

SOUTH TECH CHARTER ACADEMY, INC.
d/b/a SouthTech Academy, SouthTech Treasure Coast Academy,
and SouthTech Treasure Coast Middle,
SOUTH TECH PREPARATORY ACADEMY, INC.
d/b/a SouthTech Preparatory, and
SOUTH TECH SCHOOLS HOLDINGS, LLC



Governing Board Policy Manual

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Governing Board Policy Manual

SouthTech Charter Academy, Inc. and SouthTech Preparatory Academy, Inc hereinafter "SouthTech" Schools will be governed by the policies contained herein, including the Appendices, as well the schools' charters and all applicable Florida Statutes and State Board Rules. Should any of these policies be in conflict with the SouthTech Schools' charters, Florida Statutes or State Board Rules, the charter, statute or rule will prevail.

(1) Foundation

(1.1) Mission Statement

The mission of SouthTech is to graduate students prepared for work, higher education, and productive citizenship.

(1.2) Organizational Philosophy

In carrying out its responsibilities, SouthTech Schools are guided by the desire to use the resources of its community, its staff, and its students to provide the highest quality education permitted by its financial resources. In reaching decisions the Governing Board will attempt in every case to act in the best interest of its students.

(1.3) Organizational Structure

SouthTech Schools are not-for-profit corporations incorporated within the state of Florida. The Organization is directed by the Governing Board who set the policies and guidelines for the Organization and delegate to staff day-to-day responsibilities for operational matters. The Executive Director or designee consults with staff members in order to allow for the greatest possible staff participation in the decision making of the Organization. The Executive Director shall serve as the liaison between the Governing Board and the staff.

(1.4) Non-Discrimination

No person shall, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity and sexual orientation), marital status, health status, genetic information, or political or religious beliefs, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity, or in any employment conditions or practices conducted by this School, except as provided by law.

SouthTech Schools shall comply with all state and federal laws, which prohibit discrimination and are designed to protect the civil rights of applicants, employees, and/or students, or other persons protected by applicable law.

The Organization shall admit students to programs and classes without regard to race, color, religion, gender, age, national or ethnic origin, marital status, disability or handicap or sexual orientation.

(2) Governing Board

(2.1) Governing Board Foundation

The Governing Board is a legal requirement for a charter school organized as a not-for-profit organization and ensures its operations continue to focus on service to the public. In addition to its legal responsibilities, the Governing Board supports the Organization's mission and seeks to promote it by advocating for the educational philosophy.

(2.2) General powers

All affairs of the Organization shall be overseen and authorized or delegated by the Governing Board. The Governing Board's primary duties include, but are not limited to, the hiring and evaluation of the Executive Director, setting of Policies and Procedures, strategic planning, and assessment of the Organization in accomplishing the missions of SouthTech Schools.

(2.3) General Responsibilities

The Governing Board is responsible for setting the budget, establishing organization-wide policies, and overseeing the general operation of SouthTech Schools. It is the Executive Director or designee's responsibility to ensure these policies are carried out, and to develop a system that ensures the input of staff, students and community.

The Governing Board is in charge of the direct or indirect assistance from state and federal governments and is put in a position of governance as a result of state charter school legislation, as well as nonprofit corporate law. This structure makes the Organization's management accountable to the Governing Board, who due to their voluntary nature, can effectively provide financial oversight since no personal gain is involved as every governing board in Florida for charter public schools must be operated as a not-for-profit.

Election to the Governing Board carries with it a responsibility of stewardship. The directors are the custodians of the integrity of the Organization; they hold in trust the Organization's reputation as created by its founders and as developed by those who have shaped SouthTech Schools in the past. Current governing board members accept the obligation to not only preserve, but also add to this Organization. In this way governing board members help form not only the present, but also the future composition of SouthTech Schools.

The Governing Board shall be responsible for ensuring the corporate documents have been adopted and are updated as necessary to define the proper operation and management of the Organization. The following corporate documents are the responsibility of the Governing Board, and listed in order of priority/authority:

(2.3.1) Articles of Incorporation

The Articles of Incorporation incorporate the official and primary rules governing the management of the Organization in accordance with the laws of the State of Florida and the United States of America. The Articles of Incorporation, and any amendments thereto, must be duly approved by the Governing Board and submitted to the State of Florida through the Florida Division of Corporations.

(2.3.2) Bylaws

The corporate Bylaws are the legally binding set of rules made by the Organization to control the operation of the Governing Board and the Organization itself. The Bylaws set forth the structure of the Organization in voting, operations, and guiding the Governing Board in the conduct of its business.

(2.3.3) Policy Manual

This Policy Manual, as adopted and amended from time to time by the Governing Board, is to provide direction over the general day-to-day operation of the Organization. The policies shall be adopted or amended by the Governing Board in accordance with the requirements set forth in the Bylaws and shall represent the official strategy and direction given by the Governing Board to manage the daily affairs of the Organization. All staff members of SouthTech Schools should become familiar with and carry out the directives of the Policy Manual and any supplemental employee manual.

(2.3.4) Board Resolutions

A Board Resolution is a written statement made and approved by the Governing Board detailing decisions and directives of the Governing Board which may or may not be permanent directives to be included within the Policy Manual.

(2.3.5) Corporate Budget

The Corporate Budget shall be the plan by which the expenditures of the Organization's resources shall be approved. See section ten (10) of this Policy Manual for additional information regarding the Budget process. All expenditures of the Organization's funds must align with the approved Corporate Budget. Corporate and School specific budgets have different reporting requirements with the individual School sponsor's and the School shall abide by the reporting requirements set forth in the charter agreement.

(2.4) Board Membership

(2.4.1) Board Powers

The Governing Board affirms that the directors, officers, administrators, faculty, and other employees of SouthTech Schools have an obligation to exercise their authority and to carry out the duties of their respective positions for the sole benefit of the Organization as delegated by the Governing Board. Other than described within these policies, individual members of the Governing Board hold no authority or decision-making ability outside of official meetings of the Governing Board unless an individual Governing Board member is delegated specific authority by the full Governing Board.

(2.4.2) Application Process

Any person wanting to apply to serve as a member of the Governing Board shall submit an application and resume, which shall be submitted to the Governing Board for review and consideration. The applicant will agree to follow all Board policies and to submit to fingerprinting and a background check as required by Section 1002.33(12)(g), Florida Statutes.

The Governing Board may recruit members based on the identification of strategic needs of the Board and Organization and solicit nominees who are natural matches and meet the criteria specified in the application.

(2.4.3) Election Process

The Directors of the organization shall be elected annually by the Governing Board at the annual meeting of the Board. If the election of officers shall not be held at such meeting, such election shall be held as soon thereafter as is convenient. Vacancies may be filled or new offices created and filled at any meeting of the Governing Board where a quorum is present. Each officer shall hold office until his or her successor has been duly elected, unless the Officer has voluntarily resigned prior to the end of his or her term or if, by a majority vote of the other Governing Board members, the Officer has been removed from its position.

The Board will evaluate the needs of the Governing Board at the annual meeting of the Board for the coming school year. After review of all nominees and applicants the Board shall vote on the acceptance or denial of present nominees by a majority vote of the Governing Board then present.

(2.4.4) Board Member Resignations

Any Board member who wishes to resign from office shall inform the SouthTech Schools Board Chairperson in writing. The resignation shall become effective upon receipt of the letter unless an alternative date is suggested within the resignation letter and also approved by the Chairperson. The Board Chairperson shall certify to the Board that the office is vacant. The Board will then appoint a replacement to serve using the process described within these policies.

(2.4.5) Removal Process

Any Director or agent elected or appointed by the Governing Board may be removed by the Board by majority vote whenever, in its judgment, the best interests of the Organization would be served.

(2.4.6) Operational Procedures

Upon the election or appointment of new board members, the Executive Director or designee shall provide the new Board member with copies of all relevant and important documents necessary in the fulfillment of the position as a Board member such as: Florida Laws relating to charter schools, State Board of Education Rules relating to charter schools, the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Policies and Procedures of the Organization, the current Charter contract, current annual budget, and any other documents the Executive Director or designee deems essential to an understanding of the operation of the Organization.

The Executive Director or designee shall set aside such time as is necessary to answer any questions arising from the study of these documents and shall cooperate fully in assisting the new member to become an informed and active Board member.

New Board Members shall be required to complete statutorily required governance training which must include government in the sunshine laws, conflicts of interest, ethics, and financial responsibility.

(2.5) Meetings

All meetings of the Governing Board shall be held in accordance with Florida Government in the Sunshine laws. Except for emergency meetings described below, notice of all meetings and agendas shall be posted at least three (3) days prior to each meeting. The agenda will be prepared by the Executive Director or designee with input from the Chairperson. Input into the agenda should consist only of the placement of items on it and not used as a means to circumvent the sunshine law. A working agenda will be distributed to Board members within a reasonable time prior to the meeting for input prior to the distribution of the final agenda except for special meetings as described below. These meetings will be held at such place as designated in the agenda.

(2.5.1) Governance Meetings

Pursuant to Section 1002.33(9)(p)(3), Florida Statutes, each charter school's governing board must hold at least two public meetings per school year in the school district where the charter school is located. The meetings must be noticed, open, and accessible to the public, and attendees must be provided an opportunity to receive information and provide input regarding the charter school's operations. The appointed representative and charter school principal or director, or his or her designee, must be physically present at each meeting. Members of the governing board or any member of a committee formed or designated by the governing board may attend in person or by means of communications media technology used in accordance with rules adopted by the Administration Commission under s. 120.54(5).

(2.5.2) Annual Meeting.

The annual meeting of the Governing Board shall be held in September of each year. At the annual meeting, the new Board Members will be elected or reelected.

(2.5.3) General Meetings

An annual schedule of General Meetings will be set by the Governing Board and made available for public review, which shall be subject to amendment upon reasonable notice.

(2.5.4) Emergency Meetings

Emergency Meetings of the Board may be called by the Chairman or any two voting members of the Board. The person(s) calling such a meeting may set the location of the meeting as a conveniently accessible place for all Board members and the public. Emergency Meetings must be scheduled with no less than one (1) day prior notice and must be established to

discuss only a single issue.

(2.5.5) Electronic Meetings

Pursuant to Section 1002.33(9)(p)(3), Florida Statutes and Section 120.54(5), Florida Statutes the Governing Board may elect to hold meetings through the means of “Communication Media Technology.” Governing Board members attending a meeting by means of Communications Media Technology shall be counted towards the quorum and shall be considered present for quorum and voting purposes. In the event this method is chosen for use by the Board, the following requirements will be met:

(2.5.5.1) Access

The means by which the meeting will be held will be sufficient to permit all interested persons to attend the meeting either in person or electronically. In the event that the meeting experiences technical difficulties during the proceedings, the meeting shall be postponed until the problems have been corrected.

(2.5.5.2) Access Points

The Organization shall make available a physical location where individuals who do not have access to the technology required to participate can come to observe the meeting. This access point will have adequate set up to allow all physical participants to hear and see the meeting in person.

The Executive Director and the individual who is appointed by the Governing board to facilitate parental involvement, provide access to information, assist parents and others with questions and concerns, and resolve disputes shall both be required to attend the meeting in person at an access point.

(2.5.5.3) Meeting Notice

Meetings which are to be held electronically will require additional information in the meeting notice. Specifically, the notice must include:

- The physical addresses of all access points open to the public and where the public should go to participate in the meeting in person.
- An address, e-mail address, and telephone number where an interested person may write or call for additional information or submit a request for public comment.
- An address, e-mail address, and designated person to whom a person may submit written or other physical exhibits which he or she intends to offer for consideration at the public meeting.

(2.5.6) Public Comments at Board Meetings

It is the intention of this policy to encourage public comment regarding items to be addressed by the Board or committees of the Organization. This policy describes the process to be followed to provide members of the public with a reasonable opportunity to be heard.

(2.5.6.1) Conduct

The opportunity to be heard at a public meeting of the Organization is subject to Board rules, policies and procedures, including requirements regarding orderly conduct and proper

decorum in a public meeting.

(2.5.6.2) Notification

Any person or group who wants to publicly comment on an Agenda item during a public meeting is required to submit a request for public comment. Such a request can be made at the meeting itself after notifying the board clerk upon their arrival at the meeting. The person who intends to comment must state whether he is commenting on an agenda item or simply making a general comment unrelated to the agenda. If written materials are to be distributed, a copy of such must accompany the initial request to comment. When recognized by the President of the Board, the presenter must state their name for the record.

(2.5.6.3) Timing of Public Comments

Comments for items on the current meeting's Board Action section of the agenda will be heard prior to the beginning of Board discussion for the related Agenda item.

Comments for items not on the current meeting's Board Action section of the agenda will be held until the end of the meeting, as noted on the agenda.

(2.5.6.4) Time Limits

Comments are limited to three (3) minutes for an individual unless the Chair increases or decreases time allowed in order to run an effective meeting.

(2.5.6.5) Public Record

All documents submitted to the Board are retained as part of the Public Record of the meeting.

(2.5.6.6) Accommodations

The Board will provide a reasonable accommodation to an individual with a disability who wishes to make a public comment at a Board meeting. When possible, requests for such accommodations should be made at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled Board meeting.

(2.5.7) Voting by Proxy

In circumstances where attendance at the meeting is impossible, the Board member may participate electronically even if the meeting has not been designated as an electronic meeting pursuant to policy 2.5.5 above. In the event an individual board member elects to participate electronically, it must be ensured that all members and the public are able to hear all discussion and votes. Members who are participating electronically outside of a properly posted electronic meeting as defined in section 2.5.5 may not be considered in the count to determine whether quorum has been met.

(2.5.8) Notice of Board Meetings

Notice of meetings of the Governing Board, including Committees of the Board as described elsewhere within these policies, will be given in a manner to reasonably inform the public of the matters to be considered by the Board.

Notice of the time, date, and place of the meeting as well as the tentative agenda will be provided at least three (3) days prior to the regularly scheduled meetings of the Governing Board. For emergency meetings or committee meetings the notice must be given at least

twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting.

In order to maximize public participation, notice of Board and Committee meetings will be posted on the School's calendar and website.

(2.5.9) Records of Proceedings

The minutes of the Governing Board and all committees with board delegated powers shall contain the names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement of any agenda or non-agenda item, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

(2.6) Committees

(2.6.1) Development of Committees

The Governing Board, by resolution adopted by a majority of voting members, may designate one or more committees, each of which shall consist of at least one voting Board member, plus any non-board members as the Board sees fit to appoint. All decisions made by any committee shall be subject to final approval or authorization by the Governing Board.

(2.6.2) Meetings

Committees that have been designated by the Governing Board must be held in accordance with Florida's Government in the Sunshine law. The Executive Director or designee shall ensure that all meetings are posted in the manner set forth above.

(2.6.3) Committee Reports

All Board Committees are subject to the direction and control of the Board and a designated Board member serving on that committee will serve as chairman or appoint a chairman who will report directly to the Board in a regular Board meeting unless a Special Meeting is called and lends itself to the function of the committee.

(2.6.4) Authority

The designation of such committees and the delegation of authority shall not operate to relieve the Governing Board or any individual member thereof of any responsibility imposed on it, him, or her by law. Committee recommendations are not binding until and unless adopted by a majority vote of the Governing Board in session, provided a quorum is present in accordance with the meeting requirements set forth above.

(2.7) Conflict of Interest Policy

The following Conflict of Interest and Anti-Nepotism Policy is intended to supersede and replace all prior conflict of interest policies of the Organization. The purpose of this Conflict-of-Interest Policy is to protect this tax-exempt organization's interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private

interest of an officer or Governing Board member of the Organization or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This Policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations, including but not limited to Section 1002.33, Florida Statutes and the laws contained therein. It is also intended to serve as a guide for the Organization's Governing Board with respect to conflicts of interest and voting pursuant to Florida laws pertaining to charter school governing boards. This Conflict-of-Interest Policy shall be effective and binding on the Organization and its Governing Board members as of the effective date of adoption contained herein. This Conflict-of-Interest Policy may be amended from time to time as determined by the Governing Board.

(2.7.1) Definitions

Interested Person: Any director, principal officer, owner, president, chairperson, Governing Board member, or member of a committee with Governing Board delegated powers and any superintendent, principal, other administrator, or any other person employed by SouthTech Schools who has equivalent decision-making authority who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.

Financial Interest: A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:

- An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Organization has a transaction or arrangement,
- A compensation arrangement with the Organization or with any entity or individual with which the Organization has a transaction or arrangement, or
- A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the Organization is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Family: A “family” member has the definition contained in Section 1002.33(24)(a)(2), Florida Statutes and also includes: father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half-brother, or half-sister.

Compensation: Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as loans, gifts, in-kind services, favors or anything of value. A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. A person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the appropriate Governing Board or committee decides that a conflict of interest exists.

(2.7.2) Procedures

(2.7.2.1) Duty to Disclose

In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all

material facts to the directors and members of committees with Governing Board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.

(2.7.2.2) *Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists*

After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the Governing Board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

(2.7.2.3) *Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest*

- An interested person may make a presentation at the Governing Board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
- The chairperson of the Governing Board or committee may, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- After exercising due diligence, the Governing Board or committee shall determine whether the Organization can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
- If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the Governing Board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the Organization's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable.
- In conformity with the above determination, the Organization shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement, EXCEPT if the interested person or his/her spouse or child (i.e., immediate family) has a direct material interest in a transaction involving the purchase, rent or leasing of any realty, goods or services. The Organization is prohibited from entering into such transaction without subjecting the decision to competitive bidding.

(2.7.2.4) *Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy*

- If the Governing Board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
- If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the Governing Board or committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

(2.7.3) Compensation

- A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Organization for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- No Governing Board member or his/her spouse or minor child may either solicit or accept anything of value (including a gift, loan, reward, promise of future employment, favor, or service) that is based on any understanding that the vote, official action, or judgment of the Governing Board member would be influenced by such gift.
- Board members may receive compensation for expenses spent on behalf of the Organization if such expenditures are approved within the Budget or by the Governing Board. This includes travel to conferences, meetings, seminars, and conventions related to charter schools or the Organization. The Director shall follow the Organization's reimbursement processes.

(2.7.4) Nepotism

The Organization shall abide by Section 1002.33(24), Florida Statutes regarding the restriction on employment of relatives.

(2.7.5) Periodic Reviews

To ensure that SouthTech Schools operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information and the result of arm's length bargaining.
- Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the Organization's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

(2.7.6) Use of Outside Experts

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in this policy above, the Organization may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the Governing Board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

(2.8) Financial Interest

Members of the Governing Board shall not receive any monetary compensation for their services, nor shall they have any financial interest in the Organization other than their own monetary donations to the Organization.

(2.9) Employer Responsibilities

(2.9.1) Purview of Employment Matters

Although the Executive Director or designee is responsible for all faculty hiring and evaluations the Board sets general guidelines for the qualifications of staff, terms of contracts, performance evaluation expectations, salary guidelines and budgets, administrative grievance procedures, non-renewal, and termination processes.

(2.9.2) Individual Employment Matters

Most individual employment matters will be effectively handled by the Executive Director or designee of the Organization. On occasion, should the Executive Director or designee need additional advice or recommendations, the Executive Director or designee may consult with an appropriate outside agent.

(3) Employment

(3.1) Equal Opportunity Employment

SouthTech Schools is an equal opportunity employer. The Organization is committed to providing equal opportunity for all individuals in all areas of recruitment, selection, placement, training, assignment, transfer, compensation, benefits, discipline, retention, and promotion. The Board commits itself to the policy that there shall be no unlawful discrimination against any person because of race, color, age, national or ethnic origin, disability, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity and sexual orientation), marital status, health status, genetic information, or political or religious beliefs. All decisions regarding employment shall follow applicable state and federal laws.

The Organization is required by the Immigration Reform and Control Act to employ only American citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States.

(3.2) Employment Non-Discrimination and Non-Harassment

SouthTech Schools promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, the Organization expects that all relationships among persons in the workplace will be business-like and free of discrimination, including all forms of harassment. Thus, the Organization does not, and will not, tolerate discrimination against or by our employees, students, vendors, or other persons. The term “harassment” includes, but is not limited to severe or pervasive, slurs, jokes, and other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual’s race, color, sex, pregnancy, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, disability, marital, veteran or any other protected status.

Conduct prohibited by this policy is unacceptable in the workplace and in any work- related setting outside the workplace, such as business trips, business meetings and business-related social events.

Violation of this policy will subject an employee to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.

(3.3) SouthTech Schools Employee Handbook

(4) Student Policies

(4.1) Admission of Students

The school[s] operated by the Organization are public charter schools, and as such, comply with all applicable requirements of state and Federal law (unless specifically exempt in Section 1002.33(16), Florida Statutes as well as their Charters. Federal Law may also apply if the School is the recipient of federal grant funds. As such, they must admit all students based on availability through use of the lottery process described below and as outlined in the Charters.

SouthTech schools will follow the admission criteria and process as outlined in the schools' charters.

(4.1.1) Student Selection Procedures

As per Section 1002.33, Florida Statutes a lottery will be conducted at each grade level to select students for enrollment when the number of applications exceeds capacity.

(4.1.1.1) Application Deadlines

The Executive Director and Principals shall develop an enrollment schedule each year to establish the application deadlines. The initial student selection lottery will be conducted in the spring prior to the opening of the school year. The initial application window must be at least 60 days and be advertised on the School's website as well as other methods.

(4.1.1.2) Non-Discrimination

Consistent with this Policy, state and federal statutes, the Organization will not discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, national or ethnic origin, marital status, disability or handicap, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected class. All students who are eligible to apply per the schools' charters shall be included in the student selection lottery and have an equal chance of being selected.

Publication of the enrollment process will include a non-discrimination statement.

(4.1.1.3) Student Preferences

The following students will be given a priority in the admission process under Section 1002.33(10), Florida Statutes:

- Students who are siblings of a student enrolled in the charter school.
- Students who are the children of a member of the governing board of the charter school.
- Students who are the children of an employee of the charter school.
 - Students who have successfully completed a voluntary prekindergarten education program under ss. 1002.51-1002.79 provided by the charter school or the charter school's governing board during the previous year.
 - Students who are the children of an active-duty member of any branch of the United States Armed Forces.

- Students who attended or are assigned to failing schools pursuant to s. 1002.38(2).

(4.2) Academic

(4.2.1) Grading Policy

Refer to the schools' board-approved Student Handbooks (Appendix B, Appendix C, and Appendix D).

(4.2.1.1) Graduation and Promotion Requirements

Refer to the schools' board-approved Student Handbooks (Appendix B, Appendix C, and Appendix D).

(4.2.1.3) Student Progression Plan

SouthTech Preparatory Academy will follow the district's Student Progression Plan to determine promotional requirements.

SouthTech Academy's board-approved Student Progression Plan can be found in Appendix E.

(4.3) Medical Policies

(4.3.1) Inoculations of Students

All students accepted by and attending the School are required to be in compliance with state programs mandating immunization against specific diseases. Failure to comply with the state requirements will result in the students being unable to attend classes, resulting in and receiving unexcused absences, until proof of compliance is provided.

(4.3.2) Medication Administration at School

This policy is designed to ensure safe and accurate administration of routine medications to students in the School. Every attempt must be made by the student's parent or legal guardian and healthcare provider to have medications administered during non-school hours. However, in the event that it is not possible for medications to be administered at home this Medication Administration at School Policy shall be followed.

(4.3.2.1) Staff and Training

The Executive Director and Principals shall designate appropriate personnel as being responsible for medication administration.

- All designated individuals must obtain appropriate medication administration training prior to dispensing, accepting, or answering any questions regarding medication administration at the School.
- The designated personnel responsible for the oversight of any medical administration at the School must complete appropriate training on medication administration.

(4.3.2.2) Submission and Required Documentation

- All medications must be personally brought into the School by the student's

- parent/guardian accompanied by the appropriate required medical paperwork.
- All prescription medications require written Authorization for Medication Administration, with original signature by the parent and health care provider before the School shall accept the medication.
- Medication may not be disbursed until the written Authorization for Medication Administration form contains the date of the current prescription, the expiration date of the prescription and the frequency that the medication is to be administered.
- Prescription Medication/Treatment must be received in a pharmacy labeled container with the student's name, healthcare provider's name, name of pharmacy and phone number, name of medication, directions for dosage and date of prescription.
- School personnel shall not administer medication if there is a change in type, dosage, or frequency unless a new written Authorization for Medication Administration with original signature by the parent and health care provider is presented to the School official.
- When medication is delivered to the School, the designated employees shall count the exact quantity of the medication being delivered and log the medication into the Medication Administration Log.
- Students may be given permission to carry the medication with them only if a completed Authorization to Carry and Self Administer form is submitted to the School with both the parent/guardian and physician signature.
- All medications kept at the School must be kept in a locked cabinet or refrigerator stored away from general population areas where students will not independently have access to the storage.
- Over-the-counter (OTC) medication must be received in the original, unopened container and labeled with the student's name and accompanied by an Authorization for Medication Administration. OTC medications do not require the signature of a healthcare provider.

(4.3.2.3) *Miscellaneous*

- Narcotic medications are not to be administered by school staff.
- Absolutely no OTC medications will be administered by school staff to students without appropriate documentation, and unless provided by the parents.
- In the event of expired medication or the end of the school year, the School's employees will contact parents to ask them to pick up the medication. Medications may not be given to students for transport home. If medications are not picked up by parents, they should be properly disposed of according to location requirements. Medication disposal should be witnessed by a second person and documented by both people involved.

(4.3.3) Student Physical Examination

The organization may require any student to be examined by a physician for the purpose of determining whether the student is afflicted with a contagious or infectious disease or has the liability of transmitting the disease.

The organization may also require certification from a physician indicating a student's fitness to participate in specific educational programs or extra-curricular activities.

Refusal on the part of parent/guardian to obtain the required examination and to submit the certification indicating freedom from contagious or infectious disease may result in student's exclusion from school.

Students may be excused from engaging in required educational activities upon proper certification from a physician advising of student disability.

All costs of physical or other examinations shall be at the expense of students and parents or legal guardians unless state or federal law specifically mandates the examination to be the responsibility of the School.

(4.3.4) Health Screenings and Services

At the beginning of the school year, the Principals or designee shall notify parents of each health care service offered at the School and the option to withhold consent or decline any specific service. Parental consent to a health care service does not waive the parent's right to access his or her student's educational or health records or to be notified about a change in his or her student's services or monitoring.

(4.3.5) Health, Safety, and Emergency Preparedness (K-12)

SouthTech Schools shall maintain comprehensive health, safety, and emergency preparedness procedures to protect students during school and extracurricular activities. Each school shall ensure trained personnel are prepared to respond to allergic reactions, cardiac incidents, and heat-related illnesses. Schools shall maintain at least one operational automated external defibrillator (AED) on campus, registered with local emergency medical services, and ensure AED access and trained staff are present during all workouts, practices, contests, and other school-sponsored physical activities. Students shall receive basic first aid and hands-on CPR instruction, including AED use, once in middle school and once in high school. All student-athletes must complete a preparticipation physical evaluation, including cardiovascular screening and an electrocardiogram (ECG) consistent with Florida Statute, prior to engaging in any workouts, practices, contests, or school-sponsored physical activities. Religious or medical exceptions to ECG screening may be granted as allowed by law. Coaches and sponsors of outdoor activities shall complete annual training in CPR, AED use, and exertional heat illness prevention. Schools shall implement a life-saving emergency plan (PULSE) aligned with the American Heart Association and coordinate with local emergency services to ensure timely and effective response. (1002.20, 1003.457, 1006.165, 1006.20)

(4.4) General

(4.4.1) Releasing a Student from School

The organization is concerned about the safety of our students. Students will only be released to

people who are their parents or legal guardians, unless we have received **written** permission to release the student to another adult. In the case of divorce or separation of the parents, both parents shall have full rights until legal notification is provided to the School limiting the rights of either parent. If a parent or legal guardian is not able to receive a student and the person receiving the student is not an approved person with written permission to receive the student, the School shall make all efforts to contact the parents/legal guardians, and if not the parents/legal guardians, then the previously approved persons. If none are able to provide permission, then the local police or sheriff's office shall be contacted to take custody of the child or determine whether the person attempting to receive the child without written permission may do so. The Principal or designee shall also notify the Florida Department of Children and Families informing them of the matter.

(4.4.2) Child Abuse, Molestation, Neglect

The organization considers the welfare of students to be of paramount concern in its responsibilities. Therefore, all organization employees and volunteers are directed to take whatever action may be necessary as required by Chapter 39, and 827 Florida Statutes and all statutes and laws of the State of Florida regarding all instances of suspected child abuse, molestation, and child neglect.

Any employee of the Organization or volunteer who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse shall immediately make a report to the Department of Children and Families Abuse and Neglect Hotline. A person who is required to report known or suspected child abuse, abandonment, or neglect and who knowingly and willfully fails to do so, or who knowingly and willfully prevents another person from doing so, is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083. Further, a person who does make a report of suspected abuse in good faith has immunity from civil and criminal liability pursuant to § 39.203, Florida Statutes. Any person who reports should keep a record of the date and time they made the report, whom they spoke to and the general information they provided to the Abuse Hotline.

(4.4.2.1) Interviews, Interrogations and Removal from School by Law Enforcement The School has legal jurisdiction over students during the School day and hours of approved extracurricular activities. When law enforcement officials find it necessary to question students during the School day or periods of extracurricular activities, the Principal or designee will be present, and the interview will be conducted in private. The Principal will make reasonable efforts to notify the student's parents/guardians.

Removal of Students from School - Before a student at school is arrested or taken into custody by law enforcement or other legally authorized person, the Principal will verify the official's authority to take custody of the student. The School Principal will attempt to notify the student's parent/guardian that the student is being removed from school.

(4.4.2.2) Reporting Violent Behavior

SouthTech Schools will follow the current Florida Threat Management Manual for reporting violent behavior. Violent behavior and the phrase “acts of school violence” are defined as the use of physical force by a student with the intent to do serious physical injury to another

person while on school property, including a school bus, or while involved in school activities.

(4.4.3) School Uniform Dress Code Policy

School uniform dress code policies are addressed in the board-approved Student Handbooks (Appendix B, Appendix C, and Appendix D).

(4.4.4) Searches by School Personnel

In accordance with the state and federal law, should a school staff member have reasonable suspicion that a crime or violation of school rules and policies has occurred; the School staff member has the authority to conduct an appropriate search.

Reasonable suspicion is defined to mean that the person initiating the search has a well-founded suspicion -- based on objective facts that can be articulated -- of either criminal activity or a violation of school rules. Reasonable suspicion is more than a mere hunch or supposition.

If reasonable suspicion exists, and if the School staff can justify the search at its inception, a reasonable search can be conducted to prove or disprove the stated suspicion.

Student lockers and desks may be searched by school administrators or staff who have a reasonable suspicion that the lockers or desks contain drugs, alcohol, stolen properties, weapons, items posing a danger to the health or safety of students and school employees, or evidence of a violation of school policy. In addition, the Board authorizes the use of trained dogs to sniff lockers or other school property to assist in the detection of the presence of drugs, explosives, and other contraband. The School does not need reasonable suspicion to utilize drug sniffing dogs.

Students or student property may be searched based on reasonable suspicion of a violation of School rules, policy, or state and/or federal law. The privacy and dignity of students shall be respected. Searches shall be carried out in the presence of adult witnesses, preferably both the individual conducting the search and the witness will be of the same gender as the student unless otherwise agreed to by the student or parents/guardian of the student. Students may be asked to empty pockets, remove jackets, coats, shoes, and other articles of exterior clothing for examination if reasonable under the circumstances. No employee shall perform a strip search of any student.

Law enforcement officials shall be contacted if the search produces a controlled substance, drug paraphernalia, weapons, stolen goods, or evidence of a crime, in any case involving a violation of law when a student refuses to allow a search, or where the search cannot safely be conducted. Parents may also be contacted.

(4.4.5) Student Publications

The Organization encourages student production and distribution of publications which can provide opportunities for practical journalistic experience and for the written expression of differing opinions. The Organization recognizes that freedom of speech and press bring corresponding responsibilities. The Principal , through appointment of a faculty advisor,

shall provide guidance to students in appropriate methods for preparing and producing publications. The Principal or designee may delay or stop distribution of any materials proposed for printing or that have been printed which may be reasonably forecast to cause substantial and material disruption or obstruction of any lawful mission, process, or function of the School.

(4.5)

Homeless Students

- I. Children and youth in SouthTech Schools who are identified as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act, including those not currently enrolled due to homelessness, will have equal access to the same free, public education as provided to other children and youths, and other services needed to ensure an opportunity to meet the same challenging state academic achievement standards to which all students are held.
- II. SouthTech schools will remove barriers for:
 - a. Identifying homeless children and youth
 - b. The enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth in a qualified school
- III. SouthTech schools will:
 - a. provide access to all programs administered by SouthTech Schools, including transportation, career and technical education, educational services, and extracurricular activities
 - b. award credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school
 - c. Coordinate with other programs, community service providers and organizations, including (but not limited to):
 - i. Local social services, housing authorities and other community agencies
 - ii. The School District of Palm Beach County and other school districts
- IV. SouthTech Schools will designate an appropriate staff person(s) to carry out the duties described in the McKinney-Vento Act as a liaison for homeless children, youth and their families.
- V. SouthTech Schools assures that children and youth will not be stigmatized, segregated or separated in any educational program on the basis of their homeless status
- VI. SouthTech Schools shall identify homeless children and youth as defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act. Students identified as unaccompanied minors will be issued a certificate documenting his/her status as required by Florida law.
- VII. SouthTech schools will ensure the immediate enrollment of homeless children and youth to a qualified school and assures that:
 - a. A homeless child or youth may continue their education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness except in cases where it is contrary to the request of the parent or guardian or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth
 - b. A homeless child or you shall be given a temporary document exemption to provide proof of age, proof of immunization and other documentation required for enrollment
 - c. A homeless student who becomes permanently housed during the academic year may remain at their school of origin for the remainder of the academic year and continue to receive all McKinney-Vento Act benefits
 - d. Unaccompanied homeless high school youth will receive counseling to prepare and

improve their readiness for postsecondary education

VIII. Transportation to and from a child's or youth's school of origin will be provided

IX. Records for homeless children and youth will be held confidential in a manner consistent with section 444 of the General Education Provision Act and will not be deemed to be directory information

X. SouthTech Schools shall follow the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act and Florida statutes

(5) Teaching and Learning

(5.1) Curriculum Development

The organization recognizes the need and value of a systematic and on-going program of curriculum review. The organization encourages and supports the professional staff in its efforts to identify and review new curricular ideas, develop and improve existing programs and evaluate all instructional programs.

The Executive Director, Principals, and Administration will continuously carry out the curriculum development and implementation process. As used in this Policy, curriculum is the process, attitudes, skills and knowledge that is taught and learned at the appropriate level.

(5.2) Textbook Adoption

(5.2.1) Standards Alignment

The organization shall ensure that all textbook and curricular materials utilized by the School will align with Florida's Benchmark's for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T) Standards or Next Generation Sunshine State Standards.

(5.2.2) Curriculum Materials

The Organization shall ensure that the curriculum is focused on reading and math instruction. The Organization will assure that curriculum materials are aligned with state standards.

Instructional or media materials used in the School's educational program consist of various types of print and non-print materials. Despite the care taken to select those materials deemed to be educationally useful, occasional objections to the selection of instructional materials may be made. Teachers will always provide an alternate assignment should a student or parent object to the curriculum materials assigned. If a challenge is made, it should be properly channeled through the complaint process described elsewhere within this policy manual.

(5.3) Teacher's Lesson Plans

Teachers will be expected to submit lesson plans aligned to the State and/or National

Standards. Lesson plans shall be submitted electronically through the method identified by the Principal.

(5.4) Reporting Student Progress

The organization believes parents are an integral part in their child's education. To keep parents informed, students' progress will be formally reported on a regular schedule.

More information can be found in the schools' Student Handbooks (Appendix B, Appendix C, and Appendix D).

(5.5) Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

(5.5.1) Acceptance of Students

The organization operates public schools that are required to admit all students, based on space availability and subject to selection through the School's lottery system. A student's ESE status will not be used in the selection and lottery process.

SouthTech schools will follow the criteria for admission and placement of students with an IEP as outlined in the schools' charters.

(5.5.2) Limitation of Services

The organization strives to meet the needs of all of our students. We attempt to provide individualized instruction to all of our students. The school will retain the services of an ESE teacher to assist with working with children who have special needs. When a child with an IEP (Individualized Education Program) is considering enrolling with the organization the family will be informed of the services provided by the School and the current staffing levels. It is ultimately the responsibility of the IEP team to determine the most appropriate placement for a student within the broader context of services provided by the school district. If a student were to be accepted to the School whose IEP requires services significantly above what is currently being offered at the School, the School will convene an IEP meeting to discuss the placement and develop a plan for meeting the needs of the individual student.

(5.6) Section 504

(5.6.1) Section 504 Plans

The organization provides a free and public education to each student who is disabled within the definition of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regardless of the nature or severity of the disability.

(5.6.2) When a 504 Plan will be Considered

The organization will consider a 504 plan for accommodations if a School Based Team feels that the child may have a disability which would meet the criteria for such a plan. This can occur when a teacher identifies a student who is having difficulties, a parent requests a team to consider the needs of a student, or if a medical report has been submitted identifying a student as having a disability.

(5.6.3) Meeting to consider 504 Plan

If the School Based Team recommends a student be considered for a 504 plan, the Principal or designee will coordinate a meeting among the student’s teachers and other applicable staff members. The teacher will also ensure the parents have been notified and invited to the meeting. While at the meeting, the team members will consider whether the student’s disabilities qualify them for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If so, the team will identify the accommodations necessary to allow the student to be successful within the School environment.

(5.6.4) Eligibility

To determine if a child has a disability that qualifies them for a 504 Plan, the team will utilize the policies and procedures of the School District of Palm Beach County and the schools’ charters.

(5.7) School Based Team (MTSS)

(5.7.1) Purpose

The purpose of the School Based Team [SBT] is to discuss issues that may arise regarding specific students. The team will be comprised of a diverse group of professionals who will brainstorm strategies and research-based interventions to use with students that may be having academic, behavioral, or other concerns within school. The SBT will analyze school data, assist with the providing suggestions for the MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) process, and make recommendations for modifications in the classroom and monitor student progress by analyzing interventions to assess response to those interventions.

(5.8) English Language Learners

The organization is committed to identifying and assessing the educational needs of students whose native or home language is other than English (“ELL”). Once identified, the School will provide appropriate programs to address the needs of these students.

SouthTech schools will follow the criteria for programs and services for ELL students as outlined in the charters.

(5.8.1) Services

The organization will take steps to ensure to the maximum extent practicable that the interests of ELL students are included in the development and implementation of School programs and services that are offered by the School to and for its student body. The Principal will ensure that all legal requirements are adhered to in regard to the instruction and services provided to students who qualify for ELL services.

(6) School Management

(6.1) Students

(6.1.1) Supervision of Students

Students are to be supervised at all times while under the control of the organization. This includes the time students are attending school, while away from the School on school-sponsored events, or while participating in extracurricular activities, such as clubs. Supervision will be provided for 30 minutes prior and 30 minutes after the start and end of school. Once a school-sponsored event or activity has concluded, the parent or guardian shall assume responsibility for the supervision of the student(s).

(6.2) School Records

(6.2.1) Security of Student Records

All student information is considered confidential and will be maintained as such in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, including FERPA. Such information shall be available to the parent or guardian or to the student him or herself who has attained the age of eighteen (18) years within a reasonable period of time not to exceed 30 days after receipt of request. Professionally competent personnel shall be available for interpreting any data with the student's cumulative folder. Copies of such contents shall also be made available to parents/students at cost, within the limitations of copying facilities.

The School may, without the consent of the student or his/her parents, release student records contained within the cumulative folder or any supplementary classifications to school officials who have a proper educational purpose in examining such information.

No other person may have access to or make copies of a student's records, except under the following circumstances:

- The consent must be given by the student's parent or guardian except when a student reaches the age of eighteen (18) or is married, at which time his consent and not that of his parents shall be obtained in order to release the information; and a student who meets the foregoing requirements shall consent to parental access to his records. However, if the student is a dependent under the Internal Revenue Code of a parent, or if another exception applies under 34 CFR § 99.31 (a), then the parents still have access to the student's education records without consent from the eligible student.
- The consent shall be written and shall specify the records to be released and to whom they are to be released. Each request for consent shall be handled separately; blanket permission for the release of information shall not be acceptable.
- Under compulsion of law: courts, law enforcement agencies, agencies subpoenaing such records.
- When data for outside purposes is released in such form that no individual student is identifiable.
- When the Executive Director or designee determines the release of specific information as described by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 is in the best interests of the student, provided such information has not

been disallowed by the parents.

- The Executive Director or designee may disclose to appropriate parties, including parents/guardians and eligible students, personally identifiable student information in health and safety emergencies if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals. The School may make the determination whether to disclose information to any person whose knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals based upon, but not limited to, the following factors taking into account the totality of the circumstances: (1) the seriousness of the threat to the health or safety of the student or eligible student or other individuals; (2) the need for the information to meet the emergency; (3) whether the parties to whom the information is disclosed are in a position to deal with the emergency; and (4) the extent to which time is of the essence in dealing with the emergency.

The parent or guardian, or an eighteen (18) year old or older student, shall have the right to challenge the accuracy and authenticity of data recorded within the student's cumulative folder. Any such data that is determined by the Executive Director to be inaccurate shall be expunged from the record; and an appeal from the decision of the Executive Director shall be made to the Governing Board.

(6.2.2) Fees for Copies of Educational Records

The school reserves the right to charge the following fees for copies of educational records:

(6.2.3) Up-To-Date Records

It is the parent/legal guardian's responsibility to keep the School's administrative office informed and up to date regarding any changes of names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, etc. so that important student information may be received from or provided to the parent/legal guardian in a timely manner for the benefit and well-being of the student.

(6.2.4) Record Storage

The Executive Director shall be responsible for establishing procedures to ensure that all student records are stored in secure storage areas. Only authorized individuals will have access to student records, and a log of all individuals who access a student's cumulative record shall be maintained. Staff members shall not be allowed to borrow or remove records from the student storage area unless expressly authorized by the Executive Director.

The Executive Director shall assign a staff member who is responsible for ensuring the implementation of state administrative rule 6A-1.0955 is followed with regards to the information that must be permanently maintained, and that which may be periodically eliminated once no longer useful.

(6.2.5) Record Retention

The school will abide by the Records Retention Policy established by the FL Department of State: Division of Library and Information Services section GS7.

The records retention schedule establishes the minimum length of time that the record series must be retained.

Storage of archived records will be maintained in the locked storage area of the organization or designated public storage facility. Access to this area will be limited.

(6.2.6) Annual Written Notice

An annual notice of parent/guardian and eligible students' rights under FERPA and Fla. Stat. § 1002.22, regarding student records, shall be published in the School's Student Handbook and published on the School's website. This annual notice to parents/guardians and eligible students shall include the information required by 34 CFR § 99.7, Fla. Stat. § 1002.22 (2)(e), and State Board Education Rule 6A-1.0995. This notice shall also be translated to other languages so as to effectively notify parents who have a primary or home language other than English, and the Executive Director or designee shall develop methods to inform parents/guardians of the notice if they are unable to comprehend the notice in English or these translated languages.

(6.3) School Safety

(6.3.1) School Safety Plan

The Executive Director shall coordinate with the School's Administration, Board, and relevant staff teams to develop and annually review a comprehensive School Safety Plan, using the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool (FSSAT). This plan shall provide a comprehensive plan for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of students and staff and clearly lay out the procedures to be followed in various situations which could jeopardize the health, safety or welfare of the students and staff of the School. Pursuant to Florida statutes, the School Safety Plan shall be a confidential document and not available via a public records request.

Pursuant to Section 1006.07, Florida Statutes the plan must include how the School will consult with public safety agencies, for emergency drills and for actual emergencies, including, but not limited to, fires, natural disasters, active shooter and hostage situations, and bomb threats. The plan shall include plans for regularly conducting drills for active shooter and hostage situations, which shall be conducted at least monthly.

(6.3.2) Safe-School Officer

The School shall comply with Section 1006.12, Florida Statutes and provide a Safe-School Officer. The Governing Board shall select one of the four (4) available options available in Section 1006.12, Florida Statutes to meet this requirement (School Resource Officer, School Safety Officer, School Guardian, or School Security Guard). The Board shall ensure contracts, insurance and budgets are set aside to adequately support the selected option.

(6.3.3) FortifyFL

The school will ensure to adequately promote the use of FortifyFL, the mobile suspicious activity reporting tool operated by the State of Florida. The Administration will ensure that there is a link on the School's website and that posters will be made available throughout the school building. In addition, the application will be installed on all mobile devices issued

to students, and the site will be bookmarked on all computer devices issued to students.

(6.3.4) Mobile Panic Alert System

The Executive Director shall annually review options for a mobile panic alert system and ensure that the system is installed via option selected at each school, and that appropriate staff members are trained on the use of the system. The Executive Director will work with emergency services, approved by the Florida Department of Education to ensure the system is set up and operating appropriately.

(6.3.5) Fire Drill Procedures

The School Safety Plan will clearly document the procedures and details for fire drill and emergency evacuations. All students and staff members shall be made aware of the plan, and maps highlighting the escape routes will be posted in all school rooms and provided to students and staff if requested. Fire drills will be conducted per current statutory requirements. Drills will be held at various times throughout the day and will test various types of fire emergencies. Documentation of the drills will be maintained by the organization for review.

(6.3.6) Tornado Drill Procedures

The School Safety Plan will clearly document the shelter in place procedures to be used for emergency weather such as tornadoes. All staff and students shall be made aware of this plan. The plan will be practiced at least twice per year as is required by Florida law. Documentation of the drills will be maintained by the organization for review.

(6.3.7) Hurricane Closures

The organization will follow the same emergency closures as the authorizing school district. Parents should monitor local news outlets during inclement weather. If the public schools are closed, the School will also be closed. In the event that multiple closures occur, and time must be made up, school days will be added according to the adopted amended school calendar by the School's governing board.

(6.3.8) Threat Management

In the event a student appears to pose a threat of violence or physical harm to him or herself or others, the staff member with concerns should immediately notify the Principal or designee. The Principal or designee will activate the Threat Management Team who shall make a preliminary determination about whether the student poses such a threat. The Principal or designee shall immediately attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian. Nothing in this subsection shall preclude School personnel from acting immediately to address an imminent threat, including contacting local law enforcement.

In the event that the Threat Management Team has decided that the student poses a threat of violence to himself or herself or others or exhibits significantly disruptive behavior or need for assistance, authorized members of the Threat Management Team may obtain criminal history record information pursuant to Section 985.04(1), Florida Statutes. A member of a Threat Management Team may not disclose any criminal history record information obtained pursuant to this section or otherwise use any record of an individual beyond the purpose for which such disclosure was made to the Threat Management Team.

(6.3.9) Duties of Principal

Principals shall maintain a safe and orderly school environment, supporting staff in supervising and disciplining students, including removal from classrooms or buses when necessary. Persistent behavioral issues shall involve parental engagement, child study interventions, and alternative education programs. Suspensions and expulsions must follow state and district rules, ensure due process, and maintain access to educational services, including for students with disabilities. Principals must report safety and discipline incidents accurately, notify parents and appropriate agencies regarding controlled substances or prohibited items, and may search lockers or personal belongings when reasonable suspicion exists, while respecting student privacy. (1006.09)

(6.3.10) Campus Access Control

SouthTech Schools shall maintain a secure campus. Gates and classroom doors shall remain locked when students are present unless actively monitored or exempted by the School Safety Specialist and documented in the FSSAT. Safe shelter areas must be clearly marked and communicated. Safety violations must be reported, and all substitutes shall review school safety policies and procedures before the first day of teaching. Compliance will be monitored and the policy reviewed annually. (1001.212, 1006.07(6)(f)–(h))

(6.4) Fund Raising

The Organization is incorporated as a nonprofit organization which relies on governmental funds and contributions to effectively educate our students. As a result, fundraising is necessary to help support the educational programs offered. The Executive Director or designee for each campus shall approve all fundraising activities and ensure that families are not being asked to contribute excessively at any given time. All fundraisers will identify the purpose for the money raised. Fundraising is not a prerequisite or on-going requirement for any student or family to attend a public charter school.

(6.5) Photographs of Students

(6.5.1) Portraits

The Organization will sponsor one or two formal portrait days for students. A company which best meets the needs of the families for a reasonable cost will be selected by school staff. These photos will be utilized for the creation of the yearbook in addition to being sold to the families. Portraits may be purchased by students and parents/legal guardians and portraits may be used by the School in grade-level compilations unless specifically opted-out by a student or parent/legal guardian.

(6.5.2) Snapshots

Throughout the school year, school staff may take pictures of events that happen during the school day or at school sponsored events. Through student registration forms, parents will

determine whether or not they consent to have their student(s) photographed. This information will be noted in the school's student information system. Additionally, the School reserves the right to utilize such snapshots through electronic media which do not individually identify any specific student. If a parent or guardian requests the removal of such a photograph, the School staff will comply with the request within 72 hours.

(6.6) Volunteers & Visitors

(6.6.1) Background Checks

All individuals who are not employed by the Organization must enter through the main office. Should they wish to go beyond the main office, their identification must be scanned by the background check system which will print a badge to wear, identifying that the volunteer or visitor has properly checked in through the office with proper protocols followed. It is the responsibility of all staff members to help monitor the halls to ensure that all volunteers/visitors have properly checked into the office. Any individual who does not have an appropriate name badge must be walked back to the office to ensure they are signed in properly.

(6.6.2) Background Check Concern

If, during the background check, an individual is identified as having a background as a sexual predator as defined by Florida Statutes, the Executive Director, Principal, and/or designee will immediately be notified. The person running the check should call the Executive Director, Principal, and/or designee. The following guidelines are applicable in the event a background check returns that the person is a sexual predator:

- If the person trying to gain entry has a relative who is a student attending the School, and there are no outstanding court orders barring that person from having contact with the child, the person may enter the School only with a staff member escort. The individual may not be left alone with any student on school property.
- If the person trying to gain entry has a relative who is a student attending the School, and there are restrictions on the visitation, the appropriate action will be taken as identified by the court documents. In most situations, the Police Department will be notified.
- If the person trying to gain entry does not have any relatives attending this school, they will not be permitted access to the building, and the Police Department will be notified.
- If the person trying to gain access is a volunteer, the person will not be granted entry until after their information has been entered into the school's volunteer background check system, and a clearance is given from the appropriate administrator.

(6.6.3) Trespassing and Disruptive Conduct

It is unlawful for any person to disrupt or interfere with school activities or operations on school board property. Conduct that is disruptive to the safe and orderly operation of the school or district functions is prohibited. Individuals who enter or remain on school

grounds or at school events without permission, or after being told to leave, are considered trespassing. School administrators are authorized to issue a No Trespass Letter to anyone whose behavior disrupts school operations. Violations of this policy may result in removal from the premises and possible criminal prosecution under Florida law. (1006.145, 877.13)

(6.7) Technology Usage

(6.7.1) School Telephones

Telephones are provided for business use only. Personal use of telephone systems should be for emergency use only. Employees of the School shall refrain from making or receiving outside calls while they are responsible for the supervision or education of students.

(6.7.2) Bring Your Own Device

The use and possession of personal electronic devices are limited based on this policy. Pursuant to Section 1003.02, Florida Statutes, personal devices shall include personal cell phones, tablets, and computers. A student may not use a wireless communication device during instructional time except when allowed by a teacher solely for educational purposes. The school shall not be held liable for any personal devices on campus.

(6.7.2.1) Connecting to School Networks

Only approved devices may be connected to the School's network. Prior to connecting said devices to the network, the user must agree to the acceptable use policy of the organization. The administration, in conjunction with the IT staff of the School, may institute limits on the minimum device requirements for devices to connect to the internal networks.

(6.7.2.2) Restriction of Usage

Devices brought on campus should be free of any material that may be deemed inappropriate. Pornography, gambling, gaming, and media piracy on devices is strictly prohibited while on school property. Any form of distribution of videos or pictures of other students and staff is forbidden.

Personal devices must not be used in violation of the technology policy. Excessive use of resources, or improper use of resources will result in loss of privileges. Any attempt to circumvent the Schools network security and/or filtering policies is forbidden. This includes downloading programs to bypass security or accessing and setting up proxies.

Students should not connect to any wireless service or network that is not operated by the School while on campus or participating in school activities. Proper log on credentials will be supplied by members of school staff as needed.

(6.7.2.3) Consequences for Misuse

If A Student Fails to Follow the Restrictions of Usage, above, the School will implement disciplinary action as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct found in the Student Handbook. (See Appendix B, Appendix C, and Appendix D).

If evidence of illegal activity is found on a student's personal device the administration is required to notify proper authorities.

(6.7.3) Technology Acceptable Use Policy

All employees, students and volunteers of the organization may be granted access and usage of the organization's technology resources, including network and internet usage based on need and job/student status. All access to usage codes and/or devices is assigned to the individual and is not to be shared. Users are responsible for the security of their assigned devices. Users should log out/secure devices when not in use and report any unauthorized usage promptly. All care should be taken to honor intellectual properties including copyright and license restrictions. Respect should be given to other users. Spying, bullying and harassment will not be permitted in any fashion. General usage should be for the purposes of school business or classes only.

(6.7.3.1) Internet Safety

1. SouthTech Schools recognizes the value of electronic devices and the internet to improve student learning and enhance school administration and operations. However, the internet is an unregulated vehicle for communication, and information and interactions on the internet can pose certain risks to students and staff members. Therefore, the Governing Board adopts this policy governing the use of school networks to comply with Florida law and State Board of Education rules, and to provide rules for students and employees accessing such networks.
2. General Requirements for Users. It is the policy of the School to maintain an environment that promotes ethical and responsible conduct in all online network activities by staff and students. It shall be a violation of this policy for any employee, student, or other individual to engage in any activity that does not conform to the established purpose and general rules and policies of the network. Users on any network operated by the School shall comply with the following requirements:
 - a) All use of a network must be in connection with education and research, or in the case of employees, related to the employee's job functions.
 - b) Users shall not access any content that is prohibited under this policy or under the law.
 - c) Users are prohibited from using the School's networks for any illegal or unethical purposes, including infiltrating or hacking the School's systems or any outside systems.
 - d) Users shall not utilize the School's networks for personal gain or personal business.
 - e) Users shall not install any unauthorized software or programs on any School-owned electronic device or network.
 - f) Users shall not destroy, delete, or modify any School-owned devices or software unless authorized to do so.
 - g) Users shall not utilize the School's networks to engage in harassment, discrimination, cyberstalking, cyberbullying, or obscene behavior.
 - h) Users will avoid clicking unknown links or accessing webpages and other content that may contain malware, spyware, ransomware, or other malicious software.
 - i) If any user accesses prohibited content or downloads potentially malicious software, the individual must immediately report the incident to their teacher, in the case of students, or to the Principal, in the case of staff members.
3. Requirements for Student Users. The following requirements apply to the use of the School's networks by students:

- a) Student internet and technology sessions must always be supervised by a teacher or other staff member.
 - b) Students may only use technology or access the internet when expressly instructed by a teacher for educational purposes.
 - c) Staff members who supervise students, control electronic equipment, or otherwise have occasion to observe student use of school-provided technology or internet access shall make reasonable efforts to monitor student use to assure that it conforms to the requirements of this policy and the law.
 - d) Staff must make reasonable efforts to become familiar with the internet and its use so that effective monitoring, instruction, and assistance may be achieved.
4. Prohibited Uses. It is strictly forbidden for any users to access online content that is lewd, pornographic, scandalous, obscene, illegal, hateful, objectionable, inappropriate, or that otherwise does not comply with the requirements of this policy.
5. Social Media Platforms. As a general rule, the School's networks may not be used by any person to access social media platforms. In limited circumstances, students may be permitted to access social media platforms when expressly directed by a teacher to do so and solely for educational purposes. Staff members may also access social media accounts that are maintained on behalf of the School and related to the staff member's job duties. Prior to requiring students to use online content, staff must confirm that the content is not blocked by the student internet filter. Staff may make a request to their supervisor that blocked content or social media platforms be reviewed and temporarily unblocked for educational purposes. Notwithstanding the foregoing, under no circumstances may any employee or student access TikTok or any other platforms prohibited by Florida's Department of Management Services while on school grounds or participating in a school activity. Additionally, the use of TikTok to communicate or promote the School, a School-sponsored club, extracurricular organization, or athletic team is prohibited.
6. Online Messaging Platforms. Students are only permitted to utilize sanctioned email, chatrooms, and online messaging platforms while at the School or as part of School activities and only when permitted by a staff member as part of the educational program. Students should be made aware of the potential dangers posed by communicating with unknown individuals on the internet and such communications are strictly prohibited.
7. School's Responsibilities. In order to ensure network safety and enforce the provisions of this policy, the School's administration will implement the following measures:
- a) Provide internal and external controls as appropriate and feasible that restrict access to content, including implementing a network filtering system that is designed to block access to prohibited or restricted content on the School's networks and on any School-issued device. Access to content should be limited to age-appropriate subject matter and materials. Access to websites, web or mobile applications, or software that does not protect against the disclosure, use, or dissemination of students' personal information in accordance with Rule 6A-1.0955, F.A.C., will be prevented.
 - b) Monitor the use of online activities and electronic devices. This may include real-time monitoring of network activity and/or maintaining a log of internet activity for later review.
 - c) Remove or revoke privileges for any user that poses a threat to the safety and security of the network or to any person.
 - d) Retain the ability to remotely remove any prohibited application from any School-

- issued device.
- e) Restrict access to social media platforms, applications prohibited by the Department of Management Services, and any other destination that does not adequately protect student information.
 - f) Make reasonable efforts to train staff and students in acceptable use and policies governing use of the School's networks and devices.
 - g) Contract only with service providers and operators of websites, online services, or online applications that comply with all state and federal laws governing the disclosure of confidential student information.
8. Violations. Use of electronic devices and networks provided by the School is a privilege. To maintain the privilege, all users agree to learn and comply with the provisions of this policy. Violations of this policy may result in revocation of network access rights and further disciplinary action. Students that violate this policy will be disciplined in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct. Staff members that violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Any criminal activity will be reported to law enforcement.

(6.8) Complaint Process

The Organization prides itself on the quality of the teaching and care provided to its students. All members of the School community should contribute to a respectful and inclusive environment. Staff, student, or parent/guardians can raise concerns about any issues that affect a student's well-being and/or academic performance and work together to resolve them. In rare cases where the issue cannot be resolved informally, an official written complaint can be registered by a parent with the School management.

Although no member of the School community shall be denied the right to petition the Governing Board for redress of a grievance, the complaints will be referred through the proper administrative channels for solution before investigation or action by the Governing Board. Exceptions are complaints that concern Governing Board actions or operations.

The Board advises the School community that the proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline, or learning materials is as follows:

1. Teachers
2. Assistant Principal and/or Principal
3. Executive Director
4. Parent Liaison
5. Governing Board

Any complaint about school personnel will be investigated by the Administration before consideration and action by the Board of Directors.

(6.8.1) Stages for Resolution

(6.8.1.1) Informal Resolution

If there is concern about a student's progress, the teacher should be contacted. Instructional staff at the Organization are expected to assist parents and students with concerns regarding

student success. If an immediate resolution is not determined, an assistant principal may be consulted. If a solution is still not satisfactorily resolved, the Principal will work with the School staff to ensure that each student succeeds to the best of their ability.

Documentation of the complaint, investigation, and research shall be maintained as part of student records. If the situation is not resolved, it may be escalated to additional leadership in the order described above.

(6.8.1.2) Formal Resolution with Official Complaint:

If the complaint has not been informally resolved, parents may make a formal written complaint to the Executive Director's office.

The Executive Director, or their designee, will conduct any investigation necessary into the reported concern, including interviewing the complainant and the subject of concern as needed. The Executive Director will make every effort to satisfactorily resolve the complaint as soon as possible, but no more than five (5) days after receipt of the notification. The Executive Director shall send a written statement to the parent no more than two (2) days after the meeting and/or communication which reflects the School's response to the dispute or concern. For the purposes of this policy, "days" shall mean business days and exclude state, federal and School holidays.

If the person registering a complaint has suggestions to resolve the issue of concern, their advice is encouraged.

Once all relevant and discoverable facts are considered, a decision and action to resolve the complaint, including reasons for the decision, will be provided in writing to the parent/guardian regarding the findings and the School's decision.

(6.8.1.3) Appeal to the Board:

If successful resolution still has not been made by a formal investigation by the Executive Director, concerned parties may petition the Governing Board for appeal. A written appeal request may be made to the Governing Board's assigned parent liaison within five (5) days after the Executive Director's letter of non-resolution is received. The item will be forwarded to the Governing Board Chairperson to be added to the agenda of the next regularly scheduled board meeting. If the item is urgent, the Chairperson has the ability to call an emergency meeting of the Board. Within thirty (30) days after notification by the parent that the concern remains unresolved, the Board must either resolve the concern or provide a statement of the reasons for not resolving the concern. The Executive Director shall fully cooperate in the resolution procedures of the Board and comply with the District's decision for resolution of the complaint.

(6.8.1.4) Special Magistrate Request for Resolution:

If the concern is not resolved by the Board, a parent may pursue the remedies available under Fla. Stat. § 1001.42 (8)(c). A parent may request the Commissioner of Education to appoint a special magistrate. The parent shall use the Parental Request for Appointment of a Special Magistrate for Charter School Students, Form CSSM-1 6A-6.0791, which the Executive Director shall provide to the parent upon request. The special magistrate shall determine facts relating to

the dispute over the School procedure or practice, consider information provided by the School and/or Board, and render a recommended decision for resolution to the State Board of Education within 30 days after receipt of the request by the parent. The State Board of Education must approve or reject the recommended decision at its next regularly scheduled meeting that is more than 7 calendar days and no more than 30 days after the date the recommended decision is transmitted.

All costs the Board incurs for reviewing and responding to a complaint lodged by a parent of a student enrolled in the School under this policy and Florida Board of Education Rule 6A-6.0791 is a service provided by the District to the School. Contracts for such services are limited to the Board's actual costs, unless mutually agreed to by the Board and the School.

The Executive Director shall be responsible for responding to inquiries by the Florida Department of Education regarding a request for appointment of a special magistrate and shall notify the Department of the principal's name and email address.

(6.8.2) Conduct and Records

All concerns and complaints raised will be treated seriously, and confidentiality will be established and maintained wherever possible in accordance with relevant state and federal laws.

Written records will be maintained by the Executive Director or designee and must include the dates of every resolution step and dates of resolution. Correspondence, Statements, and records will be kept confidential except where any other legal obligation prevails.

(6.9) Policy Against Bullying and Harassment

(6.9.1) Statement Prohibiting Bullying and Harassment

It is the policy of the organization that all of its students, employees, and volunteers learn and work in an environment that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying of any kind. The organization will not tolerate bullying and harassment of any type. Conduct that constitutes bullying and harassment, as defined herein, is prohibited.

(6.9.2) Definition of Bullying and Definition of Harassment

Bullying or harassment shall have the meaning set forth in Section 1006.147, Florida Statutes and means intentionally and repetitively inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees and may involve but is not limited to:

- Teasing
- Social Exclusion
- Threat
- Intimidation
- Stalking, including cyber stalking as defined herein
- Physical violence
- Theft
- Sexual, religious, or racial harassment

- Public humiliation
- Destruction of property

Harassment means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or employee that:

- Places a student or employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property.
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits.
- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying and harassment also encompasses:

- Retaliation against a student or employee by another student or employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment. Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered retaliation.
- Perpetuation of conduct listed in the definition of bullying or harassment by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause emotional or physical harm to a student or school employee by:
 - Incitement or coercion
 - Accessing or knowingly and willingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the School
 - Acting in a manner that has an effect substantially similar to the effect of bullying or harassment
- Cyber stalking, which is defined as engaging in a course of conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person, and serving no legitimate purpose.

“Cyberbullying” means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which includes, but is not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photoelectronic system, or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person, or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

(6.9.3) Expected Behavior

The Organization expects students to conduct themselves as appropriate for their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment.

The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for school and community property on the part of students, staff, and community members. The Organization upholds that bullying of any student or employee is prohibited:

- During any education program or activity conducted by the School;
- During any school-related or school-sponsored program or activity;
- On a school bus; or
- Through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the district school system.

(6.9.4) Consequences for an Act of Bullying or Harassment

Concluding whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all of the facts and surrounding circumstances.

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for students who commit acts of bullying or harassment may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or reassignment, as outlined in School's policies. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for an employee found to have committed an act of bullying or harassment may be disciplined in accordance with school policies, procedures, and agreements. Additionally, egregious acts of harassment by certified educators may result in a sanction against an educator's state issued certificate. (See State Board of Education Rule 6B-1.006, FAC, The Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida.) Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer, found to have committed an act of bullying or harassment shall be determined by the School administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

Accusations made in good faith, even though subsequently determined to be false, shall not be subject to discipline consequences or remedial action as called for by this section.

(6.9.5) Consequences for Intentional Misreporting

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or reassignment, as outlined in school's policies. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for an employee found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment may be disciplined in accordance with school policies, procedures, and agreements.

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer, found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment shall be determined by the School administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances

of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

(6.9.6) Reporting an Act of Bullying or Harassment

The Principal or designee is responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the Principal or designee. All other members of the School community, including students, parents/legal guardians, volunteers, and visitors are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy anonymously or in-person to the Principal or designee. In order to report incidents of bullying, individuals may meet with either the Principal or designee to make the report. Any report in person should be followed within one day with a written report or a written explanation to the School's office. The methods of reporting bullying will be prominently publicized to students, staff, volunteers, and parents/legal guardians, as well as how the report will be acted upon. The victim of bullying, anyone who witnessed the bullying, and anyone who has credible information that an act of bullying has taken place may file a report of bullying. An employee, school volunteer, student, parent/legal guardian, or other persons who promptly reports in good faith an act of bullying or harassment to the appropriate official and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures set forth in the School policy is immune from a cause of action for damages arising out of the reporting itself or any failure to remedy the reported incident. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of bullying or harassment will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment, grades, learning or working environment, or work assignments. Written and oral reports shall be considered official reports. Reports may be made anonymously but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

(6.9.7) Investigation of Whether a Reported Act is Within the Scope of the School

The Principal or designee will initiate an investigation of whether an act of bullying or harassment occurred within the scope of the School's oversight. The designee(s) will provide a report on results of investigation with recommendations for the Principal to make a determination if an act of bullying or harassment falls within the scope of the district and will act according to the following protocols:

- If it is within the scope of the School, further investigation will commence in accordance with subsection (6.10.8) herein;
- If it is outside scope of the School, and determined a criminal act by appropriate law enforcement, refer to appropriate law enforcement for further investigation.
- If it is outside scope of the School, and determined not a criminal act, inform parents/legal guardians of all students involved.

(6.9.8) Prompt Investigation of a Report of Bullying or Harassment

The investigation of a reported act of bullying or harassment is deemed to be a school-related activity and begins with a report of such an act.

The Procedures for Investigating allegations of Bullying and/or Harassment, as defined herein include the following:

- The Principal (or designee employed by the School) will be assigned to initiate the investigation. The designee(s) may not be the accused perpetrator (harasser or bully) or victim.
- Each individual (victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses, as applicable) will be interviewed separately.
- The investigator shall collect and evaluate the facts including, but not limited to:
 - Description of incident including nature of the behavior and the context in which the alleged incident occurred;
 - How often the conduct occurred;
 - Whether there were past incidents or past continuing patterns of behavior;
 - The relationship between the parties involved;
 - The characteristics of parties involved (i.e., grade, age, etc.);
 - The identity of the perpetrator, including whether the perpetrator was in a position of power over the student allegedly subjected to bullying or harassment;
 - The number of alleged bullies/harassers;
 - The age(s) of the alleged bullies/harassers;
 - Where the bullying and/or harassment occurred; and
 - Whether the conduct adversely affected the student's education or educational environment; and
 - Any other factors or allegations necessary to complete a prompt and thorough investigation.
- Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances and includes:
 - Recommended remedial steps necessary to stop the bullying and/or harassing behavior
 - A written final report to the Principal.
 - A recommendation of whether the bullying or harassing behavior should be referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency for further investigation and review.

When the victim is a student, according to the severity of the bullying or harassment, the Principal or designee shall promptly notify the parent/legal guardian of the victim via telephone, writing, or personal conference of any actions being taken to protect the victim. The frequency of notification will depend on the severity of the bullying incident.

(6.9.9) Determination of Consequences and Due Processes for a Perpetrator:

Concluding whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all of the facts and surrounding circumstances, followed by the determination of disciplinary sanctions appropriate to the perpetrator's position within the School. The below list encompasses possible responses from the School or Organization in response to a finding that there is a violation of the Policy:

- Consequences and appropriate interventions for students who commit acts of

bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to, but not limited to suspension, or reassignment as outlined in the Organization's policies and school's Code of Conduct.

- Consequences and appropriate interventions for an employee found to have committed an act of bullying will be instituted in accordance with school policy. Additionally, egregious acts of bullying by certified educators may result in a sanction against an educator's state issued certificate (Rule 6B- 1.006 F.A.C.).
- Consequences and appropriate intervention for a visitor or volunteer, found to have committed an act of bullying shall be determined by the School administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.
- These same actions will apply to persons, whether they are students, school employees, or visitors/volunteers/independent contractors, who are found to have made wrongful and intentional accusations of another as a means of bullying.
- If a complaint of bullying or harassment is made by the alleged victim during or after the commencement of an investigation into employee or student misconduct, it shall not be a defense to the allegations of employee or student misconduct but may be considered as a mitigating factor under school policy, if appropriate.

(6.9.10) Providing Immediate Notification to the Parents/Legal Guardians of a Student Victim:

The Principal, or designee, shall by telephone and/or in writing, report the occurrence of any incident of bullying or harassment as defined by this Policy to the parent or legal guardian of all students involved on the same day an investigation determines that an act of bullying or harassment in violation of the Policy has occurred. Notification shall be consistent with the student privacy rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

(6.9.11) Referral of Victims and Perpetrators of Bullying or Harassment for Counseling

After an investigation has determined that an act of bullying or harassment has occurred, as defined herein, the School shall discuss with both the victim's and perpetrator's parents/legal guardians, if students, options available for counseling. This may include referrals to community agencies or partner agencies the School has relationships with.

The Principal or designee shall also refer the perpetrator to the School's Student Success Team in an attempt to develop strategies to be used within School to prevent the bullying or harassing behavior from continuing. The Principal or designee shall decide if a similar recommendation would be prudent for the victim.

(6.9.12) Providing Instruction Regarding Bullying and/or Harassment

The Organization will ensure that the School[s] sustain healthy, positive, and safe learning environments for all students. Students, parents/legal guardians, all school staff, and school

volunteers shall be offered instruction, at a minimum, on an annual basis on the School's Policy and Regulations against bullying and harassment. The instruction shall include evidence-based methods of preventing bullying and harassment, as well as how to effectively identify and respond to bullying in schools.

(6.9.13) Publication of the Policy

At the beginning of each school year, the Principal shall, in writing, inform school staff, parents/legal guardians, or other persons responsible for the welfare of a student of this policy.

The Principal shall ensure the development of an annual process for discussing the policy on bullying and harassment with students in a student assembly or other reasonable format to ensure the Policy is accurately conveyed to all applicable parties

(6.10) Prohibition Against Firearms and Weapons

The presence of firearms or weapons poses a substantial risk of serious harm to organization students, staff, and community members. Therefore, possession of firearms or weapons is prohibited on school premises at all times except for law enforcement officials, Safe School Officers, or other such statutorily allowed exceptions. The unauthorized possession of a firearm or weapon on school premises may constitute a criminal act under Florida law and shall be reported as such to appropriate law enforcement agencies. As used in this policy, the phrase "school" premises" includes all organization buildings, grounds, vehicles, and parking areas. This prohibition also extends to the sites of school activities, whether or not those school activities are conducted on school property.

(6.11) Mental Health Services

The Executive Director shall ensure that the school has a plan in place to address the Mental Health Assistance Allocation funds as described in Florida Statute and will ensure compliance with Florida Statutes 394.4575 & 1006.041. The plan will ensure that a multitiered system of supports exists to provide evidence-based mental health assistance to students at the school. The plan shall detail the responsibilities of staff members as well as outside services providers. The plan should also address the early identification and programs to be provided to students who show signs of mental-health related issues. (1006.041, 394.4575)

(6.11.1) Mental Health Awareness and Assistance Training

The Executive Director shall ensure that all staff members participate in an approved mental health awareness and assistance training program as described by Florida Statutes 1012.58.

(6.12) Complaints Regarding Student Health, Safety and Welfare

Parents have a fundamental right to make decisions regarding the upbringing and control of their children. Parents shall be notified if there is a change in the student's services or monitoring related to the student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being and the School's ability to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for the student. School personnel may not discourage or prohibit parental notification of and involvement in

critical decisions affecting a student’s mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being. This does not prohibit the School from permitting School personnel to withhold such information from a parent if a reasonably prudent person would believe that disclosure would result in abuse, abandonment, or neglect, as those terms are defined in Sec. 39.01, Florida Statutes.

Parents and guardians have the right to notify the Principal or designee of any concerns related to the following areas:

- Concerns over procedures for notifying a student’s parent if there is a change in the student’s services or monitoring related to the student’s mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being and the school’s ability to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for the student.
- Concerns related to any school policies or procedures that are perceived to discourage or prohibit parental notification of and involvement in critical decisions affecting their student’s mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being.
- Concerns over classroom instruction related to sexual orientation or gender identity, which is prohibited in grades K-8 and must be age-appropriate for all other grades.
- Concerns over student support services training developed or provided to school personnel that is believed to be out of compliance with guidelines, standards, and frameworks established by the Department of Education.
- Concerns over parental notification at the beginning of the school year about healthcare services offered by the School, including ability to opt-out or withhold consent for any such services.

The Principal or their designee must provide a response to the parent within seven (7) days of receiving the complaint. If the dispute cannot be resolved by the Principal or designee within seven (7) days, the parent may present the dispute to the Executive Director. The Executive Director must attempt to resolve the dispute within seven (7) days. If a successful resolution has not been made, the concerned parties may petition the governing board for an appeal. If the Board is unable to resolve the dispute within thirty (30) days, a parent may request the appointment of a special magistrate utilizing the “Parental Request for Appointment of a Special Magistrate for Charter School Students” form linked below. For purposes of this policy, the term “days” means business days and excludes state, federal, and school holidays.

<https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7700/urlt/CSSM-16A-60791.pdf>

(7) Business Operations

(7.1) Property and Supplies

Office equipment and supplies are to be used for official business only. All property and supplies should be stored in a secure location and should not leave Organization property.

(7.2) Files and Record Management

SouthTech Schools will retain records in an orderly fashion for time periods that comply with legal and governmental requirements and as needed for general business requirements.

(7.2.1) Record Retention and Long-Term Storage

The Organization will abide by the Records Retention Policy established by the Florida Department of State: Division of Library and Information Services section GS7. The records retention schedule establishes the minimum length of time that the record series must be retained.

Storage of archived records will be maintained in the locked storage area of the Organization or designated public storage facility. Access to this area will be limited.

(7.2.3) Record Destruction

Records that have exceeded their recognized holding period will be destroyed. Destruction of the files will be by shredding.

(7.2.4) Digital Retention

Records stored electronically must follow the same retention rules as other non-electric records.

(7.2.5) Digital Communication Retention

The Organization will provide a platform for electronic communication such as Email, document storage or similar mediums.

(7.3) Public Records Request

It is the policy of the Organization that all public records made or received in connection with the official business of the agency be made available upon request of any person for inspection, examination, and copying in accordance with applicable law, including Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, and the following policy guidelines. This Policy is intended to supplement and hereby incorporates by reference the Florida Government- In-The-Sunshine Manual, prepared by the Office of the Attorney General.

- A public record request does not need to be in writing.
- All public records shall be available for inspection or copying under the supervision of the custodian (or designee) of the public records at reasonable times during normal office hours. All public records that are presently provided by law to be confidential or prohibited from being inspected by the public, whether by general or special law, are exempt from production.
- The Executive Director shall ensure a “Custodian of Public Records” is assigned to who will be responsible for ensuring the Organization’s compliance with public records requests. The name and contact information of that person shall be clearly identified on the Organization’s website.
- The fact that the originator of a public record asks or directs that it remains confidential does not in fact make that document confidential. Such record is still subject to disclosure unless the law makes it confidential or exempt from

disclosure. Except in the case of student records, if a public record contains information that is confidential or exempt by law, a true and correct copy of the original record shall be made, the confidential or exempt portions of copy shall be redacted, and the redacted copy of the record shall be made available to the requesting party. In the case of student records, the entire record is confidential and exempt and shall not be disclosed except as required or permitted by applicable law.

- Exemption: There are various records and documents that are judicially or statutorily exempt from disclosure. A complete list of exempt documents is available in the Florida Government- In-The-Sunshine Manual, prepared by the Office of the Attorney General. Common examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Social security numbers.
 - Personal financial information, such as credit card and bank account numbers.
 - Data processing software subject to licensing agreement.
 - Sealed bids or proposals received in response to invitations to bid until notice of the decision or intended decision is given or 10 days after bid or proposal opening, whichever is earlier.
 - Security system plans, threat response plans, emergency evacuation plans, sheltering arrangements, and manuals for security personnel, emergency equipment, or security training.
 - Building plans or diagrams that depict the internal layout and structural elements of a building, arena, stadium, water treatment facility, or other structure.
- If the public records request is anticipated to result in the duplication of more than 10 pages of paper or more than 15 minutes of staff member's time, the Organization shall prepare an estimate for the costs associated with completing the request. The estimate shall be provided to the requestor prior to filing the records request.
- If the nature or volume of public records requested to be inspected or copied is such as to require extensive use of information technology resources or extensive clerical or supervisory assistance by personnel of the agency involved, or both, the Organization may charge, in addition to the actual cost of duplication, a special service charge, which shall be reasonable and shall be based on the cost incurred for such extensive use of information technology resources or the labor cost of the personnel providing the service that is actually incurred by the agency or attributable to the agency for the clerical and supervisory assistance required, or both.

(8) Transportation

(8.1) Definitions

For the purposes of section 8 of this policy manual, the following terms and definitions may

be used:

- **Reasonable Distance** – The Organization defines a reasonable distance as those students who live more than 2 miles walking distance from the school, and less than 10 miles from the school.

(8.2) Student Transportation Services

SouthTech Schools, in accordance with state law, shall provide free transportation for eligible students attending the Organization's schools. The Transportation Director shall ensure that the transportation services of the Organization meet all of the guidelines established by the State of Florida, as well as the policies that pertain directly to the qualifications of bus operators and operational procedures adopted by the Organization. This policy shall be read in conjunction with the "Charter Schools Transportation Resource Guide" published by the Florida Department of Education.

(8.2.1) Routes and Schedules

The Transportation Director will prepare and monitor the Organization's bus routes and schedules. The Executive Director will initially approve all bus routes each school year; the final bus routes must be approved one week before the start of school each school year. Buses will be routed with student safety, efficiency, and economy as the controlling factors.

(8.3) School Bus Safety

Safe transportation of students shall be the paramount obligation of the transportation staff. All procedures and rules developed by the administration shall be governed by this requirement. State and local laws pertaining to the operation of buses and vehicles used to transport students will be observed by drivers, students, and staff. The primary form of transportation used for the Organization will be through the use of certified and approved school buses.

(8.3.1) Florida School Bus Specifications

All buses used by the organization will meet the most recently posted Florida School Bus Specifications. The specifications can be found on the Florida Department of Education's website.

(8.3.2) Inspection

The Transportation Director will ensure a schedule of regular inspections is established and adhered to. The schedule must ensure that all buses shall be inspected before use with students and at a maximum interval of thirty (30) school days, and that documentation of said inspections are provided to the Organization.

Inspections will be completed by certified technicians according to the rules set forth by the Florida Department of Education in Florida Administrative Code 6A-3.0171.

(8.3.3) Use of school buses

School buses will be used only for the transportation of students to and from school or for School educational purposes.

(8.3.4) Exceptions to using School Buses.

While the primary method of transportation will usually be by school bus, the Organization may in rare circumstances, as approved by the Executive Director, utilize alternative transportation if it aligns with the exceptions found within Florida Statute 1006.22.

(8.3.4.1) Private Vehicle Approval

Any private vehicle used to transport students under this policy shall be currently registered in the State of Florida, be insured for personal injury protection and property damage liability in at least the minimum amounts required by law and be in good working order. An employee, parent, or other adult wishing to transport students in a private vehicle will request approval by submitting any necessary documentation (including appropriate background checks) to the Executive Director or designee in a reasonable amount of time before the planned travel. The Executive Director or designee will determine whether approval of the request to transport students in a private vehicle is appropriate.

(8.3.4.2) Restrictions While Using Private Vehicles

Student transportation in private vehicles may only be authorized for trips within the State of Florida. When transportation is authorized in a private vehicle, students are required to use the occupant crash protection system provided by the vehicle manufacturer. A student who is transported to an activity in a private vehicle approved under this policy shall return from the activity in the same vehicle unless the student is released to his/her parent.

(8.3.4.3) Insurance Requirements

Employees of the Organization will be covered by the Organization's liability insurance when they are transporting students as part of their assigned or related duties. Benefits due from private vehicle insurance will be primary, except for workers' compensation, in accordance with State law. However, parents or other adults are not covered by the Organization's liability program when they are transporting students and, therefore, must have adequate insurance during the time that the vehicle is being used to transport students.

(8.3.4.4) Emergency Situations

Notwithstanding any other provision of this policy, in an emergency situation which constitutes an imminent threat to student health or safety, school personnel may take whatever action is necessary under the circumstances to protect students.

(8.4) Drivers

The safety and welfare of our students is of paramount importance to the Organization. Accordingly, no person shall operate a school bus unless the person possesses a valid Commercial Drivers License (CDL) with a school bus endorsement and has complied with the regulations of the State of Florida and other regulatory agencies. In addition, the Board may require evidence of continued good health from individual drivers at any time it deems necessary.

The Transportation Director will ensure that copies of all certificates, health inspections, and drug tests are provided to the Organization and kept on file to ensure driver requirements

are met. Further, all drivers must be registered in accordance with the Jessica Lunsford Act.

(8.5) General

(8.5.1) Behavioral Policies Apply

All behavioral policies within this manual and within the Student Handbook also are applicable to students while on school-provided transportation. Transportation rules and regulations will be distributed annually to parents/guardians. Students will receive instruction for the safe loading, riding, unloading and emergency evacuation procedures.

(8.5.2) Trespassing

The Organization will file criminal charges of trespass against any person who unlawfully enters a school bus where entry is not approved by Governing Board policy or where the individual does not have prior written approval of the Organization.

(9) Food Service & Wellness Program

SouthTech is committed to creating school environments that promote and protect the overall well-being of all students and staff. SouthTech will contract School Food Service through Palm Beach County Schools, following the Wellness and Healthy School Teams policies outlined by Palm Beach County Schools. Any food service will operate in accordance with USDA's National School Lunch Program (NSLP) standards and applicable laws and regulations of the state of Florida. In addition, adequate physical education will be offered in alignment with the state of Florida regulations.

(10) Fiscal and Accounting Management

SouthTech Schools follows the board-adopted Fiscal Policies and Procedures Manual which can be found in Appendix F.

Appendices Table of Content

Appendix A – SouthTech Schools Employee Handbook

Appendix B - SouthTech Academy Student Handbook

Appendix C – SouthTech Preparatory Academy Student Handbook

Appendix D - SouthTech Treasure Coast Student Handbook

Appendix E – SouthTech Academy Student Progression Plan

Appendix F - SouthTech Schools Fiscal Policies & Procedures

Appendix G - By-Laws

Appendix H – Articles of Incorporation (STA, STP, and STS)

Appendix A:

SouthTech Schools Employee Handbook

Employee Handbook

For

SouthTech Schools

2026-2027



WELCOME TO SOUTHTECH SCHOOLS

You are now a key member of a **GREAT** team—the SouthTech Schools (STS) Team! As a team member, you will play an important role in helping us meet our objectives:

- **To serve as a reliable source of high-quality education for our students**
- **To provide a career-inspiring, safe, and secure work environment for all STS employees.**

Our greatest asset is our people – people like you. We will continue to strive to make STS the kind of place that other area schools look up to. We hope that your experience here will be challenging, enjoyable, and rewarding. Again, welcome.

FOREWORD

This handbook is designed to acquaint you with STS and provide you with information about working conditions, employee benefits, and some of the policies affecting your employment. You should read, understand, and comply with all provisions of the handbook. It describes many of your responsibilities as an employee and outlines the programs developed by STS to benefit employees.

This handbook is **not an employment contract**; it is intended as a guide to help answer questions you may have in your daily working circumstances or questions about policy. As circumstances change, the need may arise, and STS reserves the right to, revise, supplement, or rescind any policies or portions of the handbook from time to time as it deems appropriate. You will be notified of these changes to the handbook as they occur.

THE SOUTHTECH SCHOOLS TEAM PHILOSOPHY

STS provides a unique environment which emphasizes student achievement through the use of innovative but proven educational methods. We prepare students to successfully compete in an increasingly competitive post-secondary environment and the global job market and to be productive and successful members of society after their school years.

The STS educational philosophy includes a strong belief in and expectation for knowing and respecting students as individuals and designing curricular models that meet individual student needs. STS also believes in the necessity of establishing a welcoming, caring, and safe environment for students and their families. Our success as an organization is founded on the skills and efforts of our employees. At STS, we realize that each employee is an intelligent, cooperative, and productive person. Each one of you is in a position to deal directly with administration on a personal and open basis regarding any matter.

It is important that we work together, with mutual respect, to maintain an efficient, safe, and productive work environment. Our commitment is to provide you with the opportunity to work in a satisfying and dignified environment and to be given fair treatment at all times.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The basic employment policy of STS is as follows:

- All applicants for employment will be considered without regard to race, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual preference, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or status as a disabled veteran.
- There shall be no discrimination with regard to race, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual preference, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or status as a disabled veteran in all matters concerning all employees of the Organization. Such matters include, but are not limited to, hiring, promotions, demotions, transfers, layoff or termination, compensation, use of facilities, and selection for training or related programs.
- It is STS's policy to maintain a discrimination-free work environment for all employees. A good working environment includes freedom from harassment based on race, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual preference, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, status as a disabled veteran, as well as freedom from unwelcome sexual advances.

Our employment practices will conform with both the spirit and the letter of federal, state, and local laws regarding nondiscrimination in employment. It is the obligation of every employee of the organization to adhere to this policy.

HARASSMENT

STS is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination and harassment, particularly discrimination and/or harassment involving an employee's race, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability, sexual preference or orientation.

Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. Harassment (both overt and subtle) is a form of employee misconduct that is demeaning to another person, undermines the integrity of the employment relationship, and is strictly prohibited.

An employee who is aware of an incident of harassment should promptly report the matter to Administration. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone engaging in harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

ACCESS TO PERSONNEL FILES

STS maintains a personnel (employment) file on each employee. The personnel file includes such information as the employee's job application, references, résumé, records of training, documentation of performance appraisals, salary increases, letters of commendation, documentation of disciplinary action, employee comments, and other employment records.

Personnel records are the confidential property of STS and access to the information they contain is restricted. Generally, only individuals who have a legitimate reason to review information in a file can do so. Correction or alteration of any information in personnel files must be done only through written request.

Employees who wish to review their own file should contact Human Resources. With reasonable advance notice, employees may review their own personnel files in STS's offices during regular business hours and in the presence of an individual appointed by STS to maintain files.

AFTER-HOUR EVENTS

All staff will be required to attend orientations, open house, graduation or other assigned school events. Approximately seven (7) events per school year are planned and scheduled for approximately two (2) hours during the evening hours each.

ANNUAL EVALUATION

Each staff member will participate in an annual evaluation, conducted by Administration. This evaluation process is intended to provide an opportunity for reflection and discussion on areas of strength and areas for improvement. Goals for the year will also be discussed.

APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATIONS, BEHAVIORS AND RELATIONSHIPS

All employees shall communicate carefully and effectively with students, colleagues, parents, school management and others in the school community in a manner that is professional and supportive, and based on integrity, trust and respect.

All Employees shall ensure that they do not knowingly access, download, or otherwise have in their possession while engaged in school activities, inappropriate materials/images in electronic or other format.

All Employees must ensure that, at all times, relationships with colleagues and students are professional and in keeping with the codes of conduct (see *Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida* and the *Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida*.)

At no time, should any employee be on the school campus while under the influence of any substance that impairs their fitness to teach or otherwise work.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Regular and prompt attendance is your individual responsibility and is essential to the efficiency and success of our organization. Absenteeism and/or tardiness disrupts work schedules and tends to place a burden on your co-workers who may have to assume your assignments. There may be times, of course, when illness or other bona fide reasons make it impossible for you to report to work.

While it is important that absenteeism and tardiness be kept to a minimum, it is equally important and your responsibility to provide the reason for your absence or tardiness and when you expect to return to work. This information is to be discussed at the time of your request and is essential for determining approval or disapproval.

If you must arrive at work late or leave early, it is mandatory that you receive approval from Administration.

CLASS MOVEMENT

Teachers must supervise their classroom and hallways. Teachers are expected to assist Administration in monitoring all areas of the school during class breaks and lunches, including the bathrooms and common areas.

COMMUNICATIONS

Open communication is essential to harmonious employee relations. The most effective communication occurs on a day-to-day basis among all members of the team.

Staff members will have messages sent by email or telephone calls during the student day unless it is an emergency. Individual mailboxes will be assigned to every employee and it is important to check boxes at least once daily.

Email and voicemail messages must be checked on a daily basis on regular work days and replies sent within 24 hours.

DAILY ATTENDANCE

Each teacher is responsible for maintaining daily attendance. Attendance will need to be entered electronically. Patterns of non-attendance need to be discussed with families and the School Counselor.

DRESS CODE

A higher standard of dress often encourages greater respect for yourself and others and results in a higher standard of behavior. All faculty and staff are expected to and are required to dress in a professional manner. All attire should be modest and appropriate. If there are any questions regarding attire, you should speak to your Principal. All determinations of appropriate and professional attire are the decision of the Principal.

DRUG FREE WORKPLACE COMPLIANCE

To comply with the federal Drug Free Workplace Act, and to promote workplace safety and productivity, STS will require all employees, temporary employees, and subcontractors to report to work without any alcohol or illegal mind-altering substances (drugs) in their systems. This requirement also applies to activities outside of the regular school day, including evening activities and field trips. In the event of an accident that requires medical treatment in regards to worker's compensation, a drug test will be required.

Restrictions on tobacco use are necessary for the health and safety of all our employees and students, the cleanliness of our property, and the fire safety of our building. No tobacco use is permitted on the school grounds.

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

Employment with STS (SouthTech Schools, Inc.) is on an at-will basis. While employees are provided with an annual employment agreement, please note that you enter into employment voluntarily, and you are free to resign at any time for any reason or no reason. Similarly, STS is free to conclude its relationship with any employee at any time for any reason or no reason. STS operates as an at-will employer.

Annual employment agreements will outline the number of work days and the daily working hours and holidays for each employee. The annual employment agreement will also outline the compensation the employee will earn if all work days, not including PTO, are completed during the annual period. If an employee is dismissed or resigns during the term of the annual employment agreement, final pay checks will be prorated based on the number of days an employee completed of the annual employment agreement.

Although all full-time employees are eligible for insurance on the first of the month following 30 days of employment, STS schools require an employee to complete a 90-day introductory period of employment. This notice informs you that your performance will be carefully monitored during this initial period of employment, and your employment status will be considered temporary until this 90-day introductory period has expired. If your performance meets STS requirements, the organization will then, at its own discretion, consider changing your employment status to regular full time. If your performance does not satisfy STS management during this period, it may be deemed grounds for dismissal regardless of any or all previous employment agreements. NOTE: Successful completion of the 90-day introductory period does not change the at-will employment status. Either the employee or the organization has the right to terminate employment at any time, with or without cause.

EMPLOYEE REPORTING & SCREENING POLICY

All employees must meet state screening and eligibility standards before and during employment, including background checks and clearance through state disqualification lists. Employees are required to self-report within 48 hours any arrest for a felony or for a misdemeanor, as well as any conviction, plea, or adjudication for any criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation. Employees who have knowledge that a student has committed sexual battery against another student must report the offense immediately to law enforcement. Law enforcement agencies are required to notify the district within 48 hours when an employee is arrested for a felony, a misdemeanor involving an offense listed in s. 435.04(2), the abuse of a minor child, or the sale or possession of a controlled substance. Within 24 hours of such notification, the principal or designee will notify the parents of all students who had direct contact with the employee and will include, at a minimum, the employee's name and the specific charges. Employees may be temporarily removed from the classroom within 24 hours of a law enforcement notification or self-report of an arrest for a felony or qualifying misdemeanor. Self-reporting is not considered an admission of guilt and cannot be used in any legal or administrative proceeding. All sealed or expunged records shall be handled in accordance with state confidentiality laws. (1012.22, 1012.315, 1012.797, 1012.799)

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips shall be approved by administration in advance of detailed planning. It is the teacher's responsibility to know and follow field trip guidelines.

FLORIDA RETIREMENT SYSTEM (FRS)

STS is a member of the Florida Retirement System (FRS) and as such all **eligible** employees will be automatically added as per state regulations to the FRS system as members; you may not opt out. You will be required to complete some documentation initially and annually for the membership upkeep.

STS will follow all rules and regulations pursuant to the retirement processing including deducting the state mandated portion of retirement from your payroll each pay day as well as contributing the state mandated portion for employers each payday to be processed and paid in on a monthly basis, also state required.

Please note that the employee deduction and employer contribution is state controlled and can change annually. STS will have no authority to make any changes other than what the state requires.

This decision to enroll in FRS for your future retirement is a great benefit to you and your family and was made with our employees' wellbeing and futures in mind.

FUNDRAISING

All fundraising activities for clubs or extra-curricular activities must be pre-approved by the Administration. Teachers or other staff responsible for fundraising activities should turn in all monies collected to the office on a daily basis after it has been counted, confirmed and logged on the club ledger/spreadsheet. Monies should never be left unsecured in a classroom or desk overnight.

GROUP INSURANCE PLAN

STS provides benefits to its employees so that you and your family can enjoy a better way of life. All employees who work 30 hours or more per week are considered full time and are eligible for insurance. All full-time employees will be eligible for group insurance benefits the first of the month following the completion of 30 days of employment. Please review details regarding insurance benefits carefully. Booklets containing specific information on insurance benefits will be provided and updated as benefits change. It is STS's policy for employees to pay their portion of insurance premiums a month in advance.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS

Beginning July 1, 2026 all SouthTech Schools employees with student contact must complete the state approved human trafficking awareness training as required by 1006.481, F.S. Employees must submit a signed acknowledgment of completion, which will be retained by the school.

KEY ASSIGNMENTS

Employees are responsible for maintaining the security of the keys they are assigned.

Key Control

Not following key policy can be grounds for discipline, up to and including dismissal.

- Keys will never be left unguarded.
- Unauthorized duplication of any key may be cause for discipline, up to and including dismissal

- Upon separation, all keys will be returned to Administration before leaving the premises.
- Immediate reporting of lost or stolen keys is mandatory. If a key is lost or stolen, its lock should immediately be replaced or re-keyed. Employees may be responsible for replacement costs.

NON-DISCLOSURE POLICY

Employee shall not use or disclose to any person, during the term of employment, or at any time thereafter (except as required to perform employee's duties on behalf of the organization), any information belonging to, used by or in possession of the organization relating to any student including, without limitation, the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the students, as well as any information belonging to, used by or in possession of the organization relating to the organization's plans, budget, financial matters, vendors, technology, payroll data, personnel records, benefit data, marketing plans and strategies, financial information, operating policies, student lists, or other information compiled by the organization (collectively referred to herein as "Organizational Information").

Notwithstanding the foregoing, Student Information and Organizational Information shall not include any information that is or becomes generally available to the public other than as a direct result of the disclosure by employee. Upon the termination of employment for any reason, or at such earlier time as requested by the Organization, employee agrees to deliver to the Organization all materials relating to the Organizational Information in employee's possession, and all other property belonging to the Organization in employee's possession.

NOTICE OF INJURY

All accidents require a completed accident report, which will be reported to Human Resources.

OVERTIME

Overtime for non-exempt employees is typically not authorized. Any overtime must be preapproved by the Executive Director.

PAID TIME OFF

Paid Time Off (PTO) leave is earned as follows:

PTO is earned at the rate of one day per month. STS employees shall be credited with four (4) days of leave as of the last day of the 1st month of regular employment of each school year, and shall thereafter earn one (1) day of leave at the end of each calendar month provided that the employee has been on duty or compensable leave a minimum of eleven (11) days within the month; and provided further, that the employee shall be entitled to earn no more than one (1) day of leave times the number of months of employment during the year of employment. PTO may be used in full day and half day increments only. Unapproved PTO days will be without pay.

No more than five (5) PTO days can be taken concurrently and ALL requests for PTO (except emergency and illness) must be approved in advance. If PTO is to be used as a personal day (as opposed to emergency or illness), employees are required to submit a leave request as early as possible. The Principal may deny any PTO requests if too many employees are scheduled to be off on one day in order to maintain the best instructional environment for students. In this instance, PTO will be approved on a first come first serve basis. All employees must notify their supervisor as soon as possible if they plan to use a PTO day due to emergency or illness. Maternity leave or emergency/illness leave is excluded from the five (5) day PTO limit.

Scheduled absences must be approved/authorized by the Principal.

Any unauthorized absences over 3 (three) days require a written doctor's note.

Black out days for leave

No leave will be given during the following dates unless prior approval is given by the Principal:

- The first two weeks of school opening;
- The last two weeks of school closing;
- Designated weeks of state assessment;
- Additional days concurrent to already scheduled Holidays.

Maternity/Extended leave

SouthTech Schools, Inc. complies with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). This provides certain employees with up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave per year (based on revolving 12-month period from the beginning of the first FMLA leave date). It also requires that group health benefits be maintained during the leave. FMLA is designed to help employees balance their work and family responsibilities by allowing them to take reasonable unpaid leave for certain family and medical reasons. It also seeks to accommodate the legitimate interests of employers and promote equal employment opportunity for men and women. FMLA applies to all public agencies, all public and private elementary and secondary schools, and companies with 50 or more employees. These employers must provide an eligible employee with up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave each year for any of the following reasons: for the birth and care of the newborn child of an employee; for placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care; to care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition; or to take medical leave when the employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition. Employees are eligible for leave if they have worked for their employer at least twelve (12) months and at least 1,250 hours over the past twelve (12) months.

Whether an employee has worked the minimum 1,250 hours of service is determined according to FLSA principles for determining compensable hours or work. Time taken off work due to pregnancy complications can be counted against the 12 weeks of family and medical leave.

Compensatory Time

Human Resources shall keep detailed, accurate records of the compensatory time granted and taken by an eligible employee. These records shall include a copy of the advance written agreement between the Administrator and the eligible employee along with proof of time worked and documentation of hours completed in excess of a complete contractual work week. The scheduled use of accrued compensatory time must be approved by an Administrator. All compensatory time accrued must be used by the eligible employee no later than the end of the school year in which it was earned.

Jury Duty

If an employee is under subpoena for jury duty during the time normally engaged in regular professional duties, the employee shall make application for temporary duty elsewhere (TDE). The employee shall receive regular pay while on jury duty and shall remit to the school the amount of fees, less travel allowance received for jury duty. If upon reporting for jury duty, the employee is dismissed, prior to serving one-half day, the employee is to report back to the regular duty assignment.

PAYDAYS

Employees will be paid on the fifteenth and the last day of each month. If a payday falls on a weekend, Saturday and Sunday dates, employees will be paid on the preceding Friday. The end of the month pay date will always fall on the last business day of the month.

Direct deposit is mandatory.

Paychecks are distributed on a 12-month cycle. Pay periods are designed on a two-week delay (i.e. Checks distributed on the last day of the month are for the hours worked from 1st to the 15th of that month).

Deductions are withheld from your paycheck for Social Security and Federal withholding taxes, as required by law. If you ever have questions about your paycheck or deductions, please see Human Resources.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The people at STS constitute the greatest strength of our school. It is our belief that all will perform consistently at a high level.

On the rare occasion when someone fails to perform to reasonable standards, it is our policy to encourage constructive instruction and feedback as a first resort in most cases. Generally, formal corrective action measures will be used when performance issues are not corrected, following coaching and counseling efforts, or in cases of genuine misconduct or disregard for safety. No rule can be written to cover all offenses or violations that may be cause for taking corrective action. The degree of discipline will be based on circumstances and the team member's previous record.

Misconduct

For certain acts of dishonesty or misconduct, discharge may be the appropriate measure, without regard to progressive disciplinary steps. The following are examples of the events that would be cause for immediate discharge:

- Violation of Substance Abuse Policy;
- Verbal or physical threats of any nature against the school and/or its representatives, parents or students;
- Fighting;
- Providing false information or omitting important information on school records;
- Unauthorized removal or attempted removal of school property;
- Violation of key control policy;
- Unauthorized use of social media;
- Intentional damage to property or product;
- Negligent or unruly behavior resulting in property damage or personal injury;
- Possession of weapons on school property;
- Walking off the job;
- Failure to return in a timely fashion from an approved leave of absence;
- Being employed while on leave, without prior approval;
- Sleeping during class time;
- Willful or repeated violation of the safety rules or work practices at STS;
- Insubordination;
- Excessive Absenteeism.

According to Florida Statute 231.26, Employees are required to self-report any criminal charges or motor vehicle violations that involve alcohol or drugs to their immediate supervisor the next working day after the charge. Employees also must report what happens once they go to court. They must report any conviction or plea the next business day. Failure to self-report is grounds for immediate dismissal.

Progressive Discipline

Progressive discipline aims to ensure that employees understand the importance of all school requirements, especially school safety requirements, and the consequences of knowingly failing to comply with them.

1. Verbal Warning

- **Purpose:** Address minor concerns
- **Process:** Administration meets with the employee to discuss the concern. This conversation is informal, but documented in the administrators records.
- **Outcome:** The employee is expected to improve without further disciplinary action. No formal notation in the employees personnel file at this stage.

2. Written Warning

- **Purpose:** Issued for repeated minor infractions or more serious initial infractions
- **Process:** The employee receives a formal written notice outlining the issue, expectations for improvement, and consequences if the issue persists. A meeting between the employee and administration may occur.
- **Outcome:** The written warning is placed in the employee's personnel file. Follow-up meetings may be scheduled to assess progress.

3. Performance Improvement Plan

- **Purpose:** Used when issues continue after a written warning or when performance issues are serious enough to require targeted intervention
- **Process:** A formal plan is developed outlining specific goals and timelines for improvement. Regular check-ins with the employees are scheduled.
- **Outcome:** The employee is expected to show significant improvement within 10 days. Failure to meet the plan's goals may result in further disciplinary action.

4. Suspension

- **Purpose:** For serious offenses that require immediate attention but do not yet warrant termination.
- **Process:** The employee is suspended, either with or without pay, pending an investigation into the alleged misconduct.
- **Outcome:** The employee may return to work after a suspension period with additional conditions and monitoring.

5. Termination

- **Purpose:** For severe infractions or repeated violations after prior disciplinary steps have failed
- **Process:** After a thorough investigation, the school moves forward with termination proceedings.
- **Outcome:** The employees' contract is terminated, and this is documented in their personnel file.

At SouthTech Schools we are committed to maintaining a safe and respectful environment, therefore some infractions may result in immediate suspension or termination.

- **Transparency:** The process will be clearly communicated to the employee, with documentation at every stage.
- **Fairness and Due Process:** Employees should have the opportunity to appeal disciplinary actions, and any decisions should be based on a thorough investigation.

Documentation: All steps, from verbal warnings to termination, should be documented for accountability and reference.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Compliance

Purpose: The purpose of this section is to ensure that all employees are aware of and comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.

1. Confidentiality of Student Records:

- All student education records, including but not limited to grades, disciplinary records, and personal information, are confidential and must be handled with care.
- Employees are required to protect the privacy of students and their families by not disclosing any personally identifiable information from a student's education records to unauthorized individuals, including other students, parents (without proper authorization), or external parties, unless a valid exception under FERPA applies.

2. Access to Student Records:

- Only employees with a legitimate educational interest, meaning those who need access to perform their job responsibilities, are allowed to access student records.
- Any employee found to be accessing or sharing student records without a legitimate educational interest or authorization may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

3. Parental and Student Rights:

- Parents of students under 18 years of age and eligible students (18 years or older) have the right to inspect and review the student's education records.
- They also have the right to request that inaccurate or misleading information in the records be amended.

4. Directory Information:

- Certain information classified as "directory information" may be disclosed without consent, unless the parent or eligible student has opted out of such disclosures.
- Directory information may include items such as the student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance.

5. Training and Compliance:

- All employees must complete FERPA training as required by the institution to understand their responsibilities under the law.
- Employees are expected to remain current with FERPA regulations and updates. Regular training and resources will be provided to ensure ongoing compliance.

6. Reporting Violations:

- Any employee who suspects a violation of FERPA should report it immediately to their supervisor or the designated FERPA compliance officer.
- Retaliation against any employee who reports a suspected violation in good faith is strictly prohibited.

Consequences for Non-Compliance:

- Violation of FERPA can result in disciplinary action, including potential termination of employment. Additionally, the institution may face legal consequences, including the potential loss of federal funding.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

An effective educational program requires the services of personnel of integrity, high ideals, and human understanding. All employees shall be expected to maintain and promote these qualities. The Board shall also expect all administrative, instructional, and support staff members to adhere to the **Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida* and the *Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida*.

It is the duty of all employees to report to the Principal or designee alleged misconduct by any employee that affects the health, safety or welfare of a student. Failure of an employee to report such misconduct shall result in disciplinary action.

*www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7725/urlt/0072460-ethics.pdf

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Employees are not allowed to conduct activities supporting or denouncing individual political candidates or views while conducting activities for STS during working hours. The use of STS resources for such activities is strictly prohibited. Should an employee choose to campaign for and hold an elective public office, the Executive Director will ensure proper safeguards are put into place to ensure that the campaign or elected duties do not interfere with the role of the employee plays at STS.

PUBLIC INFORMATION REQUESTS

Refer all media, interviews, and requests for information to the Executive Director.

REIMBURSEMENTS

Any purchases made by an individual for school benefit may be eligible for reimbursement. Any purchase submitted for reimbursement must be pre-approved by Administration.

REPLACEMENT OF PERSONAL OR STS PROPERTY

All employees are expected to respect the property of others, including STS property. STS property includes office supplies and/or services, postage, tools, equipment, misuse of communication devices, etc. Use or theft of STS property and/or services without proper authorization will result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including discharge.

All incidents of theft or damage involving personal or STS property should be reported to the Principal. To prevent theft, it is very important that all employees make sure they secure all equipment at the end of their regular day. The employee will bear the responsibility of replacing any lost or stolen items that are under their responsibility.

STS is not responsible for lost, stolen or misplaced personal items. It is the employee's responsibility to provide necessary security for his or her own personal items. Any theft should be reported to the Principal. Under no circumstances will STS make reimbursement for lost or damaged personal items.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

All staff is mandated by Chapter 39 of the Florida Statutes to directly report any suspicion of child abuse, child neglect, child sexual abuse, and/or exploitation of children, elderly or adults. In all cases the state of Florida law on reporting child abuse and neglect should be followed by calling the State Abuse Registry at 1-800-962-2873. The Principal and other appropriate administrators must be notified on the same day.

All cases of child abuse suspected or confirmed must be reported to the appropriate state agency and Administration immediately.

Any employee who is observed or alleged to engage in child abuse or neglect is reported in the same manner as outlined above. The employee will be suspended or reassigned until an investigation can be completed.

SAFETY & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Each STS employee is responsible for reading, understanding, and following all safety and emergency plans.

When to Call Emergency and Non-Emergency Numbers

It is important to know how to identify and report crimes and suspicious activity.

The following are guidelines for deciding whether an incident is an emergency or non-emergency, and if it should be reported to emergency (9-1-1) or non-emergency number(s).

Call emergency 9-1-1 when:

- A crime is in progress
- A situation is about to occur (endangering life or major property)
- A crime has just occurred (especially if you can describe the suspect and the direction in which he or she fled)

Call the non-emergency number when:

- Your school was burglarized last night
- You need to add additional information to a report you made previously

SAFETY STATEMENT

At STS, we will attain and sustain safety excellence in the operation of our facilities. The protection of each member of our team, our students, our environment, and the citizens of the community in which we operate is our primary objective. We will not compromise accident and injury prevention for any reason. Team members at STS are responsible to take all measures to prevent injuries and illnesses and must recognize and accept that working safely is a condition of employment.

SEVERE WEATHER INFORMATION

Each STS will follow the same instructions as their local district in case of severe weather emergencies. Parents and faculty should watch the local news for information about district school closings.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

All STS employees will be required to participate in any school-wide professional development opportunities as scheduled. In addition, all teachers are required to complete the required professional development for obtaining and maintaining a professional teaching certificate. While STS will assist teachers in knowing and completing the requirements for certification, it is ultimately the responsibility of the teacher to assure that these requirements are met in order to maintain required certifications.

STAFF SIGN-IN and SIGN-OUT

All employees, excluding administrative staff, will adhere to the following policies to verify attendance and hours worked. Immediately upon arriving for duty at the school site, each staff member MUST report to the main office and complete the daily sign-in log. Although there is no requirement to sign-out at the end of the work day, any employee leaving campus during their work day is required to sign-out and obtain administrative approval. If the employee is returning during the normal assigned work day, they should sign back-in upon return.

STUDENT INFORMATION

Each STS staff member must comply with HIPPA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) and FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) regulations.

Annual Notice Regarding Disclosure of Student Directory Information

Federal and State laws require that STS, with certain exceptions, obtain written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education records. However, STS may disclose appropriately designated directory information without written consent UNLESS a parent advises STS to the contrary.

Parent(s) or former students shall have thirty (30) days for the date of notice to inform the student's school administrator, in writing, that any or all the directory information should not be released without their consent. STS has designated the following information as directory information:

- A student's name, address, and telephone number (if there is a listed number)
- Image or likeness in photographs, videotape, film, or other medium
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Current grade level
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of athletic team members
- Date of attendance
- Degrees and awards received
- Most recent previous educational agency or institution (school or center) attended by the student

Directory information is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. Directory information relating to students shall be released only to the following:

- In-school use of student directory information for official school business
- Student directory information, without address and phone numbers, for school annuals, school newspapers, and printed materials or programs for extracurricular activities

STUDENT NON-FRATERNIZATION POLICY

STS expects all staff members, including teachers, coaches, counselors, administrators, board members, support staff and others, to maintain the highest professional, moral and ethical standards in their conduct with students. For the purposes of this policy, staff members also include school volunteers.

All school staff are expected to accept responsibility for their conduct, and to understand that their conduct may be regarded as representative of the entire STS organization, and that even off-duty conduct may adversely affect the abilities of a staff member to effectively perform his/her job duties. Staff is expected to abide by a professional standard of conduct and model good citizenship for students, parents, and the community.

The interactions and relationships between staff members and students should be based upon mutual respect and trust; an understanding of the appropriate boundaries between adults and students in an educational setting; and consistent with the educational mission of the schools. Even if a student participates willingly in an activity, prohibited interactions between staff and students (regardless of the student's age) are a violation of this policy.

Specifically, STS expects that its staff maintain appropriate professional relationships with students in particular, and any youth in general, and be sensitive to the appearance of impropriety in their conduct with students. Staff members are encouraged to discuss issues with their building administrator or supervisor whenever they are unsure whether particular conduct may constitute a violation of this policy.

Employees must understand that even an appearance of inappropriate relationships will adversely impact their effectiveness in the school environment. Therefore, employees must be diligent in maintaining the highest ethical standards when interacting with youth both inside and outside the school environment and are strictly prohibited from forming such personal relationships with students outside the classroom.

Prohibited Conduct

Staff is prohibited from engaging in any of the following types of conduct, regardless of whether the conduct occurs on or off school property or during or outside of school hours. The following list of prohibited conduct does not, and is not intended to, constitute the entire list of conduct for which discipline may be imposed:

- (a) Engaging in any romantic or sexual relationships with students, including dating, flirting, sexual contact, inappropriate physical displays of affection, or sexually suggestive comments between staff and students, regardless of whether staff or student initiates the behavior, whether the relationship is consensual, or whether the student has parental permission;
- (b) Fostering, encouraging, or participating in inappropriate emotionally or socially intimate relationships with students in which the relationship is outside the bounds of the reasonable, professional staff-student relationship and in which the relationship could reasonably cause a student to view the staff person as more than a teacher, administrator, or advisor;
- (c) Initiating or continuing communications with students for reasons unrelated to any appropriate purpose, including oral or written communication; telephone calls; electronic communication such as texting, instant messaging, email, chat rooms,

Facebook or other social networking sites; webcams; photographs, electronic and online communications with students, including those through personal accounts, should be accessible to supervisors and professional in content and tone;

- (d) Socializing with students outside of class time for reasons unrelated to any appropriate purpose;
- (e) Providing alcohol (regardless of age) or drugs of any kind (except for those provided in accordance with policy on medication administration) to students.
- (f) Transporting students during or outside of class time in a personal vehicle unless it is an approved school related function and written permission is given from parent or guardian.

Reporting Procedures

- (a) **Duty to Report.** Any person with knowledge or suspicion of an improper relationship between staff and a student must immediately report the conduct to school administration. Nothing in this paragraph is intended to relieve mandated reporters of their obligations under state and local statutes.
- (b) **Protection from Retaliation.** Staff who makes a good-faith report of a suspected fraternization violation, or who cooperates in inquiries or investigations related to the investigation of such a report, shall be protected from retaliation.

STS will take appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, against any staff found to have violated this non-fraternization policy.

TECHNOLOGY GUIDELINES:

Management's Right to Access Information

STS's computers, telephone, and communication hardware and software systems ("Systems") have been installed and are used to facilitate school communications. Although each employee has an individual password to access these Systems, they belong to STS and the contents of communications are accessible at all times by the administration for any business purpose. These Systems may be subject to periodic unannounced inspections and should be treated like other shared filing systems. All Systems messages are STS records. The contents of our Systems may be disclosed to STS administration without your permission. Therefore, you should not assume that messages and communications are confidential. Back-up copies of communications may also be maintained and referenced.

Social Media

It is the company policy that no employee "friend" a student or parent on Facebook or any other social media. If parents or students have questions regarding school activities, policies, etc. they may email you, check the school website or contact you or your Principal.

Personal Use of STS's Computer Systems

Because STS provides the Systems to assist you in the performance of your job, you should use them only for official business. We reserve the right to access and disclose as necessary all communications on our Systems without regard to content. Since your personal communications can be accessed without prior notice, you should not use our Systems to transmit any messages or to access any information you would not want read by any third party. You should not use the System for gossip, including personal information about yourself

or others, for forwarding messages under circumstances likely to embarrass the sender, or for emotional responses to business correspondence or work situations. You should also not use these Systems for such purposes as soliciting for commercial ventures, religious or personal causes, outside organizations, or other similar, non-job-related solicitations. Although incidental and occasional personal use of our Systems are permitted, these communications will be treated the same as other communications. However, you are prohibited from accessing or downloading information from the Internet for your personal use. Employees must not attempt to access another employee's files or e-mail messages without the latter's express permission.

Forbidden Content of Communications

There is to be no display or transmission of sexually explicit images, messages, or cartoons, or any transmission or use of e-mail communications that contain ethnic slurs, racial epithets, or anything that may be construed as harassment to, or disparagement of, others based on their race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, or religious or political beliefs. Violation of this policy will result in appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination.



Welcome to SouthTech Schools

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT of Employee Handbook

This acknowledges receipt of the SouthTech Schools, Inc. (STS) Employee Handbook. I understand that this Handbook supersedes any previously issued Handbook or other information, and that STS retains the right to change this Handbook as required.

I understand that nothing in this Handbook is intended to create any type of employment agreement or guarantee of hours of work. I realize that either STS or I can terminate the employment relationship at any time with or without cause.

I further understand that it is my responsibility to fully read and comply with all the rules and regulations in this Handbook and with any other safety policies with which I have been provided. I agree to insert and replace any revised or new policies, rules or regulations as implemented by STS, and will comply with them as they are implemented.

Team Member Signature

Date

Printed Name of Team Member

Appendix B:

SouthTech Academy Student Handbook



STUDENT/PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

SHAPING LIVES... INSPIRING SUCCESS



GOVERNING BOARD OFFICERS	SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION	GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS
Tony Robinson Chairperson Russell Feldman Vice Chairperson Ayesha Edmond Secretary	Carla Lovett Executive Director Joshua Wigelsworth Principal Erin Kurtz Assistant Principal Joseph Roberts Assistant Principal	Roger Dunson Sr. Diane Heinz Dan Heller Suzanne Nicolini Erika Deutsch Rotbart

Mission Statement

SouthTech Academy's core mission is to graduate students prepared for work, higher education, and productive citizenship.

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Students,

It is my absolute pleasure to welcome everyone to another exciting year at SouthTech Academy. Here at STA, we aim to make all Bulldogs feel like a part of the SouthTech Family. We strive to bring out the best in our students while guiding them into becoming career and college ready.

To prevent discipline issues and to maximize instructional time, it is imperative that both students and parents read this handbook in its entirety. Students, take ownership of your future and take advantage of the amazing resources SouthTech Academy has to offer you. Families, I invite you to be active in our school as a volunteer, as a board member, or by serving on one of our many committees that make our school great.

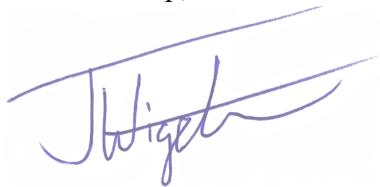
At SouthTech Academy, we have outstanding instructors who are committed to their craft and students. It is through this commitment that we can set measurable goals for improvement and growth with our students. It is our belief that all students should graduate high school prepared for work, higher education, and productive citizenship.

The expectation is for all SouthTech students to embrace and adhere to The Bulldog Way: Be respectful, responsible, and ready to learn---beginning with prompt arrival at school each and every day. Above all, as you commence your learning journey, it is essential to put forth your best efforts----working cohesively with peers, taking pride in your school, and using technology with integrity.

SouthTech Academy is a special place filled with teachers and students who care for each other and constantly strive to build positive relationships. It is through these positive relationships that we support our students academically, socially, and through career-related growth. Your child's educational experience is our priority! I'm truly honored to serve as Principal of SouthTech Academy. I take great pride in this opportunity and can't wait to see what successes the future holds. Please don't hesitate to contact me at 561-369-7040 or at joshua.wigelsworth@pbcharterschools.org.

I welcome the opportunity to collaborate with you and your families during this highly anticipated school year and moving forward.

In Partnership,



Joshua K. Wigelsworth
Principal

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Bell Schedule

A/B Schedule ~ Grades 9-12

Lunch A		Lunch B	
Breakfast	6:00 - 6:55	Breakfast	6:30 - 6:55
1st Period	7:00 - 8:27	1st Period	7:00 - 8:27
2nd Period	8:32 - 10:11	2nd Period	8:32 - 10:11
A LUNCH	10:11- 10:41	3rd Period	10:16 - 11:43
3rd Period	10:46 - 12:13	B LUNCH	11:43 – 12:13
4th Period	12:18- 1:45	4th Period	12:18 - 1:45

Printed student schedules will designate Lunch A or Lunch B.

The Bulldog Way



Respectful

Responsible

Ready to Learn

**School Colors:
Red, White & Blue**

Contact Information

Main Office: (561) 369-7001

Career Academies: (561) 369-7052

Clinic: (561) 364-7919

Exceptional Student Education Office: (561) 369-7009

Food Service: (561) 369-7074

Student Services: (561) 369-7007

Career Academies

Auto Collision & Repair

Agricultural Technology

Ed Morse Automotive Technology

Cosmetology

Culinary Arts

Business Management Academy

Commercial Arts Academy

Artificial Intelligence & Cyber Defense Academy

Medical Sciences

DigiFilm

Veterinary Assisting

Upholding academic integrity is a core value at SouthTech.

- Maintaining a **passing grade** in your academy is **essential** for remaining in **good standing** at SouthTech.
- Students are allowed to make one academy change during their academic career at SouthTech Academy. Career Academy changes must be approved by **Administration**.
- **Individual career academies may have specific guidelines and expectations.**
- ***Instances of **academic dishonesty**, particularly regarding **state certification exams**, may impact your continued **enrollment** at SouthTech.***

Dates to Remember

Teacher Work Days No School for Students	
October 12, 2026	
November 3, 2026	
January 4, 2027	
February 24, 2027	
March 29, 2027	
School Holidays	
Labor Day	September 7, 2026
Fall Holiday	September 21, 2026
Fall Holiday	November 11, 2026
Thanksgiving Week	November 23-27, 2026
Winter Break	December 21, 2026—January 1, 2027
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	January 18, 2027
Spring Holiday	March 10, 2027
Spring Break	March 22-26, 2027
Memorial Day	May 31, 2027
Early Release Days	
SouthTech Staff Development	Decemeber 11, 2026
Final Exams—Periods 1 & 2	December 16, 2026
Final Exams—Periods 3 & 4	December 17, 2026
Final Exams - Make-up Day	December 18, 2026
Midterms—Periods 1 & 2	March 17, 2027
Midterms—Periods 3 & 4	March 18, 2027
Midterms—Make-up Day	March 19, 2027
Final Exams—Periods 1 & 2	May 25, 2027
Final Exams—Periods 3 & 4	May 26, 2027
Final Exams—Make-up Day	May 27, 2027
Last Day of School	
May 27, 2027	

Parent Involvement

Parents are strongly encouraged to play an active role in students' education while at SouthTech Academy. For information on parent involvement opportunities, contact Administration at (561) 369-7935.

Emergency School Closing Procedures

The Executive Director of SouthTech Academy will close school due to dangerous weather conditions or emergencies. In case of school closure, school will operate under the Instructional Continuity Plan. School closings will be announced on local news outlets and at southtechschools.org when possible and will coincide with the Palm Beach County School District.

Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Statement

SouthTech Schools, a state-approved LEA, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), marital status, health status, genetic information, or political or religious beliefs, or any other characteristic prohibited by law in its educational programs, services or activities, or in its hiring or employment practices. Complaints regarding discrimination or harassment may be sent to: HR Manager, 6161 W. Woolbright Rd., Boynton Beach, Florida 33437; (561) 369-7042.

Message to Parents/Guardians and Students

The office will deliver messages to students on an emergency basis only. Transportation and other non-emergency situations should be handled prior to or after school. In the event of an emergency, please call (561) 369-7001.

Evacuation Drills

Evacuation routes are posted inside each classroom. The signal to evacuate will be either a horn alarm or an announcement over the P.A. system. Students are to evacuate quickly to their designated areas, remain calm and follow directions as they are given. Teachers will check rolls at their assigned areas. Students and teachers are to return to their classroom after the all-clear signal is given.

Setting off, damaging, defacing, or in any way disturbing fire alarms or fire-fighting equipment will result in a mandatory ten (10) day out of school suspension and possibly legal action.

Lost or Stolen Items

The school cannot assume responsibility for lost or stolen articles. Students are urged not to bring valuable items or large sums of money to school. Personal items or books found will be located in the student services or main office areas. School police or student services personnel will not disrupt classroom instruction to search for personal or unauthorized items which include cell phones, tablets, earbuds/headphones, or other electronic devices.

Closed Campus Policy

- Students are not permitted to leave campus without permission from administration. Violation will result in recorded absences from class or classes and additional disciplinary action.
- All **classroom areas** are off limits to students during his/her lunch period.
- Students are not permitted in the parking lot during the school day without **administrative** permission.
- If a student's vehicle is to be utilized for demonstration or practical application in the automotive labs, only the owner/student driver, with a proper hall pass will be permitted to transfer the vehicle from the student parking lot to the automotive lab where it must remain until the end of the school day and after the buses have departed.
- Any type of personal deliveries from off campus will not be permitted without prior administrative approval.
- Students must have a written hall pass to be out of class for any reason. Only one student will be released per hall pass.
- All visitors must show a valid state-issued ID, sign in, and be cleared by the main office.

Financial Responsibilities

Students may view their financial obligations in SIS. Students are responsible for meeting financial obligations in a timely manner. Seniors with unpaid fees will not be permitted to participate in activities until their financial obligations are met. The diploma of any senior who has outstanding financial obligations at the time of senior checkout will be withheld until the debt is satisfied. Meeting financial obligations is a prerequisite for walking at graduation.

News Coverage of School Activities

At various times during the course of the school year, several activities require the use of the student's photograph, video image, art work, writing, annual yearbooks, graduation programs, websites and approved news gatherings, etc. Please note the language found within the annual Student Registration Form:

Parental Consent for Release of Student Photograph and Information

I hereby give permission for the school or District to use my child's photograph, video image, writing, voice recording, name, grade level, school name, participation in officially recognized activities and sport, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, diplomas and awards received, date and place of birth, and most recent previous school attended, in annual yearbooks, graduation programs, playbills, school productions, web sites, etc. and/or similar school or District sponsored publications or in school or District approved news media interviews, releases, articles, and photographs. I also provide permission for the release by the school or District to the media and governmental entities of my child's name, grade, school name and honors my child has received for public announcement of recognition of my student's accomplishments. I understand that without checking the permission box my child's name and photograph cannot and will not be included in any publications or presentation, including a school yearbook.

Parent Conferences

Parents are encouraged and invited to confer with teachers, counselors or administration any time during the school year. It is advisable to make an appointment to do so. This can be done by calling 561.369.7001 and select your school counselor.

Governing Board

The SouthTech Academy Governing Board establishes policies and governing operations of SouthTech Academy. The Governing Board provides opportunities for all involved to have input into SouthTech Academy's success. It also promotes and increases teamwork between school, students and parents. Please call 364-7929 for more information.

Textbooks

If your classroom teacher issues textbooks, the student is responsible for those books until they are returned. On the outside cover of each book, there is a barcode, which is specifically assigned to each student so that the book can be returned in the event it is lost. Each book is given a rating according to the condition it is in when assigned to the student. If the book is returned damaged in any way, the student will pay a fine. At the time of issuance, please report any existing damage to the teacher's attention. Questions regarding textbooks should be directed to the teacher.

Visitors and Student Pick-up

Visitors who are not parents/guardians are not allowed to visit students during school hours unless it has been pre-approved by administration. No student will be released to any person not on the Student Demographic Information in SIS. Those persons authorized to pick up a student must show proper photo identification. Parents/guardians may alter the student contact/pick-up list through the SIS Parent Gateway. There will be no early release after 1:15pm.

Student Services

The Student Services department at SouthTech Academy will assist students and parents/guardians in understanding the expectations and guidelines in SouthTech Academy's conduct and behavior policies. The Student Services department will also implement and assign disciplinary consequences.

Student Code of Conduct

The educational process of SouthTech Academy is to provide a safe environment that fosters student behavior that is socially acceptable and conducive to the learning and teaching processes. It is the intent of this policy to align SouthTech Academy's Universal Guidelines, consequences, and support for students attending SouthTech Academy.

SouthTech Academy exercises these responsibilities and expectations:

- During the time a student is in route to and from school.
- During the time a student is attending school.
- During the time a student is physically on campus and the property - which is owned or operated under the jurisdiction of SouthTech Academy or the Palm Beach County School District.
- During the time a student is attending any function sponsored by SouthTech Academy or the Palm Beach County School District.
- While a student is using any and all forms of technology.

All students at SouthTech Academy are expected to reflect its high standards by conducting themselves in a manner that is conducive to the orderly operation of the school. Students should be in class on time and change from class to class in an orderly fashion. Students are expected to adhere to SouthTech Academy's Universal Guidelines, and refrain from any behavior that may cause a disruption. Students are expected to show respect and consideration for their peers and all members of the SouthTech Academy staff; including bus drivers and visitors to campus. Both on the school campus and off the school campus, students are expected to exhibit desirable behaviors and keep from manifesting behavior unbecoming of a SouthTech Academy community member.

Discipline Plan

In addition to supporting student by providing related interventions, failure to comply with the **SouthTech Academy Student Code of Conduct** will result in consequences that may include a combination of the following which are not sequential steps:

- **Conference with student:** Discuss behavior interventions and/or solutions with students. This can include direct instruction in expected or desirable behaviors.
- **Parent/guardian contact:** Teachers and/or administrators will contact parents/guardians with concerns and solutions to a student's conduct and behavior.
- **Request for parent/guardian conference:** Teachers/administration or parents/guardians may request a conference to discuss student's conduct and/or behavior. In some cases, as determined by administration, a student may not be able to return to that class until a conference has taken place. That student will be sent to ISS (in school suspension) until such time that a conference is held.
- **Parent/guardian intervention:** As a result of the severity of an infraction, an administrative request may be made to the parent/guardian that a student should not return to school without the parent/guardian accompanying him/her for an administrative conference. It is important that the parent/guardian make the conference as soon as possible. The days that a student is out shall not exceed ten days and will be considered unexcused absences.
- **In School Suspension (ISS):** ISS is the temporary removal of a student from regular classes for a determined number of class period/periods or day/days in which the student will be held in one classroom for the assigned time. In this classroom, students will sign in and turn in their mobile electronic devices. There will be total silence while in ISS. Students will be given opportunities for students to complete reflection activities and academic assignments that must be completed before the student will be released from ISS. Failure to complete an assignment or the disruption of ISS, will result in additional time added to ISS or out of school suspension (OSS).

- **Lunch Detention:** Disciplinary consequence in which an entire lunch period a student is assigned to the ISS room where they will silently eat lunch. Failure to report to Lunch detention will result in further disciplinary action.
- **Out of School Suspension (OSS):** Extreme disciplinary consequences may require the temporary removal of a student from SouthTech Academy. This removal is not to exceed ten (10) consecutive school days per incident. All out of school suspensions will be coded appropriately in SIS. The administrative designee shall include any analysis of suspension in the report of school progress.
- **Probationary Contract:** A student may be placed on a probationary contract after repeated minor level offenses or any major level offenses. A student will also be placed on a probationary contract for missing 10 days of school.
- **Withdrawal from SouthTech Academy:** Cumulative failure to adhere to SouthTech Academy policies may result in the student's withdrawal.
- **Expulsion:** As a result of an infraction that severely violates SouthTech Academy and the Palm Beach County School District policies, a recommendation may be made to the SouthTech Academy Board, who then may recommend to the Palm Beach County School Board not to allow a student to attend any public school in Palm Beach County.
- Rules and regulations will apply to all school related activities on or off campus, including school transportation. A good faith effort shall be made by instructors and/or administrators to employ parental involvement whenever necessary to assist in a student's negative behaviors or academic performances.

Discipline Matrix of the Palm Beach County School District

According to SouthTech Academy's Student Code of Conduct Policy, SouthTech Academy will use and follow the codes set forth in the Palm Beach County School District's discipline matrix to determine reasons and consequences for discipline infractions. In addition, SouthTech Academy has developed a matrix for school-wide behavior expectations. Which will also be considered when deciding discipline and may override the Palm Beach County Code of Conduct Policy, if it is deemed necessary for the continued safety of students and staff.

Acceptable Use of Technology

Students will be held financially accountable for damage to Chromebooks or any other SouthTech Academy property.

There will be no unauthorized use of **any electronic devices** during instructional time. If the electronic device becomes **visible** or **disruptive**, it will be confiscated. The school shall not be held liable for any personal devices on campus.

Students are prohibited from accessing social media platforms, except when expressly directed by a teacher for an educational purpose. Additionally, the use of TikTok, and any successor platforms, is prohibited on school grounds. Any unauthorized or inappropriate use of an electronic device will result in confiscation.

Failure to comply with the *Technology Acceptable Use Policy* will result in the following action:

1st Offense – Items will be confiscated and the student may retrieve the item at the end of the day.

2nd Offense –Return of the confiscated item will require the parent/guardian to come to the Student Services Department and pick up the item.

3rd Offense - Confiscated items will not be given back to the student or parents until the end of the semester as defined by the Palm Beach County School District Matrix.

Refusal to turn over a device to a SouthTech Academy faculty or staff member when requested will result in a referral for insubordination.

School technology systems will include measures to prevent hacking or unauthorized access by students to data or information that they should not have access to, and to prohibit other unlawful online activities by students.

Continuous Offenses: Items will be confiscated and the student will receive a referral for insubordination. Disciplinary action will be taken as outlined in the Palm Beach County School District discipline matrix.

Drug, Alcohol, or Tobacco/E-Cigarette Violation

1st Offense – Dependant upon individual circumstances, students will complete up to 10 days out-of-school suspension and may be withdrawn. Prior to returning to school, students will be placed on a probationary contract, and required to complete an online drug, alcohol and tobacco course.

Repeated Offenses – Students will be withdrawn from SouthTech Academy.

Dress Code

SouthTech Academy will adhere to the following dress code policies—enforcing the following dress code policies as we prepare our students for future success.

• When on campus, students will wear the appropriate SouthTech Academy uniform. This uniform must be properly worn and visible at all times during the school day.

- Students are expected to wear only STA outerwear. No other hoodies, jackets, blankets or sweaters may be worn over uniforms. At all times, hoods should always be worn off the head. Academy shirts should be visible.
- **Academies have veto power on outer garment attire and accessories.**
- Depending on a student's academy, students should wear their academy scrub bottoms, jeans, cargo pants, or slacks/khakis only.
- Students are expected to wear their pants at their natural waistline.
- Pants should be full length.
- Sweatpants, athleticwear, leisurewear, and leggings are not permitted.
- All clothing must be free of rips, holes, or unfinished edges.
- Skirts must reach at least two inches above the knees.
- Shirts are expected to cover midriffs.
- Uniforms should be worn in their original state, and may not be worn tied up, rolled up, or altered.
- Shorts may be worn along with approved Physical Education Department shirts only while participating in Physical Education classes.
- Heads must be free of head coverings.
- Uniform shoes must be close-toed and cover the entire heel.
- No Crocs, slides, slippers or bedroom-type footwear.
- With pre-approved administrative permission, students participating in boundary school sports activities or on campus competitive clubs may wear a Game Day Jersey on Game Day **only**.
- Students will wear their IDs.
- IDs must be **visible** for STA staff members to see at all times.

- **Students may not walk around with or wear blankets.**
- No clothing should promote activities illegal for students nor should it display vulgar or inappropriate language or images.
- Decisions regarding adherence to the dress code policy are at the sole discretion of Administrators and Academy instructors.

Students are expected to arrive and depart STA already dressed for success. Failure to comply with these dress code policies will result in one of the following consequences:

- Purchase a new uniform.
- Borrow a specific loaner if available.
- Wait in ISS until a uniform is provided from home.
- Spend the day in ISS
- Repeated violations will result in further disciplinary actions.

False Fire Alarm

Any student who pulls the fire alarm without legitimate cause will be subject to immediate disciplinary and legal action.

Student ID Badges

Student ID badges must be visible for STA staff members to see at all times. Failure to wear the required student ID badge could result in disciplinary action.

Search and Seizure

Any school administrator or authorized officer may conduct a search of a student on the school premises if there is reasonable suspicion to believe that the student possesses an item of contraband. Any school administrator or authorized employee may conduct a search of students' lockers and backpacks. Any confiscated property belonging to a student will be returned to the student or his/her parents by the end of the school year, except as required by law or by consideration of safety for students and staff. Students/parents are to arrange for pick-up of the items at the designated time.

Fighting

SouthTech Academy has a zero tolerance policy for fighting. Any student that engages in fighting or a physical altercation, will have the incident documented and the student will be administratively withdrawn from SouthTech Academy. SouthTech Academy promotes effective forms of communication that result in positive outcomes.

Assault and Battery

Whenever any student, parent, or other person commits an assault or battery upon any elected official or employee of a school district, and the elected official or employee is on school property or is away from school property on official business, any offense will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. And will be included in the zero tolerance fighting policy.

Sexual Harassment Policy

SouthTech Academy and the School District of Palm Beach County, prohibits sexual harassment activity by any student. This policy shall apply to all official activities of the school and the district. It is recognized that discrimination or harassment complaints by students may arise from actual or perceived situations and circumstances. Students are obligated to carefully examine this policy prior to filing a sexual harassment complaint. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct and the context in which the conduct occurred will be investigated.

For the purpose of this policy, sexual harassment shall be defined as unwanted sexual advances and other inappropriate oral, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature that when conducted substantially interferes with a student's academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Examples of sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- Any unwanted sexually oriented physical act or advance. This includes inappropriately grabbing or touching, bumping or rubbing against someone, kissing, holding, fondling or any similar contact.
- Verbal harassment or abuse. This includes comments regarding one's gender, body or appearance, making sexual jokes, innuendoes or stories.
- Unwelcome demands or requests for sexual activities.
- Creating a school environment that is intimidating, hostile, abusive or offensive because of engaging in sexually oriented nonverbal conduct. This includes making obscene gestures, displaying sexually suggestive objects,

posters or other material. Written sexual remarks, suggestions and drawings are also included.

Any student who violates this policy will be disciplined according to the Palm Beach County School District's discipline matrix.

Bullying and Harassment Policy

It is the policy of the organization that all of its students, employees, and volunteers learn and work in an environment that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying of any kind. The organization will not tolerate bullying and harassment of any type. In compliance with the Jeffrey Johnston Stand Up for all Students Acts, Section 1006.147, and Florida Statutes, conduct that constitutes bullying and harassment, as defined herein, is prohibited.

For the purpose of this policy bullying and harassment will be defined as intentionally and repetitively inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees and may involve but is not limited to: Teasing, social exclusion, threat, intimidation, stalking (including cyberstalking), physical violence, theft, sexual, religious or racial/ethnic harassment, public humiliation, or destruction of property. Cyberbullying means bullying through the use or distribution of technology or any electronic communication.

In compliance with the Jeffrey Johnston Stand Up for all Students Act, SouthTech Academy has read and reviewed anti-bullying initiatives with all staff, put posters in appropriate areas throughout the school, established a designee to review, maintain and monitor any bullying/harassment incident reports and the bullying/harassment anonymous drop box.

Any student who violates this policy will be disciplined according to the Palm Beach County School District's discipline matrix.

Parent/Student Grievance Procedure

SouthTech Academy prides itself on the quality of the teaching and care provided to its students. All members of the STA community should contribute to a respectful and inclusive environment. Staff, student, or parent/guardians can raise concerns about any issues that affect a student's well-being and/or academic performance and work together to resolve them. The Board advises that the

proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline, or learning materials is as follows:

1. Teachers
2. Assistant Principal and/or Principal
3. Executive Director
4. Parent Liaison
5. Governing Board

Any complaint about school personnel will be investigated, and may require action by the Board of Directors.

All concerns and complaints raised will be treated seriously, and confidentiality will be established and maintained wherever possible in accordance with relevant state and federal laws.

Transportation Policy

Riding the bus is a privilege. A student may be suspended from riding the bus if his/her conduct presents a safety concern. SouthTech Academy may suspend any student from riding the bus for a period not to exceed 10 (ten) days. Students and parents/guardians will be notified of such a decision within 24 hours of said suspension. Repeat offenders may be subject to expulsion.

BUS RULES

Occasionally, a bus is delayed in picking up students. Students should wait a reasonable time and then contact the school or our Transportation Coordinator to see if the bus is on route. Students are required to ride their assigned bus. The school bus driver is in charge of the bus and the passengers.

The driver is responsible for the safety of students and for their conduct on the bus. Riders are subject to the authority of the bus driver and may be suspended from riding the bus for violation of bus rules. Riding the bus is a privilege that can be denied if a pupil's behavior creates a problem on the school bus or at the bus stop. Safety is the number one consideration. In addition to the disciplinary rules stated in this handbook, the following rules must be observed:

- Students are expected to respect their neighbors and the property of their neighbors while waiting for the bus or while in route to or from the bus stop. Students are expected to behave in

a way that promotes safety and good manners. Students must stand off the roadway while waiting for the bus.

- Students preparing to board the bus should cross the roadway immediately in front of the bus, BUT NOT UNTIL THE BUS DRIVER HAS GIVEN THE SIGNAL TO CROSS AND IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.
- Students riding buses must arrive at the bus stop on time; the bus cannot wait for those who are tardy.
- Students must remain in their seats at all times when the bus is in motion.
- All riders must keep their arms and heads inside the bus at all times. Nothing may be thrown from the bus.
- Riders should not engage in unnecessary conversation with the driver because this creates a dangerous situation. Students are to observe classroom conduct, except for ordinary conversation.
- Students must treat the bus property respectfully and carefully. Vandalism will not be tolerated.
- Eating, drinking, smoking or vaping on the bus is absolutely forbidden. Smoking or vaping and possession of tobacco products/e-cigarettes and vaping products is prohibited at the bus stop or while waiting for the bus.
- The driver has the right to assign students to certain seats if necessary in order to promote order and safety on the bus.
- Students must get on and off the bus at their assigned school bus stop. No one is entitled to ride any bus other than the one to which they are assigned.
- Parents/adults other than official personnel are not to board or approach the bus for any reason without prior approval from administration.

If a student's bus privileges are suspended, the student's parents are responsible to ensure that the student is attending school.

Parking and Driving on Campus

Parking on school property is a privilege that carries responsibilities.

- Students must produce a valid Florida's Operators Driver's License, the vehicle registration, proof of auto insurance, and a SouthTech Academy Parking Application, signed by the parent/guardian and student in order to apply for a parking tag.

- Upon approval, the parking tag will cost \$30.00. If a parking tag is lost or misplaced, the student may purchase a duplicate tag for \$5.00.
- Decals are to be suspended from the mirror and must be displayed at all times while the vehicle is on campus.
- Decals may not be transferred from person to person or vehicle to vehicle.
- Students must drive with care and obey all State of Florida traffic laws.
- Any instances of reckless driving on or off campus may result in suspension of parking privileges.
- The on-campus speed limit is 12 MPH and will be enforced.
- Students may not return to their car during school day (including lunch).
- No loitering is allowed in the parking lot before, during (including lunch), or after school. Students must depart the student parking lot immediately upon arriving or departing school.
- All students are to park in their assigned parking space unless notified by School Police or administration.
- Students that are habitually late may have their parking privileges suspended or revoked.
- Any student taking another student off campus without proper authorization will result in:
 - o **1st Offense** – Loss of parking privileges for no less than 10 days
 - o **2nd Offense** – Loss of parking privileges for no less than 30 days
 - o **3rd Offense** – Loss of parking privileges for remainder of school year
- No Student, once on the main campus, may return to the parking lot for ANY reason.

Attendance Policy

Pursuant to Florida statutes 1003.01 all students shall be required to attend school. Florida Statute 1003.24 states that it is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardians(s) to insure their children attend school on a regular basis.

“Regular basis”, according to statute and policy means attending school every day including every period.

SouthTech Academy operates on a 4x4 block. Any student missing more than 10 days per full credit course, whether **excused or unexcused**, will put themselves in peril of not receiving full credit and may jeopardize their continued enrollment at SouthTech Academy.

Pursuant to Florida State Statute 1003.26 the Executive Director and Board of SouthTech Schools has the authority to take steps to bring **criminal prosecution** against the parent(s)/guardians(s) of a student that has violated the State of Florida Department of Education, Palm Beach County District School System and SouthTech Academy attendance policies which are the same.

To implement the provisions of state laws and rules requiring School Districts to verify the enrollment and attendance of students for the purpose of granting or denying driving privileges, the names of students who are in violation of the enrollment and attendance requirements for being licensed to drive in the State of Florida will be submitted by the principal or designee to the Department of Highway and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) with recommendations to suspend such student’s driving privileges.

Parents/guardians of students, who need to miss school due to religious holidays, should notify **Student Services** in writing prior to the date(s) requested for approval of the student to be excused from school on said day(s).

Students with prior approval via a (Temporary Learning Elsewhere) Field Trip Permission Form STCAI 1571 are allowed 2-1/2 days per year in grades 11 and 12 (for a total of 5 days) to visit colleges. Local colleges (Palm Beach State College, FAU, and Palm Beach Atlantic College) are not included. Proof of visitation must be returned to the **Student Services Department** for the missed days to be excused within 24 hours of the student’s return to school.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

The parent(s)/guardians(s) and students understand that Florida State Law requires that all students attend school each day without exception unless there is a documented excuse for being absent.

After 5 days absent per semester, a warning will be issued. After 10 days absent, excused or unexcused, a student will be placed on a probationary contract and referred to the School Based Team.

It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to justify an absence within **24 hours** of the student's return to school. The justification will be evaluated based on the adopted School Board definition of "excused" absences which are:

1. Student illness
2. Medical appointment
3. Death in the family
4. Religious holidays or services recognized by all members of the faith
5. Subpoena by law enforcement agency or mandatory court appearance
6. Other individual student absences beyond the control of the parent or student, as determined and approved by the Principal or Principal's designee.

It is SouthTech Academy and The Palm Beach County School District's policy that the school responds in a timely manner to excused or unexcused absences. To this effect the Palm Beach County School District, through automatic dial, attempts to contact the parent/guardian within 24 hours of a student's absence.

Tardies

General Expectations

- Students are expected to be on time for all of their classes.
- Students are tardy if they are not in classrooms when the tardy bell rings.
- Late-arriving students will be marked tardy in the SIS.
- Students who arrive late will report to the nearest tardy station for a pass.
- **The Student Services Team will conduct Tardy Sweeps every day for each period after the final bell.**
 - **Students found loitering in the hallways will be subject to disciplinary consequences.**
- Students who arrive later than 45 minutes will be marked as absent for that period.

Managed by Student Services

- Students who accumulate unexcused tardies will receive administrative consequences as follows:

- o Three (3) unexcused tardies, in one or more classes, will result in one (1) lunch detention and parent contact.
- o Six (6) unexcused tardies, in one or more classes, will result in one (1) period of In-School Suspension (ISS) from their Academy class.
- o Nine (9) unexcused tardies, in one or more classes, will result in one (1) full day of In-School Suspension (ISS).
- o Twelve (12) unexcused tardies, in one or more classes, will result in a probationary contract and a referral to the School-Based Team for specific, targeted interventions.

Multiple Documented Offenses

- Student Services will develop a formalized intervention plan, which includes a probationary contract, for all students who become truant.
- Students who violate the terms of their probationary contracts jeopardize their continued enrollment at SouthTech Academy.

Procedures for Leaving Campus

- Only parents/guardians/formal designees that are listed **in the SIS** may sign out and pick up a student.
- Early dismissal will not be permitted between 1:15 PM and 1:45PM.
- Parents/guardians/formal designees **must** provide some form of picture identification i.e., driver's license to main office personnel to sign out a student regardless of the student's age.
- Parents/guardians/formal designees **must** complete the sign out log located in the main office.
- The main office will process **all** releases of students.
- Students will only be released to authorized adults appearing in person, with the exception of a documented medical appointment that is confirmed by a school official with the parent or guardian.
- School Personnel will verify identity and custody issues before releasing a student to parents, guardians, or formal designees.

Wellness Promotion

SouthTech Academy follows the School District's wellness promotion policy 1.11 which is intended to fulfill the requirement under Public Law 108-265 state statute 204 (204) (42 U.S.C. statute 1751 Note) that promotes student health and reduction of childhood obesity, as well as to promote wellness for employees.

Student Activities – All SouthTech Policies Still Apply and DO extend to other campuses.

SouthTech Academy does not offer any interscholastic sports activities. SouthTech's charter agreement with Palm Beach County School District specifies that any SouthTech student in good standing may participate in interscholastic sports or other FHSA activities at their boundary school. In addition, SouthTech Academy does offer after school intramural sports as well as various clubs and other activities in which students may participate.

To participate in any club, athletics or school-related activity a student must:

- Have a minimum of a 2.0 GPA
- Not be on a Probationary Contract
- Seniors must have met all graduation requirements—including community service and state assessments, along with having earned at least one Industry Certification. Any exceptions to the Industry Certification requirement must be approved by Administration.

Pledge of Allegiance

According to s.1003.44F.S., Patriotic Programs, upon written request by the parent/guardian, a student may be excused from reciting the pledge, including standing and placing the right hand over the heart. Students who have not been excused via written request by the parent/guardian are expected to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Posting of Advertisements, Signs or Messages

Administrative approval is required prior to any advertisements, signs or messages being posted at SouthTech Academy. To obtain administrative approval, follow these steps:

- Email the proposed sign, poster, or photo thereof to Administration.
- Await approval from a member of the Administrative Team.
- Once approval has been secured, proceed to post signage.

In the event that any signage is posted without approval from Administration, it will be removed.

Clinic

The clinic is located in the front office and is staffed by a trained professional. Once a student has been referred to the clinic, the clinic will administer first aid,

and families will be contacted as needed. Only parents/guardians/formal designees who are **pre-approved** and listed in the **SIS** may sign out and pick-up an ill student via the Main Office. If pre-approved designee is not reached, then the student will remain in the clinic or return to class.

Medication Needs

A student under the care of a physician and needing to take medication must clear its use by obtaining written permission from the parent and physician, or other authorized person on the emergency card. Students must secure the **Authorization of Medication** form from the school nurse and have it completed by the physician and parent. Completed forms must be returned to the school nurse. The medication itself should be presented to the nurse by the student's parent or guardian in the original container issued from the pharmacy. The school nurse or designee will monitor the administration of the medicine. Over-the-counter (OTC) medication must be received in the original, unopened container and labeled with the student's name and accompanied by an Authorization for Medication Administration. OTC medications do not require the signature of a healthcare provider. Parents must notify school administration if a student has a special medical condition or need. If a parent requests that prescription medication be given to their child, a doctor's written authorization and the original prescription containers should provide dosage and storage instructions. Prescriptions will be refilled as needed by the parent. Students may be given permission to carry the medication with them only if a completed Authorization to Carry and Self Administer form is submitted to the School with both the parent/guardian and physician signature.

Accidents and Injuries

As conditions warrant, students injured on school premises will be evaluated by the clinic staff. Depending on the severity of the injury they will be taken to the school clinic, or if needed (unless it is an emergency), with the permission of the parent/guardian, transported to an area hospital. In any and all cases, the parent/guardian will be notified. The supervising teacher or staff member will submit an accident report to the Office Manager within 24 hours.

Voluntary Student Accident Insurance

A voluntary student accident insurance program is available. Application forms regarding coverage and benefits can be obtained from the main office. Student insurance coverage is strongly recommended for all students. Health Science students must purchase specialized insurance.

Mental Health and Student Safety Evaluation

In case of emergency, SouthTech will provide onsite mental health evaluation and release to a law enforcement officer as necessary:

- SouthTech Academy will notify a student's parent or guardian if the student is in need of evaluation.
- Administration may delay notification by up to 24 hours if there is suspected abuse, abandonment or neglect and the delay has been deemed to be in the student's best interest.
 - Delay in notification may occur only after a report of suspected abuse, abandonment or neglect is submitted to the Department of Children and Families' central abuse hotline.

Guidelines and Procedures for Grading

Grading Period and Report Card Distribution

Report cards are generated every 4-1/2 weeks. The report card will reflect the academic status and attendance for each student. A student that is struggling academically may be referred to the School Based Team for academic interventions. Any student in jeopardy of failing may receive daily or weekly progress reports issued to the parents.

Student Information System

Parents will be able to view student grades through the Student Information System (SIS). Parents receive emailed instructions on accessing SIS upon their students' initial entry into a School District of Palm Beach County school. STA will send instructions to newly enrolled families in August. Questions can be directed to the main office or to the school counseling office.

General Rules for Grading

Grading shall be based on the progress and mastery of the standards. A student's attendance, daily preparation and promptness in completing assignments must be consistent and congruent with the grades given. Students are required to make-up

all work missed for all absences. A student must complete all work within one day for each day he/she is absent from class. Students who do not complete and submit make-up work will earn no credit for all missed work which may result in failure of the course and no credit earned for that course.

Cheating/Plagiarism

Any work submitted by a student must represent his/her own effort. In the case of material borrowed from another source, the work submitted must include clear and appropriate attribution. Any student who is caught cheating or deliberately plagiarizing will be subject to disciplinary action. Grade-related consequences will be determined by Classroom Instructors as stated in syllabi.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Acceptable Use Policy

- The purpose of this policy is to ensure that AI technologies are used safely, ethically, and responsibly to support teaching, learning, and student development.
- AI technologies may only be used for educational purposes and activities approved by teachers or school administrators.
- Students must adhere to all school rules and guidelines while using AI technologies, both on school premises and during school-sponsored events or activities.
- Students are expected to use AI technologies responsibly and respectfully, treating others with kindness and consideration at all times.
- Students must ensure that any content created or shared using AI technologies is appropriate for an educational setting and complies with school policies on acceptable content. Content must not be plagiarized and must follow copyright laws.
- Content that is offensive, inappropriate, or violates copyright laws is strictly prohibited.
- Cyberbullying, harassment, or intimidation of others using AI technologies is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.
- Students should report any instances of cyberbullying or harassment to a teacher or school administrator immediately.
- Teachers and school staff may monitor the use of AI technologies to ensure compliance with this policy and promote a safe and supportive learning environment.
- Violations of this Acceptable Use Policy may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to loss of access to AI

technologies, parental notification, and suspension or expulsion from school.

Credits

Florida Statutes mandate a minimum of 120 hours of attendance for one credit to be awarded. On the block schedule utilized by SouthTech Academy, perfect attendance provides 123.0 hours of instruction available to students. Three absences place the student below the required hours of attendance. An alternative to meeting hours-of-attendance requirements is to demonstrate mastery of the course content. Mastery is defined as: (1) passing at least one of the blocked quarters and, (2) passing the semester final examination or (3) passing both of the blocked quarters. Students may earn one credit per semester for each course successfully completed.

Senior Exemptions

For any non-EOC course, a graduating senior who has received A's and B's in BQ 3 & BQ 4 or BQ7 & BQ8 for that course may choose to be exempt from the final examination for that course. If exemption is chosen, the quarter grade for the non-EOC course will be determined by averaging the last two marking periods. If exemption is not chosen, the quarter grade for the course will be calculated using the normal grade calculation method for all high school credit courses. Seniors in an EOC course may not be exempted from the EOC assessment.

Grading Scale

- A = Outstanding progress (90%-100%)
- B = Above average progress (80%-89%)
- C = Average progress (70%-79%)
- D = Lowest acceptable progress (60%-69%)
- F = Failure (below 60%)
- W = Withdrawn
- I = Incomplete
- E = Senior exempt from final exam

Student Behavior Evaluation

- 4 = Student's behavior is very constructive to learning.
- 3 = Student's behavior is generally supportive of learning.
- 2 = Student's behavior is detrimental to his/her own learning.
- 1 = Student's behavior is detrimental to his/her own learning and to the learning of others.

Exceptional Student Education and 504 Plans

SouthTech Academy follows Federal and State regulations and timelines regarding students with disabilities. Contact the school's ESE Coordinator for further information.

School Counseling

The school counseling department provides academic, personal/social, and career focused counseling services. School counselors can also assist students and families with community resources, including referrals for mental health counseling.

Graduation Requirements

The typical student will successfully complete eight credits or units per year. A minimum of twenty-four credits earned in grades 9-12 are required for graduation. In order to graduate from SouthTech Academy with a regular diploma, the student must meet the following requirements:

- Pass the following statewide assessments
 - Grade 10 ELA or concordant scores
 - Algebra 1 EOC or comparative score
 - Students enrolled in Biology, US History, Algebra 1, and Geometry must take an EOC which will count as 30% of the final grade
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.
- Complete 20 hours of community service.
 - Items excluded from community service are: donations, service to benefit for-profit businesses, and court mandated community service.
 - A student who does not have access to community service opportunities will be provided opportunities on campus.

Required Subjects for a Standard Diploma

- English/Language Arts – 4 credits
- Mathematics – 4 credits (Must include Algebra 1 and Geometry. One credit from middle school may be utilized)
- Science – 3 credits (Must include biology and physical science)
- Social Studies – 3 credits (World History, U.S. History, American Government and Economics with Financial Literacy)

- Physical Education - 1 credit (**must** include ½ credit of personal fitness and ½ credit of physical education activity elective.
- Fine and/or Performing Arts – 1 credit
- Electives – 8 credits (7.5 credits for students entering in 2023-2024 and thereafter)
- Beginning with students entering in 2023-2024 each student must earn .5 credit in personal financial literacy

Refer to the Student Progression Plan for additional graduation options.

Students are expected to complete a 4-year Career Academy Program at SouthTech Academy. If a student wishes to graduate early for any reason, students should meet with their school counselor as early as possible, but at the latest prior to December of their senior year.

Accelerated Options at SouthTech Academy

Dual Enrollment

Students may dual enroll at Palm Beach State College. Students must have a 3.0 unweighted GPA and college ready test scores in order to dual enroll. Freshmen must have a 3.5 unweighted GPA.

Advanced Placement

Students have the opportunity to take Advance Placement (AP) classes in several content areas. At the end of each AP course, students take an exam to attempt to earn college credit. All students enrolled in AP courses must sit for the exam.

CTE & Industry Certification

Every student at SouthTech is enrolled in a career academy, through which they will have the opportunity to take at least one industry certification exam.

FLVS

Students who are interested in taking Florida Virtual School (FLVS) classes should speak to their school counselor for more information.

Diplomas

Standard Diploma

- Awarded to students who meet all criteria established by SouthTech Academy, The Palm Beach County School District and The Florida State Department of Education.

Diploma Designations

In addition to meeting the 24-credit standard high school diploma requirements, a student may earn:

- *Scholar* Designation:
 - o Earn 1 credit in Algebra II
 - o Pass the Geometry EOC
 - o Earn 1 credit in statistics or an equally rigorous mathematics course;
 - o Pass the Biology I EOC
 - o Earn 1 credit in chemistry or physics
 - o Earn 1 credit in a course equally rigorous to chemistry or physics
 - o Pass the U.S. History EOC
 - o Earn 2 credits in the same world language
 - o Earn at least 1 credit in AP, IB, AICE or a dual enrollment course
- *Merit* Designation:
 - Meet the standard high school diploma requirements
 - Attain one or more industry certifications from the list established (per section 1003.492, Florida Statutes).

Scholarships

SouthTech Academy's School Counseling Department provides information regarding a variety of scholarship opportunities. It is in the student's best interest to look at this information early in his/her high school career so that plans can be made accordingly. To that end, a list of scholarship opportunities from local and national organizations is located in the School Counseling Google Classroom. We encourage students to utilize our resources to find ways of furthering their secondary educational pursuits, and to secure employment based on the skills learned at SouthTech Academy. See your School Counselor or Vocational Instructor for more information.

Class or Schedule Change

A student wishing to withdraw from a class or have a schedule change must request a schedule change by completing a form in the School Counseling Google Classroom. Students must continue to attend all classes until they are officially withdrawn or until their schedule has been officially changed. Schedule changes **MUST** be justified and will be approved on a limited basis. Unless special circumstances exist, schedule changes after the second week of a class will not be approved.

Withdrawals and Transfers from School

The following must be completed in order for a student to withdraw or transfer from SouthTech Academy:

- Parent/guardian must accompany the student to the School Counseling Office and authorize the student's withdrawal.
- Turn in all books and clear financial obligations.
- Complete the required exit interview/survey.
- Complete the withdrawal Form PBSO 0756 and obtain all the required signatures.
- Return the completed withdrawal form to the School Counseling Department.

Student Records

Parents and/or students eighteen years of age or older shall have the right to inspect, review and obtain copies of any and all official records, files and data directly related to the student. These records may be obtained through the data processor's office. Copies of education records shall be provided upon request according to Florida Statutes.

Transcripts

An official compilation of credits for release to other schools or organizations is called a transcript. Arrangements for transcripts can be made through the schools website at <https://www.southtechschools.org/transcript-request/>. Electronic transcripts are free of charge. Paper transcripts are \$3.00. See the website for more information.

Certificates

- **Vocational Certificate of Completion** – Awarded to students who complete a vocational job preparatory program as outlined in the Department of Adult, Vocational and Community Education guidelines.

SOUTHTECH ACADEMY
PARENT/GUARDIAN/STUDENT
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Student's Rules and Regulations.

Your signature means you have received this booklet and understand the rules, protocols and expectations of SouthTech Academy Students.

Students, parents/guardians, teachers, counselors, administrators, custodians, and office staff all have important roles to play at SouthTech Academy. With so many people working together, problems may occur from time to time. Rules have been made to address these problems and rules need to be followed with fidelity. The Student/Parent/Guardian Handbook lists the rules for students at SouthTech Academy. The rules apply to all activities occurring on school grounds, on other sites being used for school activities, and for any vehicle authorized for the transporting of students. Please read them.

Since parents/guardians can be held responsible for the actions of their children, it is important that they are aware of the rules and consequences if the rules are broken. Parents/guardians need to become actively involved in the education of their children and have the responsibility to provide the school with the current emergency contact person and/or telephone numbers. They also have the responsibility to notify the school of anything (such as medical information) that may affect their child's ability to learn, to attend school regularly, or to take part in school activities. Parents/guardians should take special notice of the student services section that includes the attendance, dress code, tardies, utilization of cell phones and other electronic devices and gang relationship policies.

SouthTech Academy must have proof that every student and every parent/guardian has received, read and understands the SouthTech Academy Student/Parent/Guardian Handbook. Student's and parents'/guardians' signatures indicate an understanding of an agreement to adhere to all SouthTech Academy policies and procedures while utilizing school provided transportation, attending all school learning activities or school sponsored extracurricular activities.

Your signature indicates that you have received this booklet and acknowledge the rules.

PRINT NAME	STUDENT SIGNATURE	DATE
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PRINT NAME	PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE	DATE
------------	---------------------------	------

PARENT/GUARDIAN EMERGENCY NUMBER	STUDENT GRADE
----------------------------------	---------------

Appendix C:

SouthTech Preparatory
Academy

Student Handbook



2026-2027

STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK

SOUTHTECH PREPARATORY CHARTER ACADEMY, INC.

MISSION STATEMENT

SouthTech Preparatory Academy's core mission is to graduate students prepared to matriculate into a career academy program of study, which will prepare them for work, higher education, and productive citizenship.

GOVERNING BOARD OFFICERS	SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION	GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS
Russell Feldman <i>Chairperson</i>	Carla Lovett <i>SouthTech Schools Executive Director</i>	Roger Dunson, Sr.
Suzanne Nicolini <i>Vice Chairperson</i>	Pamela Galarza <i>Principal</i>	Diane Heinz
Ayesha Edmond <i>Secretary</i>	Tricia Clarke <i>Assistant Principal</i>	Dan Heller
	Faten Atway <i>Assistant Principal</i>	Tony Robinson <i>Chairperson</i>
		Erika Rotbart

Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Statement

SouthTech Schools, a state-approved LEA, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or sexual orientation, marital status, age, religion, disability, genetic information, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic prohibited by law in its educational programs, services or activities, or in its hiring or employment practices. Complaints regarding discrimination or harassment may be sent to: HR Manager, 6161 W. Woolbright Rd., Boynton Beach, Florida 33437; (561) 369-7042

SCHOOL CALENDAR 2026-2027

JULY 2026				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
		1 School Closed	2 School Closed HOLIDAY	3 School Closed
6	7	8	9	10
School Closed	School Closed	School Closed	School Closed	School Closed
13	14	15	16	17
End 220-A, L, IS, NI				School Closed 4 Day Week
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31
	New Student Orientation 8th Gr.	New Student Orientation 7th & 8th	Pre-School Teacher Work Day FACH STA	School Closed 4 Day Week

OCTOBER 2026				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
			1 A	2 B
5 A	6 B	7 A	8 B	9 A
		Midweek Breakout (All Parents Welcome)		END QUARTER 1
12	13 B	14 A	15 B	16 A
No Students Teacher Work Day FACH/PLC/ESP	BEGIN QUARTER 2			
19 B	20 A	21 B	22 A	23 B
26 A	27 B	28 A	29 B	30 A

JANUARY 2027				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
				1 HOLIDAY
4	5 B	6 A	7 B	8 A
No Students Teacher Work Day FACH/PLC/ESP	BEGIN QUARTER 3			
11 B	12 A	13 B	14 A	15 B
18	19 A	20 B	21 A	22 B
HOLIDAY				
25 A	26 B	27 A	28 B	29 A

SCHOOL CALENDAR 2026-2027

APRIL 2027				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
			1 A	2 B
5 A	6 B	7 A	8 B	9 A
12 B	13 A	14 B	15 A	16 B
19 A	20 B	21 A	22 B	23 A
26 B	27 A	28 B	29 A	30 B

SOUTHTECH PREPARATORY ACADEMY

AUGUST 2026				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
3 Pre-School FACH STA	4 Pre-School	5 Pre-School	6 Pre-School	7 Pre-School
10 A	11 B	12 A	13 B	14 A
STUDENT LIST BEGINS 1ST SEMESTER BEGIN QUARTER 1				
17 B	18 A	19 B	20 A	21 B
24 A	25 B	26 A	27 B	28 A
31 B				

NOVEMBER 2026				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
2 B	3 No Students Teacher Work Day FACH/PLC/ESP	4 A	5 B	6 A
9 B	10 A	11 HOLIDAY	12 B	13 A
16 B	17 A	18 B	19 A	20 B
23	24 HOLIDAY	25 HOLIDAY	26 HOLIDAY	27 HOLIDAY
30 A				

FEBRUARY 2027				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
1 B	2 A	3 B	4 A	5 B
8 A	9 B	10 A	11 B	12 A
15	16 B	17 A	18 B	19 A
No Students Teacher Work Day FACH/PLC/ESP	BLACK HISTORY WEEK (SPRING PARENT MEETING)			
22 B	23 A	24 B	25 A	26 B

SOUTHTECH PREPARATORY ACADEMY

MAY 2027				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
3 A	4 B	5 A	6 B	7 A
10 B	11 A	12 B	13 A	14 B
17 A	18 B	19 A	20 B	21 A
24 B	25 A	26 B	27 A	28
31				
HOLIDAY				

BOARD APPROVED: 1/16/2025

SEPTEMBER 2026				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
	1 A	2 B	3 A	4 B
7	8 A	9 B	10 A	11 B
14 A	15 B	16 A	17 B	18 A
21	22 B	23 A	24 B	25 A
28 B	29 A	30 B		

DECEMBER 2026				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
	1 B	2 A	3 B	4 A
7 B	8 A	9 B	10 A	11 B
14 A	15 B	16 A	17 B	18 A
21	22	23	24	25
HOLIDAY	HOLIDAY	HOLIDAY	HOLIDAY	HOLIDAY
28	29	30	31	
HOLIDAY	HOLIDAY	HOLIDAY	HOLIDAY	

MARCH 2027				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
1 A	2 B	3 A	4 B	5 A
8 B	9 A	10	11 B	12 A
15 B	16 A	17 B	18 A	19 B
22	23	24	25	26
HOLIDAY	HOLIDAY	HOLIDAY	HOLIDAY	HOLIDAY
29	30 A	31 B		
No Students Teacher Work Day FACH/PLC/ESP	BEGIN QUARTER 4			

BOARD APPROVED: 1/16/2025

JUNE 2027				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
			End 220-A, L, IS, NI	School Closed 4 Day Week
14	15	16	17	18
School Closed	School Closed	School Closed	School Closed	School Closed
21	22	23	24	25
School Closed	School Closed	School Closed	School Closed	School Closed
28	29	30		
School Closed	School Closed	School Closed		

Grade 6-8 Grades School Hours 8:45 AM to 3:15 PM

HOLIDAYS				
Date	Holiday	A/NI	IS	I
July 02, 2026	Independence Day	X	X	X
Sep 07, 2026	Labor Day	PD	PD	PD
Sep 21, 2026	Fall Holiday	X	X	X
Nov 11, 2026	Fall Holiday	X	X	X
Nov 23-27, 2026	Thanksgiving Break	1 PD	1 PD	1 PD
Dec 21-31, 2026	Winter Break	1 PD	1 PD	1 PD
Jan 1, 2027	Winter Break	1 PD	1 PD	1 PD
Jan 18, 2027	M.L. King's Jr. Day	PD	PD	PD
Mar 10, 2027	Spring Holiday	X	X	X
Mar 22 - 26, 2027	Spring Break	X	X	X
May 31, 2027	Memorial Day	PD	PD	PD
June 17, 2027	Juneteenth (Observed)	X	X	X
Employee Group	Begin Date	End Date	# of Days	
Administration (A)	Jul 13, 2026	Jun 10, 2027	220 Days	
Non-Instructional (NI)	Jul 13, 2026	Jun 10, 2027	220 Days	
Instructional Support (IS)	Jul 13, 2026	Jun 10, 2027	220 Days	
Instructional (I)	Jul 20, 2026 July 30, 2026	Jun 4, 2027 May 27, 2027	210 Days 196 Days	

Teacher Work Days - Pre/Post School	
July 30, 2026	July 30 - August 07, 2026 (Pre-School)
Oct 12, 2026	
Nov 03, 2026	
Jan 04, 2027	
Feb 15, 2027	
Mar 29, 2027	
Scheduled Meetings	
PLC Professional Learning Community @ 8:00 AM	
ESP Educator Support Program ~ Meeting with Administration	
Department Head Meeting @ 4:00PM ~ with Administration	
Faculty Meeting @ 4:00PM ~ with Instr. Staff, Guidance and Administration	
Recruitment Open House / Parent Night ~ times vary with All Employees	

Employees work 10 Hr Days M-Th and Friday school is closed

STP ~ Student Attendance Days			
Period	Begins	Ends	# of Days
Q1	Aug 10, 2026	Oct 9, 2026	43
Q2	Oct 13, 2026	Dec 18, 2026	42
Q3	Jan 5, 2027	Mar 19, 2027	51
Q4	Mar 30, 2027	May 27, 2027	43
STP ~ Report Card Distribution Dates			
Grading Period	Distribution Dates		
Q1	10/16/26		
Q2	01/08/27		
Q3	04/05/27		
Q4	TBA		
EMD - Emergency Make-Up Days			
Emergency Make-Up days (EMD) will be at the discretion of the Executive Director in accordance with the state statute for student instructional time.			

LAST UPDATED ON: 6/4/2026

Revised on: May 28, 2026



SOUTHTECH PREPARATORY ACADEMY

BELL SCHEDULE



Teacher Duty Day 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

A Day Schedule			B Day Schedule		
BREAKFAST 8:15 - 8:45 (30 minutes)			BREAKFAST 8:15 - 8:45 (30 minutes)		
1st PERIOD (SLL) 8:45 - 9:55 (70 minutes)			1st PERIOD (SLL) 8:45 - 9:55 (70 minutes)		
3rd PERIOD 10:00 - 11:30 (90 minutes)			2nd PERIOD 10:00 - 11:30 (90 minutes)		
5th PERIOD 11:35 - 1:40 (125 minutes)			4th PERIOD 11:35 - 1:40 (125 minutes)		
Lunch One	Specific Classes	11:40 - 12:10	Lunch One	Specific Classes	11:40 - 12:10
Lunch Two	Specific Classes	12:10 - 12:40	Lunch Two	Specific Classes	12:10 - 12:40
Lunch Three	Specific Classes	12:40 - 1:10	Lunch Three	Specific Classes	12:40 - 1:10
Lunch Four	Specific Classes	1:10 - 1:40	Lunch Four	Specific Classes	1:10 - 1:40
7th PERIOD 1:45 - 3:15 (90 minutes)			6th PERIOD 1:45 - 3:15 (90 minutes)		
Please pick up your students two minutes before lunch ends.			Please pick up your students two minutes before lunch ends.		

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GENERAL INFORMATION

SOUTHTECH PREPARATORY ACADEMY GOVERNING BOARD

The SouthTech Preparatory Academy Governing Board establishes policies and governing operations of SouthTech Preparatory Academy and provides opportunities for all involved to have input into SouthTech Preparatory Academy's success. It also promotes and increases teamwork between school, students, and parents. Please call 561-364-7929 for more information.

STUDENT RESIDENCE ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

- "Residence" and/or "address" shall mean the home location where the student and a parent (if applicable) are primarily living. Residence does not refer to citizenship or proof of residence that would require a permanent resident card (green card) or any immigration documentation. Primary residence and/or address means the home in which the student and a parent (if applicable) lives most of the time.
- "Parent" is defined as either or both biological or adoptive parent(s) of the student, the student's legal guardian, a person in a parental relationship to the student, or a person exercising supervisory authority over the student in place of the parent, pursuant to Fla. Stat. 1000.21(5).
- The school selection, enrollment, and placement of students experiencing homelessness and unaccompanied youth are governed by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001, and School Board 5.74 shall be referred to when enrolling students experiencing homelessness, unaccompanied youth, and students awaiting placement in foster care.
- Parents are required to immediately notify the school in writing of a student's change in address and updated emergency contact phone numbers.

ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

SouthTech Preparatory Academy applications are found on our website at www.southtechschools.org. We offer assistance over the phone or in-person to prospective applicants. Upon acceptance, parents and guardians will receive the registration documents via mail, email, or in-person delivery. Please call the office at (561)318-8087 with any questions. Please be advised that all students new to the county must present proof of a physical exam not more than one-year-old within 30 (thirty) days of registration. The following information needs to be submitted to SouthTech Preparatory Academy:

- Physical examination (Form DH3040): Students failing to submit this document within 30 (thirty) days will not be permitted to attend SouthTech Preparatory Academy. The form must be signed by the parent on page 2 to be valid.
- Immunization: Parents must produce documentation on the prescribed Florida Blue DH680 form or DH681 exemption from appropriate immunizations.
- Proof of Birth: Birth certificate, baptism certificate, insurance that has been in place for two years or more, passport (shown in person), or school record.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES IMMUNIZATIONS

(P-5.322) and (F.S. 1003.22(9)) (P-5.06) and (F.S. 1003.22(1))

Students who have, or are suspected of having, a communicable disease or infestation that may be transmitted to others may be excluded from school, as determined by the Department of Health. Students may return to school only after they have been successfully treated and/or provide documentation from a physician stating that they are no longer contagious.

STUDENT HEALTH

If a student becomes sick at school, they will request permission from their teacher or administrator to visit the health room or front desk to call their parent/guardian. Only parents/guardians/formal designees who are pre-approved and listed on the Pick Up and Drop Off form may sign out and pick-up an ill student via the Main Office. Should the school be unable to reach the parents/guardians, a formal designee is expected to pick up the student.

MEDICATION NEEDS

A student under the care of a physician and needing to take medication must obtain written permission from the parent/guardian and physician. Parents or guardians must obtain the “**Physician Authorization for Student Medication** and or **Physician Authorization for Student Treatment**” form from the doctor’s office and have it completed by the physician and the parent/guardian. Completed forms must be turned in to the school. The medication itself should be presented to the office in the original unopened container issued by the pharmacy. The school nurse or Health Room designee will monitor the administration of the medicine.

Over The Counter Medications, (other than FDA approved OTC Headache Medicine)

Over-the-counter (OTC) medication must be received in the original, unopened container and labeled with the student’s name, and accompanied by a Physician Authorization for Medication Administration. Carrying medications on self: Students may be permitted to carry medication only if a completed Physician Authorization Form states to carry on self and self-administer is submitted to the School with both the parent/guardian's and the physician's signatures.

CONSENT FOR STUDENT USE OF OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATION

Pursuant to F.S. 1002.20(3)(p), A student may possess and use a medication to relieve headaches while on school property or at a school-sponsored event or activity, without a physician's note or prescription, if the medication is regulated by the United States Food and Drug Administration for over-the-counter use to treat headaches. If the over-the-counter medication is regulated by the United States Food and Drug Administration to treat headaches, the student shall be exempt from the requirement of a Physician's Authorization for Student Medication/Treatment form for use of the medication to relieve headaches if the parent/guardian provides at the beginning of each academic

school year, written consent for the student to self-administer the medication. The medication must be in an original container and labeled with the student's name by the parent/guardian.

The student is solely responsible for safely administering and transporting the over-the-counter headache medication to and from school each day. Any incidence of student dispensation of the over-the-counter medication used to treat headaches to other students, or the student being in possession of a medication that is not regulated by the United States Food and Drug Administration, may result in disciplinary action against the student in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, and may result in suspension, expulsion, or referral to law enforcement, when appropriate.

ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

As conditions warrant, students injured on school premises will be evaluated by school personnel and depending on the severity of the injury, parents may be contacted or students may be transported to an area hospital. The supervising teacher or staff member will submit an incident report.

ACADEMICS

CLASS OR SCHEDULE CHANGE

A student wishing to withdraw from a class or have a schedule change must complete a form which is obtained from their Guidance Counselor in order to have the request considered. Students must continue to attend all classes until they are officially withdrawn or until their schedule has been officially changed. Schedule changes must be justified and will be approved on a limited basis. Unless special circumstances exist, schedule changes after the second week of a class will not be approved.

GRADING PERIOD AND REPORT CARD DISTRIBUTION

Report cards are generated every nine weeks. The report card will reflect the academic status and attendance for each student. Progress reports will be issued to each student approximately four and a half weeks into each nine week marking period.

Quarter One: August 10th - October 9th
Progress Reports, September 11th

Quarter Two: October 13th - December 18th
Progress Reports, November 13th

Quarter Three: January 5th - March 19th
Progress Reports, February 12th

Quarter Four: March 30th - May 27th
Progress Reports, April 30th

GENERAL RULES FOR GRADING

Grades will be input weekly. All assigned work must be completed by its due date to receive a grade. Repeated failure or refusal to make-up work will result in disciplinary action and placement upon a student academic contract. In order to enable parents and guardians to stay informed about their child's academic progress, we provide mid-quarter progress reports through Student Info System S/S. It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to log in to the system and access the report. We encourage parents and guardians to review these reports carefully and to communicate with their child's teachers if they have any questions or concerns.

GRADING SCALE

- A = Outstanding progress (90% - 100%)
- B = Above average progress (80% - 89%)
- C = Average progress (70% - 79%)
- D = Lowest acceptable progress (60% - 69%)
- F = Failure (below 59%)
- W = Withdrawn
- I = Incomplete

STUDENT CONDUCT GRADING

- 4 = Student's behavior very constructive to learning
- 3 = Student's behavior generally supportive of learning
- 2 = Student's behavior detrimental to his/her own learning
- 1 = Student's behavior detrimental to his/her own learning and to the learning of others

ACADEMIC CONTRACT POLICY

Students who are not meeting academic expectations may be placed on an Academic Contract. The Academic Contract outlines specific goals, support strategies, and timelines to help the student to return to good academic standing.

STUDENT RECORDS

Parents and/or students eighteen years of age or older shall have the right to inspect, review and obtain copies of any and all official records, files, and data directly related to the student. These records may be obtained through the guidance office. Copies of education records shall be provided upon request according to Florida Statutes D.5.05 (Public Law 93380).

ATTENDANCE

ABSENCE AND EXCUSE REQUIREMENTS

In general. Except as provided in Fla. Stat. § 1003.24 and State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.09513, all students are expected to attend school regularly and to be on time for classes in order to benefit from the instructional program and to develop habits of punctuality, self-discipline, and responsibility. Each student is required to attend school regularly during the entire school term. Students who exhibit a pattern of nonattendance may be referred to the School Based Team and interventions implemented

pursuant to School Board Policy 5.09 and F.S. §1003.26 to enforce the requirement of school attendance.

Parental Notification of Absence to School

Parents and guardians are responsible for notifying the school and providing documentation, if required, when a child will be absent and for informing the school of the reason for the absence within twenty-four (24) hours of the student's absence. If notification was not provided prior to the absence, the parent or guardian shall be required to notify and provide written documentation, if requested by the school, to justify the reason for the student's absence.

Tracking of Absences

The school shall track students' excused and unexcused absences and attendance in the computer student information system.

Makeup of Assignments

For excused and unexcused absences, including suspensions, the student will be afforded the opportunity to make up work without academic penalty. For in-school suspensions, students will receive assignments daily. For out-of-school suspensions, students will receive assignments in a timely manner. The number of days allowed to make up the work shall be the same as the number of days the student was not present. Upon return to school, it is the student's responsibility to contact his or her teacher(s) about the makeup assignments and to complete all makeup work within the allowed time frame.

Reporting on Student Report Cards

Attendance, including absences and tardiness, shall be reported on student report cards, as required by Fla. Stat. § 1003.33(1)(c) and (2).

LATE ARRIVAL AND EARLY DISMISSAL

The school recognizes that from time to time compelling circumstances require that a student be late to school or dismissed before the end of the school day. Parents or guardians must follow the same process to obtain an excuse for tardiness or early dismissal as they do to obtain an excuse for an absence. A pattern of non-attendance for instructional activities is also established by repeated tardiness, early dismissals, or absences for all or any part of the day.

Students reporting late to school/class when the day/class period begins are considered tardy. Excessive tardiness or early dismissals shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis to determine if there is a pattern of non-attendance. Unless excused under the provisions of this Policy 5.09, accumulated tardiness or early dismissals will be recorded as unexcused absences consistent with Fla. Stat. § 1003.02(1) (b) and this Policy 5.09. When a secondary student misses fifty (50) percent

or more of the identified instructional class period due to unexcused late arrival or tardiness early dismissals, the student shall be considered absent.

STUDENT PICKUP

For the safety of your child(ren), no student will be released to any person not on the Registration Form PBSD 0636 or an STCA/SPAI Student Demographic form. Those persons authorized to pick up a student must show proper photo identification. There will be no exceptions. Parent/guardians may alter the student contact/pick-up list only by completing in person/in writing, the additional student pick-up information section of the Student Demographic Information Form. An original signature is required. No early release after 2:45pm.

CAMPUS ACCESS

Students are required to remain on campus, and may not leave campus. Once on campus, students are permitted in approved areas. Students are not permitted to be in parking lots or any other outdoor areas without supervision. Students are prohibited from receiving personal deliveries from off campus - this includes food items. When moving throughout the campus, students are required to log into and use Minga to document and receive permission to transition. Students are required to be wearing their school identification and it should be visible.

All visitors - parents, contractors, agency personnel, etc. must sign-in and sign-out at the front desk, be cleared through the background security system, and wear the school issued visitor badge/stickers at all times while on campus.

School Arrival and School Dismissal

For safety, parents must ensure that their children do not arrive at school until the official starting time and do not remain on school grounds after the official closing time, supervision is not provided.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

COVERAGE OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

At various times during the course of the school year, several activities require the use of the student's photograph, video image, art work, writing, annual yearbooks, graduation programs, web sites and approved news gatherings, etc. Please note the language found within the annual Student Registration Form:

Parental Consent for Release of Student Photograph and Information

I hereby give permission for the School or District to use my child's photograph, video image, writing, voice recording, name, grade level, school name, participation in officially recognized activities and sport, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, diplomas and awards received, date and place of birth, and most recent previous school attended, in annual yearbooks, graduation programs, playbills, school productions, web sites, etc. and/or similar School or District sponsored publications or in School or District approved news media interviews, releases, articles,

and photographs. I also provide permission for the release by the School or District to the media and governmental entities of my child's name, grade, school name and honors my child has received for public announcement of recognition of my student's accomplishments. I understand that without checking the permission box my child's name and photograph cannot and will not be included in any publications or presentation, including a school yearbook.

If you do not want your child to be included in the school photographs please contact us at 561-318-8087 or email Mr. Argueta at andy.argueta@pbcharterschools.org

PARENT CONFERENCES

At any time during the school year, parents are encouraged and invited to confer with teachers, counselors or administration. This can be done by calling the guidance department at (561) 318-8087, or sending Ms. Colas or Mr. John an email at patricia.colas@pbcharterschools.org or john.meredith@pbcharterschools.org.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

The capability to contact parents during emergency situations is essential. Students cannot receive emergency non-life threatening medical care without parental/guardian approval. Parents must ensure that emergency contact information listing the address and phone numbers where they can be reached during the day are on file and current. Please contact the office if any emergency information changes.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

In the event of dangerous weather conditions or emergencies, the school principal or representative of SouthTech Schools, will close the school. SouthTech school closings will coincide with the Palm Beach County School District's closings unless the closing is due to a problem unique only to one or more of the SouthTech schools. Closings may be announced via email, phone, local radio stations, television stations, social media, or through automated messages. If local district schools are announced as being closed, SouthTech schools will be closed as well.

STUDENT SAFETY

SouthTech Preparatory Academy conducts the following safety drills:

- Fire Drills
- Tornado Drills
- Active Assailant Drills
- Lockdown Drills
- Lockout Drills
- Code Blue Drills

Evacuation routes are posted inside each classroom. The signal to evacuate will be either an alarm or an announcement over the P.A. system. Students are to quickly evacuate to their designated areas, remain calm and follow directions as they are given.

Setting off, damaging, defacing, or in any way disturbing fire alarms, fire-fighting equipment, or any safety equipment will result in a mandatory ten (10) day out of school suspension and possibly legal action.

IN AN EMERGENCY TAKE ACTION



HOLD! In your room or area. Clear the halls.

STUDENTS

Clear the hallways and remain in room or area until the "All Clear" is announced
Do business as usual

ADULTS

Close and lock the door
Account for students and adults
Do business as usual



SECURE! Get inside. Lock outside doors.

STUDENTS

Return to inside of building
Do business as usual

ADULTS

Bring everyone indoors
Lock outside doors
Increase situational awareness
Account for students and adults
Do business as usual



LOCKDOWN! Locks, lights, out of sight.

STUDENTS

Move away from sight
Maintain silence
Do not open the door

ADULTS

Recover students from hallway if possible
Lock the classroom door
Turn out the lights
Move away from sight
Maintain silence
Do not open the door
Prepare to evade or defend



EVACUATE! (A location may be specified)

STUDENTS

Leave stuff behind if required to
If possible, bring your phone
Follow instructions

ADULTS

Lead students to Evacuation location
Account for students and adults
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults



SHELTER! Hazard and safety strategy.

STUDENTS

Use appropriate safety strategy for the hazard

Hazard

Tornado
Hazmat
Earthquake
Tsunami

Safety Strategy

Evacuate to shelter area
Seal the room
Drop, cover and hold
Get to high ground

ADULTS

Lead safety strategy
Account for students and adults
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults

LOST OR MISSING ITEMS

Southtech Preparatory Academy is not responsible for lost, broken, or stolen items. Students are urged to not bring valuable items or cash to school. Personal items found and turned in will be stored in the lost and found. School staff will not disrupt classroom instruction to search for lost or personal items, which include; cell phones, other electronics, jewelry, or other personal items. The school does not assume responsibility for lost, broken or stolen articles. Students are urged not to bring valuable items or large sums of money to school. Personal items or books found will be stored in the main office lost and found bin.

TEXTBOOKS, MATERIALS & RESOURCES

The student is responsible for any and all material assigned to them, until they are returned. If materials are returned damaged in any way, or lost, the student will pay a fine or replacement fee.

STUDENT LIFE

Southtech Preparatory Academy's Student Services Team works with students and parents/guardians to understand the expectations and guidelines of the school. The Student Services Team participates in guiding the faculty and staff in implementing Positive Behavior Interventions & Support (PBIS) and implementing disciplinary consequences.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

The educational process of SouthTech Preparatory Academy is to provide a safe environment that fosters student conduct that is socially acceptable and conducive to the learning and teaching processes. It is the intent of this policy to align SouthTech Preparatory Academy's Universal Guidelines, PBIS, consequences, and support for students attending SouthTech Academy.

SouthTech Academy exercises these responsibilities and expectations:

- During the time a student is in route to and from school.
- During the time a student is attending school.
- During the time a student is physically on campus and the property - which is owned or operated under the jurisdiction of SouthTech Schools or the Palm Beach County School District.
- During the time a student is attending any function sponsored by SouthTech Preparatory Academy or the Palm Beach County School District.
- While a student is using any and all forms of technology.

All students at SouthTech Preparatory Academy are expected to reflect its high standards by conducting themselves in a manner that is conducive to the orderly operation of the school. Students should be in class on time and change from class to class in an orderly fashion. Students are expected to adhere to SouthTech Preparatory Academy's Universal Guidelines, and refrain from any behavior that may cause a disruption. Students are expected to show respect and consideration for their peers and all members of the SouthTech Preparatory Academy staff; including bus drivers and visitors to campus. Both on the school campus and off the school campus, students are expected to

exhibit desirable behaviors and keep from manifesting behavior unbecoming of a SouthTech Preparatory Academy community member.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORT (PBIS)

Positive Behavior Interventions & Support is a framework for using data to integrate strategies to support positive behaviors. The PBIS team is the group that plans activities related to rewards and incentives. The PBIS team works to:

- Promote a Positive School Culture
- Increase Academic Achievement
- Maintain Excellent Student Attendance
- Encourage Students to Be on Time
- Nurture and Foster Desires Student Etiquette & Behaviors

UNIFORM POLICY

As a career and technical education school, Southtech Preparatory Academy strives to prepare students to be successful in their field of study and post secondary school. Student attire or grooming that substantially or potentially disrupts the educational environment or school program, creates a distraction, interferes with the educational process or classroom activity, or presents a health or safety hazard to the students or school community is not permitted. The determination of what constitutes a safety or health hazard, or what constitutes a distraction of students from a classroom activity, or what constitutes a disruption of a school program or excessive maintenance of school property shall be made by the principal or designee. The principal or designee shall have final authority to decide if a student's attire complies with the uniform policy below.

- When on campus, students will wear the appropriate SouthTech Preparatory Academy uniform and STPA school identification. This uniform must be properly worn and visible at all times.
- Students are expected to wear only STPA outerwear - STPA zippered jackets. No other hoodies, jackets, sweaters, or blankets may be worn.
- Students will wear their assigned grade level polo shirts - Burgundy, Heather Gray, and Charcoal Gray.
- Black, navy blue, or khaki/beige shorts, skirts and pants must be uniform, chino, or khaki style only. Students may not wear leggings, athleticwear, leisurewear, sweatpants, jeans, jeggings, cargo style, or five pocket styles.
- Students are expected to wear their uniform bottoms at their natural waistline. In addition, there should be no exposed undergarments or skin.
- Female students may wear uniform only style skirts that fall no more than two inches above the knee. Pencil skirts, athletic skirts, and mini skirts are not permitted.
- All clothing must be free of rips, tares, stains, holes, or unfinished edges.
- All uniforms must cover midriffs.

- STPA uniforms are required to be worn in their original state, and may not be tied up, rolled up, or altered.
- Bandanas, caps, large headcoverings, headscarves, or other headwear deemed inappropriate by administration are not permitted.
- Uniform shoes must be flat, have backs, closed-toed, and have rubber soles. Crocs, slides, flip flops, sandals, or bedroom type of footwear are not permitted.
- Wallet chains, dog collars, studded belts/jewelry or other non-jewelry chains are prohibited.
- For Physical Education, students are required to wear athletic sneakers that are laced up with an STPA PE shirt and plain athletic shorts. Bike shorts and Yoga pants are not permitted.
- Southtech Preparatory Academy reserves the right to deny any student the privilege of wearing anything deemed to be disruptive to the educational process.
- Clothing, bags, and accessories may not contain vulgar language, inappropriate images, promote illegal activities, or promote inappropriate activities or ideas for a CTE middle school student.
- Clothing that is sexually suggestive or revealing (examples include but are not limited to clothing which exposes the midriff, exposes one's undergarments, has plunging necklines, muscle tops, backless clothing, or is constructed of see-through materials) is not allowed.
- Students may carry a small personal bag, no larger than the size of a hand.
- Students are expected to arrive at STPA already dressed for success, meaning arriving in their full school approved uniforms. Failure to comply with these uniform requirements will result in consequences that may include disciplinary actions.
- All decisions regarding adherence to the uniform policy are at the sole discretion of the Southtech Preparatory's Administration.

DRESS CODE VIOLATIONS

Failure to comply with these code policies will result in the following consequences:

Violation of dress code students will result in parent contact to notify about the uniform violation and ask to drop off proper clothing.

- Students that are not compliant with dress code will wait in the Student Services office until proper attire can be obtained.
- Repeated violations will result in a referral for insubordination and require further disciplinary actions.

IDENTIFICATION BADGE

While on campus and some school sponsored activities, students are required to wear their Southtech Preparatory ID Badge. Badges are to be worn around the neck on a lanyard or clipped to the student's front collar, with the crisis hotline on the back visible. The entire student ID must remain

visible, and students may not cover any part of their STPA ID with Stickers. Failure to wear your ID badge is a violation of school policy. Students that do not have a visible school ID will receive a new ID and \$5.00 will be charged to their school account. Prior to promotion or withdrawal, all fees are expected to be paid in full.

DISCIPLINE ACTION PLAN

In addition to supporting students by providing interventions, failure to comply with Southtech Preparatory Academy's Student Code of Conduct, will result in consequences that may include a combination of consequences.

DISCIPLINE MATRIX OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY

According to SouthTech Preparatory Academy's Student Code of Conduct 5.18, SouthTech Preparatory Academy will use and follow the codes set forth in the Palm Beach County School District's discipline matrix to determine reasons and consequences for discipline infractions. In addition, SouthTech Preparatory Academy implements a Positive Behavior Interventions & Support program. SouthTech Preparatory Academy has developed three universal guidelines for behavior and a matrix for school wide behavior expectations:

 Universal Guidelines 		
	All Settings	Classrooms
Be Respectful	• Be respectful to all adults and peers. • Use appropriate language. • Clean up messes created. • Honor authority figures. • Adhere to the STPA Student Handbook. • Keep your hands to yourself.	• Use good manners. • Refer to instructor by their last name (Dr., Mr. or Mrs./Ms.). • Use appropriate vocabulary & gestures. • Use Voice Level zero - two. • Follow directions the first time.
Be Responsible	• Follow dress code. • Be accountable for physical movements. • Report any problems on campus to a staff member. • Electronics & bluetooth devices are not permitted.	• Be present for school. • Attend all classes. • Remain where in the area expected. • Be on time. • Be accountable for actions. • Food is not permitted in the class.
Be Ready To Learn	• Adhere to the bell schedule. • Arrive with necessary supplies. • Use appropriate Voice Level. • Put forth your best effort. • Be accountable for your actions • Have a growth mindset.	• Remain active, engaged and appropriate. • When needed, ask for help. • Appreciate the opinions of others. • Be accountable for your actions. • Be prepared with proper materials. • Work cooperatively with others. • Remain on topic
The Bulldog Way - Respectful, Responsible, and Ready to Learn		

SouthTech Preparatory Academy's Voice Levels

Level 0	No Conversation (No talking, no sound)
Level 1	Whisper (Only the person next to you can hear you)
Level 2	Talking Voice – Quiet Conversation (Only the person next to you can hear you)
Level 3	Presentation Voice (Everyone in the room should be able to hear you)
Level 4	Outside Voice (You can be heard across the pavilion, cheering at a pep rally, etc.)

HALLWAY TRANSITIONS

Students should create an orderly flow of traffic in the hallways by practicing hands down, eyes forward, low speed, low volume, and walk on the right side of hallways following the posted flow of traffic. All students should be respectful of others. No public displays of affection will be tolerated.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

SPORTS

SouthTech Prep Academy does not offer any interscholastic sports activities. SouthTech's charter agreement with Palm Beach County District specifies that any SouthTech student in good standing may participate in interscholastic sports or other FHSAA activities at their boundary school. In addition, pursuant to SouthTech Academy 2.05, SouthTech Prep Academy does offer after school intramural sports activities as well as various clubs and other activities in which students may participate.

FIELD TRIP AND ACTIVITIES PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Students at STPA have the opportunity to participate in a number of educational and extracurricular in and out of school activities and field trips throughout each school year. It is the goal of our school's administration and faculty to include as many students as possible in these school-sponsored trips and activities. It is also important to understand that extracurricular activities are a privilege and students must meet certain criteria in order to participate. The following criteria are general school-wide policies for all school sponsored field trips and activities. These guidelines, as well as any

additional guidelines established by the group sponsor, will be used in determining whether a student may participate in the activity or trip.

1. Student may have no more than three (3) discipline referrals (including dress code and tardy referrals).
2. Student may have no more than, or the equivalent of, two (2) days of In-School Detention.
3. Student may have no more than one bus referral suspension.
4. Student may not have any out-of-school suspensions.
5. Student may not have excessive tardies or absences.
6. Student may not have Ds or Fs.
7. Student must have all required forms on file in the front office: current emergency contact card, a signed Student Code of Conduct form, signed academic or behavior contract, handbook receipt of acknowledgement, permission slip complete including teacher signatures, etc.
8. At administration's discretion, a parent or guardian may be required to chaperone their child.
9. If the student signed up for a field trip and committed an infraction between that time and the time of the trip that prohibits them from going, no refunds will be made.

It is our hope that in establishing field trip criteria early, students and parents will read this together and discuss the expectations here at STPA. We appreciate good behavior and academic excellence and hope to see all of our students enjoy our planned activities.

TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation for students living more than two miles from school is governed by the State and provided by South Tech Schools. For information regarding bus pick-ups and drop-offs or any other transportation questions, please contact the School's transportation liaison. Riding the bus is a privilege. Students may be suspended from riding the bus if their conduct presents a safety concern.

All students riding the bus are subject to the authority and discipline of the bus driver at all times while on the bus. School bus misconduct or vandalism is reported to school administrators on student discipline referral form by the driver. Any student receiving a referral form will be subject to disciplinary action according to the Palm Beach County School District discipline matrix. SouthTech Prep Academy may suspend any student from riding the bus for a period not to exceed ten (10) days. Repeat offenders may be expelled from bus privileges. Students and parents/guardians will be notified of such a decision within 24 hours of said suspension. If a student is suspended from the bus, the bus driver will not allow the student to enter the bus.

BUS RULES

Students are required to ride their assigned bus. The school bus driver is in charge of the bus and the passengers. The driver is responsible for the safety of students and for their conduct on the bus. Riders are subject to the authority of the bus driver and may be suspended from riding the bus for violation of bus rules. Riding the bus is a privilege that can be denied if a pupil's behavior creates a problem on the school bus or at the bus stop. Safety is the number one consideration. In addition to the disciplinary rules stated in this handbook, the following rules must be observed:

- Students are expected to respect their neighbors and the property of their neighbors while waiting for the bus or while en route to or from the bus stop. Students are expected to behave in a way that promotes safety and good manners. Students must stand off the roadway while waiting for the bus.
- Students preparing to board the bus should cross the roadway immediately in front of the bus, BUT NOT UNTIL THE BUS DRIVER HAS GIVEN THE SIGNAL TO CROSS AND IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.
- Students riding buses must arrive at the bus stop on time; the bus cannot wait for those who are tardy.
- Electronic devices are not permitted to be used on the school buses.
- Students must remain in their seats at all times when the bus is in motion.
- All riders must keep their arms and heads inside the bus at all times. Nothing may be thrown from the bus.
- Riders should not engage in unnecessary conversation with the driver because this creates a dangerous situation. Students are to observe classroom conduct, except for ordinary conversation.
- Students must treat the bus property respectfully and carefully. Vandalism will not be tolerated.
- Eating, drinking, smoking or vaping on the bus is absolutely forbidden. Smoking or vaping and possession of tobacco products/e-cigarettes and vaping products is prohibited at the bus stop or while waiting for the bus.
- The driver has the right to assign students to certain seats if necessary in order to promote order and safety on the bus.
- Students must get on and off the bus at their assigned school bus stop. No one is entitled to ride any bus other than the one to which they are assigned.
- Parents/adults other than official personnel are not to board or approach the bus for any reason without prior approval from administration.

If a student's bus privileges are suspended, the student's parents are responsible to ensure that the student is attending school.

SKATEBOARDS, ROLLER BLADES, SCOOTERS, SPORTS EQUIPMENT

Skateboards, roller blades, sports equipment and/or scooters are not permitted on school grounds without pre-approval from administration and they must be kept in the Student Services Department during the school day.

TECHNOLOGY

ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

([SouthTech Schools Board Policies](#))

Students will be held financially accountable for damage to Chromebooks or any other SouthTech Preparatory property.

Florida House Bill 1105

Student Cell Phone Use Restricted During the School Day

Beginning July 1, 2025, Florida House Bill 1105 placed limits on when students can use cell phones and other wireless devices:

- Elementary and Middle School Students are not permitted to use phones at all during the school day.

The new law is designed to minimize distractions and enhance student focus. For more information, please review [Florida Senate Session Bill 1105](#).

At STPA, there will be no unauthorized use of electronic devices while at the school bus stop, on the school bus, on the school campus, during instructional time, or while at any school sponsored event or activity. If the electronic device becomes disruptive, it will be confiscated. The school shall not be held liable for any personal devices on campus. Electronic devices include, but are not limited to cellular phones, bluetooth devices, smart watches, smart glasses, cameras, and more.

Students are prohibited from accessing social media platforms, except when expressly directed by a teacher for an educational purpose. Additionally, the use of TikTok and any successor platforms is prohibited on school grounds. Any unauthorized or inappropriate use of an electronic device will result in confiscation.

Failure to comply with the Technology Acceptable Use Policy will result in the following action:

- 1st Offense – Items will be confiscated and the student may retrieve the item at the end of the day.
- 2nd Offense – Return of the confiscated item will require the parent/guardian to come to the Student Services Department and pick up the item.
- 3rd Offense - Confiscated items will not be given back to the student or parents until the end of the semester, as defined by the Palm Beach County School District Discipline Matrix.

All consequences are at the discretion of the STPA administration.

Refusal to turn over a device to a SouthTech Preparatory faculty or staff member when requested will result in a referral for insubordination.

School technology systems will include measures to prevent hacking or unauthorized access by students to data or information that they should not have access to, and to prohibit other unlawful online activities by students.

Continuous Offenses: Items will be confiscated and the student will receive a referral for insubordination. Disciplinary action will be taken as outlined in the [Palm Beach County School District Discipline Matrix](#).

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) ACCEPTABLE USE

The purpose of this is to ensure that AI technologies are used safely, ethically, and responsibly to support teaching, learning, and student development.

- AI technologies may only be used for educational purposes and activities approved by teachers or school administrators.
- Students must adhere to all school rules and guidelines while using AI technologies, both on school premises and during school-sponsored events or activities.
- Students are expected to use AI technologies responsibly and respectfully, treating others with kindness and consideration at all times.
- Students must ensure that any content created or shared using AI technologies is appropriate for an educational setting and complies with school policies on acceptable content. Content must not be plagiarized and must follow copyright laws.
- Content that is offensive, inappropriate, or violates copyright laws is strictly prohibited.
- Cyberbullying, harassment, or intimidation of others using AI technologies is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.
- Students should report any instances of cyberbullying or harassment to a teacher or school administrator immediately.
- Teachers and school staff may monitor the use of AI technologies to ensure compliance with this and promote a safe and supportive learning environment.
- Violations of this Acceptable Use may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to loss of access to AI technologies, parental notification, and suspension or expulsion from school.

PROCEDURES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT **STUDENT WELFARE POLICY**

SouthTech Schools is committed to supporting student well-being while respecting parental rights. Parents will be notified of any changes to their child's mental, emotional, or physical health services provided by the school. Staff cannot withhold important health-related information from parents unless there is a risk of abuse, abandonment, or neglect. Instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity is not allowed in grades 6–8 and must follow state guidelines for grades 9–12. If parents have

concerns about student welfare or instruction, they can submit a written complaint to the principal. If the issue is not resolved, parents may escalate the matter to the Executive Director and if not resolved to the SouthTech Schools Board of Directors. If necessary, parents may request a special magistrate or seek legal action. At the beginning of the school year, SouthTech Schools will notify parents of each health care service offered at the School and the option to withhold consent or decline any specific service. Parental consent to a health care service does not waive the parent's right to access his or her student's educational or health records or to be notified about a change in his or her student's services or monitoring as provided by this paragraph.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CODE OF CONDUCT

SouthTech Preparatory Academy is committed to providing all stakeholders with a safe and positive educational environment. The support of parents/guardians/relatives/friends helps to ensure a safe and respectful environment. Therefore, all parents/guardians/relatives/friends are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the values of integrity, respect, and open communication.

Parents/Guardians/Relatives/Friends are expected to:

- Recognize that the education of children is a shared responsibility.
- Ensure students attend school regularly.
- Encourage students to adhere to STPA's expectations.
- Demonstrate a positive and collaborative attitude towards STPA and all staff.
- Comply with and support all STPA school safety policies.
- Communicate effectively and respectfully with all STPA staff - written, spoken or body language.
- Respect all children and members of the STPA school community.
- When on campus, dress appropriately for a school atmosphere.
- In the car line, follow instructions of STPA school staff.
- Refrain from using any substances including but not limited to cigarettes, e-cigarettes, or drugs.
- Raise all concerns following the correct procedures, channels and personnel.
- Refrain from using social media to voice grievances about or related to the school.

FORTIFY FL

Fortify FL is a suspicious activity reporting tool that allows students and the community to relay information anonymously concerning unsafe, potentially harmful, dangerous, violent, or criminal activities, or the threat of these activities, to appropriate public agencies and school officials. Reports can be made at www.getfortifyfl.com. In addition, the Fortify FL App is available for download in the Apple App Store or Google Play. Knowingly submitting a false tip through the [FortifyFL app](#) is illegal and carries severe criminal penalties, including third-degree felony charges.

Parents and guardians are urged to have candid conversations with their children regarding the seriousness of making threats and the expected consequences that may follow thereafter. All threats will be thoroughly investigated, and appropriate action will be taken toward those who make threats,

including but not limited to notification of the person(s) making or posing the threat, criminal charges, and disciplinary consequences as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct (SCOC).

WITHDRAWALS AND TRANSFERS FROM SCHOOL

The following **MUST** be completed in order for a student to withdraw or transfer from SouthTech Prep Academy:

- Parents/guardians must accompany the student to the Guidance Office and authorize the withdrawal.
- Turn in all books/assigned materials and clear all financial obligations.
- Complete the required withdrawal form.
- Return the completed withdrawal form to the Guidance Department.

PARENT/STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

- SouthTech Schools prides itself on the quality of the teaching and care provided to its students.
- All members of the School community should contribute to a respectful and inclusive environment.
- Staff, student, or parent/guardians can raise concerns about any issues that affect a student's well-being and/or academic performance and work together to resolve them. In rare cases where the issue cannot be resolved informally, an official written complaint can be registered by a parent with the School management.
- Although no member of the School community shall be denied the right to petition the Governing Board for redress of a grievance, the complaints will be referred through the proper administrative channels for solution before investigation or action by the Governing Board. Exceptions are complaints that concern Governing Board actions or operations.
- The Board advises the School community that the proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline, or learning materials is as follows:
 1. Teachers
 2. Dean of Students
 3. Assistant Principal
 4. Principal
 5. Executive Director
 6. Parent Liaison
 7. Governing Board

Any complaint about school personnel will be investigated by the Administration before consideration and action by the Board of Directors.

SOUTHTECH PREPARATORY ACADEMY

PARENT/GUARDIAN/STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Everyone at the school, students, parents/guardians, teachers, and staff, plays an important role. To keep things running smoothly, all students must follow the rules outlined in this handbook. These rules apply at school, during school activities off campus, and while using school transportation.

Parents/guardians are responsible for being aware of these rules and the consequences if they are not followed. They must stay involved in their child's education, keep contact information up to date, and inform the school of any important information (such as medical conditions) that may affect their child.

Please pay special attention to sections about attendance, dress code, tardiness, cell phone use, and student behavior.

The school requires confirmation that both students and parents/guardians have received and understood this handbook. By signing, you agree to follow all school policies during school hours, transportation, and school-related activities.

Your signature confirms that you reviewed and understand the rules, expectations, and procedures for students at SouthTech Preparatory Academy outlined in this handbook.

PRINT NAME PARENT/GUARDIAN: _____ **DATE:** _____

PRINT NAME STUDENT: _____ **DATE:** _____

Parent emergency phone number: _____ **Student Grade Level:** _____

Appendix D:

SouthTech Treasure Coast Middle School & Academy Student Handbook

SouthTech Treasure Coast Schools



2026-2027

STUDENT & PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK



SOUTHTECH TREASURE COAST ACADEMY

MISSION STATEMENT

SouthTech Treasure Coast Academy's core mission is to graduate students prepared to matriculate into a career academy program of study which will prepare them for work, higher education, and productive citizenship.

GOVERNING BOARD OFFICERS	SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION	GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS
<i>Tony Robinson</i> Chairperson	<i>Carla Lovett</i> Executive Director	<i>Roger Dunson Sr.</i>
<i>Russell Feldman</i> Vice Chairperson	<i>Lisa Davenport</i> Principal	<i>Diane Heinz</i>
<i>Ayesha Edmond</i> Secretary	<i>Elias O. Velazquez</i> Assistant Principal	<i>Dan Heller</i>
		<i>Suzanne Nicolini</i>
		<i>Erika Deutsch Rotbart</i>

Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Statement

SouthTech Schools, a state-approved LEA, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or sexual orientation, marital status, age, religion, disability, genetic information, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic prohibited by law in its educational programs, services or activities, or in its hiring or employment practices. Complaints regarding discrimination or harassment may be sent to: HR Manager, 6161 W. Woolbright Rd., Boynton Beach, Florida 33437; (561) 369-7042

School Calendar SY 2026-2027

SCHOOL CALENDAR 2026-2027					SOUTH TECH TREASURE COAST					BOARD APPROVED: EMPLOYEE VERSION				
JULY 2026					AUGUST 2026					SEPTEMBER 2026				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
		1 Actual Closed	2 HOLIDAY	3 Actual Closed	3 Pre-School Teacher Work Day PLATE	4 Pre-School	5 Pre-School	6 Pre-School	7 Pre-School		1 A	2 B	3 A	4 B
6 Actual Closed	7 Actual Closed	8 Actual Closed	9 Actual Closed	10 Actual Closed	10 A STUDENTY LEFT DAY BUSES LEFT SCHOOL END OF QUARTER 1	11 B	12 A	13 B	14 A	7 HOLIDAY	8 A	9 B	10 A	11 B
13 Begin 228	14	15	16	17 Actual Closed 4 Day Week	17 B	18 A	19 B	20 A	21 B	14 A	15 B	16 A	17 B	18 A
20 Begin 228	21	22	23	24 Actual Closed 4 Day Week	24 A	25 B	26 A Early Dismissal	27 B	28 A	21 HOLIDAY	22 B	23 A	24 B	25 A
27	28	29	30 Teachers return	31 Actual Closed 4 Day Week	31 B					28 B	29 A	30 B		
OCTOBER 2026					NOVEMBER 2026					DECEMBER 2026				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
			1 A	2 B	2 B	3 No Students Teacher Work Day	4 A	5 B	6 A		1 B	2 A	3 B	4 A
5 A	6 B	7 A	8 B	9 A END OF QUARTER 1	9 B	10 A	11 HOLIDAY	12 B	13 A	7 B	8 A	9 B	10 A	11 B Early Dismissal
12 No Students Teacher Work Day	13 B END OF QUARTER 2	14 A	15 B	16 A	16 B	17 A	18 B	19 A	20 B	14 A	15 B	16 A	17 B	18 A END OF QTR 2 Early Dismissal
19 B	20 A	21 B	22 A	23 B	23 HOLIDAY	24 HOLIDAY	25 HOLIDAY	26 HOLIDAY	27 HOLIDAY	21 HOLIDAY	22 HOLIDAY	23 HOLIDAY	24 HOLIDAY	25 HOLIDAY
26 A	27 B	28 A Early Dismissal	29 B	30 A	30 A					28 HOLIDAY	29 HOLIDAY	30 HOLIDAY	31 HOLIDAY	
JANUARY 2027					FEBRUARY 2027					MARCH 2027				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
				1 HOLIDAY	1 B	2 A	3 B	4 A	5 B	1 B	2 A	3 B	4 A	5 B
4 No Students Teacher Work Day	5 B END OF QUARTER 3 BUSES LEFT SCHOOL	6 A	7 B	8 A	8 A	9 B	10 A Early Dismissal	11 B	12 A	8 A	9 B	10 A	11 B	12 A
11 B	12 A	13 B	14 A	15 B	15 HOLIDAY	16 B	17 A	18 B	19 A	15 B	16 A	17 B	18 A	19 B Early Dismissal END OF QUARTER 4
18 HOLIDAY	19 A	20 B	21 A	22 B	22 B	23 A	24 No Students Teacher Work Day	25 B	26 A	22 HOLIDAY	23 HOLIDAY	24 HOLIDAY	25 HOLIDAY	26 HOLIDAY
25 A	26 B	27 A	28 B	29 A						29 No Students Teacher Work Day	30 A END OF QUARTER 4	31 B		

SCHOOL CALENDAR 2026-2027

SOUTH TECH TREASURE COAST

APRIL 2027				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
			1 A	2 B
5 A	6 B	7 A	8 B	9 A
12 B	13 A	14 B	15 A RECRUITMENT OPEN HOUSE	16 B
19 A	20 B	21 A Early dismissal	22 B	23 A
26 B	27 A	28 B	29 A	30 B

MAY 2027				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
3 A	4 B	5 A	6 B	7 A
10 B	11 A	12 B	13 A	14 B
17 A	18 B	19 A	20 B	21 A
24 B	25 A	26 B	27 A Early dismissal	28 Early Release Students Last Day
31 HOLIDAY				

JUNE 2027				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
	1	2	3	4 School Closed 4 DAY WEEK
7 	8 	9 	10 	11 School closed 4 Day Week
14	15	16	17	18 School closed
21	22	23	24	25 School closed
28	29	30		

Grade 6-12 School Hours : 8:00 A.M TO 2:50 P.M

HOLIDAYS	
Date	Holiday
July 03, 2026	Independence Day
Sep 07, 2026	Labor Day
Sep 21, 2026	Fall Holiday
Nov 11, 2026	Fall Holiday
Nov 22-27, 2026	Thanksgiving Break
Dec 24-31, 2026	Winter Break
Jan 1, 2027	Winter Break
Jan 16, 2027	M.L. King's Jr. Day
Mar 22 - 26, 2027	Spring Break
May 31, 2027	Memorial Day
June 17, 2027	Juneteenth (Observed)

Employee Contract Periods			
Employee Group	Begin Date	End Date	# of Days
Administration (A)	Jul 13, 2026	Jun 10, 2027	220 Days
Non-Instructional (NI)	Jul 13, 2026	Jun 10, 2027	220 Days
Instructional Support (IS)	Jul 13, 2026	Jun 10, 2027	220 Days
Instructional (I)	Jul 30 2026	Jun 4, 2027	196

Teacher Work Days - Pre/Post School	
July 30, 2026	August 03- August 07, 2026 (Pre-School)
Oct 12, 2026	Teacher Workdays
Nov 3, 2026	
Jan 04, 2027	
Feb. 24, 2027	
Mar. 29, 2027	
Scheduled Meetings	
TBA	

Employees work 10 Hr Days M-Th and Friday school is closed
Faculty hours 7:30-3:30

Student Attendance Days			
Period	Begins	Ends	# of Days
Q1	Aug 10, 2026	Oct 9, 2026	43
Q2	Oct 13, 2026	Dec 18, 2026	42
Q3	Jan 5, 2027	Mar 19, 2027	51
Q4	Mar 30, 2027	May 27, 2027	43
STP ~ Report Card Distribution Dates			
Grading Period	Distribution Dates		
Q1	10/16/26		
Q2	01/08/27		
Q3	04/05/27		
Q4	TBA		
EMD - Emergency Make-Up Days			
Emergency Make-Up days (EMD) will be at the discretion of the Executive Director in accordance with the state statute for student instructional time.			

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Bell Schedules

BELL SCHEDULES

BE RESPECTFUL. BE RESPONSIBLE. BE READY TO LEARN.

REGULAR BELL SCHEDULE

BREAKFAST	7:30 AM - 8:00 AM
BLOCK 1	8:00 AM - 9:30 AM
BLOCK 2	9:35 AM - 11:05 AM
BLOCK 3	11:45 AM - 1:15 PM
BLOCK 4	1:20 PM - 2:50 PM
LUNCH	11:10 AM - 11:40 AM

EARLY DISMISSAL SCHEDULE

BREAKFAST	7:30 AM - 8:00 AM
BLOCK 1	8:00 AM - 8:45 AM
BLOCK 2	8:50 AM - 9:35 AM
BLOCK 3	9:40 AM - 10:25 AM
BLOCK 4	10:30 AM - 11:15 AM
LUNCH	11:20 AM - 11:50 AM

BE RESPECTFUL. BE RESPONSIBLE. BE READY TO LEARN.

GENERAL INFORMATION

SOUTHTECH TREASURE COAST GOVERNING BOARD

The SouthTech Treasure Coast Governing Board establishes policies and governing operations of SouthTech Treasure Coast. The governing board provides opportunities for all involved to have input into SouthTech Treasure Coast's success. It also promotes and increases teamwork between school, students, and parents. Please call 561- 364-7929 for more information.

MESSAGE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND STUDENTS

The office will deliver messages to students on an **emergency basis only** to avoid disruption of instruction. Transportation and other non-emergency situations should be handled prior to or after school. In the event of an emergency, **please call (772) 801-5522**.

STUDENT RESIDENCE ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

- “Residence” and/or “address” shall mean the home location where the student and a parent (if applicable) are primarily living. Residence does not refer to citizenship or proof of residence that would require a permanent resident card (green card) or any immigration documentation. Primary residence and/or address means the home in which the student and a parent (if applicable) lives most of the time.
- “Parent” is defined as either or both biological or adoptive parent(s) of the student, the student’s legal guardian, a person in a parental relationship to the student, or a person exercising supervisory authority over the student in place of the parent, pursuant to Fla. Stat. 1000.21(5).
- The school selection, enrollment and placement of students experiencing homelessness and unaccompanied youth are governed by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 and School Board 5.74 shall be referred to when enrolling students experiencing homelessness, unaccompanied youth and students awaiting placement in foster care.
- **Parents are required to immediately notify the school in writing of a student’s change in address and updated emergency contact phone numbers.**

ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

SouthTech Treasure Coast applications are found on our website at www.southtechtc.org/. We offer assistance over the phone or in-person to prospective applicants. Upon acceptance, parents and guardians will receive the registration documents via mail, email, or in-person delivery. Please call the office at (772) 801-5522 with any questions. Please be advised that all students new to the county must present proof of a physical exam not more than one-year-old within 30 (thirty) days of registration. The following information needs to be submitted to SouthTech Treasure Coast:

- **Physical examination:** Students failing to submit this document within 30 (thirty) days will not be permitted to attend SouthTech Treasure Coast. Form DH3040 must be signed by the parent on page 2 to be valid.
- **Immunization:** Students must produce documentation on the prescribed Florida Blue DH 680 form of appropriate immunizations. DH681 Exemption from immunization form is also accepted.
- **Proof of Birth:** Birth certificate, baptism certificate, insurance that has been in force for two years or more, passport (shown in person), or school record.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE COMMUNICABLE

DISEASES IMMUNIZATIONS

(P-5.322) and (F.S. 1003.22(9)) (P-5.06) and (F.S. 1003.22(1))

Students having or suspected of having a communicable disease or infestation schedule that can be transmitted to others may prior to be excluded from school, based on the decision of the Department of Health, and not allowed to return unless they have been successfully treated and/or present a note from a physician indicating that they are no longer contagious.

A Certificate of Immunization (DH 680) indicating compliance with the current required immunizations must be presented prior to the enrollment in school absent exemption. Students who are homeless may be eligible for a 30-day exemption.

IMMUNIZATIONS

SCHOOL HEALTH REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2026-2027

FLORIDA ADMINISTRATIVE CODE 64D-3.011

Prior to entry, attendance, or transfer to Florida schools (kindergarten through 12th grade), each child shall have on file a Florida Certification of Immunization, DH 680, documenting the following:

GRADES:														
VACCINE TYPES:	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
DTAP/DT SERIES	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
TDAP BOOSTER									x	x	x	x	x	
TDAP OR TD BOOSTER														x
POLIO SERIES	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
MMR (2 DOSES)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
HEPATITIS B SERIES	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
VARICELLA (2 DOSES)		x	x	x	x	x	x							
VARICELLA (1 DOSE)	x							x	x	x	x	x	x	x
* PHYSICAL EXAMINATION	x	x							x					

DH681 Exemption from immunization form is also accepted.

FLORIDA ADMINISTRATIVE CODE 64D-3.011

A physical examination is required for all students new to the District and SouthTech Treasure Coast. (P-5.06A)

CLINIC

The clinic is located in the front office and is staffed by a trained professional. Once a student has been referred to the clinic, the clinic will administer first aid, and families will be contacted as needed. Only parents/guardians/formal designees who are **pre-approved** and listed in **Skyward** may sign out and pick-up an ill student via the Main Office. If pre-approved designee is not reached, then the student will remain in the clinic or return to class.

MEDICATION NEEDS

A student under the care of a physician and needing to take medication must obtain written permission from the parent and physician, or other authorized person on the emergency card. Parents or guardians must secure the “**Physician Authorization for Student Medication**” form from the doctor’s office and have it completed by the physician and parent. Completed forms must be returned to the school. The medication itself should be presented to the office in the original container issued from the pharmacy. The school nurse or designee will monitor the administration of the medicine.

OTC Meds: Over-the-counter (OTC) medication must be received in the original, unopened container and labeled with the student’s name, and accompanied by an Authorization for Medication Administration. OTC medications do not require the signature of a healthcare provider.

Carrying Meds: Students may be given permission to carry the medication with them only if a completed Authorization to Carry and Self Administer form is submitted to the school with both the parent/guardian and physician's signature.

ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

As conditions warrant, students injured on school premises will be evaluated by school personnel and depending on the severity of the injury, and with parent permission, they will be taken to the main office, or if needed, with the permission of the parent/guardian, transported to an area hospital. In any and all cases, the parent/guardian will be notified. The supervising teacher or staff member WILL submit an accident report STCAI 0335 to Ms. Davenport, the School Principal **within 24 hours**.

AI Acceptable Use

- The purpose of this is to ensure that AI technologies are used safely, ethically, and responsibly to support teaching, learning, and student development.
- AI technologies may only be used for educational purposes and activities approved by teachers or school administrators.
- Students must adhere to all school rules and guidelines while using AI technologies, both on school premises and during school-sponsored events or activities.
- Students are expected to use AI technologies responsibly and respectfully, treating others with kindness and consideration at all times.
- Students must ensure that any content created or shared using AI technologies is appropriate for an educational setting and complies with school policies on acceptable content. Content must not be plagiarized and must follow copyright laws.
- Content that is offensive, inappropriate, or violates copyright laws is strictly prohibited.
- Cyberbullying, harassment, or intimidation of others using AI technologies is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.
- Students should report any instances of cyberbullying or harassment to a teacher or school administrator immediately.

- Teachers and school staff may monitor the use of AI technologies to ensure compliance with this and promote a safe and supportive learning environment.
- Violations of this AI Acceptable Use Policy may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to receiving a grade of zero on the affected assignment, loss of access to AI technologies, parental notification, detention, suspension, or expulsion from school, in accordance with district and school policies.

CAMPUS ACCESS

Students are not permitted to leave campus without permission from administration. **Violation will result in recorded absences from class or classes and additional disciplinary action.** Students are not permitted in the parking lot during the school day without staff supervision. Any type of personal deliveries from off campus **WILL NOT** be permitted without prior administrative approval. This includes any food items. To be out of class, students must receive permission from administration. Only one student will be released per class. Violation will result in recorded absences from class or classes and additional disciplinary action. All visitors (parents, contractors, agency personnel, etc.) must sign-in/out at the front desk and be cleared through the main office's background security system and issued a visitor badge to be worn at all times while on campus. All employees must wear an ID badge in a visible location at all times while on campus.

COVERAGE OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

At various times during the course of the school year, several activities require the use of the student's photograph, video image, art work, writing, annual yearbooks, graduation programs, web sites and approved news gatherings, etc. Please note the language found within the annual Student Registration Form:

Parental Consent for Release of Student Photograph and Information

I hereby give permission for the School or District to use my child's photograph, video image, writing, voice recording, name, grade level, school name, participation in officially recognized activities and sport, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, diplomas and awards received, date and place of birth, and most recent previous school attended, in annual yearbooks, graduation programs, playbills, school productions, web sites, etc. and/or similar School or District sponsored publications or in School or District approved news media interviews, releases, articles, and photographs. I also provide permission for the release by the School or District to the media and governmental entities of my child's name, grade, school name and honors my child has received for public

announcement of recognition of my student's accomplishments. I understand that without checking the permission box my child's name and photograph cannot and will not be included in any publications or presentation, including a school yearbook.

If you do not want your child to be included in the school photographs please contact us at 772-801-5522 or email Ms. Dukes at nicole.dukes@southtechtc.org

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parents are encouraged and invited to confer with teachers, counselors or administration any time during the school year. It is advisable to make an appointment to do so. This can be done by calling our guidance department at (772) 801-5522 ext.106 or email at kimberly.gaites@southtc.org

EMERGENCY CODES

IN AN EMERGENCY TAKE ACTION



HOLD! In your room or area. Clear the halls.

STUDENTS

Clear the hallways and remain in room or area until the "All Clear" is announced
Do business as usual

ADULTS

Close and lock the door
Account for students and adults
Do business as usual



SECURE! Get inside. Lock outside doors.

STUDENTS

Return to inside of building
Do business as usual

ADULTS

Bring everyone indoors
Lock outside doors
Increase situational awareness
Account for students and adults
Do business as usual



LOCKDOWN! Locks, lights, out of sight.

STUDENTS

Move away from sight
Maintain silence
Do not open the door

ADULTS

Recover students from hallway if possible
Lock the classroom door
Turn out the lights
Move away from sight
Maintain silence
Do not open the door
Prepare to evade or defend



EVACUATE! (A location may be specified)

STUDENTS

Leave stuff behind if required to
If possible, bring your phone
Follow instructions

ADULTS

Lead students to Evacuation location
Account for students and adults
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults



SHELTER! Hazard and safety strategy.

STUDENTS

Use appropriate safety strategy for the hazard

Hazard

Tornado
Hazmat
Earthquake
Tsunami

Safety Strategy

Evacuate to shelter area
Seal the room
Drop, cover and hold
Get to high ground

ADULTS

Lead safety strategy
Account for students and adults
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults

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EMERGENCY INFORMATION

The capability to contact parents during emergency situations is **essential**. Students cannot receive emergency non-life threatening medical care without parental/guardian approval. Parents must ensure that emergency contact information listing the address and phone numbers where they can be reached during the day are on file and current. Please contact the office at 772-801-5522 if any emergency information changes.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

The executive director will close school due to dangerous weather conditions or emergencies. SouthTech school closings will coincide with the Saint Lucie County School District's closings unless the closing is due to a problem unique only to one or more of the SouthTech schools. Closings will be announced on local radio stations, television stations, and through automated parent calls. If District schools are announced as being closed, SouthTech schools will be closed as well.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Evacuation routes are posted inside each classroom. The signal to evacuate will be either an alarm or an announcement over the P.A. system. Students are to quickly evacuate to their designated areas, remain calm and follow directions as they are given. Teachers will check rolls at their assigned areas. Students and teachers are to return to their classroom after an all-clear signal is given.

Setting off, damaging, defacing, or in any way disturbing fire alarms or fire-fighting equipment WILL result in a mandatory ten (10) day out of school suspension and possibly legal action.

LOST OR STOLEN ITEMS

The school **CANNOT** assume responsibility for lost, broken or stolen articles. **Students are urged not to bring valuable items or large sums of money to school.** Personal items or books found will be stored in the main office – lost and found. School personnel will not disrupt classroom instruction to search for lost personal or unauthorized items which include cell phones, I-pods, or other electronic personal items.

TEXTBOOKS

If your classroom teacher issues textbooks, the student is responsible for those books until they are returned. On the inside cover of each book, there is a number. It is important that you write your name in the designated area clearly in ink so that the book can be returned in the event it is lost. Each book is given a rating according to the condition it is in when assigned to the student. If the book is returned damaged in any way, the student will pay a fine. At the time of issuance, please bring any damage to the teacher's attention. Any and all questions regarding textbooks should be directed to the teacher. Classroom sets will be distributed by number as well. Students are responsible for the condition of all assigned textbooks.

VISITORS AND STUDENT PICKUP

Parents/Guardians are always welcomed and encouraged to visit the school. Visitors who are not parents/guardians are not allowed to visit students during the school hours unless it has been pre approved by administration. **For the safety of your child(ren), no student will be released to any person not on the registration form or noted in Skyward. Those persons authorized to pick up a student must show proper photo identification. There will be no exceptions.** Parent/guardians may alter the student contact/pick-up list only by completing in person/in writing, the additional student pick-up information section of the Student Demographic Information Form. An original signature is required.

Student Code of Conduct

The educational process of SouthTech Treasure Coast is to provide a safe environment that fosters student behavior that is socially acceptable and conducive to the learning and teaching process. It is the intent of this to establish guidelines and consequences for the conduct and discipline of students attending SouthTech Treasure Coast in accordance with The School District of Port Saint Lucie County's Discipline Matrix.

SouthTech Treasure Coast exercises these responsibilities during the times:

- a student is in route to and from school using SouthTech Schools or The School District of Saint Lucie County (School District) provided transportation.
- a student is attending school.
- a student is physically on the property that is owned or operated under the jurisdiction of SouthTech Schools or the School District.
- a student is attending any function sponsored by SouthTech Schools or the School District.

All students at SouthTech Treasure Coast are expected to reflect its high standards by conducting themselves in a manner that is conducive to the orderly operation of the school. Students should be in class, on time, and change from class to class in an orderly fashion, avoiding any behavior that may cause disruptions. Students must show respect and consideration for their peers and all members of the SouthTech Treasure Coast's staff, including bus drivers.

DISCIPLINE ACTION PLAN

Failure to comply with **SouthTech Treasure Coast Student Code of Conduct** - will result in consequences that may include a combination of the following, which are not sequential steps:

- **CONFERENCE WITH STUDENT:** Private time with student to discuss behavior interventions/solutions. This can include direct instruction in expected or desirable behaviors.
- **PARENT/GUARDIAN CONTACT:** Teachers and/or administrators will contact parents/guardians with concerns and solutions to a student's conduct and behavior.
- **REQUEST FOR PARENT/GUARDIAN CONFERENCE:** Teachers/administration or parents/guardians may request a conference to discuss student's conduct and/or behavior. In some cases, as determined by administration, a student may not be able to return to that class until a conference has taken place. That student will be sent to In-School Suspension (ISS) until such time that a conference is held.
- **PARENT/GUARDIAN INTERVENTION:** As a result of the severity of an infraction an administrative request may be made to the parent/guardian that a student should not return to school without the parent/guardian accompanying him/her for an administrative conference or to shadow the student during class. It is important that the parent/guardian schedule the conference as soon as possible. The time that a student is out shall not exceed ten days and will be considered unexcused absences.
- **IN SCHOOL SUSPENSION (ISS):** ISS is the temporary removal of a student from regular classes for a determined class period(s) or day(s) that the student will be held in one classroom for the assigned time. There will be total silence while in ISS. Students will be given academic assignments that must be completed before the student will be released from ISS. Failure to complete an assignment or the disruption of ISS will result in additional time added to ISS or an out of school suspension (OSS).
- **LUNCH DETENTION:** Students spend an entire lunch period assigned to the ISS room where they will silently eat lunch and complete an assignment. Failure to report to lunch detention will result in further disciplinary action.
- **AFTER SCHOOL DETENTION:** Students spend part of the evening (3:00-5:00) assigned to the ISS room where they will silently complete an assignment. Failure to report to after school detention will result in further disciplinary action.
- **OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION (OSS):** Extreme disciplinary consequences may require the temporary removal of a student from SouthTech Treasure Coast. This removal is not to exceed ten (10) consecutive school days per incident.
- **ATTENDANCE OR DISCIPLINARY CONTRACT:** Missing more than five (5) days during a semester or a continuous disregard for classroom and/or school rules and regulations will result in a student being placed on an attendance or disciplinary contract respectively.
- **WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTHTECHTREASURE COAST:** After all interventions have been

exhausted, failure to adhere to the SouthTech Treasure Coast Student Code of Conduct or SouthTech Treasure Coast academic requirements, may result in a student being withdrawn from SouthTech Treasure Coast immediately or at the end of the semester and referred back to the student's boundary school.

- **EXPULSION:** As a result of an infraction that severely violates SouthTech Treasure Coast and the Saint Lucie County School District policies, a recommendation may be made to the SouthTech Academy Board along with the Saint Lucie County School Board not to allow a student to attend any public school in Saint Lucie County.
- **Rules and regulations will also apply to school transportation (buses). A good faith effort shall be made by instructors and/or administrators to employ parental involvement whenever necessary to assist in a student's negative behaviors and/or academic performances.**

DISCIPLINE MATRIX OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PORT SAINT LUCIE COUNTY

SouthTech Treasure Coast will use and follow the codes set forth in the Saint Lucie County School District's discipline matrix to determine reasons and consequences for discipline infractions. In addition, SouthTech Treasure Coast subscribes to the Positive Behavior Interventions & Support program. *SouthTech Treasure Coast has developed three universal guidelines for behavior and a matrix for school wide behavior expectations:*

BE RESPECTFUL

BE RESPONSIBLE

BE READY TO LEARN

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

DRESS CODE

- Upon entering and when on campus, students must wear the appropriate SouthTech Treasure Coast uniform. This uniform **MUST** be properly worn and visible at all times during the school day.
- No unapproved outer garments are to be worn over the uniform. Students may wear the STTC cardigan or jacket, any other brand of jacket/hoodie **may not be worn**. No sweaters or jackets with hoodies are allowed in school. Uniform bottoms must be uniform styled (shorts, skirts, capris, pants), and are required to be khaki (tan), navy or black. Students are not allowed to wear leggings, sweatpants, or athletic wear.
- **Students are not permitted to wear pants that fall below the waist or droop too low (no exposed undergarments or other indecencies will be permitted). Pants that expose skin of any**

kind may not be worn on campus.

- Students may wear uniform skirts or shorts that fall no more than **two inches** above the knee. No pencil skirts will be allowed. No exposed midriffs will be allowed.
- **Bandanas, caps, headbands, headscarves or other headwear deemed inappropriate by administration will not be allowed.**
- Uniform shoes must have backs and be closed-toed. **No Crocs** or cloth or bedroom type footwear will be permitted. No sandals or flip flops.
- Wallet chains, dog collars, stud belts/bracelets or any other types of non-jewelry chains are prohibited.
- SouthTech Treasure Coast reserves the right to deny any student the privilege of wearing certain colors and clothing which may be disruptive to the educational process.

DRESS CODE VIOLATIONS

Failure to comply with these code policies will result in the following consequences:

- Violation of dress code students will result in parent contact to notify about the uniform violation and ask to drop off proper clothing.
- Students that are not compliant with dress code will wait in the Student Services office until proper attire can be obtained.
- Repeated violations will result in a **referral for insubordination** and require further disciplinary actions.

ID BADGE

Students must wear their SouthTech Treasure Coast ID badge at all times while on campus. Badges are to be worn around the neck on a lanyard or clipped to the student's front collar. Replacement Badges are available in the main office for \$5.

Failure to comply with these code policies will result in the following consequences:

- **1st offense** - A verbal warning from teacher/staff/admin.
- **2nd offense** - Teacher/Staff will call the parent to notify them about the ID violation.
- **3rd offense** - Lunch detention will be administered.

Repeated violations will result in a **referral for insubordination** and require further disciplinary actions.

SKATEBOARDS, ROLLER BLADES, SCOOTERS, SPORTS EQUIPMENT

Skateboards, roller blades, sports equipment and/or scooters are not permitted on school grounds without pre-approval from administration and they must be kept in the main office during the school day.

Extracurricular Activities

It is a privilege for students to participate in extracurricular activities, like *Grad Bash*, *school dances*, *School Festivals*, *Field Trips*, *Dress Down days*, etc. However, students who do not follow the school rules will lose these privileges.

WELLNESS PROMOTION

SouthTech Treasure Coast 5.003 follows the School District's wellness promotion Policy 1.11 which is intended to fulfill the requirement under Public Law 108-265 state statute 204 (204) (42 U.S.C. statute 1751 Note) that promotes student health and reduction of childhood obesity, as well as to promote wellness for employees.

SouthTech Treasure Coast's Voice Levels

Level 0	No Conversation (No talking, no sound)
Level 1	Whisper (Only the person next to you can hear you)
Level 2	Talking Voice – Quiet Conversation (Only the person next to you can hear you)
Level 3	Presentation Voice (Everyone in the room should be able to hear you)
Level 4	Outside Voice (You can be heard across the pavilion, cheering at a pep rally, etc.)

PROCEDURES FOR MISCONDUCT

ASSAULT OR BATTERY UPON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD EMPLOYEE

Whenever any student, parent, or other person commits an assault or battery upon any elected official or employee of a school district, and the elected official or employee is on school property or is away from school property on official business, the offense will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

CHEATING/PLAGIARISM

Students are expected to maintain values of personal integrity and honesty. Cheating is not acceptable behavior. Any work submitted by students must represent their own effort. In the case of material borrowed from another source, the work submitted must include clear and appropriate attribution. Any student who is apprehended cheating or deliberately plagiarizing will be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, failing grade for work submitted.

COLLECTING/SOLICITING MONEY

Students or staff may not solicit funds unless the principal has first given permission. Students are to refrain from borrowing money from other students. **ABSOLUTELY NOTHING IS TO BE SOLD ON CAMPUS OR ON THE BUSES UNLESS SCHOOL SPONSORED.**

DISRUPTIVE ITEMS

Items that are disruptive to the learning environment are prohibited. Perfumes, lotions, makeup, hairspray, deodorants, etc. may not be applied in the classroom or hallways. Exploding or noisemaker items such as poppers, snappers and other items are strictly prohibited. Water guns, laser guns, stink bombs, laser pens, fidget spinners, slime and other disruptive “toys” have no place in the school environment. These types of disruptive items will be confiscated.

DRUG/INTOXICANTS AND ALCOHOL VIOLATIONS

The possession, purchasing, consumption, use or distribution of drugs, including intoxicating beverages, is illegal and is prohibited anywhere on school property. Any involvement in drug-related activity is prohibited. This includes all school activities and functions on and off school grounds. Offenses could result in exclusion or expulsion from school. Anyone deemed being under the influence of drugs/intoxicants to any degree is subject to disciplinary action. “Under the influence” is defined as having consumed any amount of an alcoholic beverage or having taken any amount of an illegal drug. (Sips and “one hits” counts). The possession of drug paraphernalia is prohibited (e.g. rolling papers, bongos, commercial inhalants (Wite Out, air cans etc.).

- **1st offense** – Must provide students with an opportunity to exchange 5 days of the 10 days out of school suspension for the district approved alternative to suspension program.
- **2nd offense** – Requires a 10 day out of school suspension and/or recommendation for expulsion.

EATING/DRINKING IN INAPPROPRIATE AREAS

All food and beverages must be consumed in designated areas only and all trash must be properly disposed of. No food or beverages should be consumed in the hallways or in classrooms unless it is an approved class activity. At no time should open cans of beverages be carried through the halls. Everyone's cooperation is needed to maintain a clean, trash-free campus. Food or drinks may not be consumed in the hallways. ***No gum chewing in class or on campus at any time. Students cannot bring or have food delivered. They can eat from our school cafeteria or bring their own food from home.***

FALSE FIRE ALARM

Any student who pulls the fire alarm without legitimate cause will be subject to immediate disciplinary and **legal action**.

FIGHTING

SouthTech Treasure Coast has a zero tolerance for fighting. Every individual has the right to be free from fear of attack, bullying, assault or intimidation. Actions on the part of any person which infringe this basic individual right will not be tolerated. Wherever possible, the administration will try to determine who started the fight and whether the fight was a "fight or a scuffle." The person starting the fight may receive the greater punishment. All students who actively participate in a fight regardless of who "threw the first punch" are subject to disciplinary action. Any student who has reason to believe a fight may occur should seek immediate help from an administrator, counselor or teacher as a preventative step. **Students who promote, film, share or instigate violent activity will also be held responsible and accountable.** Everyone must learn ways other than violence to handle individual differences. ***This applies on school grounds, school buses, bus stops, on the way to or from the bus or anywhere where students are wearing SouthTech Treasure Coast uniform.***

INSUBORDINATION

Insubordination is defined as defying the authority of a school official or acting in a manner, which connotes such defiance. When a school official makes a reasonable request of any student, compliance is imperative. Students are expected to identify themselves immediately upon request. Failure to do so shall constitute insubordination.

LEAVING SCHOOL GROUNDS

Students must remain on campus unless a student is officially excused to leave school, by the principal/designee, and parent/guardian. There are no exceptions.

REPORTING TO ADMINISTRATOR

If students are sent for by an administrator or are sent to an administrator's office by any staff member at any time, they should have the appropriate hall pass and report immediately to the appropriate office. Students should remain in the office until seen by an administrator or given permission to leave. Students should never have "no place" to be. If in doubt, students should report to the main office.

REPORTING TO THE MAIN OFFICE & GUIDANCE OFFICE

Students must have an appropriate hall pass to report to the main office and guidance office. Students must check in with a staff member and obtain a note for re-admittance to class when leaving.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Any school administrator or authorized officer may conduct a reasonable search of a student on the school premises if there is reasonable suspicion to believe that the student possesses an illegal substance, object, or anything that is prohibited as defined by School . Any school administrator or authorized officer may conduct a search of every part of the physical plant of the school to include student lockers and backpacks. Any confiscated property belonging to a student will be returned to the student or his/her parents by the end of the school year, except as required by law or by consideration of safety for students and staff. Student's/parents are to arrange for pick-up of the items at the designated time.

THEFT

The taking of anything or the attempt to take anything without the owner's consent is prohibited. Materials improperly removed from the offices, classrooms or cafeteria fall into this category.

THREATS

No word, action, gesture or deed that threatens violence towards a student or member of the school staff (even if "joking") will be tolerated. Students are expected to report such threats immediately to an administrator, counselor, or teacher.

TOBACCO/E-CIGARETTE/VAPES VIOLATIONS

The possession, purchasing, consumption, use or distribution of tobacco, including e-cigarettes and vapes, etc., is illegal and is prohibited anywhere on school property. Any involvement in tobacco-related activity is prohibited. This includes all school activities and functions on and off school grounds.

- **1st offense** – Must provide students with an opportunity to exchange 3 days of the 5 days out of school suspension for the district approved alternative to suspension program.
- **2nd offense** – Must provide students with an opportunity to exchange 3 days of the 5 days out of school suspension for the district approved alternative to suspension program.

Repeated offenses – 10 days out of school suspension for each offense.

Tobacco products include but are not limited to: cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vapes, chewing tobacco, cigars, Juuls, and snuff.

UNAUTHORIZED AREAS

Areas designated for staff (e.g. staff lounge) or other unsupervised classrooms, spaces, offices or storage areas are “off limits” to students, unless given written permission by a staff member.

UNAUTHORIZED POSSESSION OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students may not be in possession of any school property (e.g. hall passes, grade books, keys) without the permission of a staff member.

VERBAL ABUSE

Verbal abuse is defined as intimidating, insulting or in another manner abusing a member of the school community, including, though not limited to, students and staff members.

VIOLENCE

No word, action, gesture or deed that threatens violence (even if “joking”) will be tolerated. Students are expected to report such threats immediately to an administrator, counselor or teacher.

WEAPONS

Florida Statutes § 1006.07 , provides that: a. Possession of a firearm or weapon as defined in Chapter 790, Florida Statutes, by any student while the student is on school property or in attendance at a school function is grounds for disciplinary action and may also result in criminal prosecution. b. Any student who is determined to have brought a firearm or weapon, as defined in Chapter 790, Florida Statutes, to school, to any school function, or onto any school sponsored transportation, or to have possessed a firearm at school, will be

expelled, with or without continuing educational services, from the student's regular school for a period of not less than 1 full year and referred to the criminal justice or juvenile justice system.

ATTENDANCE

Pursuant to Florida statutes 1003.01 all students shall be required to attend school. Florida Statute 1003.24 and SouthTech Treasure Coast Attendance states that it is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) to insure their children attend school on a regular basis. "Regular basis," according to statute and, means attending school every day including every period. SouthTech Treasure Coast operates on an A/B daily block that has 4 grading terms. Any student missing more than 5 days per term will put themselves in peril of not receiving full credit and MAY jeopardize their continued enrollment at SouthTech Treasure Coast. Pursuant to Florida State Statute 1003.26 and SouthTech Treasure Coast the Executive Director and Board of SouthTech Treasure Coast has the authority to take steps to bring criminal prosecution against the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student who has violated the State of Florida Department of Education, the Saint Lucie County District School System and SouthTech Treasure Coast attendance policies which are the same.

EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

The parent(s)/guardian(s) and student understand that Florida State Law requires that all students attend school each day without exception unless there is a legal excuse for being absent. After 10 days absent, excused or unexcused, a student may be placed on an attendance contract. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to justify an absence within 24 hours of the student's return to school. The justification will be evaluated based on the adopted School Board definition of "excused" absences which are:

1. Student illness
2. Medical appointment
3. Death in the family
4. Religious holidays or services recognized by all members of the faith
5. Subpoena by law enforcement agency or mandatory court appearance
6. Other individual student absences beyond the control of the parent or student, as determined and approved by the Principal or Principal's designee.



ATTENDANCE PLAN

Number of Days Absent	Notification
3	Parent will receive a call from the teacher indicating that the student has missed three days of school.
5	Parent will receive a phone call from the school administrator or counselor explaining that the student has missed five days of school and reminding the parent of the importance of regular school attendance. The parent will be encouraged to meet with the son or daughter's counselor to discuss attendance issues.
7	A letter will be sent home from the school requiring that the parent meet with the principal or counselor to discuss supports that can be provided to facilitate improved attendance.
10	Student will be placed on an attendance contract.
11+	Conditions listed on attendance contract In addition, the school principal and counselor may conduct a home visit to the meet with the student's parents, assess barriers to school attendance, and develop a plan to improve the student's attendance.

Policy: A student can miss no more than 5 days per half credit hour course or 10 days per full credit hour course, excused or unexcused.

Tardy

Within the first 15 minutes of class

Students are expected to be on time to all of their classes as tardiness disrupts the learning process for the student and the teaching process for the instructor. Students are considered tardy to class if they are NOT in their seats ready to learn. Students who arrive within the first 15 minutes of class should be marked tardy on the teacher's grade book/attendance record.

Later than 15 minutes of class

Students who arrive later than 15 minutes into the class period must report directly to the Counselor or front desk for an Admit Slip to class. Once students have received an Admit Slip they must report directly to their class. Students with the Admit Slip must be allowed to participate in all instructional activities for the remainder of the class period. Students will still be considered tardy on the teacher's attendance. Only students who do not attend any portion of the class period should be marked absent. Below are the consequences for student tardiness.

Failure to comply with tardiness will result in the following action:

1st offense - A verbal warning from teacher/staff/admin.

2nd offense - Verbal warning and teacher will contact parent/guardian to notify of 2nd offense of tardiness.

3rd offense - Students will need to report to the Counselor or Assistant Principal will contact parent/guardian and administer any disciplinary action.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, such as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature are not tolerated. Harassing conduct can include verbal or nonverbal actions, including graphic and written statements, and may include statements made through computers, cellphones, and other devices connected to the Internet. The conduct can be carried out by school employees, other students, and non-employee third parties. This includes, but is not limited to, an incident when one student demands a sexual favor from another student under the threat of physical harm or adverse consequence. *Must be reported as a SESIR incident and is expected to include consultation with Law Enforcement.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

SouthTech Treasure Coast has joined hands in a national campaign to stop "bullying" and cyber-bullying in our schools. The faculty and administration at SouthTech Treasure Coast wish to

provide each and every member of our families information to recognize and prevent all forms of bullying from occurring. It is the responsibility of all to prevent this negative behavior and help assure a safe and sound learning environment. Bullying can take the form of physical harm to someone's body or property, emotional harm to someone's self-esteem, or feeling of safety and social harm to someone's group acceptance. Bullying occurs when there is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance, **and is repeated and consecutive**. No act that demeans or puts down another individual will be considered "fooling around." Students who are bullied are encouraged to share such experiences with a teacher, counselor, or administrators.

PARENT / STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

- The Organization prides itself on the quality of the teaching and care provided to its students.
- All members of the School community should contribute to a respectful and inclusive environment.
- Staff, student, or parent/guardians can raise concerns about any issues that affect a student's well-being and/or academic performance and work together to resolve them. In rare cases where the issue cannot be resolved informally, an official written complaint can be registered by a parent with the School management.
- Although no member of the School community shall be denied the right to petition the Governing Board for redress of a grievance, the complaints will be referred through the proper administrative channels for solution before investigation or action by the Governing Board. Exceptions are complaints that concern Governing Board actions or operations.
- The Board advises the School community that the proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline, or learning materials is as follows:
 1. Teachers
 2. Assistant Principal and/or Principal
 3. Executive Director
 4. Parent Liaison
 5. Governing Board

Any complaint about school personnel will be investigated by the Administration before consideration and action by the Board of Directors.

HALLWAY CONDUCT/TRANSITIONS

Students should create an orderly flow of traffic in the hallways by practicing hands down, eyes forward, low speed, low volume, and following designated one-way hallway procedures. All students should be able to walk the halls without having embarrassing or derogatory remarks made to or directed at them. Students should not bump into, push, or jostle other students. There should be no running in the halls or loitering. There is to be no eating or drinking in the halls except in designated areas. Appropriate passes are required at all times except between classes. *No public displays of affection will be tolerated.*

INTERNET SAFETY

1. SouthTech Schools recognizes the value of electronic devices and the internet to improve student learning and enhancing school administration and operations. However, the internet is an unregulated vehicle for communication, and information and interactions on the internet can pose certain risks to students and staff members. Therefore, the Governing Board adopts this policy governing the use of school networks to comply with Florida law and State Board of Education rules, and to provide rules for students and employees accessing such networks.

2. General Requirements for Users. It is the policy of the School to maintain an environment that promotes ethical and responsible conduct in all online network activities by staff and students. It shall be a violation of this policy for any employee, student, or other individual to engage in any activity that does not conform to the established purpose and general rules and policies of the network. Users on any network operated by the School shall comply with the following requirements:

- a) All use of a network must be in connection with education and research, or in the case of employees, related to the employee's job functions.
- b) Users shall not access any content that is prohibited under this policy or under the law.
- c) Users are prohibited from using the School's networks for any illegal or unethical purposes, including infiltrating or hacking the School's systems or any outside systems.
- d) Users shall not utilize the School's networks for personal gain or personal business.
- e) Users shall not install any unauthorized software or programs on any School-owned electronic device or network.
- f) Users shall not destroy, delete, or modify any School-owned devices or software unless authorized to do so.
- g) Users shall not utilize the School's networks to engage in harassment, discrimination, cyberstalking, cyberbullying, or obscene behavior.
- h) Users will avoid clicking unknown links or accessing web pages and other content that may contain malware, spyware, ransomware, or other malicious software.
- i) If any user accesses prohibited content or downloads potentially malicious software, the individual must immediately report the incident to their teacher, in the case of students, or to the Principal, in the case of staff members.

3. Requirements for Student Users. The following requirements apply to the use of the School's networks by students:

- a) Student internet and technology sessions must always be supervised by a teacher or other staff member.

- b) Students may only use technology or access the internet when expressly instructed by a teacher for educational purposes.
- c) Staff members who supervise students, control electronic equipment, or otherwise have occasion to observe student use of school-provided technology or internet access shall make reasonable efforts to monitor student use to assure that it conforms to the requirements of this policy and the law.
- d) Staff must make reasonable efforts to become familiar with the internet and its use so that effective monitoring, instruction, and assistance may be achieved.

4. Prohibited Uses. It is strictly forbidden for any users to access online content that is lewd, pornographic, scandalous, obscene, illegal, hateful, objectionable, inappropriate, or that otherwise does not comply with the requirements of this policy.

5. Social Media Platforms. As a general rule, the School's networks may not be used by any person to access social media platforms. In limited circumstances, students may be permitted to access social media platforms when expressly directed by a teacher to do so and solely for educational purposes. Staff members may also access social media accounts that are maintained on behalf of the School and related to the staff member's job duties. Prior to requiring students to use online content, staff must confirm that the content is not blocked by the student internet filter. Staff may make a request to their supervisor that blocked content or social media platforms be reviewed and temporarily unblocked for educational purposes.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, under no circumstances may any employee or student access TikTok or any other platforms prohibited by Florida's Department of Management Services while on school grounds or participating in a school activity. Additionally, the use of TikTok to communicate or promote the School, a School- sponsored club, extracurricular organization, or athletic team is prohibited.

6. Online Messaging Platforms. Students are only permitted to utilize sanctioned email, chatrooms, and online messaging platforms while at the School or as part of School activities and only when permitted by a staff member as part of the educational program. Students should be made aware of the potential dangers posed by communicating with unknown individuals on the internet and such communications are strictly prohibited.

7. School's Responsibilities. In order to ensure network safety and enforce the provisions of this policy, the School's administration will implement the following measures:

- a) Provide internal and external controls as appropriate and feasible that restrict access to content, including implementing a network filtering system that is designed to block access to prohibited or restricted content on the School's networks and on any School- issued device. Access content should be limited to age-appropriate subject matter and materials. Access to websites, web or mobile applications, or software that does not protect against the disclosure, use, or dissemination of students' personal information in accordance with Rule 6A-1.0955, F.A.C., will be prevented.

- b) Monitor the use of online activities and electronic devices. This may include real-time monitoring of network activity and/or maintaining a log of internet activity for later review.
- c) Remove or revoke privileges for any user that poses a threat to the safety and security of the network or to any person.
- d) Retain the ability to remotely remove any prohibited application from any School- issued device.
- e) Restrict access to social media platforms, applications prohibited by the Department of Management Services, and any other destination that does not adequately protect student information.
- f) Make reasonable efforts to train staff and students in acceptable use and policies governing use of the School's networks and devices.
- g) Contract only with service providers and operators of websites, online services, or online applications that comply with all state and federal laws governing the disclosure of confidential student information.

8. Violations. Use of electronic devices and networks provided by the School is a privilege. To maintain the privilege, all users agree to learn and comply with the provisions of this policy. Violations of this policy may result in revocation of network access rights and further

Disciplinary action. Students that violate this policy will be disciplined in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct. Any criminal activity will be reported to law enforcement.

TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation for students living more than two miles from school is governed by the State and provided by South Tech Schools. For information regarding bus pick-ups and drop-offs or any other transportation questions, please contact the school. **Riding the bus is a privilege.** Students may be suspended from riding the bus if their conduct presents a safety concern. All students riding the bus are subject to the authority and discipline of the bus driver at all times while on the bus. School bus misconduct or vandalism is reported to school administrators on student discipline referral form by the driver. Any student receiving a referral form will be subject to disciplinary action according to the Port Saint Lucie County School District discipline matrix. SouthTech Treasure Coast may suspend any student from riding the bus for a period not to exceed ten (10) days. **Repeat offenders may be expelled from bus privileges.** Students and parents/guardians will be notified of such a decision within 24 hours of said suspension. If a student is suspended from the bus, the bus driver will not allow the student to enter the bus.

BUS RULES

Occasionally, a bus is delayed in picking up students. Students should wait a reasonable time and then contact the school to see if the bus is on route. Students are required to ride their assigned bus. The school bus driver is in charge of the bus and the passengers. The driver is responsible for the safety of students and for their conduct on the bus. Riders are subject to the authority of the bus driver and may be suspended from riding the bus for violation of bus rules. Riding the bus is a

privilege that can be denied if a pupil's behavior creates a problem on the school bus or at the bus stop. **Safety is the number one consideration.** In addition to the disciplinary rules stated in this handbook, the following rules must be observed:

- Students are expected to respect their neighbors and the property of their neighbors while waiting for the bus or while in route to or from the bus stop. Students are expected to behave in a way that promotes safety and good manners. Students must stand off the roadway while waiting for the bus.
- Students preparing to board the bus should cross the roadway immediately in front of the bus, BUT NOT UNTIL THE BUS DRIVER HAS GIVEN THE SIGNAL TO CROSS AND IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.
- Students riding buses must arrive at the bus stop on time; the bus cannot wait for those who are tardy.
- Students must remain in their seats at all times when the bus is in motion.
- All riders must keep their arms and heads inside the bus at all times. Nothing may be thrown from the bus.
- Riders should not engage in unnecessary conversation with the driver because this creates a dangerous situation. Students are to observe classroom conduct, except for ordinary conversation.
- Students must treat the bus property respectfully and carefully. Vandalism will not be tolerated.
- Eating, drinking, smoking or vaping on the bus is absolutely forbidden. Smoking or vaping and possession of tobacco products/e-cigarettes and vaping products is prohibited at the bus stop or while waiting for the bus.
- The driver has the right to assign students to certain seats if necessary in order to promote order and safety on the bus.
- Students must get on and off the bus at their assigned school bus stop. No one is entitled to ride any bus other than the one to which they are assigned.
- Parents/adults other than official personnel are not to board or approach the bus for any reason without prior approval from administration.

If a student's bus privileges are suspended, the **student's parents are responsible to ensure that the student is attending school.**

SPORTS

SouthTech Treasure Coast does not offer any interscholastic sports activities. SouthTech's charter agreement with Saint Lucie County District specifies that any SouthTech student in good standing may participate in interscholastic sports or other FHSA activities at their boundary school. In addition, SouthTech Treasure Coast does offer after school intramural sports activities as well as various clubs and other activities in which students may participate.

TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE - DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Whether in or outside of the classroom, any unauthorized or inappropriate use of an electronic device will result in confiscation; refusal to surrender the device will result in disciplinary action, after the first time. In the case of repeat offenses, a parent or guardian will be required to retrieve the device. Unauthorized use of cell phone or other technology includes, but is not limited to:

- Complaint of photography without consent
- Complaint of recording without consent

- Texting
- Social networking
- Listening to Music
- Cyberbullying
- Negative posting on social media

If cell phones are heard in any way (vibrating) or seen they will be confiscated. This applies to headphones and other hearing devices.

Failure to comply with the Digital Citizenship will result in the following action:

- **1st offense** - *Return of the confiscated item will require the parent/guardian to come to the main office and pick up the item. The cell phone will be stored securely in a safe located in the main office during the school day and will be returned to the student at the end of the school day.*
- **2nd offense** - *The cell phone will be held in the main office and will be returned to the parent or guardian only.*
- **3rd offense** - *Confiscated items will not be given back to the student or parents until a parent conference has been held*

Refusal to turn over a device to a SouthTech Treasure Coast faculty or staff member when requested will result in a referral for insubordination.

Continuous offenses: Items will be confiscated and the student will receive a referral for insubordination. Disciplinary action will be taken as outlined in the Saint Lucie County School District discipline matrix. Items will be confiscated and returned to students at the end of the school year.

The school will not be responsible for confiscated items lost, stolen or damaged.

WIRELESS COMMUNICATION AND ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY

To promote a safe and focused learning environment, SouthTech Schools prohibit the use of wireless communication devices (like phones, smartwatches, and tablets) during the school day for middle school students. All devices must be turned off or in airplane mode during the school day. Unauthorized use, especially that which disrupts learning or safety, is not allowed. Exceptions apply for medical or educational needs with proper documentation. Proper use is expected at all school events and on school property. Photographs and video recordings may only occur with the consent of the person who is the subject of the photograph/video. Violations may lead to disciplinary action and possible confiscation of the device, to be returned only to a parent. Students who use wireless communication devices in the commission of a criminal act while on school property or in attendance at a school-sponsored event or activity may face school disciplinary action and/or criminal penalties. Students carry wireless communications devices at their own risk. The school is not responsible if a student's wireless communication device is lost or stolen while in school, in attendance at a school-sponsored event or activity, or while on school transportation.

OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY VIOLATION

Any cyberbullying, or technology harassment, that takes place off campus and is reported to school staff members shall be addressed by the parent/guardian. School administrators will advise the parent, but are not responsible for taking action UNLESS the incident is disruptive to the learning environment.

Pledge of Allegiance

According to s.1003.44F.S., Patriotic Programs, upon written request by the parent/guardian, a student may be excused from reciting the pledge, including standing and placing the right hand over the heart. Students who have not been excused via written request by the parent/guardian are expected to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

SOUTHTECH SCHOOLS

CLASSROOM RULES FOR MOBILE DEVICES

Get ¹Mobile Devices when the teacher instructs to do so.
Be sure to use only the ¹Mobile Devices number assigned to you.
Always sit down while using the ¹Mobile Devices.
If you are asked to move for any reason, carry the ¹Mobile Devices with two hands and hold it by the base, not the cover.
No banging, slamming, or hitting the ¹Mobile Devices.
Stay focused on the lesson objectives; do not visit pages that are not directly related to your assignment.
Do not touch someone else's ¹Mobile Devices.
No gum, food, or drinks allowed in CLASS or near the ¹Mobile Devices.
Stop 5 minutes before the end of the period and log off the ¹Mobile Devices before closing the cover.
Place the ¹Mobile Devices back on the cart in its proper numerical space when instructed to do so.
Inspect your ¹Mobile Devices at the beginning of class and report Mobile Devices damage immediately. (Failure to report damage or improper function to the ¹Mobile Devices may result in student being held liable).

Disciplinary Actions

Tier One	Tier Two	Tier Three
Loses ability to use ¹ Mobile Devices for the remainder of that class period, or for the next class period if violation occurs at the end of a class period for that specific teacher.	Loses ability to use ¹ Mobile Devices for at least one week, and placed on a behavioral technology contract. This offense applies across all teachers and classes.	Immediate suspension of the use of ¹ Mobile Devices for at least one semester. If violation occurs within the last month of a semester, consequence applies for the remainder of that semester and the entirety of the following semester. Student will only gain back privileges by conferencing with teacher where that incident has occurred, administration, and parent/guardian.

¹Mobile Devices: Laptops, Chromebooks, iPads, Tablets

SouthTech Schools prohibits discrimination against students, employees, and applicants on the basis of religion, race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, marital status, age, parental status, pregnancy, or disability in all employment practices, programs, services or activities. For questions contact 561-369-7042.

ACADEMIC PROCEDURES

CLASS OR SCHEDULE CHANGE

A student wishing to withdraw from a class or have a schedule change must request a schedule change and complete a form which is obtained from their **Guidance Counselor** in order to have the request considered. Students must continue to attend all classes until they are officially withdrawn or until their schedule has been officially changed. Schedule changes **MUST** be justified and will be approved on a limited basis. Unless special circumstances exist, schedule changes after the second week of a class will not be approved.

GRADING PERIOD AND REPORT CARD DISTRIBUTION

Report cards are generated every 9 weeks. The report card will reflect the academic status and attendance for each student. Progress reports will be issued to each student approximately 4-1/2 weeks into each 9 week marking period. Any student in jeopardy of failing may receive daily or weekly progress reports issued to the parents.

GENERAL RULES FOR GRADING

Grading shall be based on the quality of work done. A student's attendance, daily preparation, and promptness in completing assignments must be consistent and congruent with the grades given. All students will receive a daily grade. Students who have not completed all assigned work will show a "missing" grade until the assignment is graded or will get an 0 if it is not turned in. Students are required to make-up all work missed for all absences, whether excused or unexcused. Students must complete all work within one day for each day absent from class, not counting the day of return. Students who fail to do make-up work will be assigned a zero for all assigned work missed on a daily basis which could result in failure of the class and loss of credit. Repeated failure or refusal to make-up work will result in disciplinary action and placement upon a student academic contract. In order to enable parents and guardians to stay informed about their child's academic progress, we provide mid-quarter progress reports through Skyward. It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to log in to the system and access the report. We encourage parents and guardians to review these reports carefully and to communicate with their child's teachers if they have any questions or concerns.

GRADING SCALE

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| ● A = Outstanding progress (90% - 100%) | ● F = Failure (below 59%) |
| ● B = Above average progress (80% - 89%) | ● W = Withdrawn |
| ● C = Average progress (70% - 79%) | ● I = Incomplete |
| ● D = Lowest acceptable progress (60% - 69%) | |

STUDENT CONDUCT GRADING

- 4 = Student's behavior very constructive to learning
- 3 = Student's behavior generally supportive of learning

- 2 = Student's behavior detrimental to his/her own learning
- 1 = Student's behavior detrimental to his/her own learning and to the learning of others

Academic Contract Policy

Students who are not meeting academic expectations may be placed on an Academic Contract. The Academic Contract outlines specific goals, support strategies, and timelines to help the student to return to good academic standing.

STUDENT RECORDS

Parents and/or students eighteen years of age or older shall have the right to inspect, review and obtain copies of any and all official records, files, and data directly related to the student. These records may be obtained through the guidance office. Copies of education records shall be provided upon request according to Florida Statutes D.5.05 (Public Law 93380).

STUDENT WELFARE POLICY

SouthTech Schools is committed to supporting student well-being while respecting parental rights. Parents will be notified of any changes to their child's mental, emotional, or physical health services provided by the school. Staff cannot withhold important health-related information from parents unless there is a risk of abuse, abandonment, or neglect. Instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity is not allowed in grades 6–8 and must follow state guidelines for grades 9–12. If parents have concerns about student welfare or instruction, they can submit a written complaint to the principal. If the issue is not resolved, parents may escalate the matter to the Executive Director and if not resolved to the STS Board of Directors. If necessary, parents may request a special magistrate or seek legal action. At the beginning of the school year, SouthTech Schools will notify parents of each health care service offered at the School and the option to withhold consent or decline any specific service. Parental consent to a health care service does not waive the parent's right to access his or her student's educational or health records or to be notified about a change in his or her student's services or monitoring as provided by this paragraph.

WITHDRAWALS AND TRANSFERS FROM SCHOOL

The following **MUST** be completed in order for a student to withdraw or transfer from SouthTech Treasure Coast:

- Parents/guardians must accompany the student to the Guidance Office and authorize the withdrawal.
- Turn in all books and clear all financial obligations.
- Complete the required withdrawal form.
- Return the completed withdrawal form to the Guidance Department

SOUTHTECH TREASURE COAST STUDENT & PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

PARENT/GUARDIAN/STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 2026-2027

Student's Rules and Regulation of Operations

Your signature means you have received this booklet and know what the rules are.

Students, parents/guardians, teachers, counselors, administrators, custodians, and office staff all have important roles to play at SouthTech Treasure Coast. With so many people working together, problems may occur from time to time. Rules have been made to address these problems and rules need to be followed with fidelity.

The **Student/Parent/Guardian Handbook** lists the rules for students at **SouthTech Treasure Coast Schools**. The rules apply to all activities occurring on school grounds, on other sites being used for school activities, and for any vehicle authorized for the transporting of students. **Please read them.**

Since **parents/guardians** can be held **responsible** for the **actions of their children**, it is important that they are aware of the **rules** and **consequences** if the **rules are broken**. Parents/guardians need to become actively involved in the education of their children and have the responsibility to provide the school with the current emergency contact person and/or telephone numbers. They also have the responsibility to notify the school of anything (such as medical information) that may affect their child's ability to learn, to attend school regularly, or to take part in school activities. Parents/guardians should take special notice of the student services section that includes the attendance, dress code, tardies, utilization of cell phones and other electronic devices and gang relationship policies.

SouthTech Treasure Coast must have proof that every student and every parent/guardian has received, read and understands the SouthTech Treasure Coast Student/Parent/Guardian Handbook. Student's and parents'/guardians' signatures indicate an understanding of an agreement to obey all SouthTech Treasure Coast policies and procedures while utilizing school provided transportation, attending all school learning activities or school sponsored extracurricular activities. Your signature indicates that you have received this booklet and acknowledge the rules.

PRINT NAME PARENT/GUARDIAN: _____ DATE : _____

PRINT NAME STUDENT: _____ DATE : _____

Parent emergency phone number: _____

Appendix E:

SouthTech Academy Student Progression Plan



Grades 9 - 12

Student Progression Plan

Entry, Promotion, Retention, and Graduation

2025-2026

Carla Lovett, Executive Director
Joshua Wigelsworth, Principal
Erin Kurtz, Assistant Principal
Joseph Roberts, Assistant Principal
Meghan Hess Shamdasani, CTE Coordinator

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

In accordance with Florida Statute § 1008.25(1)(2), the purpose of Student Progression Plan is that each student's progression from one grade to another be determined, in part, upon satisfactory performance in English Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies; that STA's governing board policies facilitate student achievement; that each student and his or her parent¹ be informed of the student's academic progress; and that students have access to educational options that provide academically challenging coursework or accelerated instruction pursuant to Florida Statute § 1002.3105.

This Student Progression Plan strives to ensure that the required program of study, placement, promotion, reporting, retention, and special programs are equitable and comprehensive for all students. It is the responsibility of the Governing Board and SouthTech Academy (STA)² administration to provide students with effective instructional and remedial programs that monitor progress, promote continuous achievement, and make provisions for individual differences.

If items are not addressed in this document, please see the School District of Palm Beach County Student Progression Plan and/or State Statutes.

PLAN FORMAT

When relevant, citations of Florida Statutes, State Board of Education Rules, school policies, as well as resources are provided. Most of the citations and resources/references, such as websites and forms, are hyperlinked to direct sites for easy access.

This Student Progression Plan

- Provides for a student's progression from one grade to another based on the student's mastery of the standards in [Florida Statute § 1003.41](#), specifically English Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies standards.
- High schools shall use all available assessment results, including the results of statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessments and end-of-course assessments for Algebra 1 and Geometry, to advise students of any identified deficiencies and to provide appropriate postsecondary instruction before high school graduation.
- The results of evaluations used to monitor a student's progress must be provided to the student's teacher in a timely manner and as otherwise required by law. Thereafter, evaluation results must be provided to the student's parent in a timely manner.
- When available, instructional personnel must be provided with information on student achievement of standards and benchmarks in order to improve instruction.

In addition, the plan includes information about student eligibility and procedural requirements for whole-grade promotion, midyear promotion, and subject-matter acceleration. This information includes:

- the process for parent(s) and students to request student participation in Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning (ACCEL) and the additional options available at the student's school;
- advising parent(s) and students to contact the school counselor regarding student eligibility and participation requirements for these options, including virtual;
- reference to all Dual Enrollment courses available within the Dual Enrollment Articulation Agreement.

¹ Throughout the Student Progression Plan, when the word "parent(s)" is used, it also refers to "legal guardian(s)" and persons acting as a parent.

² Throughout the Student Progression Plan, "STA" will be used to refer to SouthTech Academy.

Mission, Goals, and System Wide Measures

The Florida Department of Education's mission, stated in [Florida Statute § 1008.31\(2\)](#), is to increase the proficiency of all students within one seamless, efficient system. This is accomplished by providing students with the opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills through learning opportunities and research valued by students, parents, and communities, while maintaining an accountability system that measures student progress toward the following goals:

- highest student achievement;
- seamless articulation and maximum access;
- skilled workforce and economic development; and
- quality efficient services.

Florida's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a term used to describe an evidence-based model of schooling that uses data-based problem solving to integrate academic, behavioral, and Skills for Learning and Life and intervention. The integrated instruction and intervention are delivered to students in varying intensities (tiers) based on student needs. The goal of this "needs driven" decision making is to ensure that available resources are allocated and matched to the appropriate students at the appropriate levels in order to accelerate the performance of all students to achieve or exceed proficiency.

This seamless system requires a commitment from all stakeholders in the community. The most essential components of a MTSS Framework include:

- multiple tiers of evidence-based instruction/intervention
- a problem-solving method that is designed to successfully match evidence-based interventions to area(s) of need
- an integrated data collection and assessment system to inform decisions at each level of support
- parental involvement and engagement in each child's education

Supplemental (Tier 2) instruction/intervention is provided in addition to and in alignment with effective core instruction and behavioral supports to individual students or groups of targeted students who need additional instructional and/or behavioral support.

Intensive, Individualized Instruction/Intervention (Tier 3) support is the most intensive instruction/intervention and is teacher directed, as well as based upon an individual student's specific needs. Intensive support is provided in addition to and aligned with core and supplemental academic and behavior, curriculum, instruction, and supports.

Academic Standards

The Plan herein incorporates the B.E.S.T. Standards, State Academic Standards (SAS), and ACCEL options that provide academically challenging coursework or accelerated instruction to students in Grades 9 through Grade 12.

Responsibilities

The STA instructional personnel are responsible considering the individual student's academic needs when placing students in subjects, grade levels, or specialty programs.

The principal is responsible for making and maintaining required records/reports and providing leadership for

instruction that meets the needs of all students. [\[Florida Statutes §§ 1001.54 & 1012.28\]](#)

Teachers are responsible for providing effective instruction and remediation, as well as, documenting instruction in all content areas and students' mastery of the above Standards.

Students with Disabilities

Throughout the document the term students with disabilities (SWD) will be utilized. The term "student with a disability" means a student who is documented as having an intellectual disability; a hearing impairment, including deafness; a speech or language impairment; a visual impairment, including blindness; an emotional or behavioral disability; an orthopedic or other health impairment; an autism spectrum disorder; a traumatic brain injury; or a specific learning disability, including, but not limited to dyslexia, dyscalculia, or developmental aphasia. In all cases for purpose of this document, this will refer to a student with a disability who has an IEP. [\[Florida Statute 1007.02\]](#)

DISTANCE LEARNING

Distance learning may be leveraged in the rare event of an emergency school closure or if the Superintendent or Palm Beach County School Board determine there are national, state, or local health and safety concerns that prevent students from physically being on campus. STA will make every effort to ensure that our students' educational opportunities continue while at home. The STA may leverage distance learning to foster sustained student growth by (1) supporting continuous instruction, (2) providing access for all students, and (3) maintaining connectedness to the community. The STA may assign students to distance learning or provide parents an opportunity to select instruction through brick and mortar or distance learning.

Distance learning shall provide a remote learning situation that mimics, as closely as possible, the brick and mortar experience. Students will follow the school's regular bell schedule. Daily routines will mirror that of a traditional in-class setting. This includes live instruction in each subject, intensive reading, interventions, and electives.

Students participating in distance learning will be considered to be present if visibly seen or actively participating in the course (including but not limited to participating in class conversations, completing assignments during class time, writing in the chat box). Students will be encouraged to turn their camera on when engaged in distance learning. However, no penalty may be imposed for students whose cameras are not on.

Virtual instruction, virtual education, blended learning, online learning, and variations of these terms as referenced in this document do not include distance learning. Students with disabilities, who have an IEP, will be provided with a Distance Learning Plan that outlines how services delineated on the IEP will be implemented during distance learning.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

INITIAL ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

To register a student, the following four types of documents are required:

1. valid Birth Certificate or other documentation of birth as stated above⁴;
2. Certification of a Physical/Health Examination⁵(submitted within 30 school days, if not available at the time of registration);
3. proof of residence⁶; and
4. Florida Certificate of Immunization. (Refer to Immunization Requirements section).

According to [Florida Statute § 1003.01\(12\)](#) and [State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03411\(1\)\(s\)](#), students who are without a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, are considered children and youths who are experiencing homelessness. Pursuant to the [McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 \(Section 725\) 42 U.S.C.A. § 11432\(g\)\(3\)\(A\)-\(C\)](#), these children are to be enrolled immediately in the school that meets the best interest of the student. Arrangements are to be made for immunizations, transportation, and all other school services. Appropriate student, school, and grade level placement, as well as completion of required immunizations and physical examination, shall occur within 30 school days of enrollment. Refer to [Florida Statute § 1003.21\(1\)\(f\)](#) for procedures relating to the enrollment of these students.

When a student is not living with a biological or adoptive parent, and is registering for a school person acting as parent must complete the Affidavit of Person Acting as Parent (STCAI / STPAI 1543).

A student who is emancipated, and provides sufficient documentation to the principal is not required to live in a residence with an adult as a condition of admission to school.

Student Registration Form

The STA New and Returning Student Registration Form and Student Housing Questionnaire, must be completed by the parent(s), signed, and returned to school at the beginning of each school year or when the student enters the STA. This form is available in English, Haitian Creole, Spanish. Annually, this information may be collected via the SIS. Parents may request paper documents at any time.

⁴ If a passport is offered for verification of birth, it may not be duplicated for placement in the cumulative folder.

⁵ See [Florida Statute § 1003.22](#), [State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.024](#). Refer to [Health Requirement](#) section. Footnote 4 addresses temporary exemption criteria.

⁶ Parent(s) must provide proof of residence by presenting documentation, such as lease, mortgage, or utility bill. Additionally, schools must meet the language needs of parent(s) at all relevant stages of the registration.

STUDENT RESIDENCE ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

Residence and/or address shall mean the home location where the student and a parent (if applicable) are primarily living. Residence does not refer to citizenship or proof of residence that would require a permanent resident card (Green Card) or any immigration documentation. School personnel are strictly prohibited from requesting and/or requiring documentation of the immigration status of students and families. It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to promptly notify the school, in writing, of any change in a student's address.

Proof of Address Requirements

Upon initial enrollment in a school, a student or parent must produce two current documents reflecting the correct residential street address. Post office boxes, private mailbox addresses, or commercial establishment addresses are insufficient. Examples of acceptable documents reflecting residential street addresses are as follows:

- home telephone or cellular telephone bill;
- electric bill;
- rent receipt with the name of the tenant and landlord and contact information for all parties;
- lease agreement with the name of the tenant and landlord and contact information for all parties (valid only through the expiration date indicated on the agreement. Upon expiration, parents must present a copy of the renewed or new agreement to the school office);
- mortgage;
- home purchase contract including specific closing date, with copy of the deed to be provided within 30 days of closing date;
- State of Florida driver's license;
- State of Florida identification card;
- automobile insurance policy;
- credit card statement;
- United States Postal Service confirmation of address change;
- evidence of correspondence, including a stamped, addressed, postmarked envelope delivered to the home address; or
- Declaration of Domicile form from the County Records Department.

MAXIMUM AGE LIMIT FOR ENROLLMENT

A person who is involved in a continuous program of study may be enrolled in a regular high school program through the end of the semester in which he/she reaches 21 years of age. A person is deemed in a continuous program of study even though such program was interrupted by military service, illness, or other extenuating circumstances as deemed by the principal or designee.

A person who has not been enrolled in a continuous program of study and who has attained the age of 20 years of age on or before the opening of the school year shall not be enrolled in any regular high school program. A 19-year-old person who has had a break in enrollment (see exception above), who will reach 20 years of age during the school year, may enroll in a regular high school program and remain enrolled until the end of that school year.

Students with Disabilities (SWD) Program

Students with disabilities entering grade nine may attain a standard diploma and earn standard diploma designation by meeting requirements in Florida Statute 1003.4282. An ESE-eligible student has the option to continue to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) through the school year of the student's 22nd birthday, or until he/she earns a Standard Diploma, 22 whichever comes first. Graduation with a Standard Diploma, regardless of age, constitutes cessation of FAPE and a change in placement, requiring written prior notice. Students with disabilities continue to be eligible for FAPE through the end of the school year in which the student turns age 22 if they have

not earned a Standard Diploma, even if they have earned a General Education Diploma (GED) credential. A student with a disability, who has met requirements for a standard diploma and whose IEP requires special education, transition planning, transition services or related services through the age of 21 may defer receipt of their standard diploma. Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student enters high school or attains the age of 14, whichever comes first, the process of deferment must be discussed. For the IEP in effect at the school year the student is expected to graduate, the parent, or student who has reached the age of majority and rights have transferred to the student, must sign he or she understands the process for deferment and identify if the student will defer receipt of his or her standard high school diploma. The parent and the student must be informed the year in which the student is expected to meet graduation requirements, that failure to defer receipt of a standard high school diploma after all requirements are met releases the school district from the obligation to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE). This communication must state that the deadline for acceptance or deferral of the diploma is May 15 of the year in which the student is expected to meet graduation requirements, and that failure to attend a graduation ceremony does not constitute a deferral. In addition, once a student defers, he/she must be enrolled in accelerated college credit instruction, industry certification courses that lead to college credit, an early college program, courses necessary to satisfy the Scholar Diploma Designation requirements or a structured work-study, internship or pre-apprenticeship program in order to continue to receive FAPE (State Board of Education Rule 6A- 1.09963(6), F.A.C. and Florida Statute § 1003.4282(11)(c)) [Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section, 300.102(a)(3) and State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03028]

Students who Qualify for ESOL

Students who qualify for ESOL services may be enrolled in a regular high school program through the end of the semester in which he/she reaches 21 years of age, regardless of previously interrupted schooling. ELL students may not be withdrawn solely due to lack of credits.

Students who Attain Age 16

Students who attain age 16 during the school year are not subject to compulsory school attendance beyond the date that they attain 16 years of age if the student files a formal declaration of intent. Refer to *Student Exit Interview Form 1055*. At the bottom of the form, "Intent to Terminate" must be checked and the form must be signed by the student in order to terminate school enrollment STA must notify the student's parent(s) of receipt of the student's intent to terminate school enrollment. The student's school counselor or other school personnel must conduct an exit interview with the student to determine the reasons for the student's decision to terminate school enrollment and the actions that could be taken to keep the student in school. The student must be informed of opportunities to continue his/her education in a different environment, including but not limited to, Adult Education and high school equivalency examination preparation.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Physical Examination and Immunization Requirements

All new students seeking entrance into STA must meet the requirements of [Florida Statute § 1003.22](#) and present, at the time of entry, a valid [Florida Certificate of Immunization Form \(DH 680\)](#) and a valid health examination preferably documented on State of Florida [School Entry Health Exam Form \(DH 3040\)](#) performed within one year prior to enrollment. A student who does not have a completed School Entry Health Exam may have thirty days from the date of enrollment to obtain the Health Entry Exam. [\[F.S. § 1003.22\]](#)

In accordance with [State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.0985](#) and [Fla. Admin. Code 64D-3.046](#), students will not be admitted into class without proof of immunization with the physician's signature and office stamp, absent a lawful exception. For students who transfer into a new county, an authorized school official may issue a temporary exemption for a period not to exceed 30 days for the following situations:

- a. Students who are new to the District, transferring from another School District within the State of Florida.
- b. Students who are experiencing homelessness as defined by [School Board Policy 5.74](#) and [Florida Statute §1003.01\(12\)](#).
- c. Children who are known to the Department of Children and Family Services as defined in [Florida Statute §39.0016](#).
- d. Students entering a juvenile justice program. e. Students of military families as defined under [Florida Statute §1000.36](#).
- e. Students of military families as defined under Florida Statute [FL Statute 1000.36](#)

Immunization Registry

- a. Each child who is entitled to admittance to Grades preschool through 12, shall have a certificate of immunization on file with the FDOH State Immunization Registry (Florida Shots).
- b. Any child shall be exempt from the requirements of registration with the state immunization registry if the parent or guardian of such child objects to having their child in the FDOH State Immunization Registry (Florida Shots).
 - i. Registry Exemption. The parent or guardian of the child must present or have on file with the school a certificate of immunization prior to admittance or attendance in a Florida Public or private school.
 - ii. The parent or guardian shall sign an opt-out form (DH 1478) obtained from the FDOH, from a healthcare practitioner or entity that provides their child's immunization which indicates that the parent or guardian does not wish to have the child included in the immunization registry.

2025-2026 EXPLANATION OF PHYSICAL EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS

STUDENTS	PHYSICAL EXAMINATION
All SDPBC students	School Health Entry Exam preferably on Form DH 3040* required for Pre-K, Kindergarten, and Grade 7
All transfer students within the SDPBC and other counties within the State of Florida (including private schools)	Review of School Health Entry Exam preferably on Form DH 3040* (original or copy) for at least Kindergarten and/or Grade 7 documentation
All transfer students from another state or country	School Health Entry Exam Form preferably on DH 3040* (original or copy) required for all grades. Physicals presented on forms from another state are acceptable, if they include all components covered on Form DH 3040* and have the physician's signature and office stamp. Physicals must have been performed within one year of enrollment unless exemption is based on a written request for religious reasons.

**Form DH 3040 -State of Florida School Entry Health Exam Form*

Required Immunization Form

[The Florida Certification of Immunization Form \(DH 680\)](#) is available from either private physicians or the Florida Department of Health. The form includes sections for temporary and permanent medical exemptions based on medical reasons. For example, all medical exemptions must be signed by a physician (M.D. or D.O.), *Temporary Medical Exemptions* must have an expiration date, and *Permanent Medical Exemptions* must specify which vaccine the student is exempt from and the valid clinical reason for exemption.

The following DOH form **must** be completed, as applicable: Immunization Form DH 680 or Florida SHOTS printed DH 680

[The Certificate of Religious Exemption \(DH 681\)](#) is available only through the Florida Department of Health Palm Beach County. Only an original DH 681, generated by The Florida SHOTS Program for the Health Department, will be accepted at school sites.

NOTE: As noted in the [Physical Examination and Immunization Requirements section](#) above, students experiencing homelessness, students in shelter placement, students in foster care, students of military families, and students entering a juvenile justice program without immunization and physical exam documentation must be enrolled and receive a 30 school-day exemption. Follow-up with these students on temporary exemptions is required prior to the expiration of the exemption.

According to the Florida Department of Health Immunization Program and Department of Health Rule 64D-3.046, the required immunizations and dosages for elementary, middle, and high school students are as follows:

Immunization	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
DTaP/DT Series	X	X	X	X
Tdap Booster	X	X	X	X
Polio Series	X	X	X	X
MMR (2 doses)	X	X	X	X
Hepatitis B Series	X	X	X	X
Varicella (2 doses)	X	X	X	X

High School/Grades 9-12 Immunization Requirements

Source: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/healthy-people-and-families/childrens-health/school-health/enrollment.html>

PLACEMENT OF TRANSFER STUDENTS

The following section addresses procedures relating to the acceptance of transfer work and credit for students, as specified in [Florida Statute § 1003.25](#).

Enrollment and placement of children of active duty military families is under the guidelines of the [Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children](#).

Transfer of Students (K-12) from Home Education

Pursuant to [School Board Policy 8.14\(12\)](#), if a Home Education student enrolls full-time in a public school within the District, grade placement and transferable credits shall be determined by the school administrator(s). The student's home education curriculum, portfolio, and annual evaluations may be reviewed at the school prior to placement or credit decisions. Annual evaluations shall consist of the following:

- a. An evaluation of the student's progress by a Florida certified teacher chosen by the parent based on a review of the portfolio and discussion with the student. Such teacher shall hold a valid Florida regular certificate to teach academic subjects at the elementary or secondary level.

- b. Any nationally-normed student achievement test that is administered by a Florida certified teacher.
- c. A state student assessment test administered by a Florida certified teacher, at a location (e.g., zoned public school) and under testing conditions approved by the test publisher. The School District shall provide the test materials, monitored site and test results.
- d. An evaluation by a psychologist holding a valid active license pursuant to [Florida Statute § 490.003\(7\) or \(8\)](#).
- e. An evaluation with another or valid measurement tool as mutually agreed upon by the Home Education Office and the parent or guardian. One acceptable method to the STA is providing an official transcript from an accredited correspondence learning institution.

For transfer of home education students to high school as stated in 6A-1.09941 State Uniform Transfer of Students in Middle Grades and High School. (2) The procedures relating to the acceptance of transfer work and credits for students in high school from out of state or out of country shall be as follows: (a) Credits and grades earned and offered for acceptance shall be based on official transcripts and shall be accepted at face value subject to validation if required by the receiving school's accreditation. If validation of the official transcript is deemed necessary, or if the student does not possess an official transcript or is a home education student, credits shall be validated through performance during the first grading period as outlined in paragraph (2)(b) of this rule. Assessment requirements for transfer students under Section 1003.4282, F.S must be satisfied.

HIGH SCHOOL (9-12) TRANSFER STUDENTS

A student who transfers STA from a private school must submit an official transcript (including from out of state or out country). Students who have earned a standard diploma or its equivalent may not enroll at STA, unless they are a student with a disability who has deferred their standard diploma.

Grades earned and offered for acceptance shall be accepted at face value subject to validation by Cognia or another recognized agency. (More information on validation, including Cognia™ Accredited Agencies, is located at <https://www.cognia.org/>.) In accordance with [State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.09941](#), the student does not possess an official transcript or is a Home Education student, successful completion of courses shall be validated through performance during the first grading period the student is enrolled.

In accordance with [Florida Statute § 1003.4282\(7\)](#), transfer students must pass the Algebra 1 EOC as a graduation requirement, unless the student earns a comparative score as established in [State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.09422](#) or submits proof of an approved Algebra 1 EOC passing score or approved statewide mathematics assessment from another state. If a transfer student's transcript shows a final course grade and course credit in Algebra I, Geometry, Biology I, or United States History, the transferring course final grade and credit shall be honored without the student taking the requisite statewide, standardized EOC assessment and without the assessment results constituting 30 percent of the student's final course grade. If upon receipt of an official transcript, the school determines that the student has been enrolled in the wrong subject or grade, the student shall be immediately placed in the appropriate grade and/or subjects.

Validation of Transfer Credits/Grades for High School (9-12)

The principal or designee shall validate transfer credit(s) or grades, which shall be based on performance during the first grading period the student is enrolled if:

- validation of the official transcript is deemed necessary under the Cognia™ policy;
- the student does not possess an official transcript; and/or
- the student is a Home Education student without an official transcript from an educational institution or program.

Validation Process for High School (9-12)

As stated in [State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.09941](#), validation of credits shall be based on performance in courses at the receiving school. A student transferring into a school shall be placed in the appropriate sequential course(s) and must have a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0 being validated at the end of the first grading period the student is enrolled. Students who do not meet this requirement shall have credits validated using the Alternative Validation Procedure, as outlined in the next subsection of this Plan.

The grade of “P” (Pass) is used when validating/granting transfer credits for coursework when an official transcript or grades that equate to those used in SDPBC cannot be obtained. It is also used when “P” is specified on an official transcript. A grade of “P” is a transcript grade only, not a report card grade. It gives credit for coursework, but does not affect the GPA. For transfer of home education students to a high school as stated in 6A-1.09941 State Uniform Transfer of Students in Middle Grades and High School. (2) The procedures relating to the acceptance of transfer work and credits for students in high school from out of state or out of country shall be as follows: (a) Credits and grades earned and offered for acceptance shall be based on official transcripts and shall be accepted at face value subject to validation if required by the receiving school’s accreditation. If validation of the official transcript is deemed necessary, or if the student does not possess an official transcript or is a home education student, credits shall be validated through performance during the first grading period as outlined in paragraph (2)(b) of this rule. Assessment requirements for transfer students under [Section 1003.4282, F.S.](#), must be satisfied.

Alternative Validation Procedure for High School (9-12)

As stated in [State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.09941](#), if validation based on performance as described above is not satisfactory, or when it is not applicable because there is no sequential course, then any **one** of the following alternatives shall be used for validation purposes as determined by the teacher, principal, and parent(s):

1. portfolio evaluation by the Executive Director/designee;
2. written recommendation by a Florida certified teacher selected by the parent(s) and approved by the principal;
3. satisfactory performance in courses taken through Dual Enrollment or at other public or private accredited schools;
4. satisfactory proficiencies on nationally-normed standardized subject area assessments;
5. satisfactory proficiencies on a statewide, standardized assessment; **or**
6. written review of the criteria utilized for a given subject provided by the former school.

Students should be provided at least 90 calendar days from date of transfer to prepare for nationally-normed standardized subject area assessments, statewide standardized, or EOC Assessment outlined above, if required.

The student’s custodial parent(s) may appeal the placement decision to the Executive Director/designee within 14 calendar days of the principal’s decision.

Transfer Students Placement for Graduation

Students transferring in from outside of the SDPBC will be placed on a schedule to graduate with their cohort, based on the number of credits needed to graduate with a standard 24- credit diploma. Refer to the Graduation Requirements for Transfer Students section for specific requirements or 18-credit diploma information. Graduation cohort will be set based on grade level placement.

During the first semester of school, placement will be based on the following credits:

CREDITS NEEDED FOR GRADUATION	GRADE PLACEMENT
20 or more	9th Grade
14.5 to 19.5	10th Grade
7.5 to 14	11th Grade
7.0 or less	12th Grade

During the second semester of school, placement will be based on the following credits:

CREDITS NEEDED FOR GRADUATION	GRADE PLACEMENT
18 or more	9th Grade
11 to 17.5	10th Grade
4.0 to 10.5	11th Grade
3.5 or less	12th Grade

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (ELL) TRANSFER STUDENTS

In accordance with [State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.0905](#), the [School District of Palm Beach County Plan for English Language Learners](#) During registration, the initial date a student first entered a school in the United States, Date Entered United States School (DEUSS), is collected. An ELL is identified and assessed to determine eligibility for services, in accordance with [State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.0902\(1\)\(2\)](#).

The English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) coordinator/contact person and the school counselor/administrator shall review the educational background of the transferring student to determine appropriate grade level, subject, and ESOL Program placement. [\[State Board Education Rule 6A-6.0902\(3\)\(b\)\]](#)

Schools make every effort to obtain records for students transferring from other locations into Palm Beach County. Records are requested from the sending school through phone calls, faxes, emails, and/or the U.S. Postal Service. Parental input regarding educational background should be taken into consideration especially when transcripts, records, or report cards are not readily available. This information is documented on the **English Language Learners Programmatic Assessment and Academic Placement Review (PBSD 1764)** and filed in the ELL folder. When necessary, Community Language Facilitators assist the students and their families with completing the forms, to ensure proper program/course placement.

For students who enter SouthTech Academy with a prior transcript, careful analysis of a sending school's curriculum will be done on the level and type of courses the student completed in his/her country of origin. In order to provide consistent and equitable evaluation of foreign transcripts that will recognize course work completed as comparable to high school levels abroad, the grading scale, grade level, time spent in the course, as well as the methodology and/or pedagogy used in teaching some courses abroad may also impact the correct transferring of the credit. For example, a native language credit may be applied as a required English credit for a student transferring from out of the country and an English course a student may have taken outside of the United States as a foreign language may be credited as foreign language.

A student who is age appropriate for high school must be placed in at least Grade 9. ELLs are scheduled into classes that fulfill graduation requirements, as well as granted credit for completed academic

coursework, regardless of the language in which the coursework was completed. Special care must be taken to ensure that ELLs have full and equal access to the entire and wide-range of courses offered at the high school and that the placement of ELLs in courses is not solely based on English language proficiency. Promoting placement in academically challenging courses should be paramount when considering placement. STA is not precluded from performing subsequent evaluations to ensure appropriate placement of the student in courses. This policy shall not apply to student's who graduated from high school in another country, those students shall be referred to an appropriate post-secondary institution.

Refer to the [age-appropriate placement chart](#) for guidance when determining K-12 grade-level placement.

An ELL Committee meeting, in which the student's parent/guardian has been invited to participate, must be conducted under the following circumstances: a student's placement is based on age; or there is a lack of information about prior schooling (no transcript or report card); or prior schooling does not meet grade level requirements. An administrator must participate in the ELL Committee and grade placement process. In accordance with [State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.0902\(3\)\(d\)](#), parent(s) have the right to choose the ESOL Instructional Model (sheltered, mainstream, or dual language) in which the child is served.

Reevaluation of ELL student placement can be made at the request of any member of the ELL committee. Due diligence should be taken to make placement decisions in the best interest of the student] [Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida 6A- 10.081](#)].

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (SWD) TRANSFER STUDENTS

The [State Board of Education Rules 6A-6.0331](#), [6A-6.0361](#), and STA's [Exceptional Student Education Policies and Procedures \(SP&P\)](#), address the requirements for Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) or Educational Plans (EPs), as well as the requirements for students who transfer to the STA within Florida and students who transfer from outside of Florida.

Students with Disabilities who Transfer Within Florida

If a SWD, who had an IEP in effect in a previous Florida school district, transfers to the STA and enrolls in school, the STA, in consultation with the parent(s), will provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to the student, which includes services comparable to those described in the child's IEP from the previous Florida school district, until the STA does either of the following:

- adopts the child's IEP from the previous school district; or
- develops, adopts, and implements a new IEP that meets the applicable requirements of [State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03028](#) or [6A-6.03019\(1\)](#).

Students with Disabilities (SWD) who Transfer from Outside Florida

If a SWD, who had an IEP in effect in a previous school district in another state, transfers and enrolls in STA within the same school year, STA, in consultation with the parent(s), will provide a FAPE to the student, which includes services comparable to those described in the child's IEP from the previous District, until STA does both of the following:

- conducts an initial evaluation in accordance with [State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.0331](#) (if determined to be necessary by the STA); and

- develops, adopts, and implements a new IEP/EP, if appropriate, that meets the applicable requirements of State Board of Education Rules 6A-6.03011 through 6A-6.0361⁷

Students who Transfer with Section 504 Accommodation Plans

A transferring student with an active Section 504 Accommodation Plan is a student who was previously enrolled in any other school or agency with an active Section 504 Accommodation Plan, and who is enrolling in a Florida school district. Upon notification that a transferring student has an active Section 504 Accommodation Plan, the receiving school must review and revise, as necessary, the existing active Plan and supporting documentation. Until that review is complete, the receiving school must implement the student's current Section 504 Accommodation Plan to the maximum extent reasonable in the current placement. If, following the receiving school's review, it is determined that the Section 504 Accommodation Plan is not appropriate; the school must evaluate the student consistently with Section 504 procedures, and develop and implement an appropriate Section 504 Accommodation Plan.

⁷ State Board of Education Rules are located at: <https://www.flrules.org/default.asp>.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENTEEISM

In accordance with [Florida Statute § 1003.24](#), school attendance is the direct responsibility of the parent(s) and child(ren). Each parent of a child within the compulsory attendance age is responsible for the child's school attendance as required by law/ Except as provided in [Florida Statute § 1003.24](#) and [State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.09513](#), all students are expected to attend school regularly, to be on time for classes in order to benefit from the instructional program, and to develop habits of punctuality, self-discipline, and responsibility. For detailed information regarding attendance requirements refer to [Florida Statute § 1003.21](#).

ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

General Attendance Policies and Procedures

The [STA Student and Family Handbook](#) outlines the attendance procedures. All school procedures conform to the following procedures.

- Parents and guardians are responsible for notifying the school and providing documentation, if required, when a child will be absent and for informing the school of the reason for the absence, within twenty-four (24) hours of the student's absence. If notification was not provided prior to the absence, the parent or guardian shall be required to notify and provide written documentation, if requested by the school, to justify the reason for the student's absence.
- If a student is continually sick and repeatedly absent from school, he or she must be under the supervision of a physician in order to receive an excuse from attendance.

High School Attendance Policies and Procedures

Students who are absent from a class more than 10 percent of a semester must pass at least one four and a half-week marking period and the Quarter exam in order to demonstrate their knowledge of the subject and to receive credit.

If a student is absent more than 10 percent of the entire semester in an EOC Assessment course, the student must earn a passing grade in the last four and a half-weeks or earn a Level 3, 4, or 5 on the corresponding EOC, in order to pass the course.

LATE ARRIVALS/TARDINESS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Students reporting late to school/class when the day/class period begins are considered tardy. Excessive tardiness shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis to determine if there is a pattern of non-attendance. Unless excused under the provisions of this policy, accumulated tardiness will be recorded as unexcused absences consistent with [Florida Statute § 1003.02\(1\)\(b\)](#).

When a **secondary student (Grades 6-12)** misses 50 percent or more of the identified instructional class period due to late arrival, tardiness, or early dismissal, the student shall be considered absent.

Absence means not being actually present when attendance is checked, unless the student arrives within time to be marked "tardy" instead of absent. Students may not be counted in attendance while away from the school on a school day unless they are engaged in an educational activity, which constitutes part of the school-approved instructional program.

ABSENCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Excused Absences

The following situations/reasons qualify as excused absences:

- student illness (if a student is continually sick and repeatedly absent from school, he/she must be under the supervision of a physician in order to receive an excuse from attendance);
- medical appointment; including an appointment scheduled to receive a therapy service provided by a licensed health care practitioner or behavior analyst certified for the treatment of autism spectrum disorder, including, but not limited to, applied behavioral analysis, speech therapy, and occupational therapy.
- death in the family;
- observance of a religious holiday or service that is recognized as such by all members of the faith
- Participation in an activity or program sponsored by 4-H or Future Farmers of America (FFA), if a representative of 4-H or FFA provides the school with documentation proving the student's participation in an activity or program by 4-H or FFA. Participation in an educational activity sponsored by other comparable national organizations with comparable learning objectives may be considered an excused absence if approved by the principal
- subpoena by a law enforcement agency or mandatory court appearance;
- Extreme weather conditions such as, but not limited to, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, or other acts of God which make it impractical or inadvisable for the safety of the student to attend school;1994
- other individual student absences beyond the control of the parent or student (as determined and approved by the principal/designee).

Unexcused Absences

An unexcused absence is any absence that does not fall into one of the above excused absence categories and is not a school related absence. Students with excessive absences will be referred to the School Based Team for interventions to be implemented to assist the student and family with improving attendance. The school may refer the student to the District's Truancy Intervention Program if attendance does not improve after interventions are put in place. If the student continues to not comply with the school's attempts to enforce school attendance, the Executive Director or designee is authorized to file a truancy petition with the 15th Judicial Circuit of Florida.

Make-Up Work

For excused and unexcused absences, including suspensions, the student will be afforded the opportunity to make-up work without academic penalty. For In-School Suspensions (ISS), students will receive assignments daily. For Out-of-School Suspensions (OSS), students will receive assignments in a timely manner.

For excused or unexcused absences, the number of days allowed to make-up work shall be the same as the number of days the student was not present. Upon return to school, it is the student's responsibility to contact his or her teacher(s) about the makeup assignments and to complete all makeup work within the allowed time frame.

Students with Section 504 Accommodation Plan Absence Policy

When a student with an active 504 Accommodation Plan has excessive absences, the student must demonstrate mastery. In each case, the Multi-Disciplinary Team must meet to determine if the absences are caused by the disability of record. If the Multi-Disciplinary Team determines that the absences are caused by the student's disability, the student's placement must be reevaluated for appropriateness. [[Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 34 C.F.R. Part 104](#)]

The Section 504 Accommodation Plan must address any additional accommodations, strategies, and/or interventions needed to ensure that the student has an equal opportunity to demonstrate course mastery.

Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Absence Policy

In the case of an ESE-eligible student with excessive absences, an IEP Team meeting must be conducted to determine whether or not the absences are related to the student's disability. Attendance data shall be reviewed and used as one indicator of a student's access to instruction/ Refer to [State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.0331\(1\)\(c\)](#), [School Board Policy 5.725](#), and its referenced [Exceptional Student Education Policies and Procedures \(SP&P\)](#).

If the IEP Team determines that the excessive absences are related to the student's disability, the IEP Team must take appropriate action, which may include waiver of the attendance guidelines in determining grades, as well as a change of placement. To the maximum extent possible, the student will be educated in the least restrictive environment.

If the IEP Team determines that the student's excessive absences are not related to the student's disability, the student is treated the same as a General Education student.

Pursuant to [State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.09515](#), students may be released during the school day to participate in therapy services or scheduled appointments. Parents wishing to excuse their child for this purpose shall notify the school prior to the absence. For purposes of this rule, documentation of the excused absence may be provided from a duly licensed certified behavior analyst, speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, psychologist, clinical social worker, or health care provider.

Hospital/Homebound Services

Hospital Homebound is a temporary ESE eligibility. The services provided are limited and not intended to replicate the classroom experience. The primary goals are to minimize instructional gaps by providing access to the curriculum while the student is medically confined and to promote re-entry into a traditional school setting.

Extended Absence Due to Documented Medical Concern

Once the school is alerted to a medical concern preventing student attendance or causing excessive absences, the school team must meet and document all discussions addressing the following:

1. Current Academic Plan (any combination of the below can be considered)
 - 504 consideration/review
 - Providing missing work-sending work home on a temporary basis
 - Grades/Posting of incompletes with the intention of coordination the completion of course work and a grade change at a future date.

- Medical withdrawal (W18) – with supported documentation by a physician of extended absence due to medical concern
2. The school team should review and revise the academic plan until grades have been changed and a full grade can be calculated for the period in which the student was absent.

Hospital Homebound Referral

1. Refer to LEA guide or contact school administration with referral questions.
2. Hospital Homebound services are determined by the IEP team based on physician evaluation, state criteria and student data. The process for Hospital Homebound referral and eligibility considerations can take one (1) to four (4) weeks. Hospital Homebound services do not begin until a student is determined eligible. Hospital Homebound does not address academic concerns for periods which the student was not eligible or was being considered.
3. Attendance/Grade concerns prior to eligibility are the responsibility of the school. Hospital Homebound staff will not change grades posted by the school or address missing coursework from periods prior to eligibility.

The school team should review and revise the original academic plan until grades have been changed

and a full year/semester grade can be calculated. [Hospital Homebound Edplan Integrated Referral Process Hospital Homebound](#)
[Hospital Homebound Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Any Palm Beach County student can be recommended for Hospital Homebound Instructional Services if the student meets state requirements and after the zoned-school has exhausted available school-based resources. [State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03020](#) and is available in [School Board Policy 5.725](#); [Exceptional Student Education Policies and Procedures \(SP&P\)](#); and [State Board of Education Rule 6A- 6.03411](#). Additional information is provided by the Department of Exceptional Student Education https://www.palmbeachschools.org/students_parents/ese/hospital_homebound.

NOTE: In accordance with [Florida Statute § 1003.33\(2\)](#), a student's attendance record may not be used in whole or in part to provide an exemption from any academic performance requirements.

STUDENT WITHDRAWALS

HIGH SCHOOL (9-12) PROCEDURES

Students who leave school prior to grade posting will not be awarded credit unless they enroll in another school and complete the course requirements including examinations, if applicable. Yet, pursuant to [Florida Statute § 1003.4295\(3\)](#), students enrolled in courses with an End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment who meet satisfactory performance or earn a Level 3 or higher on the assessment may earn course credit through the Credit Acceleration Program (CAP). Principals are authorized to make arrangements for the administration of any tests, as appropriate.

Students who leave school during the last week of any semester must show evidence that the withdrawal is mandatory, and the student must successfully complete any necessary examinations, as appropriate, in order to receive course credit. The principal is authorized to make arrangements for the administration of examinations, as appropriate.

HOME EDUCATION ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Withdrawal for Enrollment in Home Education Program

To withdraw a student for enrollment in a Home Education Program, the parent(s) must initiate the withdrawal process at the school and notify STA Principal/designee in writing, of the intent to establish a Home Education Program for the student. The parent shall submit the Notice of Intent to the Home Education Office within 30 days of the establishment of the Home Education Program. Refer to the School District's [Home Education Website](#) to complete this form. Parent(s) can also obtain assistance by emailing homeed@palmbeachschools.org or phone (561) 434-8052. [[Florida Statute § 1002.41](#) & [School Board Policy 8.14\(3\)\(4\)\(5\)](#)]

Home Education correspondence can be emailed, faxed, or mailed to:

School District of Palm Beach County
Home Education Office
3308 Forest Hill Boulevard, Suite C-124 West Palm
Beach, FL 33406-5813
homeed@palmbeachschools.org
Fax: (561) 434-8447

CURRICULUM

STA Curriculum Guidelines incorporate the performance standards as defined by the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE), Florida Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) for English Language Arts and Mathematics, State Academic Standards (SAS), or Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning (ACCEL) options, as applicable. FLDOE course descriptions can be accessed through CPALMS at: [http://www.cpalms.org/Public/\[State Board of Education Rule 6A- 1.09401\]](http://www.cpalms.org/Public/[State Board of Education Rule 6A- 1.09401])

HIGH SCHOOL (9-12) CURRICULUM

The curriculum includes standards for the following content areas:

- Arts Education
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Physical Education
- Science
- Social Studies
- World Languages

STA shall provide all courses required for high school graduation and appropriate instruction designed to ensure that students meet the State Board of Education adopted standards in the following subject areas: reading and other language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, world languages, health and physical education, and the arts. [\[Florida Statute § 1003.42\(1\)\]](#)

High school courses may be semester or quarter courses. With the exception of certain Dual Enrollment college courses and all courses with EOC Assessments, 0.5 credit is awarded for passing a quarter in each course. No credit is awarded solely on the basis of participation in extracurricular activities.

CURRICULUM FOR SPECIAL PROGRAMS, SITUATIONS, AND/OR POPULATIONS

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs

CTE programs are 9-12 theme-based programs offering students innovative approaches to learning and specialized curriculum enhancements that engage students and provide rigorous academic instruction by specially trained teachers. Students are provided opportunities for in- depth experiences and study in specific areas of interest.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

In accordance with [State Board of Education Rules 6A-6.0902, 6A-6.0903, 6A-6.0904; 6A6.0908](#), students who are identified as English Language Learners (ELLs) must be given equal access to the general curriculum. The General Education standards and benchmarks should be the basis of their curriculum. ELLs are placed in

courses based on need and eligibility, regardless of their English language proficiency. The student's English Language Learner (ELL) Student Plan documents the instructional strategies required, ensuring the student an equal opportunity to master the General Education curriculum.

Refer to [State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.09022](#) for more information on the extension of services for ELLs, [State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.0903\(2\)](#) for the requirements for exiting ELLs from ESOL Programs, and [State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.09031](#) for post reclassification of ELLs.

Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

Pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03028, Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities enrolled in an Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Program must specify the specially designed instruction and related services that are necessary to meet each student's unique needs. Refer to Florida Statutes §§ 1003.57, 1003.571, and 1003.5715.

All students must be given access to the general curriculum, as is appropriate, in relation to their unique needs and abilities and as delineated on each student's IEP. For the majority of these students, the General Education standards should be the basis of their curriculum.

As appropriate, the IEP must enable the parent(s) and student to be involved in determining how the student will be involved/progress in the General Education curriculum, and how the student will participate in appropriate activities. The IEP shall also address how each of the student's other educational needs (that result from the student's disability) will be met. [\[State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03028\(3\)\(h\)2\]](#).

The IEP may specify whether accommodations⁹/modifications¹⁰ are necessary in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment provided that the accommodations/modifications do not include modifications to the curriculum descriptions/frameworks or student performance standards. The IEP must be implemented as drafted by the IEP Team. The IEP must contain an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the student will not participate with non-disabled students in the General Education class. [\[State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03028\(3\)\(h\)2\]](#) In compliance with the least restrictive environment mandate, a student with a disability may be removed from the General Education environment, only if the nature and/or severity of the disability are such that education in General Education classes, with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

To ensure quality planning for a successful transition of a student with a disability to postsecondary education and career opportunities, an IEP Team shall begin the process of, and develop an IEP for, identifying the need for transition services during the seventh grade year or when the student attains the age of 12, whichever comes first, in order for the postsecondary goals and career goals to be identified and in place when the student enters high school or attains the age of 14 years, whichever comes first. In accordance with [Florida Statute §1003.5716](#) this process must include, but is not limited to: consideration of the student's need for instruction in the area of self-determination and self-advocacy to assist the student's active and effective participation in an IEP meeting and preparation for the student to graduate from high school with a Standard High School Diploma pursuant to Florida State Statute § 1003.4282. SWD are eligible to pursue a Scholar Designation and/or Industry Scholar Designation for their Standard High School Diploma. Public school students with disabilities must be provided the opportunity to meet the graduation requirements for a Standard High School Diploma as set forth in [Florida Statute § 1003.4282](#) in accordance with the provisions of [Florida Statutes §§ 1003.57](#) and [1008.22](#).

⁹ Accommodations are changes that can be made to the way students learn and how they are tested. They describe changes in format, response, setting, timing, or scheduling that do not alter the curriculum or test in any significant way. Accommodations include changes made to the environment and/or teacher behavior, which supports a student's learning, such as teaching methods and materials, classroom assignments and tests, learning environment, strategies, time demands, and schedules.

¹⁰ Modifications to basic courses shall not include modifications to the curriculum frameworks or student performance standards. Modifications to basic or vocational courses may include: increased or decreased instructional time; varied use of methodology; special communications systems (which may be used by the teacher or the student); classroom or district test administration procedures; and other evaluation procedures (which may be modified, as specified in State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.0943) to accommodate the student's disability.

Section 504 Accommodation Plans

A student is eligible for accommodations, under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, if the student is determined to have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity of such student. In addition, a student with either a record of impairment, or who is regarded as having impairment, is protected from discrimination under both Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, effective January 1, 2009.

A student meets the requirement of being regarded as having impairment by establishing that the student has been subjected to a prohibited act because of an actual or perceived physical or mental impairment, whether or not the impairment limits or is perceived to limit a major life activity/ This provision shall not apply to a student's impairments that are transitory and minor. A transitory impairment has an actual or expected duration of six months or less.

A Multi-Disciplinary Team must meet as necessary to determine if an otherwise qualified student's mental and/or physical impairment substantially limits one or more of the student's major life activities.

Major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working. Major life activities also include the operation of a major bodily function, including but not limited to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

An episodic or in remission impairment is a disability if it would substantially limit a major life activity when active. Impairment that substantially limits one major life activity need not limit other major life activities in order to be considered a disability.

The determination of whether the impairment substantially limits a major life activity shall be made without regard to the ameliorative effects of mitigating measures such as:

- medication, medical supplies, equipment or appliances, low-vision devices (which do not include ordinary eyeglasses or contact lenses), prosthetics including limbs and devices, hearing aids and cochlear implants or other implantable hearing devices, mobility devices, or oxygen therapy equipment and supplies;
- use of assistive technology;
- reasonable accommodations or auxiliary aids or services; or
- learned behavioral or adaptive neurological modifications.

However, the ameliorative effects of the mitigating measures of ordinary eyeglasses or contact lenses shall be considered in determining whether the impairment substantially limits a major life activity.

To ensure compliance for all school decisions made under Section 504 and ADA, two components are necessary. First, the parent(s) must always be notified of any meeting scheduled to determine eligibility or subsequent meetings to make changes to the Section 504 Accommodation Plan. Secondly, the student's Multi-Disciplinary Team must make service, accommodation, and placement decisions. A Section 504 Accommodation Plan cannot be changed without proper parental notice and a Multi-Disciplinary Team Meeting. The individual student's Section 504 Accommodation Plan documents the accommodations and/or modifications that are required to ensure that the student has an equal opportunity to access the General Education curriculum. [[Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 34 C. F. R. Part 104](#)]

Virtual Instruction

A student must have permission from his/her school counselor and/or principal/designee to enroll in virtual education courses. School districts may not limit student access to FLVS courses. However, the school counselor will determine if the course is academically appropriate for the student based upon the student's academic history, grade level, and age.

Please note, virtual instruction is not distance learning.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR HIGH SCHOOL

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Students at STA participate in Career & Technical Education Programs. Recent legislation and rule revisions have substantially changed many of these programs and have mandated placement and productivity standards as conditions for continued funding. [[Florida Statutes §§ 1003.491 & 1003.492](#)]; and it is essential that parents, students, teachers, school counselors, and administrators be aware that individual CTE courses do not stand alone, but are part of a planned program of study leading to college and career readiness and industry certifications, where applicable. To better prepare our students to be college and career ready, the Department of Choice and Career Options has developed a solid [Career Pathway System](#). This System includes rigorous Programs of Study to provide students with academic preparation, guidance, and career-related knowledge to help them prepare for their future career goals. Each program of study includes college credit earning opportunities through Gold Standard Statewide Articulation Agreements via industry certifications, as well as Articulation Agreements with local post-secondary institutions.

At the core of each Program of Study is a common set of foundational knowledge and skills, which include the following:

- communication;
- creativity and innovation;
- critical thinking and problem solving;
- global, social, and cultural awareness; and
- intellectual curiosity.

Core Credit for Career and Technical Education (CTE)

A student who earns an industry certification that articulates to college credit may substitute the certification for up to two mathematics credits, except for Algebra 1 and Geometry. To substitute the two mathematics credits, the student would need to earn two industry certifications. An identified rigorous Computer Science course with a related industry certification substitutes for up to one mathematics credit (except for Algebra 1 or higher-level mathematics).

A student who earns an industry certification that articulates to college credit may substitute the certification for one science credit, except for Biology 1. An identified rigorous Computer Science course with a related industry certification substitutes for up to one science credit (except for Biology 1 or higher-level science).

To substitute the two mathematics credits and a science credit, the student would need to earn three industry certifications.

Course code waiver numbers have been added to the Course Code Directory (CCD) for student transcript purposes:

- Industry Certification Mathematics Waiver numbers are 1200998 and 1200999; and
- Industry Certification Science Waiver number is 2000999. (Refer to [Section 5](#) of the CCD).

For a listing of applicable industry certifications, please refer to the [Statewide Articulation Agreements-Industry Certification](#).

NOTE: Students interested in an applicable mathematics and/or science substitution through an Industry Certification or eligible Computer Science course, which leads to college credit, should consult with a school counselor regarding college admissions criteria utilizing course substitutions. Course substitutions may not count towards State University System admissions requirements.

Career Academies

Students completing CTE programs or academies may receive a Standard High School Diploma, contingent on all other graduation requirements being met. In addition, students have the opportunity to earn one or more of the following:

- Scholar Diploma Designation
- Industry Scholar Diploma Designation
- Career Education Program Completion Certificate;
- Articulated credits through Career Pathways (local and statewide);
- Dual Enrollment credits;
- State Licensure, if applicable; and
- Florida Bright Futures Vocational Gold Seal Scholarship.

Career Education Program Completer Certificate

A Career Education Program Completer Certificate is awarded to students who successfully complete all courses in a CTE Program or Academy, as set forth by the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) curriculum framework.

Beginning in middle school, a student can begin a CTE courses that includes proficiency in mathematics, communications, science, and a sequence of courses in a CTE Program or Academy, such as business, marketing, drafting, computer technologies, culinary, early childhood education, and health science occupations, etc. This will provide preparation for careers that will have continued growth and are in demand within our local workforce region. In addition, Articulation Agreements with postsecondary institutions are developed to provide students with the opportunity to receive college credit for certain secondary CTE courses upon matriculation. [\[Florida Statute § 1007.22\]](#) Scholarships are available to eligible students who successfully complete a CTE Program of Study through the [Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program](#)

ACADEMICALLY CHALLENGING CURRICULUM TO ENHANCE LEARNING (ACCEL)

GENERAL HIGH SCHOOL ACCEL OPTIONS

According to [Florida Statute § 1002.3105](#), ACCEL options include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Credit Acceleration Program (CAP);
- Advanced Placement (AP) Program;
- Dual Enrollment;
- Career Academy Courses
- Virtual Courses

CREDIT ACCELERATION PROGRAM (CAP)

- The CAP Program allows a student to earn high school credit in courses required for high school graduation through passage of an End-of-Course assessment administered under [s. 1008.22](#) (Algebra 1, Geometry, United States History, and Biology 1), an Advanced Placement Examination, International Baccalaureate (IB), or Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE), or a College Level Examination Program (CLEP).
- The Grade of **T** is used when a student earns course credit through the Credit Acceleration Program.
- According to [s.1003.4295](#), notwithstanding [s. 1003.436](#), course credit shall be awarded to a student who

is not enrolled in the course, or who has not completed the course, if the student attains a passing score on the corresponding End-of-Course assessment, Advanced Placement Examination, or CLEP.

- Students are responsible for all fees associated with CLEP exams. Students who take an Advanced Placement or an Advanced International Certificate of Education exam without being enrolled in the corresponding course are responsible for all fees.

WHOLE-GRADE AND MIDYEAR PROMOTION PROCEDURES

High School Requirements

Whole-year and midyear promotion will be determined by the number of credits needed for the grade level, as defined in the High School Grade Classification for Promotion and Retention section.

High School (9-12) Procedures for Requesting Acceleration

To explore acceleration options, the student and parent(s) should contact the school to initiate the process of determining the student's eligibility for each option and develop a plan for acceleration, as appropriate. Upon notification of student and parent(s) request for acceleration, the school will:

1. review student achievement and academic performance data to establish eligibility for one or more ACCEL options;
2. notify student of eligibility and program requirements;
3. assist the student in meeting timeline and ACCEL option requirements; and
4. develop a schedule to meet student's needs and chosen program.

COURSES TAKEN THROUGH NON-DISTRICT EDUCATIONAL PROVIDERS

Students who participate in enrichment programs will not receive school credit. Courses taken through other educational providers may be awarded credit, so long as the provider is accredited by Cognia™. The designee will evaluate the course to determine if and which course credit and weighting will be awarded. Credit may be denied if preapproval is not obtained

CREDIT BY EXAMINATION

Credit by examination shall be the program through which postsecondary credit is earned by secondary students based on the receipt of a specified minimum score by the Florida Department of Education on nationally standardized general or subject area examination. [\[Florida Statute §1007.27\(6\)\]](#)

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP)

Eligible secondary students may enroll in courses offered by the Advanced Placement Program administered by the College Board. Postsecondary credit may be awarded to students who score a minimum of three on a five-point scale on the corresponding AP Exam. Students shall be exempt from any fees for administration of the examination, regardless of whether or not the student achieves a passing score on the examination. [\[Florida Statute §1007.27\(5\)\]](#)

DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM

The Dual Enrollment Program is the enrollment of an eligible secondary student or Home Education student in a postsecondary course creditable toward high school completion and a career and technical certificate or an Associate or Baccalaureate Degree. [\[Florida Statute §1007.271\]](#)

In accordance with [Florida Statute § 1007.23\(5\)](#), a Dual Enrollment Articulation Committee made up of the SDPBC and, Palm Beach State College, as applicable, establishes rules, regulations, and policies of Dual Enrollment.

The Dual Enrollment Program provides an opportunity for students to simultaneously earn high school and college credit. Course credit earned in college-level courses shall be counted as college-level credit and may also be used to meet high school academic unit credit. It is not recommended that students duplicate potential college credit through dual enrollment, AP, AICE, or IB. This may have negative financial and degree completion implications at the postsecondary level. Dual Enrollment credit can be earned at Palm Beach State College. Course credit earned in these courses with a grade of “C” or better, shall transfer as college-level credit to a state college/university in Florida. College credit is transferable to other colleges according to the individual college guidelines and requirements. Where sufficient numbers of qualified students have been identified, a college course may be offered at the local high school.

Some college courses equate to a 0.5 high school credit, while others equal one credit. All Dual Enrollment grades shall be weighted 1.50 times the standard scale.

The Dual Enrollment Articulation Agreement lists Dual Enrollment courses and credits meeting specific subject area credit toward graduation. Certain Dual Enrollment courses may be used to satisfy specific required courses for graduation. (See the Florida Department of Education’s Dual Enrollment Equivalency List at: <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-collegesystem/academic-student-affairs/dual-enrollment.stml>.)

Students must meet the following requirements and conditions, as stated in the Dual Enrollment Articulation Agreements, in order to be eligible for participation in the Dual Enrollment Program:

1. Students must be enrolled in Grades 9-12. Students in Grades 9 must have earned four (4) high school credits with at least a 3.50 GPA, two of which must be an English Language Arts course and a mathematics course. Grade 10 includes the summer upon completion of Grade 9.
2. Students must have a minimum 3.0 GPA.
3. Students must earn college ready scores on either the SAT, ACT, CLT, Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (P.E.R.T.) PSAT, or ACCUPLACER as specified in the Dual Enrollment Articulation Agreement. Students must earn college ready scores on all sections of the above-named tests, as specified in the Dual Enrollment Articulation Agreement, to enroll courses at Palm Beach State College.
4. Students must limit enrollment to no more than eight total college credit hours per semester, regardless of the number of institutions they attend (per Dual Enrollment Articulation Agreement).
5. Students are limited to enrolling in courses that are a minimum of three (3) credit hours. One (1) credit hour lab courses must accompany a co-requisite three (3) credit hour course.
6. Students are limited to earning a maximum of sixty (60) credit hours through dual enrollment.

7. Students are only eligible for undergraduate courses.
8. Students must receive approval from the school principal/designee.
9. Students must adhere to the Dual Enrollment Agreement Guidelines set up by the school. Participation in Dual Enrollment is subject to the school's schedule.
10. Students must satisfy any course prerequisites.
11. The college/university must have space available in the requested course.
12. Students must maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA [\[Florida Statute § 1007.271\(3\)\]](#) per semester and earn a grade of "C" or better in any college-level course, in order to continue in the Dual Enrollment Program. A student will no longer be eligible for the Dual Enrollment Program if he/she earns a grade of "D", "F" or "W" These grades will be reflected on the high school and college transcripts.
13. Seniors are eligible for dual enrollment courses through the spring semester of their senior year and may NOT take summer dual enrollment courses regardless of their graduation date. Students may not enroll in vocational-preparatory instruction, college-preparatory instruction, and other forms of precollegiate instruction, or physical education courses that focus on the physical execution of a skill, rather than the intellectual attributes of the activity. [\[Florida Statute §1007.271\(7\)\]](#) Students may not enroll in vocational-preparatory instruction, college-preparatory instruction, and other forms of precollegiate instruction, or physical education courses that focus on the physical execution of a skill, rather than the intellectual attributes of the activity. [\[Florida Statute §1007.271\(7\)\]](#)

Career and Technical Dual Enrollment courses shall be available for students seeking a degree or certificate from a complete job preparatory program, but shall not sustain student enrollment in isolated career and technical courses. [\[Florida Statute §1007.271\(4\)\]](#)

Career Dual Enrollment shall be provided as a curricular option for secondary students to pursue in order to earn a series of elective credits toward the high school diploma. It is the intent of the legislature that Career Dual Enrollment provides a comprehensive academic and Career Dual Enrollment Program within the career center or community college. [\[Florida Statute §1007.271\(4\)\(21\)\]](#)

Per [Florida Statute § 1007.271\(2\)\(10\)\(11\)\(16\)](#), there are no tuition, registration, laboratory fees, or textbook cost to students participating in the Dual Enrollment Program. Students are responsible for textbooks that must be returned to the vendor. Fees will be charged to students who lose or damage textbooks. Students will be responsible for parking permits, identification card fees, late fees, library fees, special course fees, etc. or other course-related materials.

A student may attempt a single course, a maximum of three times, during their college career in a Florida postsecondary educational facility. These three attempts include withdrawals. Students may not dually enroll if they will graduate prior to the end of the postsecondary course. The student may apply to the postsecondary institution and pay the required registration, tuition, and fees, if the student meets the postsecondary institution's admissions requirements. [\[Florida Statute § 1007.271\(2\)\]](#) & [Florida Counseling for Future Education Handbook](#)

Enrollment in Schools without Dual Enrollment Agreements

For a student to be dual enrolled, courses must be taken with a college or university with whom STA has an articulation agreement. Students who choose to take courses at other postsecondary institutions are not considered dually enrolled. In order to receive permission from a non-partnering institution, a student must receive prior approval from the Principal. Criteria for approval for participation in such courses must meet the same requirements as dually enrolled students.

The parent(s) and/or student will be responsible for payment of fees and instructional materials. Excluding the required fees, all other rights and privileges will be afforded these students as those under Dual Enrollment Agreements (Dual Enrollment Articulation Agreement between the School District, Palm Beach State College). All courses that are not on the Dual Enrollment Course Equivalency List will be awarded a 0.5 elective credit. (Refer to *Dual Enrollment Equivalency List* at: <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-collegesystem/academic-student-affairs/dual-enrollment.shtml>)

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

No student may be assigned to a grade level based solely on age or other factors that constitute social promotion or administrative placement, as referenced in [Florida Statute § 1008.25\(6\)\(a\)](#). No student may be retained solely on the basis of standardized assessments.

Schools will make efforts to promote successful transition for students from each grade level to the next. School planned activities or programs that promote successful transition may include, but are not limited to:

- Course selection and articulation meetings with students
- School visits and orientation programs
- Summer student orientation programs

STUDENTS WITH INTERRUPTED EDUCATION

Grade Placement: Students must be enrolled immediately upon registration and referred to School Based Team for development of education support plan progress monitoring. However, the grade placement of students registering in SDPBC from within the state, other states, nonpublic schools, home education programs, other countries, or with interrupted education, will be made upon review of the students' records by the principal of the receiving school and in collaboration with school counseling team ([F.S. §1008.25](#)). Credits should be interpreted so that the requirements for promotion and graduation are not retroactive, provided the student has met all requirements for the grade placement in the school or home education program from which the student is transferring.

Age Discrepancy: In the absence of educational records or if a student's records reflect an age discrepancy of two years or more, placement will be according to chronological age as indicated in the following chart:

Student Chronological Age Assignment

Age in Years	Grade Level Assignment
5-10	Elementary School
11	Elementary School or Middle School depending on the grade configuration of the school.
12-13	Middle School
14	Middle School or High School depending on the grade configuration of the school
15 or older	High School

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPECIAL PROGRAM STUDENTS

The following sections address the considerations for Students with Disabilities (SWD), students with a Section 504 Accommodation Plan, and English Language Learner (ELL) students that do not meet the mandatory retention criteria.

English Language Learners (ELLs)

In accordance with [State Board of Education Rules 6A-6.0902, 6A-6.0903, 6A-6.0904](#), and [A1.09432\(6\)](#) a student identified as an ELL must meet the District levels of performance, as indicated on the Student Progression charts.

Promotion for an ELL shall be based on the student's academic performance, regardless of the level of English Language proficiency

An ELL is required to meet student performance standards for the appropriate grade level.

Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) requires that the IEP for each child with a disability include a statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals. The IEP must meet the student's needs that result from the disability to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the General Education curriculum.

When a student with a disability is determined to be performing below grade level in reading, writing, mathematics, and/or science, the IEP Team shall be convened to review the IEP. The student's IEP must address all of the student's educational needs, including the student's below grade level performance. The IEP Team may recommend a Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP) to address the student's educational need in reading, writing, mathematics, and/or science.

In accordance with [Florida Statute § 1008.25\(1\)](#), it is the responsibility of the School Board and School District administration to provide all students with effective instructional and remedial programs that monitor progress, promote continuous achievement, and make provisions for individual differences. With respect to Students with Disabilities, the School Board and School District administration have additional responsibilities, as set forth below.

The IDEA requires the School District to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to any individual child with a disability who needs special education and related services, even though the child has not failed or been retained in a course or grade, and is advancing from grade to grade [\[34 C.F.R. § 300.101\(c\)\(1\)\]](#).

State law requires that Students with Disabilities, who are included in the General Education curriculum must meet School District and/or State levels of performance for student progression; unless the student's IEP Team determined that the student should follow the Florida Standards Access Points modified curriculum aligned with ESE course requirements and benchmarks.

State law prohibits social promotion for any public-school student, including Students with Disabilities. Social promotion occurs when a student is promoted based on factors other than the student achieving School District and State levels of performance for student progression. In accordance with [Florida Statute § 1008.25\(6\)\(a\)](#), no student may be assigned to a grade level based solely on age or other factors that constitute social promotion.

Active Section 504 Accommodation Plans

As outlined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 34 C. F. R. Part 104, a student's Section 504 Accommodation Plan documents each of the accommodations required to ensure the student receives a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and has an equal opportunity to access the General Education curriculum in the least restrictive environment. If a Section 504 Team decides to make any alteration to the delivery of instruction or student assignments for a student with an active Section 504 Accommodation Plan, such alteration must be documented in the student's Section 504 Accommodation Plan. A parent of a student with an active Section 504 Accommodation Plan must be notified of any proposed changes to the Plan. In addition, a parent must be given the opportunity to provide input on decisions made by the 504 Team.

A student with an active Section 504 Accommodation Plan must meet the School District's levels of performance. Parent(s) must be notified if a student with a 504 Plan is being considered for retention. The Team must determine if the reason(s) for retention is/are caused by the disability of record on the active Section 504 Accommodation Plan. If the Team determines that the below grade level performance is caused by the disability, the student's placement must be re-evaluated.

The re-evaluation must include a review of the student's records, the student's intellectual and academic abilities, and other pertinent information provided by the student's teachers. Comprehensive documentation regarding student placement must be provided each time reevaluation occurs.

If the Team determines that the below grade level performance is not caused by the disability, the student is treated in the same manner as any General Education student.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADE CLASSIFICATION FOR PROMOTION AND RETENTION

The following requirements are used to determine grade classification to the next grade level. At the end of the school year, students will be promoted as follows:

- **9th grade** students will be promoted to **10th grade**;
- **10th grade** students will be promoted to **11th grade**;
- **11th grade** students will be promoted to **12th grade**; and
- **12th grade** students who do **not** meet graduation requirements will be **retained** in **12th grade**.

Students opting to earn an 18-credit ACCEL Diploma will be promoted to 12th grade in the beginning of the semester they intend to graduate.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to satisfy the graduation requirements in effect at the time the student first enters Grade 9, regardless of the date the student graduates, unless the requirements change for the entire class, or unless requirements are changed for all students by Florida Statute.

Schools shall provide parent(s) with information concerning all graduation options, including the respective curriculum requirements for those options, so that the students and their parent(s) may select the program that best fits their needs.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR A STANDARD DIPLOMA

Assessments for Standard Diploma

In order to receive a Standard Diploma, students must meet satisfactory performance or earn a Level 3 or higher on the required statewide assessments or meet the concordant or comparative subject area test score on a State Board of Education approved alternate assessment. They must also satisfy student performance standards for each course in Grades 9-12 for which credit toward graduation is awarded. As for students with a disability, see below as to the criteria for waivers from this graduation requirement. [[Florida Statutes §§ 1008.22\(3\)](#)], [[State Board of Education Rules 6A-1.0995](#)], & [[6A-1.09961](#)]

Students must meet satisfactory performance or earn a Level 3 or higher on the Grade 10 ELA FAST Assessment. A student may satisfy the Grade 10 FAST ELA requirement by achieving a concordant/comparative score as described in: <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7764/urlt/GradRequireFSA.pdf>.

Students must meet satisfactory performance or earn a Level 3 or higher on the Algebra 1 End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment or meet the concordant/comparative scores as described in: <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7764/urlt/GradRequireFSA.pdf>.

Statewide Standardized Assessment Waivers for Students with Disabilities

Section [1008.22\(3\)\(c\)2., F.S.](#), states that students with disabilities can be eligible for a waiver of statewide, standardized assessment results for the purpose of receiving a course grade or a standard diploma. This includes the Florida Standards Assessment, all end-of-course assessments and the Florida Standards Alternate Assessment.

In order for the general assessment graduation requirement to be waived, the IEP Team must meet to determine whether or not the state standardized assessment can accurately measure the student's abilities, taking into consideration allowable accommodations.

Statewide Standardized Assessment Waiver Eligibility Criteria for Students with Disabilities

Assessment results may be waived under special circumstances for students with disabilities for the purpose of receiving a course grade or a standard high school diploma. Specific requirements regarding the waiver process are found in s. [1008.22\(3\)\(c\)2., F.S.](#) To be considered for a statewide, standardized assessment results waiver, the following criteria must be met:

1. The student must be identified as a student with a disability, as defined in [s. 1007.02, F.S.](#): The term "student with a disability" means a student who is documented as having an intellectual disability; a hearing impairment, including deafness; a speech or language impairment; a visual impairment, including blindness; an emotional or behavioral disability; an orthopedic or other health impairment; an autism spectrum disorder; a traumatic brain injury; or a specific learning disability, including, but not limited to, dyslexia, dyscalculia, or developmental aphasia.

2. The student must have an individual educational plan (IEP).
3. The student must have taken the statewide, standardized assessment with appropriate allowable accommodations at least once.
4. In accordance with [s. 1008.22\(3\)\(c\)2., F.S.](#), the IEP team must make a determination of whether a statewide standardized assessment accurately measures the student's abilities, taking into consideration all allowable accommodations for students with disabilities.

The IEP team may meet at any time to:

- Verify that the criteria have been met
- Document the team's determination and information analyzed in making the decision

District Responsibilities:

The IEP Team will convene to make a determination whether the Statewide Standardized Assessment accurately measures the student's abilities, taking into consideration all allowable accommodations. The team may review evidence that includes, but is not limited to:

- Classroom work samples
- Course grades
- Teacher observations
- Relevant classroom data derived from formative assessments
- Intensive remediation activities on the required course standards
- Higher-level, related coursework (honors, advanced placement, etc.)
- Related postsecondary coursework through dual enrollment
- Other standardized academic assessments
- Portfolio

The IEP team must convene to analyze the information needed to consider whether a student is eligible for a waiver of statewide, standardized assessment results for the purpose of receiving a course grade or a standard diploma. A decision may be made at an IEP team meeting any time after a student takes a statewide, standardized assessment needed to earn a course grade or a standard high school diploma in accordance with [s.1008.22 \(a\)\(b\), F.S.](#) Documentation of the decision to grant or deny should be completed at that time.

A student who transfers from another state must pass the Grade 10 general assessment or an alternate assessment that is concordant with the general assessment; earn a 2.0 GPA; and meet all requirements of the school, district, or state from which he/she is transferring or meet Florida's course requirements to earn a Standard Diploma. A transfer student may be considered for the assessment waiver. [[Florida Statute § 1003.433\(1\)](#)]

Any waiver of the statewide, standardized assessment requirements by the individual education plan team, pursuant to [s. 1008.22\(3\)\(c\)](#), must be approved by the parent and is subject to verification for appropriateness by an independent reviewer selected by the parent as provided for in [Florida Statute § 1003.572](#).

Course Credit for Standard Diploma

In accordance with [Florida Statute § 1003.436\(2\)](#), credits are awarded in 0.5 credit increments per quarter upon successful completion of course requirements, with the exception of courses with EOC Assessments that award one credit.

Grade Point Average (GPA) for Standard Diploma

In middle and high school, GPA is defined as the numerical average represented by the point value of the letter grades earned, divided by the number of semester grades. The point value is based on a standard scale of 4.0 with no weighing factor for different levels of difficulty. The scale is based on 4.0 (A), 3.0 (B), 2.0 (C), 1.0 (D) and 0 for any other grade. [\[Florida Statute § 1003.437\]](#)

Students must earn a minimum GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale for all credits attempted, except for those replaced according to the Forgiveness Rule. [\[Florida Statute § 1003.437\]](#)

FOUR-YEAR, 24-CREDIT TRADITIONAL OPTION REQUIREMENTS

The 24 credits may be earned through applied, integrated, and combined courses approved by the Department of Education.

English Requirements for Four-Year 24-Credit Option

- Students must earn four English credits (English I, II, III, and IV or the AP/AICE/ IB/ Dual Enrollment course equivalents).

Mathematics Requirements for Four-Year 24-Credit Option

1. Students must earn four high school mathematics credits, which must include Algebra 1 and Geometry. [\[Florida Statute § 1003.4282\(3\)\(b\)\]](#)
2. Three of the four required mathematics credits must be earned in Grades 9-12. However, students who score a minimum of 550 on the mathematics portion of the Old SAT (prior to March 2016), or a 570 on the mathematics portion of the New SAT (March 2016 and thereafter), or a minimum score of 24 on the mathematics portion of the ACT, may be exempt from the requirement that the three credits be earned in Grades 9-12 and may use all high school mathematics credits earned in middle school toward the four-credit graduation requirement. (Students should be reminded that meeting only the minimum mathematics credit requirement might adversely impact college admission.)
3. The grades earned in high school courses, taken in middle school, will be included on the high school transcript.
4. Students enrolled in Algebra 1:
 - a. must take the Algebra 1 EOC Assessment and pass the course. Student performance on the Algebra 1 EOC Assessment constitutes 30 percent of the student's final course grade. Students who do not take the Algebra 1 EOC Assessment will receive an "I" in the course. After the student makes up the EOC, the final grade will be recalculated. [\[Florida Statute § 1008.22\(3\)\(b\)1\]](#)
 - b. must meet satisfactory performance or earn a Level 3 or higher on the Algebra 1 End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment or meet the concordant/comparative scores as described in: <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7764/urlt/GradRequireFSA.pdf>
5. Students enrolled in Geometry:
 - a. must take the Geometry EOC Assessment and pass the course. Student performance on the Geometry EOC Assessment constitutes 30 percent of the student's final course grade. Students who do not take the Geometry EOC Assessment will receive an "I" in the course. After the student makes up the EOC, the final grade will be recalculated. [\[Florida Statute § 1008.22\(3\)\(b\)1\]](#)
 - b. must meet satisfactory performance or earn a Level 3 or higher on the Geometry EOC Assessment to earn a Standard High School Diploma Scholar Designation.
6. Industry certification courses that lead to college credit may substitute for up to two mathematics credits, not including Algebra 1 or Geometry.
7. A student who earns a computer science credit may substitute the credit for up to one credit of the mathematics requirement, with the exception of Algebra 1 or Geometry, if identified by FLDOE as being equivalent in rigor to the mathematics credit. An identified computer science credit may not be used to

substitute for both a mathematics and a science credit.

8. A student who earns an industry certification in 3D rapid prototype printing may satisfy up to two credits of the mathematics requirement with the exception of Algebra 1, if identified by FLDOE as being equivalent in rigor to the mathematics credit.

Algebra 1 End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment Requirement

All students enrolled in and completing any of the following courses must take the Algebra 1 EOC Assessment:

Course	Course Code
Algebra 1*	1200310
Algebra 1 Honors*	1200320
Algebra 1-B	1200380
Access Algebra 1 *or Access Algebra 1B*	7912075 7912090
Pre-AICE Mathematics 1*	1209810
IB MYP Algebra 1 Honors*	1200390
Pre-AP Algebra 1*	1200386

*Not offered at STA

Geometry End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment Requirement

All students enrolled in and completing any of the following courses must take the Geometry EOC Assessment:

Course	Course Code
Geometry	1206310
Geometry Honors	1206320
Access Geometry*	7912065
Pre-AICE Mathematics 2*	1209820
IB MYP Geometry*	1206810

*Not offered at STA

Science Requirements for Four-Year 24-Credit Option

1. Three science credits must be earned during high school:
 - 1.0 credit Biology 1
 - 1.0 credit in a physical science (must be an equally rigorous course: Earth/Space, Chemistry, Physics, Astronomy, or Physical Science); and
 - 1.0 credit in science (must be an equally rigorous course¹⁴).
2. If a student earned a Biology 1 and/or physical science credit in middle school, that course will meet the subject area requirement. However, an additional three science credits must be earned in grades 9-12.
3. Two courses must include a laboratory component. [[Florida Statute § 1003.4282 \(3\)\(c\)](#)]
4. Students enrolled in Biology 1:
 - a) must take the Biology 1 EOC Assessment and pass the course. Student performance on the Biology 1 EOC Assessment constitutes 30 percent of the final course grade. Students who do not take the EOC Assessment will receive an “I” in the course. After the student makes-up the EOC, the final grade will be recalculated. [[Florida Statute §§ 1003.4282 \(3\)\(c\) and 1008.22\(3\)\(b\)2](#)]
 - b) must meet satisfactory performance or earn a Level 3 or higher on the Biology 1 EOC Assessment to earn a Standard High School Diploma Scholar Designation. [[Florida Statute § 1003.4285\(1\)\(a\)](#)]
5. An industry certification for which there is a statewide college credit articulation agreement approved by the State Board of Education or an identified computer science course with a related industry certification may substitute for up to one science credit, not including Biology 1. [[Florida Statute §1003.4282\(3\)\(c\)](#)]
6. A student who earns a computer science credit may substitute the credit for up to one credit of the science requirement, with the exception of Biology 1, if identified by FLDOE as being equivalent in rigor to the science credit. An identified computer science credit may not be used to substitute for both a mathematics and a science credit.

¹⁴ Equally rigorous courses are determined by the State Board of Education. Courses with a physical science designation are determined by SDPBC.

Biology 1 End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment Requirement

All students enrolled in and completing any of the following courses must take the Biology 1 EOC Assessment:

Course	Course Code
Biology 1	2000310
Biology 1 Honors	2000320
Access Biology*	7920015
Pre-AICE Biology*	2000322
FL Pre IB Biology 1*	2000800
IB MYP Biology Honors*	2000850
Biology Technology*	2000430
Integrated Science 3*	2002440
Integrated Science 3 Honors*	2002450

*Not offered in the STA schools.

Students enrolled in AP, IB, or AICE Biology courses that take the respective assessment and earn the minimum score required for college credit, are exempt from the EOC assessment. They may take the Biology EOC if desired for the Scholar Designation.

Social Studies Requirements for Four-Year 24-Credit Option

- Students must earn three social studies course credits for graduation [[Florida Statutes § 1003.4282\(3\)\(d\)](#)], as follows:
 - Grade 10 World History – 1.0 credit
 - Grade 11 United States (U.S.) History – 1.0 credit
 - U.S. History students must take the U.S. History EOC Assessment and pass the course.
 - Student performance on the U.S. History EOC Assessment constitutes 30 percent of the student's final course grade.
 - Students who do not take the U.S. History EOC Assessment will receive an "I" in the course. After the student makes-up the EOC, the final grade will be recalculated.
 - A student must meet satisfactory performance or earn a Level 3 or higher on the U.S. History EOC Assessment to earn a Standard High School Diploma Scholar Designation.
 - Grade 12 U.S. Government -0.5 credit - includes Florida Civic Literacy Exam (FCLE)
 - Grade 12 Economics– 0.5 credit

Social Studies End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment Requirement

All students enrolled in and completing the following courses must take the U.S. History EOC Assessment:

Course	Course Code
United States History	2100310
United States History Honors	2100320
Access United States History*	7921025

*Not offered at STA.

Personal Financial and Money Management for Four-Year 24-Credit Option

Beginning with students entering grade 9 in the 2023-2024 school year, students must earn one-half credit in personal financial literacy and money management for graduation. [\[Florida Statute § 1003.4282\(3\)\(h\)\]](#)

Physical Education requirements for Four-Year 24-Credit Option

- In accordance with [Florida Statute § 1003.4282\(3\)\(f\)](#), the school may not require that the one credit physical education requirement be taken during the 9th grade year.
- This requirement may be met by completing one of three options:

Credit Awarded	Description	Course Number(s)
1.0	Earn 1.0 credit in Health Opportunities through Physical Education (HOPE)	1506320 or 3026010
0.5 0.5	Earn 0.5 credit in Personal Fitness AND Earn 0.5 credit in a PE elective	1501300 Various
0.5 0.0	Earn 0.5 credit in Personal Fitness AND Successfully complete a marching band course	1501300 1500440
0.5 0.0	Earn 0.5 credit in Personal Fitness AND Successfully complete a dance course	1501300 1500445
0.0	Successfully complete 2 full years of JROTC	1500450 1500460 1500480
0.0	Successfully complete 2 full seasons of a Junior Varsity or Varsity Sport (complete PBSD 1954) Must be documented by school in which the student participated	1500410 1500420
0.0	Choose the 18-Credit ACCEL Graduation Option (WXL)	N/A
• If a Marching Band, Dance, JROTC or JV/Varsity Sport waiver is used, the elective requirements needed by the student is increased by the amount of credits that are waived. For example – If a student completes 2 years of a JV Sport, 1.0 credit is waived. This means the elective requirements has increased by 1.0 credit from 8 to 9. • There is no PE or Online course requirement with the use of the WXL Graduation code. Three electives are needed instead of eight. This option can only be used if the student has met all graduation assessment requirements.		

Fine and Performing Arts Requirements for Four-Year 24-Credit Option

Students must earn one credit in fine or performing arts, speech and debate, or career and technical education. A practical arts course that incorporates artistic content and techniques of creativity, interpretation, and imagination satisfies the one credit requirement in fine or performing arts, speech and debate, or career and technical education. [\[Florida Statute §1003.4282\(3\)\(e\)\]](#)

Eligible practical arts courses shall be identified through the Florida Department of [Education Course Code Directory](#). [\[Florida Statute § 1003.4282\(3\)\(e\)\]](#)

The Fine and Performing Arts requirement may also be fulfilled by completing the following:

- two years of JROTC, a significant portion of which is drills;
- 1.0 credit of JROTC satisfies the performing arts requirement and 1.0 credit of ROTC satisfies the HOPE requirement. [\[Florida Statute §1003.4282\(3\)\(f\)\]](#)
- Completion of 2 years of marching band (completion of 2 years of marching band shall satisfy the on-credit requirement in physical education OR the one-credit requirement in performing arts.)

Electives Requirements for Four-Year 24-Credit Option

1. Students must earn 7.5 credits in electives (beginning with students entering grade 9 in 2023-2024, 8 credits for students entering earlier) for graduation. [\[Florida Statutes § 1003.4282\(3\)\(g\)\]](#)
2. Elective credit may not be granted toward high school graduation for the following:
 - more than a total of nine elective credits in remedial/compensatory programs;
 - more than one credit in exploratory vocational courses;
 - more than three credits in practical arts, family, and consumer science (home economics) courses; and/or
 - any Level I course unless the student's assessment indicates that a more rigorous course of study would be inappropriate, in which case a written assessment of the need must be included in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Progress
 - Monitoring Plan (PMP), signed by the principal, the school counselor, and the parent(s) of the student, if the student is not 18 years or older, or by the student, if the student is 18 years of age or older.

World Language Options

The successful completion of two sequential World Language courses is not a graduation requirement. However, a student must demonstrate World Language proficiency at a level equal to two years of high school World Language coursework (in the same language) or two years of high school American Sign Language coursework as a requirement for entry into the State University System (SUS), for a Florida College System Associate in Arts degree, and the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program. Students not completing this requirement while in high school must make up the credits at a postsecondary institution prior to graduation from a university.

This requirement can be met in one of the following ways:

1. Successfully completing two high school World Language or American Sign Language courses, at least one of which must be equivalent to level 2 or higher (e.g., Spanish 1 & Spanish 2, French 1 & French 2, or American Sign Language 1 & 2).
2. Successfully completing two (2) World Language or American Sign Language courses at a postsecondary institution via dual enrollment, at least one of which must be equivalent to the Elementary Level 2.
3. Qualifying for the Silver or Gold Seal of Biliteracy
4. Earning college World Language credits through a college's internal World Languages Departmental Test; documentation of the credits awarded must be provided to the high school counselor.

*Note: If a student's proficiency is in a language for which there is no test available to determine proficiency, a transcript documenting formal education equal to two years of high school coursework in that language, or in English in a non-English-speaking country, may be used.

Refer to the Bright Futures Student Handbook for current policies related to meeting the World Language requirement at: <https://floridabrightfutures.gov/>

NOTE: Students must confirm that the World Language Waiver will be recognized by the college or university to which they are applying. Refer to <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5421/urlt/0078391-acc-cbe.pdf>. If it is determined that a World Language Waiver is appropriate, the counselor will add the World Language waiver (Course Code 0791920) to the student's academic history, including FL as the subject area/ Documentation indicating how the proficiency was met must be kept in the student's cumulative folder. The World Language Waiver options do **not** award students high school credit.

Community Service Graduation Requirement

Students of the School District of Palm Beach County are required to obtain a minimum of 20 community service hours to graduate from high school. In the event of a state, local, or national emergency, the Superintendent may waive the 20-hour community service requirement for any student who has not met the requirement, but is otherwise on track to graduate. Community service is also a requirement for many scholarships (i.e., Bright Futures) and college entrance programs. The purpose of community service is for students to engage in activities that help them develop an appreciation for the concept of service to the school or community.

The following guidelines must be followed to participate in activities that are considered acceptable for community service:

- Community service is defined as non-paid volunteer work for a non-profit agency.
- Students may begin accumulating service hours as early as the summer prior to entry of the 9th grade year.
- Service should benefit the community at large. Working solely for an individual will not be acceptable.
- Hours must be documented in writing, either on a common community service log (generated by the school) or on letterhead from the organization being served.
- Parent notification of the community service requirement is necessary. A school generated notice will include the necessity of parental knowledge/supervision while students are engaged in community service activities.
- Student who do not have access to community service opportunities must be provided opportunities on the school campus. It is the student's responsibility to alert the School Counseling Department that he/she is in need of school access to community service.
- Time spent organizing and collecting canned goods, clothing, or book drives for a community in need does qualify as community service.
- Service on behalf of a candidate for public office can be considered community service.
- Fostering animals for a non-profit animal organization will be given no more than four (4) hours a day.

The following are examples that would not count as community service:

- Rehearsal time for participation in a fine arts or performing arts program.
- Practice time for sports and band.
- Club meetings to organize community service activities.
- Donating canned goods or items to gain community service hours.

Parents cannot sign to verify their child's participation in a community service activity.

The documentation of the number of hours and dates of service must be signed by the student, the student's parent or guardian, and a representative of the organization for which the student performed the volunteer work. Schools should have the community service hours entered onto the student's electronic records by two (2) weeks after submittal.

For Bright Futures Requirements ONLY

- (Students entering grade 9 in the 2024-2025 school year and thereafter must complete 75 hours of volunteer service.
- Students must earn either the required volunteer service (using the criteria described above, paid work hours, or a combination of both.
- Reflection: The student must, through papers or other presentations, evaluate and reflect upon their volunteer service or paid work experience.

- The agencies where the volunteer service hours or paid work hours were earned must provide on agency letterhead documentation of the number of hours and dates of service or paid work completed. Where a letter cannot be obtained, students may submit a copy of their pay stub.
- Volunteer service hours and paid work hours may not be hours that benefitted the student financially or materially while in the service of family members defined as: parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, and spouses, including aforementioned step relations.
- Students may begin accumulating paid work hours as early as June 27, 2022.
- Paid work may include, but is not limited to, a business or governmental internship, work for a nonprofit community service organization, or activities on behalf of a candidate for public office.
- Paid work must be documented in writing, either on a common paid work log (generated by the School) or on letterhead from the organization.
- Volunteer service or paid work must be approved by School Principal or Principal Designee, or the Department of Education for Home Education students.

The document must be signed by the student, the student's parent or guardian, and a representative of the organization for which the student performed the paid work.

Graduation Requirements for Transfer Students

Per [Florida Statute § 1003.433](#), students who enter a Florida public school in the 11th or 12th grade from out-of-state or from a foreign country shall not be required to spend additional time in a Florida public school in order to meet the high school course requirements, if the student has met all requirements of the school district, state, or country from which he/she is transferring. However, to receive a Standard High School Diploma, a transfer student must earn a 2.0 GPA and meet satisfactory performance or earn a Level 3 or higher on all required graduation assessments according to [Florida Statute § 1008.22\(3\)](#) or an alternate assessment as described in [Florida Statute § 1008.22\(3\)](#).

1. A student entering high school from another district, state, or country is required to satisfy the graduation requirements of his/her enrolled cohort.
2. The student must take a full schedule of courses to comply as closely as possible with the graduation requirements of the cohort, but shall not be required to spend additional time in school in order to meet these requirements. Unless prescribed by his/her Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP), no junior or senior will be required to take two required courses in the same discipline concurrently.
3. A Graduation Credit Waiver Request (PBSD 2461) must be completed to waive this requirement.
4. A transfer student may not waive credits required for graduation if he/she will receive a Certificate of Completion.

OTHER GRADUATION OPTIONS

Early Graduation for Four-Year 24-Credit Option Students

Per Florida Statute § 1003.4281, a high school student may be provided the option of early graduation. Students who complete the requirements for graduation before their cohort class may elect to:

1. graduate at the time that all requirements have been completed; or
2. with principal's permission, continue enrollment as a full-time student in the SDPBC until the end of the regular school year in which their cohort class graduates. All grades earned by the student will become a part of the student's permanent record and calculated in the student's GPA/HPA.
3. It is the expectation that STA students complete a 4-year program.

The principal may deny continued enrollment for a student who has met graduation requirements. Students who graduate early may participate in the end-of-year graduation ceremonies. Students will be promoted to 12th grade at the beginning of the semester they intend to graduate.

18-Credit ACCEL Graduation Option

Per [Florida Statute § 1002.3105\(5\)](#), the 18-Credit ACCEL graduation option is now available for students. All graduation requirements for a Standard Diploma must be met, per [Florida Statute § 1003.4282\(3\) \(a-e\)](#), except for the following credits:

- Physical Education credit
- Five elective credits

Students opting to earn an 18-credit ACCEL Diploma will be promoted to 12th grade in the beginning of the semester they intend to graduate.

Career and Technical Education Graduation Pathway Option

Beginning with the 2019-2020 school year, students are eligible to complete an alternative pathway to earning a standard high school diploma through the Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathway option. The following requirements must be met.

Minimum 18 credits in the following:

- 4 English Language Arts
- 4 mathematics (must include Algebra 1 and Geometry)
- 3 science (must include Biology 1 and a physical science)
- 3 social studies (World History, U.S. History, ½ Economics, ½ U.S. Government)
- 2 CTE (must result in a program completion and an industry certification)
- 1.5 work-based learning programs

Additional Requirements:

- Minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0
- 20 hours volunteer community service (required by SDPBC)
- Assessment requirements for standard diploma must be met as described in the [Assessments for Standard Diploma section](#)

COURSE ACCOMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

Active Section 504 Accommodation Plans Course Modifications

A student is eligible for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 if the student is determined to have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such student. [\[Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 34 C. F. R. Part 104\]](#)

In addition, a student with either a record of impairment, or who is regarded as having impairment, is protected from discrimination under both Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (effective January 1, 2009). Congress declared that its purpose in amending the ADA was to reinstate a broad scope of protection, to carry out its objectives of providing "a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination," and set forth "clear, strong, consistent, enforceable standards addressing discrimination."

A student meets the requirement of being regarded as having an impairment by establishing that the student has been subjected to a prohibited act because of an actual or perceived physical or mental impairment, whether or not the impairment limits or is perceived to limit a major life activity. This provision shall not apply to a student's impairments that are transitory and minor. A transitory impairment has an actual or expected duration of six months or less. A Multi-Disciplinary 504 Team must meet as necessary to determine if an otherwise qualified student's mental and/or physical impairment substantially limits one or more of the student's major life activities.

Major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working. Major life activities also include the operation of a major bodily function, including but not limited to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

In deciding eligibility, the Multi-Disciplinary 504 Team will consider information from a variety of sources, including medical documentation, behavioral observations, checklists, classroom tests, teacher recommendations and/or reports, current grades and trends, academic history, standardized test reports, and other relevant information.

The Multi-Disciplinary 504 Team determines accommodations to be included on the Section 504 Accommodation Plan to ensure an equal opportunity to master the General Education content requirements.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities entering grade 9 may attain a standard diploma and earn standard diploma designation by meeting requirements in Florida Statute 1003.4282.

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS

A diploma is considered a ceremonial certificate. A transcript is the official documentation of high school graduation.

Diploma Designations

Students may earn one or more designations on their Standard Diploma. Students are not required to obtain a designation and there is no deadline for choosing a designation. The three designations are:

1. **Scholar Designation** - In addition to meeting the Standard Diploma requirements, the following criteria must be met.
 - Students must earn:
 - 1.0 credit in Algebra 2 (or an equally rigorous mathematics course);
 - 1.0 credit in statistics (or an equally rigorous mathematics course);
 - 1.0 credit in Chemistry or Physics;
 - 1.0 credit in a course equally rigorous to chemistry or physics; and
 - 2.0 credits in the same world language.
 - Students must meet satisfactory performance or earn a Level 3 or higher on the Geometry, Biology 1,

- and U.S. History EOC Assessments.
 - Students must earn at least one credit in AP, IB, AICE, or a Dual Enrollment course
- Industry Scholar Designation** - In addition to meeting the Standard Diploma requirements, students must attain one or more industry certifications from the list established, per [Florida Statute § 1003.492](#).
 - Seal of Biliteracy** -The Seal of Biliteracy is an award in recognition of high school graduating students who have attained a high level of competency in listening, speaking, reading and writing in one or more languages in addition to English, which is signified on a high school graduate's diploma and transcript as either a Gold Seal of Biliteracy or a Silver Seal of Biliteracy. The purpose of the Seal of Biliteracy is to encourage students to study languages, certify attainment of biliteracy skills, provide employers with a method of identifying an individual who has language and biliteracy skills, provide a postsecondary institution with a method of recognizing an applicant with biliteracy skills who is seeking admission to the postsecondary institution, recognize and promote World Language instruction in public schools, strengthen intergroup relationships, affirm the value of diversity, and honor the multiple cultures and languages of a community. [[Florida Statute § 1003.432](#)]

In addition to standard diploma requirements, the [Seal of Biliteracy requirements](#) are outlined below:

Silver Seal of Biliteracy:

- Earn four (4) world language course credits in the same world language with a cumulative 3.0 grade point average or higher on a 4.0 scale in those world language courses; or
- Earn a score or performance level on any of the examinations found on the chart shown below:

Examination	Score or Performance Level
International Baccalaureate (IB) Language Exam	4 or higher
Advanced Placement (AP) Language Exam 3	3 or higher
Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) Subject Test	A, B, C, D, or E
College Level Examination Program (CLEP) Level Language Exam	Spanish 50-62 French 50-58 German 50-59
American Sign Language Proficiency Interview (ASLPI)	3 or higher
Sign Language Proficiency Interview: American Sign (SLPI:ASL)	Intermediate mid or higher
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Assessment of Performance Toward Proficiency in Language (AAPPL)	Intermediate mid or higher
Oral Proficiency Interview (ACTFL/OPI)	Intermediate or higher
Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP4S)	Intermediate or higher
Latin Interpretive Reading Assessment (ACTFL/ALIRA)	

Gold Seal of Biliteracy:

- Earn four (4) world language course credits in the same world language with a cumulative 3.0 grade point average or higher on a 4.0 scale in those world language courses; AND Level 4 or higher on the Grade 10 English Language Arts (ELA) Florida Standards Assessment (FSA); OR
- Earn a score or performance level on any of the examinations found in the chart below:

Examination	Score or Performance Level
International Baccalaureate (IB) Language Exam	5 or higher
Advanced Placement (AP) Language Exam	4 or higher
Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) Subject Test	A, B, C, D or E
College Level Examination Program (CLEP) Level 2 Language Exam	Spanish 63 or higher French 59 or higher German 60 or higher

Or, for languages which are not tested on the nationally recognized examinations list, demonstrated language proficiency through maintenance of a portfolio of language performance at the intermediate Mid-level or higher for the Silver Seal of Biliteracy or Advanced Low level or higher for the Gold Seal of Biliteracy, based on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 in the modes of communication appropriate for the language.

A high school student who did not enroll in, or complete, world language courses, shall be awarded four (4) world language high school course credits, upon attaining at least the minimum score or performance level for the corresponding level (Silver or Gold). No more than four (4) world language course credits in total should be awarded to a student who qualifies per this option, regardless of any other earning of world language credits or awarding of world language credits.

Seal of Fine Art

To earn the Florida Seal of Fine Arts, a high school student must:

1. Obtain a standard high school diploma.
2. Complete at least three year-long courses in dance, music, theatre, or visual arts, achieving a grade of “A” or higher in each course. Alternatively, the student can earn three sequential course credits in these subjects, with a grade of “A” or higher in each course.

The student must fulfill at least two of the following requirements:

1. Complete a fine arts International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, Dual Enrollment or Honors course in the above subjects, achieving a “B” or higher grade
2. Participate as a selected student in a juried event by a district or statewide organization for two or more years
3. Perform at least 25 volunteer hours of art-related community service and present a comprehensive report on their experiences
4. Meet the criteria of a portfolio-based program that recognizes the student as an exemplary fine arts practitioner
5. Receive district, state, or national recognition for creating and submitting an original work of art, which can be a musical or theatrical composition, visual artwork, or choreographed performance.

Students Who Do Not Meet Standard Diploma Requirements

A student who earns the required 24 credits, or the required 18 credits, but fails to pass the assessments required under s. 1008.22 (3) or achieve a 2.0 GPA may elect to remain in high school either as a full-time student or a part-time student for up to 1 additional year and receive special instruction designed to remedy his or her identified deficiencies.

A student who subsequently meets the requirements for a Standard High School Diploma shall be awarded a Standard High School Diploma dated the school year in which the requirements are completed.

Students who do not meet graduation requirements may have the following options:

1. take the Grade 10 FAST ELA/End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments;
2. meet the concordant/comparative scores
3. return to school for a 13th year to remediate state assessments and/or GPA
4. Enroll in an Adult High School Equivalency/GEP program.
5. take the Postsecondary Education Readiness TEST (P.E.R.T.) and attend a Florida College System while continuing to take the Grade 10 FAST ELA and/or Algebra 1 EOC Assessment if the only graduation deficiency is Grade 10 FAST ELA and/or Algebra 1 EOC Assessments

RECOGNITION OF VALEDICTORIAN/SALUTATORIAN

To be eligible for valedictorian or salutatorian recognition, a student must have attended STA for three complete years, two of which must be the junior and senior years, two of which must be the junior and senior years

Students selecting an 18-Credit ACCEL Graduation Option or electing to complete the 24-Credit Option in three years will not be eligible for valedictorian/salutatorian. An early admission student enrolled full-time in a college or university during any portion of his/her senior year will not be eligible for valedictorian/salutatorian.

Valedictorian/Salutatorian Calculation

1. The valedictorian/salutatorian award will be based on grades earned after entry into 9th grade through the first semester of 12th grade
2. The valedictorian will be the student with the highest HPA, carried to the ten-thousandth place.
3. The salutatorian will be the student with the second highest HPA, carried to the ten-thousandth place.
4. In the case of a tie for the highest HPA, co-valedictorians will be named, and the student with the third highest HPA will be designated as salutatorian. In the case of a tie for the second highest HPA, co-salutatorians will be named.

REMEDIATION AND RETENTION

IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS IN NEED OF REMEDIATION

The following sections identify performance levels as they relate to the Florida's Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST), statewide, standardized ELA assessment, End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments, and additional optional assessments. This permits decision-makers to identify the overall achievement of each child through District and statewide assessments and allows for a narrower focus on student achievement for the purposes of remediation decisions. Teachers and administrators may examine the student's reading, writing, mathematics, science, and/or social studies performance to determine whether a student is in need of remediation in one or more of these areas.

HIGH SCHOOL (9-12) REMEDIATION REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with [Florida Statute § 1008.25\(3\)](#), remedial and supplemental instruction resources must be allocated first to students who fail to meet achievement performance levels required for promotion. STA provides remedial instruction for those students with substantial reading, writing, science, and/or mathematics deficiencies as identified by State testing.

In accordance with [Florida Statute § 1008.25\(2\)\(a\)](#), high schools shall use all available assessment results to advise high school students of any identified deficiencies and to provide appropriate postsecondary preparatory instruction before high school graduation.

In accordance with [Florida Statute § 1008.25\(4\)\(b\)3](#), remedial instruction shall be provided through implementation of a Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP), a Student Plan for Services for English Language Learners (ELLs), an Individual Educational Plan (IEP), or a student's 504 Accommodation Plan, developed in consultation with a parent. If a student does not meet the minimum performance expectations, remedial instruction will be provided until expectations are met, the student graduates from high school, or the student is not subject to compulsory attendance.

Credits earned in remedial instruction courses must be in addition to, not in lieu of, English and mathematics credits required for graduation. These courses will be considered elective credits. [\[Florida Statute § 1003.4282\(5\)\]](#)

Students who do not meet satisfactory performance or earn a Level 3 or higher on the required statewide assessments are provided remedial instruction, which may be incorporated into the student's content course. Seniors who have not met satisfactory performance or earned a Level 3 or higher on the required statewide assessments, or who do not have the required minimum 2.0 Grade Point Average (GPA), may elect to attend school for an additional year.

High School Reading Remediation

The goal of reading remediation is to provide students with the skills and strategies necessary to assist them in reading text that is on grade level.

All students in grades 9-10 scoring a level 1 or 2 on the previous year's FAST ELA assessment must receive reading support. Students in Grades 9-10 may also be determined to be in need of reading intervention based on all available data, such as Diagnostic predicted FAST ELA level results and teacher observation. Students in Grades 11 and 12 who did not meet satisfactory performance on the previous year's FAST ELA must also receive intensive reading support. The level of support necessary for students in Grades 9-12 depends upon

school personnel input.

Algebra 1 Remediation

Scoring at or above achievement Level 3 on the Algebra 1 End-of-Course (EOC) indicates satisfactory performance and awards the student credit in Algebra 1 (Access Algebra 1).

If a student does not meet the minimum score of Achievement Level 3 or above, the student may move on to the next mathematics course but must retake the Algebra 1 EOC Assessment or meet the concordant / comparative scores as described in: <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7764/urlt/GradRequireFSA.pdf>

In accordance with [Florida Statute § 1003.4282\(5\)\(b\)](#) and general requirements for high school graduation, students scoring a Level 1 or Level 2 on the Algebra 1 EOC Assessment, who need to retake the assessment, must enroll in and complete an intensive remedial course the following year or be placed in a content area course that includes remediation of skills not acquired by the student.

High School Complementary Options for Remedial Instruction

- Content Area Course
- Before or After School Tutorial
- Saturday School Tutorial
- Contracted Academic Services
- Suspension of Other Curriculum
- Online Coursework
- Other Strategies

PROGRESS MONITORING

GENERAL PROGRESS MONITORING PLAN (PMP) PROCESS

A PMP is intended to provide the school flexibility in meeting the academic needs of the student. A student who is not meeting the or State's requirements for satisfactory performance in reading, writing, mathematics, and/or science must have one of the following plans to target instruction and identify ways to improve his/her academic achievement:

- a federally required student plan addressing specific needs, such as an Individual Education Plan (IEP);
- a school-wide system of progress monitoring for all students; or

In accordance with [Florida Statute § 1008.25\(4\)\(b\)](#), all PMPs are to be developed through the collaboration of the receiving teacher(s) and the parent(s) and approved by the principal. In the case of students receiving continued remediation, recommendations of the sending teacher(s) are to be reviewed as a part of the PMP process.

It is the responsibility of the teacher and the principal to ensure that the PMP is substantive and that the outlined instructional and support services are provided. The PMP will assist schools and teachers in the implementation of research-based strategies.

The PMP should clearly identify the following:

- the specific diagnosed academic needs to be remedied;
- the goals and benchmarks for student growth
- the monitoring and reevaluation activities to be employed
- the evidence-based intervention strategies to be used;
- Strategies, resources, and materials that will be provided to the student's parent to support the student
- how, when, how often, by whom, and how long intensive remedial instruction is to be provided; and
- Any additional services the student's teacher deems available and appropriate to accelerate the student's reading or mathematics skill development.

The selection of a PMP is a school-based decision. A school-wide plan can be developed that indicates the diagnostic tools, strategies and interventions to be used across the school and at all grade levels. If a school-wide plan is used, schools must:

- complete the school-wide plan;
- provide copies of the completed form to all staff members;
- ensure teachers of eligible students are aware of their students who are included within this plan and verify that what they plan to do to remediate and progress monitor these students is listed on the school-wide form;
- teachers should make every effort to make parent contact;
- document attempts to inform parents;
- periodically, after assessments are completed, teachers should review the plan and document changes being made to ensure that every effort is employed to remediate the student;
- at the end of the year, the teacher should review the plan and each student's progress to determine if a PMP is necessary for the following school year.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLs) PROGRESS MONITORING

If a student has an ELL Plan, this Plan may include strategies and the student may not need a PMP. However, if the ELL Plan does not include the required strategies to remediate the student's deficiency, a PMP can be written. An ELL Plan can be amended to include the strategies so that a PMP would not be necessary.

HIGH SCHOOL (9-12) PROGRESS MONITORING

English, Mathematics, and Science Progress Monitoring

High school students are expected to receive passing grades in the required English, mathematics, and science courses. Those students, who fail to receive passing grades, will be provided interventions and strategies.

Teachers and administrators may examine the student's reading, writing, mathematics, and/or science performance to determine whether a student is in need of remediation in one or more of these areas.

REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

[Florida Statute § 1003.33](#) requires that report cards clearly depict and report the following:

- the student's academic performance in each class or course (based upon examinations, as well as written papers and other academic performance criteria), and must include the student's performance or nonperformance at his/her grade level;
- the student's conduct and behavior; and
- the student's attendance, including absences and tardiness.

The student's final report card for a school year shall contain a statement indicating end-of the-year status regarding performance or nonperformance at grade level, acceptable or unacceptable behavior and attendance, and promotion or non-promotion. [[Florida Statute § 1003.33\(2\)](#)]

EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS EDUCATION (ESE) STUDENTS

Parent(s) of students with disabilities enrolled in Exceptional Student Education (ESE) must also be informed of their child's progress toward his/her annual Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals at least as often as their non-disabled peers receive progress reports during each marking period. A statement specifying the method and frequency of the progress of a student with a disability is reported and included in the student's IEP.

PARENT WRITTEN NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

As outlined in [Florida Statute § 1008.25\(8\)\(a\)](#), an annual written report must be provided to the parent of each student on the student's progress toward meeting satisfactory performance. All communication (written and verbal) with parents must be in a language they understand unless clearly not feasible.

1. Parent(s) must be notified in writing of promotion requirements. Parent(s) of English Language Learners (ELLs) must be notified using the appropriate translated version of the promotion requirements.
2. All notifications to parent(s) who are not proficient in the English Language shall be in the language or other mode of communication commonly used by the parent(s) unless such communication is clearly not feasible.
3. School personnel will notify parent(s) in writing of student progression and/or promotion/graduation requirements within the first two months of school. The requirements may be included in the parent/student handbook or sent home in some other written form. [[Florida Statute § 1008.25](#)]
4. For students identified as substantially deficient in reading, writing, mathematics, and/or science, remediation instruction will be provided through the implementation of a student's IEP (e.g., PMP, IEP, ELL Plan, and Section 504 Accommodation Plan) developed in consultation with the parent(s). The student's IEP, with the signature of the parent(s), will serve as written notification as required by [Florida Statute § 1008.25](#).

Additional High School Requirements for Parent Notification

1. Parent(s) of a student who is in danger of failing a course or not meeting promotion requirements must

be notified in writing at mid-term or at any time thereafter when a student is in danger of not meeting the course/promotion/graduation requirements.

2. At the end of each semester, parent(s) of students who do not meet promotion/graduation requirements will be notified in writing of the requirements for remediation and/or credit accrual programs.
3. A report card is issued to each student at the end of each four and a half week marking period and serves as a written notification of the student's progress. The report card issued at the end of each quarter indicates if the student will receive credit for each course and reflects the student's attendance as required by [Florida Statutes §§ 1002.20\(14\), 1003.02\(1\), and 1003.33/](#) The student's final report card for the school year will indicate end-of-the year status regarding performance or non-performance at grade level, acceptable or unacceptable behavior, and attendance and promotion. [[Florida Statute § 1003.33\(2\)](#)]

FREQUENCY OF GRADE REPORTS

STA reports grades to parents on a four-and-a-half-week schedule.

GENERAL GRADING RULES

1. Grades are based on the quality of student performance relative to expected levels of achievement of the State academic standards, Florida's B.E.S.T. Standards, as applicable, and/or the course frameworks approved by the principal/designee, if necessary.
2. Grades will be determined by multiple measures including, but not limited to, the following:
 - classroom assignments: work completed during the scheduled class;
 - homework: requires time and effort outside of the scheduled class time [[School Board Policy 8.16](#)]
 - examinations, tests, and/or quizzes; and/or
 - alternative methods (based on a predetermined set of criteria). [[Florida Statute § 1003.33\(1\)\(a\)](#)]
3. A minimum of two grades per week will be recorded to justify the marking-period grade. A marking-period grade is not based solely on a single project.
4. A recorded grade may not be changed after report cards are finalized, except for one of the following situations:
 - The change is initiated by the teacher of record and approved by the principal. **Signatures of both the teacher of record and the principal are required;** or
 - The change is initiated by the principal and approved by the Executive Director. **Signatures of both the principal and the Executive Director are required.** The teacher will be consulted prior to the initiation of grade change by the principal if the teacher is on duty. If the grade change is initiated when the teacher is not on duty, the teacher will be notified in writing upon his/her return. Only in justified cases may a principal change a marking code without teacher consent and then only with the approval of the Executive Director.

For all cases, **any grade change** requires **two signatures**, through the Student Information System grade change process.

5. Academic performance and behavior must be evaluated independently.

6. Students may not be exempt from academic performance requirements based on practices or policies designed to encourage student attendance. A student's attendance record may not be used in whole or in part to provide an exemption from any academic performance requirements. [Florida Statute § 1003.33(2)]
7. School districts must keep a record of courses taken and a record of achievement, such as grades. Student records cannot be altered at any time unless it has been determined that the information is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the privacy or other rights of the student. All courses and grades must be included on the student's transcript. [State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.0955(3), and Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section, 99.21]

DESCRIPTION AND DEFINITION OF MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL GRADES

The grading system and interpretation of letter grades for all middle and high schools must comply with the grade scale identified in [Florida Statute § 1003.437](#). These grades are used to measure student success in courses Grades 6-12.

A	(90-100)	Outstanding Progress	Indicates thorough mastery of the subject
B	(80-89)	Above Average Progress	Indicates above average mastery of the subject
C	(70-79)	Average Progress	Indicates average mastery of the subject
D	(60-69)	Lowest Acceptable Progress	Indicates below average mastery of the subject
F	(Below 60)	Failure	Indicates lack of mastery of the subject
I		Incomplete	Indicates a problem that causes the student's work to be incomplete. For example: • Student has not been enrolled in a class long enough to determine a grade. • Transfer student's grades from previous school have not been received. • Student's Dual Enrollment grade is delayed. • Student has not received an EOC grade for a required EOC course. All effort should be made to allow a student ample opportunity to make up work and/or exams in order to change the grade of "I".

Grade averages are calculated to two decimal places (with no rounding). When assigning letter grades, an average with 0.50 or higher **must** be rounded up (i.e., 79.50 is a "B", and 79.49 is a "C").

Grade of E: Examination Exemption (High School Only)

Indicates the student is exempt from the semester examination. This grade can only be used during second semester of the student's senior year.

Grade of I: Incomplete

An I (Incomplete) in any marking period or exam grade, unless changed, remains on the report card and the final course grade will be reported as an I on the student's transcript and computed as an F in the grade point average. All effort should be made to allow the student to complete assignments in order to earn a grade for each course in which he/she is enrolled.

Grade of M: Valid Missing Work High School:

Grades are not required for a student who enters a class within the last three weeks of the second or fourth marking period, but enrollment during this time should not preclude a student from earning semester grades if appropriate. With the principal's permission, a grade of M may be recorded on the report card for a student who has not been enrolled a sufficient number of days to be evaluated. All effort should be made to allow the student to complete a sufficient number of assignments in order to earn a grade for

each course in which he/she is enrolled. Prior enrollment in school should be taken into consideration when recording a grade of M for the semester. The principal/designee can make an exception and award grades of M for a student who enrolls prior to the last 3 weeks of the semester. The M is for report card purposes only and does not appear on the final student transcripts. M does not compute as a grade and does not provide credit.

Grade of NG: No Grade

A grade of NG should be recorded as a previous quarter grade for students who transfer in without grades. All effort should be made to obtain the grades from the previous school. A grade of NG will remove that marking period from the calculation of the final course grade.

Grade of P: Pass

- The grade of P (Pass) is used when validating/granting transfer credit for coursework when an official transcript or grades that equate to those used in Palm Beach County cannot be obtained. It is also used when P is specified on an official transcript. It results in credit for coursework but does not affect the GPA.
- A grade of P is also awarded for middle school courses to show course recovery status was awarded by passing the corresponding statewide standardized assessment.
- Students with disabilities who have either completed a Special Diploma or deferred receipt of their standard diploma and are enrolled in ESE transition or other elective courses should be graded using a Pass/Fail grade.
- Students opting to earn their credit using the [blended credit option](#) will be awarded a grade of P for the semester in which the F was earned. The original course and semester grade of F will remain on the student's transcript. For these purposes, a grade of P is a transcripts grade only, not a report card grade.

Grade of T: Passed Exam

The Grade of T is used when a student earns course credit through the Credit Acceleration Program. This grade is used exclusively for AP, EOC, and CLEP. A grade of T is a transcript grade only, not a report card grade. It results in credit, but does not affect the GPA.

Grade of "W": Withdrawn

Indicates withdrawal from a Dual Enrollment course. A Dual Enrollment course that results in a grade of W will be entered on the student's high school transcript, as required by State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.09941.

REPORTING STUDENT CONDUCT

At the secondary level, teachers record their best judgment of how each student's behavior affects learning in the classroom. The following are the general descriptions used in secondary schools:

- | |
|--|
| 4 Student's behavior very constructive to learning |
| 3 Student's behavior generally supportive of learning |
| 2 Student's behavior detrimental to own learning |
| 1 Student's behavior detrimental to own learning and/or the learning of others |

Student conduct indicators are separate from the academic grade earned for the grading period. These conduct indicators reflect the student's overall conduct in all class activities and cannot be cause for lowering an academic grade.

REPORTING ATTENDANCE

Attendance and academic performance shall be reported separately on student report cards. Students cannot be exempted from academic performance requirements based on policies or practices designed to encourage student attendance. [[Florida Statute § 1003.33](#)]

CALCULATION OF GRADES FOR HIGH SCHOOL COURSES

The semester grade is calculated on a 4.0 system and converted to a letter grade. The following grade point minimum values are used to calculate letter grades:

3.5 – Above.....	A
2.5 -3.49	B
1.5 -2.49	C
0.5 -1.49	D
Below 0.5.....	F

High school course grades are reported on student transcripts as quarter grades with the exception of courses with EOC Assessments. Each marking period grade counts 40 percent of the quarter grade. Quarter examinations at the high school level count 20 percent of the final Quarter grade. High school students are required to take a Quarter examination for each course excluding the exemptions noted below. Quarter grades for each course are calculated electronically. .5 Credits are awarded each quarter, with the exception of EOC courses.

In the event of a state, local, or national emergency, the Executive Director may waive quarter exams.

To receive a passing grade for the Quarter, the student must earn passing grades in two of the three grades used to calculate the Quarter average.

Blended Credit Option

Per Florida Statute §1003.436(2), a student enrolled in a full-credit course shall receive a full credit if the student successfully completes either the first half or the second half of a full-credit course but fails to successfully complete the other half of the course and the averaging of the grades obtained in each half would result in a passing grade, provided that the following criteria are met:

- One of the semester grades earned must be a C or higher;
- In the semester with the F, the semester exam grade must be a C or higher; and
- Student cannot be absent more than 5% of the semester in which the F was earned

Students opting to earn their credit using this blended credit option will be awarded a grade of P for the semester in which the F was earned. The original course and semester grade of F will remain on the student's transcript.

Prior to choosing this option, the school counselor should advise students and parents regarding possible implications of a grade of P on a transcript.

Grading Procedures for Courses with an End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment

A student's performance on the statewide EOC Assessment constitutes 30 percent of the student's final course grade. All high school courses with statewide EOC Assessments will be recorded as yearlong courses. The final grade calculation for an EOC course shall be calculated as follows:

BQ 1/5	BQ 2/6	Q 1/3 Exam	BQ 3/7	BQ 4/8	EOC Grade	Final Course Grade
15.4%	15.4%	8.4%	15.4%	15.4%	30%	100%

The EOC grading scale is: Level 5 = A, Level 4 = A, Level 3 = B, Level 2 = C, Level 1 = D.

- If a student earns an "F" in all four quarters, he/she will receive an "F" in the course, unless a satisfactory score or higher (Level 3-5) is earned on the EOC.
- Students who do not take the required EOC will receive an "I" in the course. After the student makes-up the EOC, the final grade will be recalculated.
- Earning course credit for an EOC course through the Credit Acceleration Program can be found in the Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning section.

Honors Level Points

1. STA uses a weighted system to calculate the student's Honor Point Average (HPA). The standard scale is based on 4.0 "A", 3.0 "C", 2.0 "D", 1.0 "D" and 0 for any other grade. The grade received in a course is weighted and awarded according to the Florida Course Code Directory or as determined by the SDPBC.
2. Regular-level courses use the standard scale.
3. Honors-level and gifted-level courses are weighted at 1.125 times the standard scale.
4. Advanced Placement (AP) courses, International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, and Advanced International Certification of Education (AICE) courses are weighted at 1.50 times the standard scale. In order to obtain the 1.50 weighting, a student must take the standardized AP examination; including students taking AP courses through Florida Virtual. **Students who do not take the AP examination will not receive AP weighting for the course(s).** The course code will remain the same; however, the weighting will be changed to honors level 1.125.
5. Students taking AP courses through a non-District educational provider will be awarded the first semester credit with 1.50 grade weighting. The second semester will be awarded with honors-level (1.125) credit and will be changed to 1.50 weighting after the student sits for the required assessment.

All Dual Enrollment classes must be weighted the same as Advanced Placement (AP) (1.50 times the standard scale). [\[Florida Statute § 1007.271\(16\)\]](#)

Senior Exemptions from Semester Examinations

For any non-EOC course, a graduating senior who has received A's and B's in BQ 3& BQ 4 or BQ7 & BQ8 for that

course may choose to be exempt from the final examination for that course. If exemption is chosen, the quarter grade for the non-EOC course will be determined by averaging last two marking periods. If exemption is not chosen, the quarter grade for the course will be calculated using the normal grade calculation method for all high school credit courses. Seniors in an EOC course may not be exempted from the EOC assessment.

Students may not be exempt from academic performance requirements based on practices or policies designed to encourage student attendance. A student's attendance record may not be used in whole or in part to provide an exemption from any academic performance requirement. [\[Florida Statute § 1003.33\(2\)\]](#)

FORGIVENESS RULE

Only courses designated as multiple-credit courses in the [Florida Department of Education Course Code Directory](#) may be repeated unless it is eligible for grade forgiveness as defined below.

High School Courses Taken in Middle School

In accordance with [Florida Statute § 1003.4282\(6\)](#), the Forgiveness Rule applies to a middle school student who has earned either a grade of "C", "D", or "F" in a high school credit course taken during middle school. The initial "C", "D", or "F" grade(s) will remain as part of the academic history. Students should be advised that many universities calculate GPAs based on all courses attempted.

All other high school grade forgiveness rules in the subsequent section apply

High School Courses Taken in High School

1. In accordance with [Florida Statute § 1003.4282\(5\)](#), the following section addresses when courses can be forgiven: Students may repeat a course taken in Grades 9-12 for forgiveness if a grade of "F" or "D" ("D" on a space-available basis) is earned in a course.
2. A course may be forgiven only if a student receives a grade of "C" **or higher** on a subsequent attempt. However, a subsequent transfer grade of "P" (passing) may be used to forgive a "D" or "F" earned previously in the same course. Grade forgiveness cannot be done for a "T" earned through the credit Acceleration Program (CAP).
3. A required course may be forgiven by the same or a comparable course taken subsequently. A regular level course may be used to forgive the same course at the honors, AP/IB/AICE, or dual enrollment level. A lower level of the same course is considered comparable because the benchmarks and/or course objectives are similar.
4. A required course may be forgiven by a Dual Enrollment course of the same subject area and topic. This is considered a comparable course.
5. A non-specific course requirement may be forgiven by another course within the same subject area. For example, Physics may be forgiven by Ecology.
6. An elective course may be forgiven by another course taken subsequently. Any course that is not being used to fulfill a subject area requirement is considered an elective for forgiveness purposes. When using a different course to forgive an elective, that *course* does **not** have to be taken during the same semester. Examples:
 - A second semester "F" in World Languages may be forgiven by a subsequent first semester "C" in Art (does not remove other State requirements related to world language courses).
 - An "F" in law studies (semester long course) taken first semester may be forgiven by a "C" in weight training (semester long course) taken second semester.
 - An "F" second semester in intensive reading (a yearlong course) may be forgiven by a "C" in law studies (a semester course) taken either semester.

7. Students earning a grade of “D” on the repeat effort earn credit for that course; however, the initial failing grade is not forgiven. Students may again choose to repeat the same course, and upon earning a grade of “C” **or higher**, all earlier grades will be forgiven.
8. In all cases of grade forgiveness, only the new grade, of “C” or higher, shall be used in the calculation of the student's grade point average. Any course grade not replaced, according to a district school board forgiveness policy, shall be included in the calculation of the cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) required for graduation.
9. In all cases where courses are forgiven under the provisions above, the initial “F” or “D” grade(s) will remain as part of the academic history. Students should be advised that many universities calculate GPAs based on all courses attempted.

If the student’s final average, with the EOC Assessment as 30 percent, results in a course grade of “D” or “F”, the options for the student include one of the following:

- taking a credit recovery version of the course (CR)
- retaking the course through a virtual program

If taking a credit recovery version of the course or retaking the entire course through a virtual program, results in a final course average of “C” or above, then this grade will replace the “D” or “F”. If it does not result in a “C” or above, then the original course average stands and is not replaced. Only one credit is allowed per course, so only one grade per course should be included as part of the student’s GPA. Any course not replaced according to a school district board forgiveness policy shall be included in the calculation of the cumulative GPA required for graduation.” [\[Florida State Statute § 1003.4282\(6\)\]](#)

A student who takes a Credit Recovery course (course title ending in CR) may earn elective credit for the terms up to a maximum value of 1.0. In addition, the grade earned in the Credit Recovery course and the course credit value is posted on the transcript. Please note that the Credit Recovery courses do not count toward academic core subject areas for FL University admissions and the Bright Futures Scholarship program requirements. In addition, the NCAA Eligibility Center determines whether to approve nontraditional academic core subjects (e.g., credit recovery, online courses, and independent study). Each high school must complete the NCAA eligibility certification process for academic core subject course approval.

ASSESSMENTS

Each student's progression from one grade to another is determined, in part, upon proficiency in English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, social studies and/or science. Information in the Student Progression Plan facilitates recognizing such proficiency. In accordance with Florida Statute § 1008.25(1), each student and his/her parent will be informed of the student's progress.

Florida Assessment for Student Thinking (FAST)/ Statewide Academic Standards In accordance with Florida Statute § 1008.22(3) & (6) and State Board of Education Rule 6A1.09422, all eligible students in Grade 3 and above must participate in all regular statewide assessments for accountability purposes, except as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education. The Florida Assessment for Student Thinking (FAST) is the current statewide assessment designed to measure student achievement of the Florida B.E.S.T. Standards in ELA (Grades 3-10), Writing (Grades 4-10), and Mathematics (Grades 3-8).

End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments

The Statewide Academic Standards EOC Assessments and the B.E.S.T. Standards (FS) EOC Assessments are designed to measure student achievement of the Statewide Academic Standards and the FS for specific courses that include Algebra 1, Geometry, Biology 1, Civics, and U.S. History, as outlined in the course descriptions. Any students enrolled in any of the courses that require an EOC Assessment shall participate in the EOC Assessment administration that is specific to that course. Students who do not take the required EOC Assessment will receive an "I" in the course. After the student makes-up the EOC, the final grade will be recalculated.

Statewide Assessment Program Schedule

For more information on statewide assessments refer to the Florida Statewide Assessment Program Schedule located at: <http://www.fldoe.org/asp/schedule.asp>.

Assessing Comprehension & Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners Paper (ACCESS for ELLs Paper) Alternate ACCESS for ELLs (Grades 1-12), & Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs

Florida uses the ACCESS for ELLs Paper & Alternate ACCESS for ELLs and Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs Assessments as a tool to measure the progress of English Language Learners (ELLs) proficiency in English; thus, ensuring the skills needed in school to achieve at high levels, academically.

Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (PERT)

P.E.R.T. is Florida's customized common placement test. The purpose of the P.E.R.T. is to determine accurate course placement based on the student's skills and abilities. The P.E.R.T. is aligned with the Postsecondary Readiness Competencies identified by Florida faculty as necessary for success in entry-level college credit coursework. The P.E.R.T. assessment system includes placement and diagnostic tests in mathematics, reading and writing.

National and International Education Comparisons

Pursuant to [Florida Statute § 1008.22 \(2\)](#), Florida school districts shall participate in the administration of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, or similar national or international assessments, both for the national sample and for any state-by-state comparison programs that may be initiated, as directed by the Commissioner. The administration of such assessments shall be in addition to, and separate from, the administration of the statewide, assessments.

ADDITIONAL 9-12 ASSESSMENTS

Grade 9 through Grade 12 Assessments

- State Progress Monitoring Assessments in 6-10 Reading (3 times per year)
- Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT)
- School Day SAT
- Advanced Placement (AP) Exams
- Industry Certification Exams

Assessment	Grades Assessed													
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Florida’s Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) in ELA Reading Component Florida Standards Alternate Assessment in ELA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Florida’s Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) in ELA Writing Component	Grades 4-10													
Florida’s Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) in Mathematics Florida Standards Alternate Assessment in Mathematics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Florida Standards Alternate Assessment in Science						X			X					
Algebra 1 FSA/FSAA EOC Assessment	Administered to students who complete specific course work													
Geometry FSA/FSAA EOC Assessment														
Biology 1 NGSSS EOC Assessment/Access Biology 1 EOC														
U.S. History NGSSS EOC Assessment/Access U.S. History EOC														
Civics NGSSS EOC Assessment/Access Civics EOC														
United States Government – Florida Civic Literacy Exam (FCLE)														

STATEWIDE STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS

Pursuant to [Florida Statute § 1008.22\(3\)](#) and [State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.09422\(2\)&\(3\)](#), all eligible students in Grades K and above **must** participate in all State and District assessments for accountability purposes, except as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education or waived for medical reasons. The table above provides an overview of the Florida's Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST), Statewide Science Assessment, and the End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments and the grade levels in which they are administered.

2023-2024 Statewide Assessments

Appendix F:

SouthTech Schools Fiscal Policies & Procedures



SOUTHTECH SCHOOLS

Fiscal Policies and Procedures Manual

Effective: November 6, 2025

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Section 1: Introduction

A. Overview

This manual documents the fiscal policies and procedures to be upheld by SouthTech Schools. The fiscal policies and procedures ensure sound internal controls, fiscal responsibility, and accountability in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), and adherence to standards set by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB). As a 501(c)(3) tax exempt nonprofit organization, SouthTech Schools is entrusted with funds granted by foundations and individual contributors and must adhere to the highest standards of accounting.

As a school in the State of Florida, SouthTech Schools is additionally required to operate by the standards set in The State of Florida Red Book (*Financial and Program Cost Accounting and Reporting for Florida Schools*, published by the FLDOE, Bureau of School Business Services and Office of Funding and Financial Reporting.) Additional references are – Project Application & Amendment Procedures for Federal and State Programs (Green Book) and the Uniform Grant Guidance.

Fiscal policies and procedures comprise SouthTech Schools' internal control structure. The control structure's main objective is limiting any potential unwarranted use of assets or misstatement of account balances. Several basic components of the internal control structure include:

1. The control environment
2. The accounting system
3. The control procedures
4. The accounting cycle

Most sections of this manual explicate internal control procedures and roles and responsibilities designed to mitigate specific SouthTech Schools' risks. In general, this manual documents how duties are segregated such that no one person can authorize, execute and monitor any financial transaction.

B. Internal Control Structure

1. The Control Environment

The control environment reflects the importance SouthTech Schools places on internal controls as part of its day-to-day activities. Factors that influence the control environment can include the "tone at the top" set by management and the Board of Directors, organizational structure, ways of assigning authority and responsibility, methods of management and control, personnel policies and practices, protection of informants of improper activities, and external influences such as significant funder expectations.

2. The Accounting System

The accounting system encompasses the methods, accounting software, and records used to identify, assemble, classify, record, and report accounting transactions. The accounting system should:

- Identify and record all of SouthTech Schools' transactions.
- Provide detailed descriptions of transactions allowing for classification in financial reporting.
- Highlight the time period when transactions occurred to ensure they are recorded in the correct accounting period.

3. Control Procedures

Control procedures are the procedures set up to strengthen SouthTech Schools' internal control structure and thus safeguard the agency assets. They are divided into the following:

- Segregation of Duties: Allocation of tasks is needed so that one individual does not have the ability to both make an accounting error (either intentionally or unintentionally) and also cover it up.
- Restricted Access: Physical access to valuable and movable assets is restricted to authorized personnel. Systems access to make changes in accounting records is restricted to authorized personnel.
- Document Control: To ensure that documents are captured by the accounting system, documents are numbered and the sequence for documents accounted for. To ensure compliance with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act's provision to prevent destruction of litigation-related documents, SouthTech Schools has adopted policies and procedures for document retention.
- Processing Controls: Designed to catch errors before they are posted to the general ledger. Common processing controls include: source document matching, clerical accuracy of documents, and verification of general ledger account codes.
- Reconciliation Controls: Designed to catch errors after transactions have been posted to the general ledger.

4. The Accounting Cycle

The overall purpose of the accounting system is to accurately process, record, summarize, and report on SouthTech Schools' transactions. The component accounting cycles fall into one of four primary functions:

i. Revenue, accounts receivable, and cash receipts

Key steps in this area are:

- Processing cash receipts
- Making deposits
- Recording cash receipts in the general ledger
- Performing month-end reconciliation procedures

ii. Purchases, accounts payable, and cash disbursements

Key steps in this area are:

- Authorizing the procurement of goods and/or services
- Processing purchase transactions
- Processing invoices
- Issuing checks/electronic payments
- Recording disbursements
- Performing month-end reconciliation procedures
- Completing year-end reporting for 1099 tax forms

iii. Payroll

The payroll process consists of processing payroll and remitting amounts due to employees, the government, and other agencies such as health insurers, retirement plan trustees, etc.

Key steps in this area are:

- Obtaining and gathering information for processing
- Preparing payroll checks and depositing payroll taxes
- Performing month-end reconciliation procedures

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- Preparing quarterly payroll tax returns
- Preparing W-2s, the W-3, and other annual payroll tax returns

iv. General Ledger and Financial Statements

The general ledger process consists of posting the period's transactions to the general ledger and preparing the financial statements.

Key steps in this area are:

- Preparing monthly journal entries
- Reconciling bank accounts and other general ledger accounts; reviewing outstanding checks
- Monitoring and reconciling prepaid, accrued, deferred, and fixed asset accounts
- Reviewing general ledger activity and posting adjusting journal entries
- Producing monthly financial statements

C. Key Details

1. Fiscal Year

SouthTech Schools' fiscal year is July 1 to June 30.

2. Accrual Accounting

SouthTech Schools is on the accrual basis of accounting and uses this system when preparing the organization's financial statements. Unlike cash accounting, which records revenue and expenses when they enter or leave cash accounts, accrual accounting utilizes the concept of matching revenues and expenses to the time period in which they were earned or utilized.

3. Approvals

As an internal control, approval may be required for many of the processes and transactions outlined in this manual. In general, approval will be obtained from a Supervisor, the Principal and/or the Executive Director. For processes and transactions that exceed the Executive Director approval limit, approval will be obtained from the Board of Directors.

4. Board Involvement

The day-to-day fiscal responsibilities of SouthTech Schools are assigned to its management and fiscal staff, also called the Business Department. However, ultimate responsibility for the overall fiduciary oversight of the SouthTech Schools rests with the Board.

5. Software and Applications

SouthTech Schools uses the following to process and track financial information:

- Accounting Software: QuickBooks hosted on a remote server with Building Hope Services, LLC.
- Payroll processing vendor: Paymaster
- Credit card processing Company: Integrated Merchants Solutions

6. Maintenance of this Manual and Exceptions

In order to ensure this manual accurately reflects the financial policies and procedures followed by SouthTech Schools, a periodic review of the manual is undertaken. Changes and updates to SouthTech Schools' fiscal policies must be approved by the Board. In certain cases, exceptions may be made to policies and procedures contained in this manual. All exceptions must be approved by the Financial Officer.

Section 2: Revenue – Cash Receipts, Accounts Receivable, and In-Kind Donations

A. Overview

Revenue is received, processed, deposited, and recorded in a timely and appropriate manner. An appropriate segregation of duties, as included in the procedures below, must be in place in order to ensure a checks and balances system for the revenue process.

B. Policies & Controls

1. Cash receipts are received and recorded on a timely basis.
2. Revenue is recorded in accordance with governmental account allocations.
3. Cash receipts are stored in a secure, locked location prior to deposit.
4. All receipts due to the organization are monitored for likelihood of collection and adequate reserves for uncollectible amounts are created.
5. Cash and checks are deposited within one week of receipt.
6. Client/donor credit card information is securely guarded.
7. Donations are recorded in accordance with donor stipulations and receipt is acknowledged.
8. Proposed donations of goods and services are analyzed for usability prior to acceptance. If the goods or services cannot be effectively utilized by organization, they are rejected.
9. Activities are periodically reviewed for applicability to the IRS Unrelated Business Income Tax (UBIT) definition.

C. Process Overview

Revenue Categories			
Type	Definition	Example	
Cash Receipts	• Revenue received as a donation or as a payment for services SouthTech Schools provides	• Cash • Credit cards • Checks • Online Payment	• Electronic Transfers • Money orders
In-Kind Donations	• Donations of goods or services to be used for operations and/or programs	• Supplies • Space • Autos	• Professional Services
Accounts Receivable	• Revenue pledged or earned but not yet received in cash	• Pledges receivable • Grants receivable	• Accounts receivable
Revenue Classifications			
Type	Definition		
Unrestricted Revenue	• Contributions for which purpose or timing of use has not been restricted by donors • Earned revenue and interest income		
Temporarily Restricted Revenue	• Contributions received with donor stipulations limiting use of the contribution by time or purpose		
Permanently Restricted Revenue	• Contributions where donor prohibits use of principal – Interest earned on an endowment may be purpose restricted by the donor(s), but is often unrestricted		

Pledges, also called promises to give, are written commitments to contribute cash or other assets to SouthTech Schools.

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Understanding Pledges		
Type	Definition	Treatment
<i>Unconditional Pledge</i>	Agreement to contribute does not depend on the occurrence of a specified future and uncertain event.	Recorded as income at the time the pledge is made. Create an Allowance for Doubtful Accounts (5-10% of pledged revenue recommended).
<i>Conditional Pledge</i>	Agreement to contribute dependent on the occurrence of a specified, future, and uncertain event.	Not recognized as income. Once the condition has been met, the pledge becomes unconditional and is then recognized as income.
<i>Donor-imposed Restriction</i>	Limits the use of the contributed asset to a specific purpose.	
<i>Donor-imposed Condition</i>	Specifies a future and uncertain event that must take place. If this event does not occur, the donor is released from the obligation to contribute assets.	

The documentation for pledges must include:

- The name of the donor
- The amount of the pledge
- When the payment of the pledge is expected
- Any restrictions on the use of the donation

All pledges and promises to give, along with supporting documentation, are communicated to the Business Department. The Financial Officer determines if the pledge can be recognized as revenue based on GAAP guidelines.

D. Procedures

	Executive Director	Financial Officer	Accounting Clerk	Club Manager	Front Office Secy.
<u>2.1 Checks, Teller checks and Cash</u>					
1. Receive cash and checks for school-based activities.			X	X	X
2. Payments received in the following departments -Cosmetology (work orders), Culinary (cash register), Automotive (numbered service orders) and DECA (school store – finance system registers).			X	X	
3. Record all payments on Monies Collected Report(s). Deposit payments with all supporting documents in envelope with total amount enclosed on cover sheet and drop deposit into safe.				X	X
4. Donations received.		X	X	X	X

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	Executive Director	Financial Officer	Accounting Clerk	Club Manager	Front Office Secy.
5. Copies checks and supporting documentation (Monies Collected Form, receipts, service orders) and returns a copy of the cover form to the club manager.			X		X
6. Prepare and make bank deposit (at least weekly): a. Prepare deposit slip b. Deposit at bank in correct sub-account c. Review receipt to verify amount and account d. Attach bank receipt to cash receipts backup			X		X
7. Reconcile internal account reports for different departments – at least every quarter.			X	X	X
8. Enter receipts into accounting software, classifying revenue in accordance with donor stipulations and satisfying grants or accounts receivable as applicable.		X provides info	X enter in QBO		
9. File deposit slips, check copies, and other supporting documentation (Monies Collected Form, receipts, service orders).			X		X
10.Reconcile cash received in the bank with checks/cash received (monthly).		X			
11.Monthly reports, as requested		X	X		
<u>2.2 Credit Cards (payments)</u>					
1. For credit card payments received by mail, process the payment and redact the credit card information after credit cards clear.			X		X
2. For the manual credit card machines, process all recorded transactions and print a report at least weekly.			X	X	X
3. Prepare a report that includes – o All transaction receipts signed by payee o Record the course or other reason for payment o Any other receipt or registration form as appropriate			X	X	X
4. Enter credit card transactions in accounting software.			X		
5. File all documents in the Finance files			X		
6. Record the Merchant Fees when charged by the vendor at the end of month			X		
7. Reconcile entries in the accounting software and vendor statement (monthly).		X	X		

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	Executive Director	Financial Officer	Accounting Clerk	Club Manager	Front Office Secy.
<u>2.3 Wire Transfers & Online Payments</u>					
1. Receive notification for wires and online payments.		X			
2. Record payments in accounting software.		X	X		
<u>2.4 In-Kind Donations</u>					
1. Determine whether to accept in-kind donation (cars, boats, motorcycles, salmon, hairdryers)	X			X	
2. Donations consist of motor vehicles (used for instructional purposes and then hauled out or disposed to junk with title, values less than \$5,000 always), food products (culinary dept.), cosmetology items, or cadavers for the medical dept. – Donation Intake Form completed.				X	
3. Approval of donation by SouthTech Schools teacher and Principal				X	
4. Prepare the STA donation letter	Signed		X		
5. Prepare the 1096 form for the IRS and the FL State.	Signed		X		
6. File copies of the tax forms, donation letters and title of motor vehicles			X		
7. Monthly report of all donations given to Board.			X		
8. Reported to auditors at EOY.		X			
9. Assess value of in-kind donation (quarterly) – Low value items do not have to be reported on Form 990.		X			
10. Enter donation in accounting system		X	X		
<u>2.5 All donations</u>					
1. Print acknowledgment letters, obtain appropriate signature, and mail to the donor.	Signed		X		

Section 3: Purchasing

A. Overview

Purchases are made in order to support SouthTech Schools' day-to-day activities and services provided. An appropriate segregation of duties is in place, as included in the procedures, in order to ensure check and balances in the purchasing process. The following applies to all purchases, including both goods and services.

B. Policies & Controls

1. All potential conflicts of interest are reported and reviewed.
2. Goods and services are purchased using the best combination of quality, service, availability, and price.
3. Only authorized purchase commitments are made and received.
4. Proper documentation is obtained and submitted for all purchases.
5. Only authorized personnel are issued credit cards and must agree to the credit card policies.
6. An agreement must authenticate every consulting engagement and appropriate documentation of services received prior to payment.
7. Each consulting arrangement is reviewed and documented to ensure that the consultant qualifies for consultant status and not for classification as an employee.
8. All agreements are reviewed on a yearly basis to make sure they remain current. The ledger is also periodically reviewed and checked against a list of agreements to make sure there are appropriate agreements for all consulting engagements.
9. A petty cash fund set at a reasonable amount is maintained and replenished on an imprest basis.

C. Process Description

Annual

Conflict of Interest

Staff with purchasing responsibilities, management, and members of the Board of Directors may not participate in self-interested or related party transactions. Each such individual authorized to obligate funds must sign a Conflict of Interest Statement on an annual basis which confirms adherence to the policy and discloses any actual or potential self-interested or related party transactions in writing.

Pre-Purchase

Competitive Bidding

For purchases/contracts using operating funds and costing more than \$20,000, three prices must be obtained prior to purchase commitment. For purchases/contracts using federal or state grant funds and costing more than \$10,000, three prices must be obtained prior to purchase commitment. Bids, which may include online or print advertisements, must detail the vendor, date, cost, and goods/services to be received. Extensions of existing contracts shall be allowed without bidding under extenuating circumstances. For vendors already approved by the FLDOE and SDPBC, the competitive bidding process is not carried out.

Sole Sourced Vendors

When only one vendor is available for a product or service, the vendor is considered a sole sourced vendor. Competitive bidding is not required for sole sourced vendors, although a periodic check for new and emerging vendors should be performed. Any sole sourced vendor purchase should be noted.

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Approval

Prior to purchase commitment, a Purchase Order must be completed for all purchases according to the approval authorization levels in the chart below. Exceptions can be made on a case by case basis.

	Executive Director	Financial Officer	Accounting Clerk	ST Prep Front Office Secretary
<u>3.1 Purchase Order Process</u>				
1. Review purchase order requests.		X	X	X
2. Approved vendor list and rates from the District are used. Negotiation for good rates is conducted with new vendors.			X	
3. Check against budget for that category		X		
4. Send to Executive Director and School Principal for approval.	Approve + Sign	X	X	
5. Issue a Purchase Order Number and place the order			X	
6. Receive and check deliveries, send items to specific departments after reviewing inventory items with IT			X	

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Consultant Services

Before beginning a consulting arrangement, SouthTech Schools evaluates criteria established by the IRS to confirm if the consultant performing the services qualifies for independent contractor status. In essence, in order to be categorized as a consultant, the party in question should be:

- Largely autonomous in their work
- Not subject to overt direction and control by the person(s) for whom the service is performed

Specific guidance and examples from the IRS may be found in the Employer's Supplemental Tax Guide, Publication 15-A, found on the internet at www.irs.gov.

A contractor agreement must be completed and approved prior to commencement of work.

		Purchasing Requirements					
Amount		Documentation		Approval Authorization			
		Purchase Order Form	Contractor Agreement	Board	Executive Director	School Principal	Supervisor
Goods							
< = \$10,000		X			X	X	X
> \$10,000 - \$20,000		X			X	X	X
> = \$20,000 **		X		X	X	X	X
Services							
< = \$10,000		X	X		X	X	X
> \$10,000 - \$20,000		X	X		X	X	X
> = \$20,000 **		X	X	X	X	X	X

** Board approval is not needed for goods or services purchased with federal or state grant funds. See Section 11.

Purchase

Method of Payment

Purchases may be made using one of three methods of payment, listed in order of preference:

1. The vendor is requested to invoice SouthTech Schools for the good or service;
2. The purchase is made using SouthTech Schools-issued credit card; or
3. The employee pays for expenses using her or his personal funds (i.e. "out-of-pocket") and is reimbursed by SouthTech Schools.

Vendor Invoices

Payments are processed without the vendor invoice only on an exception basis. Invoices are selected based on due dates, discounts available, and availability of cash. Payments are not processed for goods not yet received, unless a deposit or prepayment is required by the vendor. Vendor invoices must include the following for recording in the accounting system:

- General ledger account(s)
- Class codes
- Allocation % and/or dollar amount to each account and class

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Petty Cash

Petty cash funds are to be used only for small, unexpected transactions. Petty Cash funds are maintained in an amount not to exceed \$500 per accounts. Examples:

- Operating
- Culinary
- DECA
- Cosmetology

The Club Manager or Front Office Secretary serve as the petty cash custodians. Petty cash funds are held in a locked location and access is restricted to petty cash custodians. To replenish the fund, receipts are submitted to the Accounting Clerk. After reconciling, the Accounting Clerk submits a payment requisition for petty cash reimbursement. Checks are made payable to the petty cash custodians and are not made payable to "cash" or bearer.

Credit Card Purchases

Individuals may be issued SouthTech Schools designated credit cards to be used for authorized expenses. Cards are issued only with approval of the Executive Director. Corporate credit cards are never to be used for personal expenses and cash advances on credit cards are prohibited. Cardholders who use SouthTech Schools designated credit cards improperly will be held liable for any and all unapproved purchases and will reimburse SouthTech Schools for unapproved purchases within 30 days of the purchase.

Merchant issued credit cards or store cards are used on a limited basis by the designee on previously approved purchases.

Out-of-Pocket

Individuals may be reimbursed for purchases using personal "out-of-pocket funds." Out-of-pocket funds may be reimbursed through the Accounts Payable process. Requests for reimbursement must be submitted within 30 days of the expense being incurred.

Sales Tax Exemption

SouthTech Schools has been granted exempt status by the State of Florida Department of Revenue and is exempt from sales taxes on goods and services purchased for activities related to its exempt purpose. A SouthTech Schools Exemption Certificate, Form DR-14 is presented to the seller at the time of purchase. Taxes for out-of-state hotel accommodations, airfare, communications, and motor fuel are not covered by this exemption.

D. References

<i>Business Partnership Agreement</i>	All consultant engagements must be documented in a formal agreement. In the case the consultant does not provide an agreement, a School template may be used.
<i>Payment Requisition & Approval Form</i>	Used for all payment requests involving payment to a vendor and petty cash disbursement/replenishment.
<i>Conflict of Interest Statement</i>	This statement must be reviewed and signed by each new employee or Board member with purchasing authority or influence over purchasing.
<i>Credit Card Authorization Form</i>	Each staff member who is issued a SouthTech Schools credit card must review and sign this form prior to receipt of the card.
<i>Expense Reimbursement Form</i>	This form must be completed for an employee to request reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses.
<i>Purchase Order Form</i>	Must be completed by the requestor for purchases. This form must be reviewed and signed <i>prior to purchase commitment</i> by the authorized approver.
<i>From W-9</i>	Should be completed in order to add a vendor to the Vendor Master File.

**Purchase approval via email is acceptable for purchases of goods less than or equal to \$20,000.*

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E. Procedures

	Board	Executive Director	Financial Officer	Accounting Clerk	Club Mngr./ Front Office Secy.	School Principals / Supervisor
3.1 Purchasing						
Goods						
1. Approved vendor list and rates from the District are used if applicable. Negotiation for good rates is conducted with new vendors.				X	X	
2. Review purchase order requests			X	X		
3. Ensure purchase is within the approved budget.			Approve + Sign			
4. For operating fund purchases of \$20,000 or more and federal or state grant fund purchases of \$10,000 or more 3 comparative bids must be submitted.				X	X	X
5. Send to Executive Director and School Principal for approval.		Approve + Sign		X		Approve + Sign
6. If petty cash is being used, fill out Petty Cash Voucher and obtain petty cash from custodian.					X	X
7. Issue a Purchase Order number and place order. Request that the vendor invoice SouthTech Schools for the purchase. Present Form DR-14 to the vendor at the time of purchase to ensure sales tax is not charged.				X		
8. Receive goods (if applicable), check order for accuracy and forward to IT for inventory management or purchase requestor depending on type of goods received.				X		
9. For purchases made via <u>vendor invoice</u> , or <u>out-of-pocket funds</u> submit the following to Business Department: a. Purchase Order Form b. Signed Check Requisition Form c. Invoice or signed expense reimbursement form (if applicable) d. Packing Slip (if applicable) For purchases made with a <u>SouthTech Schools credit card</u> , submit the following to Business Department: a. Purchase Order Form b. Receipt(s) For purchases made with <u>petty cash</u> , submit the following to the Petty Cash Custodian: a. Receipt b. Any unspent cash				Receive, Review, & Reconcile Forms to Invoices	X	

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	Board	Executive Director	Financial Officer	Accounting Clerk	Club Mngr./ Front Office Secy.	School Principals / Supervisor
3.1 Purchasing						
10. Record purchase in PO Spreadsheet.				X		
Services						
1. Ensure purchase is within the approved budget and obtain pre-approval for purchase according to the purchasing thresholds.	Approve Contract > \$20,000 **	Approve	X		X	X
2. Obtain a signed contract & Form W-9 from the contractor.		Review & Sign	X			X
3. Determine if individual qualifies as an independent contractor.			X			
4. Scan contract and set up vendor in accounting software.			X	X		

** Board approval is not needed for goods or services purchased with federal or state grant funds. See Section 11.

F. National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Procurement Policy

1. Buy American requirement (7 CFR 210.21(d) and USDA Policy Memo SP 23-2024)
 - o Food purchases must be domestic to the maximum extent practicable.
 - o Exceptions are allowed when the product is not reasonably available domestically or the domestic product is significantly higher in price.
 - o Non-domestic products require advance written approval.
 - o The limit on the percent of total commercial food costs from non-domestic foods will be phased in over 7 school years.: 10% beginning SY 2025-26, 8% beginning SY 2028-29, and 5% beginning SY 2031-32.
2. Food-service procurement procedures
 - o If a single procurement transaction is less than \$15,000 per transaction, the organization will conduct an informal Micro-purchase
 - o When the amount total for food service program related items is between \$15,000–\$50,000 per procurement event, the organization follows the informal Simplified Acquisition/Request for Quote (RFQ) procedure.
 - o When the annual total amount is greater than \$50,000, either per procurement event or in aggregate purchases, the organization follows the Formal Procurement/Invitation to Bid (ITB) or Request for Proposal (RFP)
3. Formal food-service procurement requirements
 - o Determine appropriate method (ITB or RFP) and develop written specifications/scope of work
 - o Perform cost/price analysis
 - o Submit draft solicitation to Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (FDACS) for pre-issuance review
 - o Public advertising at least 14 calendar days prior to submission deadline
 - o Evaluation and vendor selection
 - o FDACS review/approval of the proposed contract
 - o Governing Board approval
 - o Verification that goods/services received match the contract

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4. Noncompetitive procurement
 - Allow only when the applicable federal circumstances exist.
 - Include procedures for sole source, inadequate competition, and public emergencies.
 - Emergency contracts cannot exceed 12 months and cannot be renewed.
5. Piggybacking
 - A Sponsor may use another Sponsor's existing contract when the contract permits piggybacking and the original contract complies with applicable procurement requirements. Written permission must be obtained from all parties, and the contract, piggyback agreement, and permissions must be submitted to FDACS for approval at least 7 calendar days before execution.
 - If piggybacking results in a material change to the original contract, a separate competitive procurement must be conducted.
6. Food-service procurement records
 - Maintain procurement documentation for the current year and preceding five years, including solicitations, quotes/bids, evaluations, contracts, invoices, payments, and vendor noncompliance documentation.
7. Annual procurement review
 - An annual internal review by someone who is not involved in the food-service procurement process.
8. Capital expenditures
 - Capital Expenditure Requests must be submitted to FDACS before food-service capital expenses/equipment purchases over \$10,000 per unit.
9. Food Service Responsibilities
 - Menu development and updates
 - Cost analysis to determine the appropriate procurement method
 - Preparing food orders/requisitions
 - Following federal, state, and local procurement requirements
 - Treating vendors fairly and equally
 - Conducting an annual procurement review
10. Code of Conduct
 - Will follow 2 CFR § 200.318(c) and Chapter 5P-2.003, F.A.C

When more than one procurement requirement applies to a purchase, SouthTech Schools shall comply with the most restrictive applicable requirement, including applicable federal law, state law, grant conditions, program requirements, Board policy, and administrative procedures. Nothing in this policy authorizes a procurement method or threshold that is prohibited by the funding source.

Section 4: Travel and Business Expenses

A. Overview

This section contains policies and procedures related to authorized expenses as incurred while traveling or conducting business on behalf of and for the benefit of SouthTech Schools.

B. Policies & Controls

1. Out-of-town travel and overnight travel are pre-approved and are kept to a reasonable level.
2. An effort is made to find a cost-effective mode of transportation.
3. Travel Reimbursement Claim to be completed and submitted supported with appropriate receipts and must be submitted within 2 weeks for proper processing.

C. Process Description

Overview

The primary purpose for SouthTech Schools' employees' travel should be for purposes of professional development conferences and workshops, pursuing fundraising opportunities and for strategic opportunities to increase the visibility, profile, and reputation of SouthTech Schools in accordance with its strategic goals and objectives. When possible, travel arrangements should be made at least 30 days in advance to maximize opportunity for lower fares.

Travel Reimbursements

Staff traveling on business related to SouthTech Schools are entitled to transportation, hotel accommodations and meals, which meet reasonable standards for convenience, safety, and comfort. Staff should present an estimate for the trip in advance and have it approved by the Principal and Executive Director at least 20 business days in advance of anticipated travel using the Travel Reimbursement Form. During travel, Staff are expected to use discretion and good judgment regarding expenses charged to SouthTech Schools. Regular commuting costs will not be reimbursed. Funds will be issued according to the following guidelines. Please note that no advance cash is issued.

Within 2 weeks of incurring expenses, a copy of the approved Travel Reimbursement Form and receipts documenting purchases must be submitted to the Business Department to get reimbursed.

Expense	Reimbursable	Not Reimbursable	Process
Event (conference, training etc.) registration	As approved by the Supervisor and School Principal		Prepaid by School
Airfare / Rail	Tourist, coach or economy class ticket; Baggage fees for up to one (1) bag per traveler will be reimbursed each way	Business or First-Class Ticket. The cost of changing a ticket for non-work related reasons	Prepaid by School or as per receipt submitted
Business-related meals or meals while traveling on business if not supplied at the event	Meals are reimbursed at the following rates: \$10 for breakfast, \$20 for lunch, \$34 for dinner. Total per diem reimbursement, if applicable according to time schedule is \$64.		Paid by per diem rate as per number of travel days, no receipts are required

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Expense	Reimbursable	Not Reimbursable	Process
Ground transportation	Taxi fare plus up to 20% gratuity and/or public transportation		Reimbursement as per receipt submitted
Hotel	Reasonable room charges	Extra days at the hotel for business not related to SouthTech Schools	Prepaid by School
Personal automobile	Current standard mileage rate set by the IRS, tolls and parking; Driving directions between locations serve as appropriate documentation for mileage reimbursement		Reimbursement as per receipt submitted
Rental vehicles	Rental car, gas, tolls, and parking	Rental vehicle expenses when other modes of transit are available, practical and affordable	Prepaid by School or as per receipt submitted

Credit Card Purchases and Out-of-Pocket Reimbursements

Prior to processing credit card payments or employee reimbursements, the documents below are required. Any discrepancies are resolved prior to payment:

1. Signed Travel Reimbursement Form approved by principal.
2. Receipt(s) attached

Expenses:

- Reported on Travel Reimbursement Form on a daily basis;
- Submitted within 2 weeks of the traveler's return;

Documentation

All expenses need to be supported with appropriate original receipts. Please number the receipts and reference on the Travel Reimbursement Form.

Missing Receipts

Staff should make every effort to obtain receipts for credit card and out-of-pocket business expenses. In case where no receipt is available like highway tolls, payments up to \$25 will be made. In case a receipt has been lost, the expense will not be reimbursed to the employee.

D. References

Travel Reimbursement Form	Used to gain approval for scheduled travel (at least 20 business days prior to trip when possible).
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E. Procedures

	Principal / Employee's Supervisor	Financial Officer	Accounting Clerk	Employee Incurring Expense
<i>4.1 Travel & Business Expense</i>				
1. Request Travel Clearance, at least 20 business days prior to travel, using the Travel Reimbursement Form.	Approve, if applicable	Approve, if applicable		X
2. Incur business or travel expenses, ensuring all purchases meet the reimbursement guidelines and a receipt is obtained for each purchase.	Approve, if applicable			X
3. Submit receipts with a completed Travel Reimbursement Form.	Approve			X
4. Process employee reimbursements according to guidelines in Accounts Payable.		Approve	X	

Section 5: Accounts Payable & Cash Disbursements Process

A. Overview

This section refers to the payment of all purchases in which a vendor invoices for goods or services. Some portions of this section also apply to the reimbursement of expenses to SouthTech Schools' employees and the payment of SouthTech Schools-issued credit card statements. An appropriate segregation of duties, as included in the procedures, is in place in order to ensure checks and balances in the accounts payable process.

B. Policies & Controls

1. Only authorized and accurate disbursements are made and recorded.
2. All major expenditures are reviewed and approved by individuals with fiscal oversight and fiduciary responsibility to the SouthTech Schools.

C. Process Overview

Vendor Invoices

Payments are not processed without a vendor invoice or some documentation of expenses. Invoices are selected based on due dates, discounts available, and availability of cash. Payments are not processed for goods not yet received, unless a deposit or prepayment is required by the vendor. A Payment Requisition Form must be attached to each vendor invoice and must include the following for recording in the accounting system:

- General ledger account number(s)
- Class or activity number if applicable
- Vendor name
- Invoice date & number
- Invoice amount

Check Processing

Blank check stock is kept in a secure, locked location with access limited to the Financial Officer and Accounting Clerk. When appropriate, payments are made electronically rather than by check. Signatures on checks and authorizations for electronic transfers are obtained in accordance with the approval authorization guidelines below. Checks are normally cut weekly.

Approval Authorization Guidelines		
Method of Payment	Threshold	Signatories/Approvers
Checks	• Less than \$5,000: two signatures	• Two of the approved signatories
	• \$5,000 or more: two signatures	
Intra-account Transfers	• Initiation and release (any amount)	• Two of the approved signatories
Third Party Electronic Transfers (Wires/ACH)	• Release: less than \$5,000	• Two of the approved signatories
	• Release: \$5,000 or more	• Two of the approved signatories

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Transfers	
Type	Description
Intra-account Transfers	Money transferred <i>internally</i> from one SouthTech Schools bank account to another
Third Party Electronic Transfers	Money transferred <i>externally</i> from SouthTech Schools bank account to a third party's bank account or payment portal

D. References

<i>Payment Requisition Form</i>	Used for all payment requests involving payment to a vendor.
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E. Procedures

	Executive Director	Financial Officer	Accounting Clerk	Purchaser
5.1 Accounts Payable & Cash Disbursements				
1. Complete Payment Requisition Form for invoices, reimbursements, etc.		X	X	X
2. Reconcile payment documents and resolve any discrepancies before entry in accounting system. Refer to Purchasing procedure 3.1 for required documents.		X Approve & Sign	X	
3. Enter payment information into the accounting software, recording each expense to the appropriate account.			X	
4. Select invoices to pay and approve check run.		X		
5. Retrieve blank check stock and cut checks.		X		
6. Approve payments on Payment Requisition Summary or Payment Requisition Form	X Approve			
7. Route checks/electronic payments with supporting documentation for signatures. The signers for these payments are the Board Chair, Vice Board Chair, Executive Director, Director of Compliance & Expansion and Principals.	X any 2 signers	X	X	
8. Review Checks for 2 signatures and Mail checks.			X	
9. If payment is being made electronically, initiate transfer via online banking or vendor portal.		X	X	
10. File all documentation.			X	

Section 6: Payroll Process

A. Overview

This section applies to the tracking of time worked and the processing and disbursement of salaries to employees. An appropriate segregation of duties, as included in the procedures, is in place in order to ensure checks and balances in the payroll process.

B. Policies & Controls

1. Payroll is processed for work performed.
2. Payroll amounts and deductions are properly calculated, processed, and recorded in the accounting system.
3. Payroll is verified for accuracy by an individual independent of payroll processing responsibilities.
4. Employee leave is properly approved, tracked, and communicated.
5. Status changes are made in a timely matter to prevent unauthorized or erroneous payroll disbursements.
6. Payroll files are maintained and stored securely to limit inappropriate access to confidential information.

C. Process Description

Gross pay of salaried employees is calculated by dividing the annual salary by the number of pay periods during the year. Hourly employees are paid based on the number hours worked, as documented on an approved timesheet, using the most recently approved hourly pay rate for that employee.

All State and Federal laws and regulations are followed when calculating pay for overtime worked by employees.

Payroll is processed on a semi-monthly basis via an outsourced payroll processing company. The payroll processing company provides the following services:

- Calculation and electronic deposit of all federal and state taxes
- Preparation of all quarterly payroll tax returns
- Preparation of the annual W-2 statements
- Preparation of the 1095 Form for health insurance verification

Changes to net pay include changes to insurance and other deductions. A Personnel Transaction & Payroll Deduction Form is used for all actions that create a change in net pay.

In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, the date, amount, and description of deductions from wages must be shown on payroll records. The employee's personnel file should contain the original documents supporting the authorization of each deduction.

Human Resource Manager accumulates confidential payroll information, including timesheets and payroll registers, and maintains them in the payroll files. Payroll files are kept locked and confidential.

D. References

<i>Personnel Transaction & Payroll Deduction Portal</i>	Used to communicate new hires, salary changes, and terminations of both hourly and salaried employees. This portal is also used to communicate changes to benefits deductions including health insurance, dental, salary garnishments, and other tax-preferred plans.
<i>Employee Part-time Authorization Form</i>	This form is used to submit any part-time hours for an employee.
<i>Leave / TDE Application</i>	This form is used to request a Leave of Absence for any reason or information regarding a Temporary Duty Elsewhere.
<i>Substitute or Temporary Time Report</i>	This form is used by a substitute or temporary employee to submit hours for compensation.

E. Procedures

	Executive Director or Board Chairman	Financial Officer	HR Manager	All Employees
6.1 Payroll Process				
1. Determine allocation of salaries between programs/function as well as grants if applicable. Maintain allocations on a spreadsheet and updates as needed.		X		
2. Communicate the following to HR Manager: - Changes to payroll deductions - Address or personal information changes			Receives and maintains HR records	X
3. Communicate the following to HR Manager: - Salary adjustments - Employee status changes - Benefits changes	X	X	Receives and maintains HR records	Supervisors for direct reports
4. Keep records of the following information: - New hire information - Salary adjustments - Employee status changes - Benefits changes - Changes to payroll deductions - Address or personal information changes			X	
5. Complete timesheets.				Hourly Employees
6. Collect timesheets from hourly employees and obtain approval from Supervisors.			X	
7. Add new hires to the payroll system.			X	
8. Request vacation time and obtain supervisor approval. Report other PTO.			Notified	X

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	Executive Director or Board Chairman	Financial Officer	HR Manager	All Employees
6.1 Payroll Process				
9. Prepare a report in Excel with all salaries, allocations and coding. Submit payroll to online payroll processing company.			X	
10. Approval of Payroll Report from the Payroll Company + salary of HR Manager.	X			
11. Enter payroll into accounting system		X		
12. Ensure that terminated employees are removed after their final paycheck has been processed.			X	
13. Review payroll report to ensure all changes are accurate and appropriate before distribution.			X	
14. Perform payroll reconciliations: a. Prior period to current period payroll register (semi-monthly) b. Payroll register to GL (monthly) c. Employee deductions to payments made to insurers and other benefits providers (quarterly)		X		
15. Maintain payroll files.			X	

	Executive Director	Financial Officer	HR Manager
6.2 Manual Check Process*			
1. Approve the issuance of a manual payroll check.	X	X	X
2. Input manual payroll check into the accounting software and cut check according to standard Accounts Payable process (see Section 5).		X	
3. Submit the manual payroll check information to the outsourced payroll processor on the next payroll submission.	Approve & Sign		X

**Manual payroll checks will be processed on an exception basis only.*

Section 7: Fixed Assets & Inventory Policy

A. Overview

This section applies to the acquisition, tracking and disposal of fixed assets. An appropriate method of tracking must be in place to ensure the ability to value capital assets.

B. Policies & Controls

1. Written requests for the purchase of capital assets are supported by sufficient operational and financial justification; and are appropriately approved.
2. All capital assets are properly identified, tagged, and inventoried when received. All fixed asset are inventoried, tracked, and reconciled annually.
3. Only leasehold improvements and purchases that materially add to the value of the property and prolong the useful life are deemed to be capital assets.
4. Depreciable and non-depreciable fixed assets are appropriately recorded.
5. Disposals of capital assets are properly authorized and recorded.

C. Description

SouthTech Schools considers fixed assets costing \$1,000 or more, with a useful life of more than one year, to be capital assets. Note that an exception to this rule may be batch orders of goods with identical useful life that are valued at more than \$1,000 in aggregate and are on the same invoice. This should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Depreciation of property and equipment is calculated by the straight-line method of the estimated useful lives of the assets. See definitions below for more information.

Understanding Fixed Assets	
<i>Capital Asset</i>	• Fixed assets costing \$1,000 or greater with a useful life of more than one year
<i>Asset Tag</i>	• Special identification number that is numerically sequenced and visibly attached to the asset
<i>Depreciation</i>	• Calculation used to decrease the value of assets equally over the estimated useful life
<i>Estimated Useful Life</i>	• The length of time that a depreciable asset is expected to be useable
<i>Fixed Asset</i>	• Tangible property not expected to be consumed or converted to cash in the short-term

Description of Assets		
<u>Asset Category</u>	<u>Asset Examples</u>	<u>Estimated Useful Life</u>
<i>Furniture & Equipment</i>	• Desks, chairs, copiers, telephones	5 to 15 years
<i>Computer Equipment</i>	• Desktop computers, laptop computers, printers	3 to 5 years
<i>Appliances</i>	• Refrigerators, stoves, washing machines	3 to 10 years
<i>Leasehold Improvements</i>	• Replacing floors, tiles, roofing	Term of Lease

Capitalization of Expenditures

Expenditures that increase the value of property, extend its life, or alter it to a new or different use are considered capital expenditures. Significant improvements to property leased by SouthTech Schools, including improvements that add value to the leasehold, are also capitalized.

Basis for Cost

The accounting records show the depreciable assets at the acquisition cost. Acquisition costs include the invoice price plus all expenses incurred to prepare the asset for operation, including such costs as preliminary engineering studies and surveys, legal fees to establish title, installation costs, freight, and labor and material used in construction or installation.

Non-depreciable capital assets (e.g., land) are carried in the records at the original net cost.

Determination of Useful Life

When an asset is acquired, useful life is estimated. Terms of time, units of production, or hours of service can all be used to reveal the useful life. The cost of an asset is determined over its useful life via depreciation or depletion. When an asset has an indeterminable useful life, such as that for land, depreciation is not taken.

In the event there is a significant change in the estimate of the remaining useful life after the asset has been placed into use, the remaining cost to be depreciated is distributed over the revised remaining life.

Fully Depreciated Assets

Fully depreciated assets remain in the fixed asset ledger with the related accumulated depreciation as long as the property is still in use to ensure accurate tracking and safeguarding of assets.

D. References

<i>Asset Disposal Form (PD-9)</i>	Used to track and obtain approval for the disposal of capital assets.
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E. Procedures

	Executive Director or Principal	Financial Officer	IT Dept.	Employee Responsible for Asset
7.1 Asset Acquisition Process				
1. Obtain capital asset according to the purchasing guidelines in Section 3.				X
2. Upon receipt of capital asset, label item with SouthTech Schools name and identifying number.			X	
3. Assign the asset an estimated useful life.		X		
4. Enter asset information into the Fixed Asset Ledger. The fixed asset ledger should contain the following information: a. Name and description of asset b. Estimated useful life c. Tag number, Serial number, model, or other identification d. Acquisition date, and cost e. Location and condition of asset f. Disposition data, including date of disposition		X		
5. Track depreciation of assets and adjust amounts in accounting system on an annual basis.		X		
6. Complete physical inventory of capital assets and reconcile to fixed asset ledger (annually).		X Reconcile	X Physical Inventory	
7.2 Asset Disposal Process				
1. Prepare and submit Asset Disposal Form, including: a. Description of asset b. Reason for disposal c. Method of disposal	Review & approve		X Receive Form	X
2. Dispose of the asset through retirement or sale.			X	
3. Remove asset from fixed asset ledger and make appropriate adjustments to asset accounts in the accounting system.		X		

Inventory Policy

SouthTech Schools maintains inventory records of equipment owned by South Tech Charter Academy and South Tech Preparatory Academy. Equipment purchases of \$100 or more follow the inventory policy procedures.

Equipment is received, logged and barcoded if it has a cost of \$100 or more. The equipment is checked in by the inventory property custodian who barcodes the item and records the capital asset or TPP (tangible personal property) item in the inventory management system. The property custodian records the following information:

- Specific Property Description that includes brand, size, color, model number and serial number, if applicable
- Acquisition month and year
- Total purchase cost
- Tag# (barcode number)
- Date inventory was performed
- Funding source (public or private)
- Specific Funding Used (FEFP, grant, capital outlay, etc.)
- Location of Asset or TPP item
- Condition of Item

Once barcoded and recorded in the inventory management system, the custodian or the custodian's delegate sends the item to its assigned location.

A physical inventory of property is completed at least once each fiscal year by the property custodian and/or the property custodian's delegate. The results are reconciled by the accounting department on an annual basis to verify the capital assets tie to the financial statements. The Charter School Capital Asset and TPP Inventory Form is completed and updated annually by accounting personnel. This form is also submitted annually to the School District of Palm Beach County.

Disposal/Disposition of Equipment.

When original or replacement equipment acquired under a federal award is no longer needed for the original project or program or for other activities supported by the awarding agency, the school must request disposition instructions from the federal awarding agency if required by the terms and conditions of the federal award. Disposition of the equipment will be made as follows, in accordance with federal awarding agency disposition instructions:

- (1) Items of equipment with a current per unit fair market value of \$5,000 or less may be retained, sold or otherwise disposed of with no further responsibility to the Federal awarding agency.
- (2) If the federal awarding agency fails to provide requested disposition instructions within 120 days, items of equipment with a current per-unit fair market value in excess of \$5,000 may be retained by the school or sold.
- (3) The school may transfer title to the property to the Federal Government or to an eligible third party provided that, in such cases, the school is entitled to compensation for its attributable percentage of the current fair market value of the property.

Section 8: Accounting Period Close

A. Overview

This section applies to the closing processes that occur at month and year-end. The close process results in financial statements that provide critical information as to the financial performance and condition of SouthTech Schools. The primary purpose of closing procedures is to bring control, reliability and audit-ability to the accounting process. The close process is completed by the Business Department.

B. Policies & Controls

1. Staff provides information critical to the close process to the Business Department in a timely manner.
2. A monthly and annual closing process of the accounting records is performed in a timely manner.

C. Procedures

Closing Tasks	Period	Target Date*	Executive Director	Financial Officer	Accounting Clerk	HR Manager
<u>Current Assets</u>						
<u>Cash Activities</u>						
Print cash receipts summary reports after final day's receipts are recorded	Month	5			X	
Review cash receipts and post to GL	Month	5		Review	X	
<u>Cash Accounts</u>						
Complete bank reconciliations for all bank and trust accounts	Month	7		X Review	X	
Analyze aging of un-cleared checks and clear stale checks as appropriate. Follow up on significant outstanding amounts.	Month	10		X		
<u>Revenue Recognition Activities</u>						
<u>Accounts Receivable</u>						
Generate and analyze Accounts Receivable aging report. Follow up on significant outstanding amounts.	Month	5		X		
Post interest and dividends income to GL	Month	10		X		
Post grants and pledges receivable to GL as per executed award letters/contracts and pledge forms.	Month	10		X		
Reconcile revenue reports and make any necessary updates to the GL	Quarter	10		X		
Reconcile investment income	Month	10		X		

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Closing Tasks	Period	Target Date*	Executive Director	Financial Officer	Accounting Clerk	HR Manager
<u>Other Current Assets</u>						
Prepaid Expenses						
Adjust pre-paid expenses (e.g., insurance, real estate taxes, interest expense, etc.) to recognize expense in proper month	Month	10		X Review	X	
<u>Asset Analysis</u>						
Fixed Assets						
Review depreciation amounts for capital assets	Annual	30		X		
Review fixed asset purchases made in the previous quarter to verify they have been recorded properly.	Quarter	10		X		
Review disposals of fixed assets and adjust the fixed asset ledger.	Annual	30		X		
Reconcile fixed asset ledger to year-end fixed asset inventory	Annual	30		X Review	X	
Net Assets						
Review classifications of net asset accounts to ensure net assets are appropriately classified as unrestricted, temporarily restricted, or permanently restricted	Annual	30		Review		
<u>Accounts Payable</u>						
Accounts Payable						
Review credit card statement and match to supporting documentation for approved expenses	Month	8		X	X	
Review expense reports and match supporting documentation for approved travel and business expenses and verify coding	Month	8		X	X	
Follow up with staff on missing documentation as needed	Month	8			X	X
Review A/P and other payables for possible accruals, and post to GL	Month	10		X	X	
Payroll Activities						
Enter payroll to GL	Month	20		X		
Perform payroll reconciliations	Month	25		X		
Track employee vacation and other PTO and record accrued leave balances in accounting software	Quarter/Annual	20		Record		X Track
Perform reconciliation of gross salaries (W-2 Forms)	Annual	25				X

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Closing Tasks	Period	Target Date*	Executive Director	Financial Officer	Accounting Clerk	HR Manager
Notes Payable						
If applicable, analyze notes payable accounts (e.g., notes payable for mortgages or lines of credit) and post any unrecorded interest and principal amounts	Month	10	Review	X		
<u>Financial Reporting and Forecasting Activities</u>						
Cash flow when applicable	Month	12	Review	X		
Run preliminary budget-to-actual expense reports	Month	16		X		
Run preliminary balance sheet, including detail on AR and AP	Month	16		X		
Perform necessary review and analysis of month-end financial data	Month	16		X		
Review budget-to-actual reports, balance sheet, and AR and AP aging prior to preparation of full financial report package	Month	20	X	X		
Draft management narrative to accompany financial report package	Month	26	X			
Generate full final financial package and complete financial statements for management team and Board of Directors	Month	25		X		
Distribute reports to management	Month	25		X		
Distribute reports to Board of Directors	Month	30	X			
Meet with Administration to discuss variances	Month	26	X	X		
Generate financial grant reports for funders.	As Needed	N/A		X	X	

Section 9: Financial Planning & Oversight

A. Overview

This section applies to the budgeting, cash management, internal and external financial reporting, and audit processes. The annual operating budget is a managerial tool used for planning and facilitating decisions regarding the allocation of resources. Financial reports are managerial tools used for reporting the financial activities of the SouthTech Schools to managers, the Board, and outside SouthTech Schools.

B. Policies

1. A comprehensive chart of accounts is maintained and reviewed annually (including Cost Centers). Any inactive accounts/cost centers are marked as such. New accounts are added only when necessary.
2. A budget is produced on an annual basis and approved by the Board.
3. Cash balances are monitored on a regular basis and appropriate steps are taken to ensure sufficient liquid reserves are available to meet ongoing obligations.
4. Relationships with banking institutions are entered into with appropriate authorization.
5. Bank accounts are reconciled in a timely manner by someone who is not an authorized check signer.
6. Monthly financial reports are produced for management and the Board on a timely basis to ensure proper controls of the accounting process, and to facilitate effective monitoring and oversight.

C. Process Overview

Chart of Accounts and Cost Centers

The chart of accounts is a listing of all the accounts that make up SouthTech Schools' accounting system, providing the framework for defining every accounting transaction. Additional segmentation in the accounting system is used in conjunction with the chart of accounts to capture all relevant information for each revenue and expense transaction. SouthTech Schools annually reviews and updates its chart of accounts and system for coding revenues and expenses with the goal of increasing accuracy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Accounting Segments		
Segment	Definition	Examples
Chart of Accounts	A listing of all the natural accounts that make up the accounting system	- Assets - Liabilities - Net Assets - Revenue - Expenses
Fund	Segmentation by type of funding, and availability of funds for use.	- Operating - Internal - Special Revenue (grants)
Cost Center 1	Segmentation to capture relevant information for each revenue and expense transaction by functional area	- General & Administration - Program - Fundraising
Cost Center 2	Segmentation to capture relevant information for each revenue and expense transaction by project/activity	- Programs - Clubs - Activities
Cost Center 3	Segmentation to capture relevant information for each revenue and expense transaction by revenue source or grant	- Title I, II, III & IV - IDEA - Miscellaneous grants - Private grants

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Budget Development

The annual operating budget is a managerial tool used for planning and facilitating decisions regarding the allocation of resources. The budget expresses in financial terms the mission and goals of the SouthTech Schools. It is also a means of monitoring results to ensure that financial activity conforms to the plan. The budget development process begins no less than 3 months prior to the end of the fiscal year. The final budget is approved by the Board prior to the start of the fiscal year.

Financial Reporting (Internal)

Financial reports are managerial tools used for reporting the financial activities of the SouthTech Schools to management and the Board. Careful analysis of financial reports allows measurement of past performance and helps predict future performance. Results of this analysis assist in making decisions that affect the resource allocation.

<i>Internal Reports</i>		
<u>Report Name</u>	<u>Definition/Purpose</u>	<u>Distribution</u>
Budget vs. Actual Statement of Revenue, Expenditures & Changes in Fund Balance	- Provides comparison of SouthTech Schools' budget to actual revenues and expenses - Also referred to as the Profit & Loss Statement	- Department Heads - School Principals - Board of Directors - School District
Statement of Financial Position	- Provides a snapshot of SouthTech Schools' assets, liabilities, and net assets - Also referred to as the Balance Sheet	- School Principals - Board of Directors - School District
AR and AP Aging Reports	Lists of receivables and payables showing length of time outstanding	Business Dept

Financial Reporting (External)

SouthTech Schools is audited annually by an independent external auditor. The audited financial statements are the auditor's attestation that the financial records of the SouthTech Schools are complete and accurate for the fiscal year audited. These statements are distributed to Board members, senior management, and funders. The annual audit includes the reports in the following chart.

<i>External Reports</i>	
<u>Report Name</u>	<u>Definition/Purpose</u>
Statement of Financial Position	- Provides a snapshot of SouthTech Schools' assets, liabilities, and net assets at a fixed point in time - Also referred to as the Balance Sheet
Statement of Activities	Details income recognized less expense incurred over the course of the fiscal year, resulting in the total change to the net asset balance

Reporting and Audit Requirements

The Board reviews and approves the contract with the external auditor. In keeping with best practices for nonprofit voluntary compliance with the provisions of Sarbanes-Oxley anti-fraud legislation, SouthTech Schools verifies its lead auditor is rotated a minimum of once every five years. In addition, SouthTech Schools also issues a formal RFP and conducts a competitive bidding process for external auditors as circumstances warrant.

State and Federal Reporting Requirements	
Type of Report	Definition/Purpose
IRS Form 990	• Annual report to IRS • Public document showing financial position (hard copies must be available to public upon request) • Prepared in conjunction with annual financial audit
Annual Report	• Annual filing with the School District and the Auditor General's Office for the the State of Florida.
Annual Audit	• Annual review of financial records • Performed by independent, external auditor • Ensures financial records are accurate representation of financial position • According to best practice, should be completed within 6 months after fiscal year close
Single Audit	• Applicable only if SouthTech Schools expends \$750,000 or more a year in federal awards • Covers the entire operation of the SouthTech Schools, or at a minimum, the departments and/or units that receive and expend federal awards

D. References

<i>Chart of Accounts and Cost Centers</i>	Detailed list of general ledger accounts and segments for tracking additional information related to revenue and expenses
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E. Procedures

	Executive Director	Financial Officer	School Principals	Dept. Heads	Board
<i>9.1 Budget Development Process</i>					
1. Establish goals for the upcoming fiscal year, both programmatic and financial in nature.	X	Provide input	Provide input	Provide input	X
2. Designate budget development team.	X	X	X		
3. Communicate goals, timeline, and templates in a budget development “kickoff meeting.”	Attend	X	Attend	Attend	
4. Distribute historical data and template for revenue and expense budgets by program/function.		X	Receive	Receive	
5. Create work team and department expense projections.	X	Receive	X	X	
6. Create contributed revenue projections.	X	X			
7. Create management & general expense projections and earned revenue projections.	X	X			
8. Assemble individual budgets into one master budget		X			
9. Revise budgets, as necessary, to meet revenue and expense targets.	Provide input	X	Provide input	Provide input	
10. Incorporate adjustments into full budget, as necessary.	Review & Approve	X			
11. Present draft budget to the Board.	X	X			Receive & review
12. Approve budget, following the incorporation of any requested changes.					X
<i>9.2 Financial Monitoring Process</i>					
1. Produce budget-to-actual reports by program/function.	Receive & Review	X	Receive & Review	Receive & Review	
2. Draft full financial report package and distribute to the Board.	Receive & review	X			Review & Approve
3. Hold variance analysis meetings.	X	X			
4. Reforecast the budget at midyear, as necessary, to reflect significant changes	Receive & Review	X			Review & Approve

	Executive Director	Financial Officer	Board	External Auditor
9.3 Annual Audit Process				
1. Identify and engage lead external auditor.		X	X	
2. Draft audit engagement letter identifying services, terms, and delegations of roles of responsibilities of SouthTech Schools and the auditor.	Receive	Receive	Receive	X
3. Define audit timeline and deliverables with external auditor.		X		X
4. Hold pre-audit kickoff meeting to communicate timeline and responsibilities.		X		Attend
5. Coordinate audit preparation.		X		
6. Draft necessary audit schedules.		X		
7. Conduct audit.				X
8. Provide auditors with necessary documentation for testing purposes.		X		
9. Receive audited financial statements and management letter.	X	X	X	
10. Present results of the audit to the Board of Directors in an executive session.	Attend	Attend	Attend	X

Section 10: Grants Management Process

A. Overview

This section applies to the grants management process, from identifying new funding opportunities to reporting on grants received. All grants must be maintained and monitored in accordance to funder guidelines. Specifically, please refer to the requirements in the “*Project Application and Amendment Procedures for Federal and State Programs*”, published by the State of Florida DOE (also referred to as the Green Book) and the “*Uniform Grant Guidance Manual*”.

B. Policies & Controls

1. Grants are managed to minimize agency risk and maintain fiscal integrity.
2. Funding is appropriately identified, secured, and managed.

C. Procedures

	Executive Director	Financial Officer	Grant Admin.	School Principals	Ext. Grant-writer
10.1 Grants and Contracts Management Process					
1. Identify all funding opportunities. Consortium etc.	X		X	X	X
2. Receive and review RFPs. – the group evaluates whether it's feasible.	Provide Input	X	X	Provide Input	X
3. Develop and maintain income projections and funding plan. At this time, private grants are not budgeted for and they are often project-driven.		Review	X		X
4. Develop and maintain funding map, tracking expenditures by restricted grant, program/work team, and project.		X	Review		Provide input
5. Prepare proposals (narrative) for new or renewed grants.	Provide Input	Provide Input	X Provide Input	Provide input	X
6. Prepare budgets for new or renewed grants and projects, as needed.		X Provide Input	X Provide Input	Provide input	Provide Input & Review
7. Coordinate submission of grant proposals.	Review & Sign	Provide Input	X		X
8. Receive notification of funding award.		X	X		X
9. Conduct a kickoff meeting to discuss details of funding award, including timeframe, restrictions, and reporting requirements.		Participate	X	Participate	
10. As funds are spent, track against grant allocation.		X	X		
11. Monitor programmatic and fiscal compliance and ensure funds are spent according to budget.	Participate	Participate	Participate	Participate	Participate
12. Monitor receipt of funder payments and track grants receivable.		X			
13. Prepare non-financial reports to funder.	Review & approve	Provide input	X	Provide input	
14. Prepare financial reports to funder.	Review & approve	X	Review		Review
15. Create and maintain grant and funder files.		X	X		
16. Make amendments when necessary	Review & Sign	Provide Input	X		Review

Section 11: Fiscal Oversight Responsibilities of the Board

A. Overview

The Board provides effective financial oversight, which includes making financial decisions that further SouthTech Schools' mission, program(s) and goals.

B. Description of Responsibilities

1. Board Fiscal Oversight Responsibilities

- The Board approves SouthTech Schools' fiscal policies. Policies are adopted by the Board and updated as necessary.
- The Board is aware and knowledgeable of its fiscal responsibilities.
- The Board reviews and approves SouthTech Schools' annual budget. The Board reviews and approves operating and capital revenue budgets for SouthTech Schools annually.
- The Board has access to monthly financial reports in order to monitor key variances between budget and actual financial results.
- Contractual agreements for goods or services in excess of \$20,000 must be approved or ratified by the Board if operating funds are being used. Board approval is not needed for purchasing goods or services if such goods or services will be funded from an approved federal or state grant.
- Board Chair or designee, will communicate with the Financial Officer to discuss the monthly financial reports on an as needed basis.
- As needed, the Board may establish a finance committee on an ad-hoc basis for reviewing and recommending accounting and financial controls, practices, and procedures for SouthTech Schools.

2. Financial & Audit Responsibilities

- Budget: Ensure development of the annual budget, review the proposed budget with management, and recommend final operating budget to the full Board for approval. Perform ongoing monitoring of the budget, including budget modifications as necessary. Ensure management has mechanisms in place to monitor the budget on a monthly basis. Ensure the budget allows management to make spending decisions within pre-authorized guidelines.
- Assets: Oversee the management of SouthTech Schools-wide financial assets.
- Bank accounts: Approves the opening and closing of all SouthTech Schools' bank accounts.
- Meet guidelines and requirements set by The State of Florida and funders.
- Avoid and resolve conflicts of interest at staff or Board level.
- Approve executive compensation level.
- Appoint the independent auditors to be engaged by SouthTech Schools and approve the audit fees. Review and evaluate the performance of the independent auditors.
- Review all material written communications between the independent auditors and management, such as the management letter.
- Review legal and regulatory matters that may have a material impact on the financial statements.
- Conduct executive sessions with the outside auditors, outside counsel, and anyone else as desired by the committee.

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- Inquire about significant risks or exposures facing SouthTech Schools, assess the steps management has taken or proposes to take to minimize such risks, and periodically review compliance with such steps.
- Review the adequacy of SouthTech Schools' internal controls including computerized information system controls and security.
- Review procedures for receipt, retention, and treatment of complaints regarding accounting, internal controls, or auditing matters by any party internal or external to SouthTech Schools (Whistleblower Policy).

Section 12: Record Retention

A. Overview

This section applies to the retention, maintenance and destruction of SouthTech Schools' records and documents. In accordance with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, which makes it a crime to alter, cover up, falsify, or destroy any document with the intent of impeding or obstructing any official proceeding, this policy provides for the systematic review, retention, and destruction of documents received or created by SouthTech Schools in connection with the transaction of SouthTech Schools business.

B. Policies

1. Records will be maintained as required by government regulations, grant requirements, audit requirements, and other legal needs as may be determined. When in question about State rules around retention of records, refer: "*Records Retention Schedule*", Information Technology/ Records Management, March 2016, published by the School District of Palm Beach County and the "*State of Florida Red Book*" (also referred to as the "*Financial and Program Cost Accounting and Reporting for Florida Schools*", published by the State of Florida DOE, Bureau of School Business Services and Office of Funding and Financial Reporting.)
2. Any exceptions to the record retention requirements must be approved by the Board of Directors.
3. Data and information is protected from unauthorized access, use, modification, disclosure, and destruction.

C. Process Description

User Access

Authorization and privilege controls are fully implemented for the network operating system and applications, as well as specific applications and information.

Maintenance of Accounting Records

The design and implementation of a file structure is critical to having a fully documented, completely traceable and fully usable accounting system. The types of accounting records maintained by the SouthTech Schools include all original documentation submitted to substantiate transactions recorded on the general ledger and the financial reports issued to management, the Board of Directors, and the public.

Accounting File

Electronic and hard copy files, which contain the accounting files listed above, are maintained. All current hard copies of accounting documents, contracts, and funder agreements are maintained at the SouthTech Schools' main office and access is limited to authorized users only.

Permanent File

A permanent file including audits, incorporation papers, personnel policies, corporate-by-laws, board reports and other documents that span calendar and fiscal periods is maintained in the main office and access is limited to authorized users only. Electronic back-up copies are maintained off-site.

Electronic Financial Records

Access to electronic financial records is available to authorized users on a shared and limited basis. SouthTech Schools incorporates the internal control concept of separation of duties in assigning access to its electronic financial records. Electronic records are backed-up daily and stored on a virtual server.

D. Procedures

Document Retention Guidelines	
Type of Document	How Long to Retain
Accounting	
Annual reports	Indefinitely
Audits:	
Audited financial statements	Indefinitely
Internal audit reports	5 years
Bank:	
Bank deposit records	5 years
Bank statements and reconciliations	10 years
Budget:	
Approved annual budget, Record copy	Indefinitely
Supporting Documents	3 years
Canceled checks or Disbursement records:	
Ordinary	5 years
Summary records	10 years
Taxes, property and important payments	Indefinitely
Grant files (recipient):	
Unrestricted	7 years
Temporarily restricted and perm. restricted/endowment	Indefinitely
State grants and contracts	5 years (after completion)
Expense analyses / distribution schedules	7 years
Fixed asset records, appraisals, depreciation schedules	Indefinitely
General ledger and subsidiary ledgers	7 years
Physical inventory records	3 years
Purchasing:	
Purchase orders and requisitions	Retain until obsolete, supersedes or administrative value is lost
Shipping and receiving reports	
Taxes:	
Tax returns and worksheets	Indefinitely
Withholding tax statements	4 years
Vouchers for payment to vendors, employees and others	7 years
Donor and Grant Records	
Donor records and acknowledgement letters	Indefinitely
Grant applications and contracts	5 years (after completion)
SouthTech Schools Records	
Annual Reports to Attorney General	Indefinitely
Articles of Incorporation	Indefinitely
Board policy resolutions	Indefinitely

Document Retention Guidelines	
Type of Document	How Long to Retain
Charters, constitutions, bylaws	Indefinitely
Construction documents	Indefinitely
Contracts, mortgages, notes and leases (expired)	7 years
Contracts still in effect	Indefinitely
Deeds, mortgages, bills of sale	Indefinitely
Labor contracts	Indefinitely
Fixed asset records	Indefinitely
IRS Application for Tax-Exempt Status	Indefinitely
IRS Determination Letter	Indefinitely
State Sales Tax Exemption Letter	Indefinitely
Loan documents, notes	Indefinitely
Licenses	Indefinitely
Minutes from board and committee meetings	Indefinitely
Personnel	
Accident reports and workers compensation records	5 years (after termination)
Employment applications (not hired)	3 years
Employment and termination agreement	Indefinitely
Garnishments	5 years
I-9 Forms	3 years (after termination)
Payroll records and summaries	5 years
Personnel files	5 years (after termination)
Retirement and pension records	Indefinitely
Timesheets	5 years (after termination)
Insurance	
Accident reports and claims	Indefinitely
Fire inspection reports	4 years
Group disability reports	7 years
Insurance records (expired contracts)	5 years after expiration
Correspondence	
General	3 years
Legal and important matters	Indefinitely
Electronic Documents	
Email	No single retention period; depends on content of email; check with retention schedule. Transitory emails – 30 days

Section 13: Whistleblower

A. Overview

This section outlines clear procedures for handling “whistleblower” complaints. The Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, Section 1107, Retaliation Against Informants states that it is illegal to retaliate against a whistleblower. Proper handling of complaints will help protect SouthTech Schools from being accused of retaliation against whistleblowers. To be effective, this policy must be circulated to all employees and board members.

This policy establishes procedures for the receipt and treatment of employee complaints regarding wrongful conduct relating to SouthTech Schools. The policy has been adopted to:

- (i) Provide employees with a confidential mechanism to alert management of alleged “Wrongful Conduct” (*as defined below*);
- (ii) Ensure that all information regarding such conduct is handled in a professional and thorough manner; and
- (iii) Protect employees from retaliation for bringing such concerns to the attention of management.

Standards	Definition
Standards for Employee Conduct	SouthTech Schools requires employees to observe the highest standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. Employees must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their job responsibilities and must comply with all applicable laws, government regulations and agency rules and procedures.

Definitions of Wrongful Conduct	
Conduct	Definition
Baseless Allegations	Claims or accusations made with reckless disregard for their truth or falsity.
Fraudulent or Dishonest Conduct	- A deliberate act or failure to act with the intention of obtaining an unauthorized benefit. Examples: - Forgery or alteration of documents - Unauthorized alteration or manipulation of computer files - Fraudulent financial reporting - Pursuit of a benefit or advantage in violation of the Institute's conflict of interest policy - Misappropriation, misuse or theft of Institute resources, such as funds, supplies or other assets - Authorizing or receiving compensation for goods not received or services not performed - Authorizing or receiving compensation for hours not worked
Other Wrongful Conduct	- Examples of other wrongful conduct include: - Criminal behavior - Inappropriate behavior towards a coworker - Other violations of agency policies or applicable laws

B. Policy

1. Reporting Responsibility

Each employee is responsible for complying with the above Standards, and for reporting wrongful conduct or suspected wrongful conduct by other employees. "Wrongful Conduct" includes, but is not limited to, fraud, theft, embezzlement, mishandling of funds, criminal behavior, questionable accounting or auditing practices, inappropriate behavior towards a client or other violations of agency policies or applicable laws.

2. Non-Retaliation

No employee shall suffer harassment, retaliation or any other adverse employment consequence as a result of:

- (i) Reporting suspected Wrongful Conduct in accordance with the procedures of this policy;
- (ii) Providing information, causing information to be provided or otherwise assisting in any investigation, including investigations by local, state or federal governmental bodies, regarding any Wrongful Conduct; or
- (iii) Filing, causing to be filed, testifying, or otherwise assisting in a criminal, civil or regulatory investigation or proceeding relating to SouthTech Schools.

Employees seeking retaliation against someone who accounts for a violation in good faith shall be subject to discipline including potential termination. By encouraging and enabling employees and others to raise serious concerns within SouthTech Schools, the Whistleblower Policy hopes to initially address the situation internally.

3. Reporting Violations

This Whistleblower Policy encourages employees to share their questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints about other employees' conduct with someone who can address them properly. In most cases,

an employee's primary supervisor is in the best position to address an area of concern. However, an employee who is not comfortable speaking with his/her supervisor or is not satisfied with the supervisor's response is encouraged to speak with his/her Department Head. Senior managers are required to report suspected violations to SouthTech Schools' Executive Director, who has specific and exclusive responsibility to investigate all reported violations. An employee who is not satisfied or is uncomfortable with speaking to staff members in his/her department should contact SouthTech Schools' Board Chairperson directly. The Board Chair is responsible for investigating and resolving all reported complaints and allegations concerning violations and, at his or her discretion, shall advise SouthTech Schools' Executive Director or the Board of Directors in the event that the complaint concerns an alleged violation by the SouthTech Schools' Executive Director. The Board Chair has direct access to the Board of Directors and shall report to the Board of Directors at least annually on whistleblower activity.

4. Accounting and Auditing Matters

The Executive Director shall immediately notify the Chair of the Board of Directors and the Treasurer of the Board of any reported concerns or complaints regarding SouthTech Schools' finances, including accounting practices, internal controls, alleged malfeasance or illegal conduct, or auditing issues. After immediately notifying the Board of Directors of any such grievance, the Compliance Officer and the Executive Director (unless one or the other is the subject of a complaint) is expected to work with the Board of Directors until the situation is settled.

5. Acting in Good Faith

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith by having reasonable grounds for believing that the activity occurred and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of the Standards set forth above. Any allegations that prove to be unsubstantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or with knowledge of their falsehood will be treated as a serious disciplinary offense subject to potential termination.

6. Confidentiality

The complainant may submit violations or suspected violations on a confidential basis. Anonymous submissions are acceptable as well. Aligning with the need to execute a thorough investigation, reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible.

7. Handling of Reported Violations

The Executive Director or the Board Chairperson will notify the complainant and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation within five business days. All reports will be timely researched and, if stipulated by the investigation, necessary corrective measures will be pursued. They will update the complainant of the status of the reported violation or suspected violation within 30 business days of the acknowledgement of receipt and will notify the complainant of the investigation into the complaint.

Appendix G:

By-Laws

Bylaws

SOUTH TECH CHARTER ACADEMY, INC.

Latest Revision Dated November 9, 2023

ARTICLE ONE

General Provisions

1.1 Charter These Bylaws are hereby adopted for and on behalf of SouthTech Charter Academy, Inc., a Florida not-for-profit corporation (hereafter called "School"). The name and purpose of the School shall be as set forth in its Articles of Incorporation and the conversion school Charter, (to be issued by the State of Florida), as amended from time to time. Said organization is organized exclusively for educational purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations described under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

1.2 Location The principal office of the School shall be located at 6161 West Woolbright Road, Boynton Beach, Florida 33437. The Directors may change the location of the principal office within the State of Florida. The Directors may establish other offices and places of business in Florida or elsewhere as permitted by the School District and by law.

1.3 Fiscal Year Except as from time to time otherwise determined by the Directors of the School, the fiscal year of the School shall be the fiscal year of the Palm Beach County School District.

ARTICLE TWO

Board of Directors

2.1 Powers The Board of Directors, who are hereinafter referred to as Directors, shall exercise all corporate powers with respect to the School, as set forth in these Bylaws.

2.2 Duties of Board The Board of Directors shall transact all business of the corporation, determine the policies of the corporation and in general assume responsibility for the guidance and the affairs of the corporation. The duties of the Board of Directors include, but are not limited to setting policy, establishing procedures, approving budgets, approving selection of the Executive Director and overseeing and managing the financial and administrative management of the School. The Board of Directors shall be responsible for making or executing the School's performance standards, supervising ongoing accounts, overseeing financial reporting and meeting state and district requirements and providing annual programs and accountability reports. A Director shall perform his/her duties in said capacity, including his/her duties as a member of any committee of the Board of Directors upon which he/she may serve,

in good faith, in a manner he/she reasonable believes to be in the best interests of the corporation and with such care as an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would use under similar circumstances.

2.3 Number The Directors shall determine the number of directors, which shall be no less than 5 and no more than 9 and shall elect the number of Directors so determined. The Board of Directors should consist of at least one member from each of the following groups: (i) parents or guardians of school students; and (ii) members of the community including those with business, legal and financial skills if available. The Directors may, at any special or regular meeting by an affirmative vote of a majority of Directors then in office, increase the number of Directors and elect new Directors to complete the number so fixed, or they may, by a similar vote, decrease the number of Directors, but only to eliminate vacancies existing by reason of death, resignation, removal or disqualification of one or more Directors. The Directors may by an affirmative vote of a majority of Directors then in office fill any vacancy or vacancies on the Board and may exercise all their powers notwithstanding any vacancy or vacancies in their number. All Directors shall hold staggered terms of office with elections three years from the time of their election and thereafter until their respective successors are chosen and qualified; provided however that one third of the initial Members be elected initially for a one year term; one-third of the Members be elected initially for a two year term, and; one-third of the Members be elected initially for a for a full three year term. The Director shall hold such office until said Director shall retire, resign, or be removed as a Director by the Board of Directors, as herein provided.

2.4 Resignation and Removal Any Director may resign by delivering a written letter of resignation to the Board Chairperson or to the School at its principal office. Such resignation shall be effective upon receipt unless it is specified to be effective at some time later. Any Director may be removed from office with or without cause by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the Directors then in office. A Director may be removed for cause only after reasonable notice and an opportunity to be heard by the Board of Directors. Reasonable notice shall be in writing at least 14 days prior to the next Board meeting.

ARTICLE THREE

Meetings

3.1 Regular Meetings All meetings of the Board of Directors shall be open to the public. Pursuant to Florida Statute 1002.33(9)(p)(3), the Board of Directors must hold at least two public meetings per school year in Palm Beach County. The meetings must be noticed, open, and accessible to the public, and attendees must be provided an opportunity to receive information and provide input regarding the charter school's operations. Members of the governing Board or any member of a committee formed or designated by the governing board may attend in person or by means of communications media technology used in accordance with rules adopted by the Administration Commission under s. 120.54(5).

3.2 Special Meetings Special Meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at such times and places in Palm Beach County as shall be designated by the Chair or upon the written request of any member of the Board of Directors. At Special Meetings, business shall be conducted in such order as from time to time the Board of Directors may determine.

3.3 Annual Meeting The Board of Directors shall meet annually at the principal office of the School, or at such place within Palm Beach County and at such time as the Board of Directors shall determine, except that such date shall not be a legal holiday. If the annual meeting is not held on the specific day, the Directors may hold a special meeting in place thereof, and any business transacted or elections held at such meeting shall have the same force and effect as if transacted or held at the annual meeting.

3.4 Notice of Meetings Notice of any meeting of the Board of Directors shall be given as herein provided at least 5 days prior to such meeting unless due to an emergency situation a reasonable shorter notice period is appropriate under the circumstances. Public notice, if any, of such meetings shall be given as required by Florida law. Notice of the date, time, and place of all meetings of the Directors should be given to each Director by the Secretary or designee or by the Director calling a Special meeting. Such notice shall be given to each Director by mail, delivery service, or electronic mail sent to such Director's usual or last known business or home address. Except as required by law, notice of any meeting of Directors need not be given, (i) to any Director who, either before or after the meeting, delivers a written waiver of notice, executed by the Director (or the Director's attorney thereunto authorized, which is filed with the records of the meeting; or (ii) to any Director who attends the meeting and who, either prior to the meeting or at its commencement, fails to protest the lack of such notice. Except as otherwise required by law, the Charter or these Bylaws, a notice or waiver of notice need not specify the purpose of any regular or special meeting unless such purpose is, (i) the amendment or repeal of any provision of the Charter or these Bylaws, or (ii) the removal of a Director or an Officer.

3.5 Quorum A majority of the Directors then in office shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number may, without further notice, adjourn the meeting to any other time. At any meeting of Directors at which a quorum is present, the vote of a majority of those Directors present shall decide any matter unless the Charter or these Bylaws, or any applicable law requires a different vote.

3.6 Electronic Attendance Board members may attend Board meetings, workshops and retreats; participate at such Board meetings, workshops and retreats through the use of communications media technology. Pursuant to Florida Statute 1002.33(9)(p)(3), "members of the governing board or any member of a committee formed or designated by the governing board may attend in person or by means of communications media technology used in accordance with rules adopted by the Administration Commission under s. 120.54(5)".

3.7 Discussion All members are invited to engage in full discussion on all matters coming before the Board of Directors during duly called meetings. Matters which are

deemed to be too detailed or require extended analysis and review may be assigned by the Chair to an appropriate Committee as further provided in Section 3.8 below, task force or work group to work through the details and report their deliberations to the Board of Directors at the next Board of Directors meeting, or a Special Meeting may be scheduled, or the Chair may elect to limit or bring discussion to closure within a designated time as prescribed in Roberts Rules of Order. Any member of the public who is not a member of the Board of Directors may address the Board of Directors on any agenda matter at the public comment section of the meeting prior to any items being voted on. Each non member speaker is limited to no more than three (3) minutes unless otherwise granted by the Chair or Vice Chair.

3.8 Order of Business to be Considered Any business requiring exceptional scrutiny and analysis coming before the Board of Directors for formal action may be referred to the appropriate Committee for discussion and analysis unless such business is deemed by the Chair to be of such urgency that delay would be harmful to the Board of Directors or the School. Upon completion of Committee deliberations, the Committee Chair or designee will report, as appropriate, its findings to the full Board of Directors. At the discretion of the Chair, any new business may be considered at a duly constituted and noticed Regular Meeting or Special Meeting. The Chair may designate a time certain to accommodate reasonable discussion of new business, or, may assign such business to the appropriate Committee for deliberation. For the purpose of meeting deadlines due to time and/or resource constraint(s), the Board authorizes the Superintendent/Executive Director, or designee, and the Board Chair, or designee, to officially sign, execute, and submit time-sensitive documents such as, but not limited to: grants, reports, contracts, agreements, or other business-related documents for which the due date falls between prior and pending Board Meetings, but for which circumstances prevented the item of business being acted upon at the prior Board meeting. A notification will be sent to Board members upon submission of the subject document, and, in the case of grants and other revenue, a request for a vote of acceptance upon the award of said resource(s) to the SouthTech Schools System, in whole or in part. Reports, contracts, agreements, and other business-related documents would be brought before the Board for a ratification vote at the next pending Board Meeting. The sole purpose of this operational action is to better the School and directly benefit students or staff in situations where time or resources would otherwise negate a timely resolution.

3.9 Minutes The Executive Director or their designee shall prepare minutes of each Regular, Special and Annual meeting stating action taken at such meeting, and shall submit them to members as expeditiously as possible for their review. Any member may propose a correction at the meeting at which the minutes are subject to approval. The minutes together with such proposed corrections shall then be submitted for approval by the Directors during such meeting.

3.10 Maintenance of Records All regular meetings of the Board of Directors may be recorded at the discretion of the Board. Written minutes of the action items at each meeting shall be kept and maintained as public documents. The records of all meetings of the Board of Directors, the names and addresses of the Directors and Officers of the

School, and the originals or attested copies of the Charter and By laws of the School shall be kept at the Superintendent/Executive Director or Management Company Representative's office of the School. Files containing Board of Directors minutes, correspondence, tapes, if any, and records shall be maintained at such office. Copies of documents shall be supplied in accordance with the Florida Public Records Law.

ARTICLE FOUR

Committees

4.1 Committees The Directors may elect or appoint such committees (which may include individuals who are not Directors) as they may from time to time determine necessary or advisable, may delegate to the extent permitted by law, the Charter, or these Bylaws, such power and duties thereto as they may deem advisable; provided, however, that any committee to which the powers of the Directors are delegated shall consist solely of Directors and provided, however, that all committees shall be chaired by a Director. At any meeting of a committee, a quorum for the transaction of all business properly before the meeting shall consist of a majority of the members of such committee. A quorum, however, is NOT required for deliberations to continue, since any insufficiency will be rectified by reporting the committee's recommendation to the Board at which a quorum DOES need to be present for any approval or implementation of action. Any committee may, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors, make further rules for the conduct of its business. However, unless otherwise provided by vote of the Board of Directors, or by rules established by the Board of Directors, the business of any committee shall be conducted as nearly as may be in the same manner as is provided by these Bylaws for the Board of Directors. The members of any committee shall serve on such committee at the pleasure of the Directors.

ARTICLE FIVE

Officers

5.1 Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Board The Directors shall elect at the annual meeting a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Directors. The office of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be for a term of one year. Except as otherwise provided by law, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall hold office until the next annual meeting of the Directors or the special meeting held in lieu thereof, and thereafter until their respective successors are chosen and qualified, unless a shorter term is specified in electing or appointing them. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson may serve in such capacity for as many terms as the majority of members continue to elect them through the specified electoral process. The fact that an individual is currently serving as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall not create any presumption that such individual shall be nominated for either such position in any subsequent year.

Duties: The Chairperson shall establish the agenda for all meetings of the Board of Directors in consultation with the Superintendent/Executive Director and as appropriate in the discretion of the Chairperson, with other members of the Board of Directors. The

Chairperson shall preside over all meetings of the Board of Directors and shall have other powers, as the Board of Directors shall determine. The Chairperson shall serve as one of the signatories on financial accounts and official school business. Acting as spokesperson for the Governing Board also falls under the Chairperson's duties of office. In the absence of the Chairperson at any meeting of the Board, the Vice-Chairperson shall exercise the rights and perform the functions of the Chairperson. In the absence of the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson, the Secretary shall exercise the rights and perform the functions of the Chairperson.

5.2 Vice Chair: In the absence of the Chairperson, or in the event of his/her inability or refusal to act, the Vice Chairperson shall perform the duties of the Chair and when so acting shall have all the powers of and be subject to all restrictions upon the Chair. Any action taken by the Vice Chairperson in the performance of the duties of the Chairperson shall be conclusive evidence of the absence or inability to act by the Chairperson at the time such action was taken. The Vice Chairperson shall perform such other duties as, from time to time, may be assigned to him/her by the Chairperson or by the Board of Directors.

5.3 Treasurer The Treasurer shall chair a finance committee composed of Board members appointed by the Board Chair, and appropriate School staff and consultants and serve as a signatory on financial accounts. The committee shall meet as needed to review and assess the financial condition of the School. The Treasurer or designee shall present a report on the financial condition and affairs of the School, along with any recommendations for Board action at each meeting of the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall review all financial filings required by the School District of Palm Beach County, State of Florida, the Internal Revenue Service and any other government agency. The Treasurer shall have such other powers and duties as are usually incident to that office and may be vested in that office by these Bylaws or by the Directors.

5.4 Secretary The Secretary or designee shall maintain records of all action items at all meetings of the Directors in a book or series of books kept for that purpose. The Secretary, or designee, shall give such notices of meetings of Directors as are required by the Charter, these Bylaws, or state law. Before any meeting of the Board of Directors, the Secretary, or designee, shall distribute to the members of the Board of Directors copies of any minutes of the prior meetings of the Board of Directors that have not been approved by the Board of Directors. The Secretary shall have such other powers and duties as are usually incident to that office and as may be vested in that office by these Bylaws or by the Directors. In the absence of the Secretary from any meeting of Directors, a temporary Secretary designated by the person presiding at the meeting shall perform the duties of the Secretary at such meeting. The Secretary shall oversee the person designated by the Board to record the minutes of all action items taken by the Board at any meeting. In the absence of the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson, the Secretary shall exercise the rights and perform the functions of the Chairperson.

Any of the above duties may be delegated to the Executive Director or their designee,

as allowed by the Board of Directors.

5.6 Other Officers Other officers shall have such duties and powers as may be designated from time to time by the Directors.

5.7 Resignation and Removal Any officer may resign by delivering a written resignation to the Chairperson or Secretary and shall be effective upon receipt, unless it is specified to be effective at some time later. The Directors may remove any officer, with or without cause, by a vote of two thirds of the Directors then in office. An officer may be removed for cause only after reasonable notice and an opportunity to be heard by the Board of Directors. Reasonable notice shall be in writing at least 14 days prior to the next Board meeting.

5.8 Superintendent/Executive Director The Superintendent/Executive Director shall be the chief executive officer of the School and, subject to the direction and control of the Board of Directors, shall have general charge of the affairs of the School. The Superintendent/Executive Director shall have such other powers and duties as are usually incident to the office and as may be vested in that office by Bylaws or by policy and procedures established by the Directors.

ARTICLE SIX

Compensation and Personal Liability

6.1 Compensation No Director shall receive any compensation for services rendered as a Director. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any Director may, be reimbursed for necessary out-of-pocket expenses, including travel expenses and expenses reasonably incurred by the Director in the performance of duties as a Director.

6.2 Personal Liability, Indemnification and Insurance Subject to the restrictions set forth in Florida Statutes Section 768.1355 and Section 617.0834 and other rules and regulations, the Directors and Officers of the School shall not be personally liable for any debt, liability or obligation of the School. All persons, corporations or other entities extending credit to, contracting with, or having any claims against the School, may look only to the funds and property of the School for payment of any such contract or claim, or for payment of any debt, damages, judgment or decree, or of any money that may otherwise become due or payable to them from the School. The Board of Directors shall require that the School carry adequate Director and Officer Liability insurance in connection with the performance of their duties pursuant to the Bylaws, the Charter or applicable law.

The Corporation shall indemnify to the fullest extent permitted by law each of its officers, Directors, whether or not then in office (and his executor, administrator and/or heirs) or any person who may have served at its request as a director or officer, against all reasonable expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and necessarily incurred by him or her in connection with any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, proceeding or arbitration, whether civil or

criminal, administrative or investigative (including any appeal thereof), to which he or she is or is threatened to be made a party because he or she is or was a Director, officer, employee or agent of this Corporation. He or she shall have no right to reimbursement, however, in relation to matters as to which he or she has been adjudged liable to the Corporation for gross negligence or willful misconduct in the performance of his or her duties to the Corporation. The foregoing right of indemnification shall be in addition to and not exclusive of all other rights to which such Director, officer, employee or agent may be entitled.

ARTICLE SEVEN

Conflict of Interest, Grievance

7.1 Transactions with Interested Persons The School shall not enter into any contract or transact any business in which any part of the assets or net earnings, if any, of the School shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, any Director or Officer of the School, except that the School may pay reasonable compensation for services rendered or goods provided, and may make payments and distributions in furtherance of its purpose as set forth in the Charter.

7.2 Conflict of Interest The Board of Directors shall follow all applicable laws pertaining to conflicts of interest. The Chair of the Board of Directors may appoint a Committee to review and establish a separate conflict of interest policy, which will manage matters of conflict of interest coming before the Board of Directors.

7.3 Grievances The Chair of the Board of Directors may appoint a Committee to review and establish a grievance procedure policy and conflict resolution, which shall manage matters concerning disputes and grievances coming before the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE EIGHT

Miscellaneous Provisions

8.1 Execution of Instruments All contracts, deeds, leases, bonds, notes, authorized to be executed by an officer of the School on its behalf shall be signed by the Superintendent/Executive Director or designee, and the Board Chair or designee. Checks, drafts and other instruments authorized to be executed by an officer of the School on the Boards' behalf shall be signed by the Superintendent/Executive Director, or designee and one other Board-approved bank account signatory, except as the Directors may generally or in particular cases otherwise determine.

8.2 Governing Procedures The meetings of the Board of Directors shall be conducted in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order, except to the extent the provisions hereof conflict with Florida law or these Bylaws in which event, these Bylaws shall prevail.

8.3 Gifts The Chair may, upon approval of the Board of Directors, accept on behalf of the Board of Directors any contribution, gift, bequest, or device for the general

purposes, or for any special purpose of the Board of Directors which is for the benefit of the School. The Superintendent/Executive Director may receive such gifts subject to subsequent approval of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE NINE

Additional Provisions

9.1 Amendment These Bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed, or new bylaws may be adopted, by an affirmative vote of a majority of Directors then in office, at an annual meeting of the Directors or special meeting of the Directors; provided, however, that notice shall be given in the notice of the meeting that an alteration, amendment or repeal of the Bylaws, or that new bylaws may be adopted, is subject to a vote by the Board.

9.2 Invalidity of Provisions In the event any provision, clause, sentence, paragraph, sub- section, section or article hereof conflicts with, or is declared to be invalid or unlawful by a court of competent jurisdiction, such judgment or decree shall not affect, impair, invalidate or nullify the remainder of these Bylaws and shall be deemed stricken here from but the effect of such judgment or decree shall be confined to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subsection, section or article, and the remainder of these Bylaws shall be in full force and effect without regard to such invalid provision.

9.3 Effective Date These Bylaws shall become effective immediately upon approval of the Board of Directors.

9.4 Governing Entity It is intended that upon issuance of such Charter for the School, the subject nonprofit corporation, SouthTech Charter Academy, Inc., shall be the governing entity for the School and shall have all such powers as provided in its Articles of Incorporation, these Bylaws, the Charter and the laws of the State of Florida including those applicable to conversion charter schools.

9.5 Internal Revenue Code Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, no part of the net earnings, if any, of the subject corporation shall inure to the benefit of or be distributed to its Directors, Officers or any other person, except that this corporation shall be authorized to pay reasonable compensation for services and materials rendered. Upon dissolution of this corporation, all its assets remaining after payment of all costs and expenses of such dissolution shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction in the county in which the principal office of the organization is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes, or to organizations which have qualified for exemption under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue

Code, as amended, or to the Federal Government or to a State or local government, for charitable purposes, and none of the assets will be distributed to any member, Officer or Director of this corporation.

ARTICLE TEN

Adoption

10.1 Adoption: The By-laws as herein above stated are adopted for and on behalf of SouthTech Schools (comprised of SouthTech Charter Academy, Inc. and SouthTech Preparatory Academy, Inc.), a Florida not-for-profit corporation, at a duly called meeting of its Board of Directors on August 14, 2003,

10.2 History: These By-Laws were further revised at the following duly called meetings of the Board of Directors: February 17, 2005, July 7, 2005, September 22, 2005, November 2, 2006, September 20, 2007, September 25, 2008, November 6, 2008, June 4, 2009, September 23, 2010, September 22, 2011, October 13, 2011, December 13, 2012, August 10, 2017, June 20, 2018, August 9, 2018, and November 9, 2023.

THE UNDERSIGNED HEREBY adopts and approves the foregoing Amended and Restated Bylaws of SOUTH TECH CHARTER ACADEMY, INC.

Adopted: _____.

SOUTH TECH CHARTER ACADEMY, INC.

(CORPORATE SEAL)

Bylaws

SOUTHTECH PREPARATORY ACADEMY, INC.

Latest Revision Dated November 9, 2023

ARTICLE ONE

General Provisions

1.1 Charter These Bylaws are hereby adopted for and on behalf of SouthTech Preparatory Academy, Inc., a Florida not-for-profit corporation (hereafter called "School"). The name and purpose of the School shall be as set forth in its Articles of Incorporation and the conversion school Charter, (to be issued by the State of Florida), as amended from time to time. Said organization is organized exclusively for educational purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations described under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

1.2 Location The principal office of the School shall be located at 6161 West Woolbright Road, Boynton Beach, Florida 33437. The Directors may change the location of the principal office within the State of Florida. The Directors may establish other offices and places of business in Florida or elsewhere as permitted by the School District and by law.

1.3 Fiscal Year Except as from time to time otherwise determined by the Directors of the School, the fiscal year of the School shall be the fiscal year of the Palm Beach County School District.

ARTICLE TWO

Board of Directors

2.1 Powers The Board of Directors, who are hereinafter referred to as Directors, shall exercise all corporate powers with respect to the School, as set forth in these Bylaws.

2.2 Duties of Board The Board of Directors shall transact all business of the corporation, determine the policies of the corporation and in general assume responsibility for the guidance and the affairs of the corporation. The duties of the Board of Directors include, but are not limited to setting policy, establishing procedures, approving budgets, approving selection of the Executive Director and overseeing and managing the financial and administrative management of the School. The Board of Directors shall be responsible for making or executing the School's performance standards, supervising ongoing accounts, overseeing financial reporting and meeting state and district requirements and providing annual programs and accountability reports. A Director shall perform his/her duties in said capacity, including his/her duties as a member of any committee of the Board of Directors upon which he/she may serve,

in good faith, in a manner he/she reasonable believes to be in the best interests of the corporation and with such care as an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would use under similar circumstances.

2.3 Number The Directors shall determine the number of directors, which shall be no less than 5 and no more than 9 and shall elect the number of Directors so determined. The Board of Directors should consist of at least one member from each of the following groups: (i) parents or guardians of school students; and (ii) members of the community including those with business, legal and financial skills if available. The Directors may, at any special or regular meeting by an affirmative vote of a majority of Directors then in office, increase the number of Directors and elect new Directors to complete the number so fixed, or they may, by a similar vote, decrease the number of Directors, but only to eliminate vacancies existing by reason of death, resignation, removal or disqualification of one or more Directors. The Directors may by an affirmative vote of a majority of Directors then in office fill any vacancy or vacancies on the Board and may exercise all their powers notwithstanding any vacancy or vacancies in their number. All Directors shall hold staggered terms of office with elections three years from the time of their election and thereafter until their respective successors are chosen and qualified; provided however that one third of the initial Members be elected initially for a one year term; one-third of the Members be elected initially for a two year term, and; one-third of the Members be elected initially for a for a full three year term. The Director shall hold such office until said Director shall retire, resign, or be removed as a Director by the Board of Directors, as herein provided.

2.4 Resignation and Removal Any Director may resign by delivering a written letter of resignation to the Board Chairperson or to the School at its principal office. Such resignation shall be effective upon receipt unless it is specified to be effective at some time later. Any Director may be removed from office with or without cause by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the Directors then in office. A Director may be removed for cause only after reasonable notice and an opportunity to be heard by the Board of Directors. Reasonable notice shall be in writing at least 14 days prior to the next Board meeting.

ARTICLE THREE

Meetings

3.1 Regular Meetings All meetings of the Board of Directors shall be open to the public. Pursuant to Florida Statute 1002.33(9)(p)(3), the Board of Directors must hold at least two public meetings per school year in Palm Beach County. The meetings must be noticed, open, and accessible to the public, and attendees must be provided an opportunity to receive information and provide input regarding the charter school's operations. Members of the governing Board or any member of a committee formed or designated by the governing board may attend in person or by means of communications media technology used in accordance with rules adopted by the Administration Commission under s. 120.54(5).

3.2 Special Meetings Special Meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at such times and places in Palm Beach County as shall be designated by the Chair or upon the written request of any member of the Board of Directors. At Special Meetings, business shall be conducted in such order as from time to time the Board of Directors may determine.

3.3 Annual Meeting The Board of Directors shall meet annually at the principal office of the School, or at such place within Palm Beach County, and at such time as the Board of Directors shall determine, except that such date shall not be a legal holiday. If the annual meeting is not held on the specific day, the Directors may hold a special meeting in place thereof, and any business transacted or elections held at such meeting shall have the same force and effect as if transacted or held at the annual meeting.

3.4 Notice of Meetings Notice of any meeting of the Board of Directors shall be given as herein provided at least 5 days prior to such meeting unless due to an emergency situation a reasonable shorter notice period is appropriate under the circumstances. Public notice, if any, of such meetings shall be given as required by Florida law. Notice of the date, time, and place of all meetings of the Directors should be given to each Director by the Secretary or designee or by the Director calling a Special meeting. Such notice shall be given to each Director by mail, delivery service, or electronic mail sent to such Director's usual or last known business or home address. Except as required by law, notice of any meeting of Directors need not be given, (i) to any Director who, either before or after the meeting, delivers a written waiver of notice, executed by the Director (or the Director's attorney thereunto authorized, which is filed with the records of the meeting; or (ii) to any Director who attends the meeting and who, either prior to the meeting or at its commencement, fails to protest the lack of such notice. Except as otherwise required by law, the Charter or these Bylaws, a notice or waiver of notice need not specify the purpose of any regular or special meeting unless such purpose is, (i) the amendment or repeal of any provision of the Charter or these Bylaws, or (ii) the removal of a Director or an Officer.

3.5 Quorum A majority of the Directors then in office shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number may, without further notice, adjourn the meeting to any other time. At any meeting of Directors at which a quorum is present, the vote of a majority of those Directors present shall decide any matter unless the Charter or these Bylaws, or any applicable law requires a different vote.

3.6 Electronic Attendance Board members may attend Board meetings, workshops and retreats; participate at such Board meetings, workshops and retreats through the use of communications media technology. Pursuant to Florida Statute 1002.33(9)(p)(3), "members of the governing board or any member of a committee formed or designated by the governing board may attend in person or by means of communications media technology used in accordance with rules adopted by the Administration Commission under s. 120.54(5)".

3.7 Discussion All members are invited to engage in full discussion on all matters coming before the Board of Directors during duly called meetings. Matters which are

deemed to be too detailed or require extended analysis and review may be assigned by the Chair to an appropriate Committee as further provided in Section 3.8 below, task force or work group to work through the details and report their deliberations to the Board of Directors at the next Board of Directors meeting, or a Special Meeting may be scheduled, or the Chair may elect to limit or bring discussion to closure within a designated time as prescribed in Roberts Rules of Order. Any member of the public who is not a member of the Board of Directors may address the Board of Directors on any agenda matter at the public comment section of the meeting prior to any items being voted on. Each non member speaker is limited to no more than three (3) minutes unless otherwise granted by the Chair or Vice Chair.

3.8 Order of Business to be Considered Any business requiring exceptional scrutiny and analysis coming before the Board of Directors for formal action may be referred to the appropriate Committee for discussion and analysis unless such business is deemed by the Chair to be of such urgency that delay would be harmful to the Board of Directors or the School. Upon completion of Committee deliberations, the Committee Chair or designee will report, as appropriate, its findings to the full Board of Directors. At the discretion of the Chair, any new business may be considered at a duly constituted and noticed Regular Meeting or Special Meeting. The Chair may designate a time certain to accommodate reasonable discussion of new business, or, may assign such business to the appropriate Committee for deliberation. For the purpose of meeting deadlines due to time and/or resource constraint(s), the Board authorizes the Superintendent/Executive Director, or designee, and the Board Chair, or designee, to officially sign, execute, and submit time-sensitive documents such as, but not limited to: grants, reports, contracts, agreements, or other business-related documents for which the due date falls between prior and pending Board Meetings, but for which circumstances prevented the item of business being acted upon at the prior Board meeting. A notification will be sent to Board members upon submission of the subject document, and, in the case of grants and other revenue, a request for a vote of acceptance upon the award of said resource(s) to the SouthTech Schools System, in whole or in part. Reports, contracts, agreements, and other business-related documents would be brought before the Board for a ratification vote at the next pending Board Meeting. The sole purpose of this operational action is to better the School and directly benefit students or staff in situations where time or resources would otherwise negate a timely resolution.

3.9 Minutes The Executive Director or their designee shall prepare minutes of each Regular, Special and Annual meeting stating action taken at such meeting, and shall submit them to members as expeditiously as possible for their review. Any member may propose a correction at the meeting at which the minutes are subject to approval. The minutes together with such proposed corrections shall then be submitted for approval by the Directors during such meeting.

3.10 Maintenance of Records All regular meetings of the Board of Directors may be recorded at the discretion of the Board. Written minutes of the action items at each meeting shall be kept and maintained as public documents. The records of all meetings of the Board of Directors, the names and addresses of the Directors and Officers of the

School, and the originals or attested copies of the Charter and By laws of the School shall be kept at the Superintendent/Executive Director or Management Company Representative's office of the School. Files containing Board of Directors minutes, correspondence, tapes, if any, and records shall be maintained at such office. Copies of documents shall be supplied in accordance with the Florida Public Records Law.

ARTICLE FOUR

Committees

4.1 Committees The Directors may elect or appoint such committees (which may include individuals who are not Directors) as they may from time to time determine necessary or advisable, may delegate to the extent permitted by law, the Charter, or these Bylaws, such power and duties thereto as they may deem advisable; provided, however, that any committee to which the powers of the Directors are delegated shall consist solely of Directors and provided, however, that all committees shall be chaired by a Director. At any meeting of a committee, a quorum for the transaction of all business properly before the meeting shall consist of a majority of the members of such committee. A quorum, however, is NOT required for deliberations to continue, since any insufficiency will be rectified by reporting the committee's recommendation to the Board at which a quorum DOES need to be present for any approval or implementation of action. Any committee may, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors, make further rules for the conduct of its business. However, unless otherwise provided by vote of the Board of Directors, or by rules established by the Board of Directors, the business of any committee shall be conducted as nearly as may be in the same manner as is provided by these Bylaws for the Board of Directors. The members of any committee shall serve on such committee at the pleasure of the Directors.

ARTICLE FIVE

Officers

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Duties: The Chairperson shall establish the agenda for all meetings of the Board of Directors in consultation with the Superintendent/Executive Director and as appropriate in the discretion of the Chairperson, with other members of the Board of Directors. The

Chairperson shall preside over all meetings of the Board of Directors and shall have other powers, as the Board of Directors shall determine. The Chairperson shall serve as one of the signatories on financial accounts and official school business. Acting as spokesperson for the Governing Board also falls under the Chairperson's duties of office. In the absence of the Chairperson at any meeting of the Board, the Vice-Chairperson shall exercise the rights and perform the functions of the Chairperson. In the absence of the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson, the Secretary shall exercise the rights and perform the functions of the Chairperson.

5.2 Vice Chair: In the absence of the Chairperson, or in the event of his/her inability or refusal to act, the Vice Chairperson shall perform the duties of the Chair and when so acting shall have all the powers of and be subject to all restrictions upon the Chair. Any action taken by the Vice Chairperson in the performance of the duties of the Chairperson shall be conclusive evidence of the absence or inability to act by the Chairperson at the time such action was taken. The Vice Chairperson shall perform such other duties as, from time to time, may be assigned to him/her by the Chairperson or by the Board of Directors.

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Any of the above duties may be delegated to the Executive Director or their designee,

as allowed by the Board of Directors.

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5.8 Superintendent/Executive Director The Superintendent/Executive Director shall be the chief executive officer of the School and, subject to the direction and control of the Board of Directors, shall have general charge of the affairs of the School. The Superintendent/Executive Director shall have such other powers and duties as are usually incident to the office and as may be vested in that office by Bylaws or by policy and procedures established by the Directors.

ARTICLE SIX

Compensation and Personal Liability

6.1 Compensation No Director shall receive any compensation for services rendered as a Director. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any Director may, be reimbursed for necessary out-of-pocket expenses, including travel expenses and expenses reasonably incurred by the Director in the performance of duties as a Director.

6.2 Personal Liability, Indemnification and Insurance Subject to the restrictions set forth in Florida Statutes Section 768.1355 and Section 617.0834 and other rules and regulations, the Directors and Officers of the School shall not be personally liable for any debt, liability or obligation of the School. All persons, corporations or other entities extending credit to, contracting with, or having any claims against the School, may look only to the funds and property of the School for payment of any such contract or claim, or for payment of any debt, damages, judgment or decree, or of any money that may otherwise become due or payable to them from the School. The Board of Directors shall require that the School carry adequate Director and Officer Liability insurance in connection with the performance of their duties pursuant to the Bylaws, the Charter or applicable law.

The Corporation shall indemnify to the fullest extent permitted by law each of its officers, Directors, whether or not then in office (and his executor, administrator and/or heirs) or any person who may have served at its request as a director or officer, against all reasonable expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and necessarily incurred by him or her in connection with any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, proceeding or arbitration, whether civil or

criminal, administrative or investigative (including any appeal thereof), to which he or she is or is threatened to be made a party because he or she is or was a Director, officer, employee or agent of this Corporation. He or she shall have no right to reimbursement, however, in relation to matters as to which he or she has been adjudged liable to the Corporation for gross negligence or willful misconduct in the performance of his or her duties to the Corporation. The foregoing right of indemnification shall be in addition to and not exclusive of all other rights to which such Director, officer, employee or agent may be entitled.

ARTICLE SEVEN

Conflict of Interest, Grievance

7.1 Transactions with Interested Persons The School shall not enter into any contract or transact any business in which any part of the assets or net earnings, if any, of the School shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, any Director or Officer of the School, except that the School may pay reasonable compensation for services rendered or goods provided, and may make payments and distributions in furtherance of its purpose as set forth in the Charter.

7.2 Conflict of Interest The Board of Directors shall follow all applicable laws pertaining to conflicts of interest. The Chair of the Board of Directors may appoint a Committee to review and establish a separate conflict of interest policy, which will manage matters of conflict of interest coming before the Board of Directors.

7.3 Grievances The Chair of the Board of Directors may appoint a Committee to review and establish a grievance procedure policy and conflict resolution, which shall manage matters concerning disputes and grievances coming before the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE EIGHT

Miscellaneous Provisions

8.1 Execution of Instruments All contracts, deeds, leases, bonds, notes, authorized to be executed by an officer of the School on its behalf shall be signed by the Superintendent/Executive Director or designee, and the Board Chair or designee. Checks, drafts and other instruments authorized to be executed by an officer of the School on the Boards' behalf shall be signed by the Superintendent/Executive Director, or designee and one other Board-approved bank account signatory, except as the Directors may generally or in particular cases otherwise determine.

8.2 Governing Procedures The meetings of the Board of Directors shall be conducted in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order, except to the extent the provisions hereof conflict with Florida law or these Bylaws in which event, these Bylaws shall prevail.

8.3 Gifts The Chair may, upon approval of the Board of Directors, accept on behalf of the Board of Directors any contribution, gift, bequest, or device for the general

purposes, or for any special purpose of the Board of Directors which is for the benefit of the School. The Superintendent/Executive Director may receive such gifts subject to subsequent approval of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE NINE

Additional Provisions

9.1 Amendment These Bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed, or new bylaws may be adopted, by an affirmative vote of a majority of Directors then in office, at an annual meeting of the Directors or special meeting of the Directors; provided, however, that notice shall be given in the notice of the meeting that an alteration, amendment or repeal of the Bylaws, or that new bylaws may be adopted, is subject to a vote by the Board.

9.2 Invalidity of Provisions In the event any provision, clause, sentence, paragraph, sub- section, section or article hereof conflicts with, or is declared to be invalid or unlawful by a court of competent jurisdiction, such judgment or decree shall not affect, impair, invalidate or nullify the remainder of these Bylaws and shall be deemed stricken here from but the effect of such judgment or decree shall be confined to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subsection, section or article, and the remainder of these Bylaws shall be in full force and effect without regard to such invalid provision.

9.3 Effective Date These Bylaws shall become effective immediately upon approval of the Board of Directors.

9.4 Governing Entity It is intended that upon issuance of such Charter for the School, the subject nonprofit corporation, SouthTech Preparatory Academy, Inc., shall be the governing entity for the School and shall have all such powers as provided in its Articles of Incorporation, these Bylaws, the Charter and the laws of the State of Florida including those applicable to conversion charter schools.

9.5 Internal Revenue Code Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, no part of the net earnings, if any, of the subject corporation shall inure to the benefit of or be distributed to its Directors, Officers or any other person, except that this corporation shall be authorized to pay reasonable compensation for services and materials rendered. Upon dissolution of this corporation, all its assets remaining after payment of all costs and expenses of such dissolution shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction in the county in which the principal office of the organization is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes, or to organizations which have qualified for exemption under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue

Code, as amended, or to the Federal Government or to a State or local government, for charitable purposes, and none of the assets will be distributed to any member, Officer or Director of this corporation.

ARTICLE TEN

Adoption

10.1 Adoption: The By-laws as herein above stated are adopted for and on behalf of SouthTech Schools (comprised of SouthTech Charter Academy, Inc. and SouthTech Preparatory Academy, Inc.), a Florida not-for-profit corporation, at a duly called meeting of its Board of Directors on August 14, 2003,

10.2 History: These By-Laws were further revised at the following duly called meetings of the Board of Directors: February 17, 2005, July 7, 2005, September 22, 2005, November 2, 2006, September 20, 2007, September 25, 2008, November 6, 2008, June 4, 2009, September 23, 2010, September 22, 2011, October 13, 2011, December 13, 2012, August 10, 2017, June 20, 2018, August 9, 2018, and November 9, 2023.

THE UNDERSIGNED HEREBY adopts and approves the foregoing Amended and Restated Bylaws of SOUTH TECH PREPARATORY ACADEMY, INC.

Adopted: _____.

SOUTH TECH PREPARATORY ACADEMY,
INC.

(CORPORATE SEAL)

Appendix H:

Articles of Incorporation

SouthTech Charter Academy, Inc.
Articles of Incorporation

No3000006586

(Requestor's Name)

(Address)

(Address)

(City/State/Zip/Phone #)

☐

PICK-UP

☐

WAIT

☐

MAIL

(Business Entity Name)

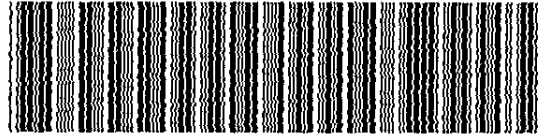
(Document Number)

Certified Copies _____

Certificates of Status _____

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08/01/03--01038--005 **78.75

RECEIVED

03 AUG - 1 AM 11:34

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF CORPORATIONS
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

FILED

03 AUG - 1 PM 1:23

SECRETARY OF STATE
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

✓

8/8/11

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ACCOUNT FILING COVER SHEET

Account Number FCA000000017

Reference:
(Sub Account)

Date:

Aug. 1, 2003

Requestor Name:

Carlton Fields

Address:

Post Office Drawer 190
Tallahassee, Florida 32302

Telephone:

(850) 224-1585

Contact Name:

Joan Perrenot (x 243)

Corporation Name:

South Tech Charter Academy

Entity Number:

Authorization:

J Perrenot

☒ Certified Copy ^{Articles}

☒ New Filings ^{Articles}

☐ Fictitious Name

☐ Plain Stamped Copy

☐ Amendments

☐ Certificate of Status

☐ Annual Report

☐ Registration

(X) Call When Ready

(X) Call if Problem

() After 4:30

(X) Walk In

() Will Wait

(X) Pick Up

CF Internal Use Only

Client: Bleshman Matter: _____

Name: Oleick Office: Tally

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
OF
SOUTH TECH CHARTER ACADEMY, INC.
A FLORIDA NOT FOR PROFIT CORPORATION

FILED
03 AUG -1 PM 1:23
SECRETARY OF STATE
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

Following are the Articles of Incorporation for the South Tech Charter Academy, Inc. ("Corporation") in compliance with Chapter 817, F.S., (not for profit):

ARTICLE I

The name of the Corporation shall be:

South Tech Charter Academy, Inc.

The principal place of business of this Corporation shall be:

1300 SW 30th Ave.
Boynton Beach, Florida 33426

ARTICLE II

The period of the duration of this Corporation is perpetual unless dissolved according to law.

ARTICLE III

The purposes for which the Corporation is organized are exclusively charitable, scientific, literary and educational within the meaning of section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of these Articles, this organization shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from

Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law.

ARTICLE IV

The qualifications for members and directors and the manner of their appointment are:

An interest and participating involvement in the affairs of the Corporation with admission approved by the Board of Directors and as otherwise regulated by the By-Laws.

ARTICLE V

The number constituting the initial Board of Directors of the Corporation is 12, and their names and addresses are:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	
Norman A. Bleshman	9954 Harbor Lake Circle	Boynton Beach, FL. 33437
Daniel F. Martell	6288 Ethan Dr.	Lake Worth, FL. 33467
James R. Kidd	1300 S.W. 30 th Ave.	Boynton Beach, FL. 33426
Donna Marie Goray	130 Island Dr .	Ocean Ridge, FL. 33435
Leslie Goldstein	9775 D Boca Gardens Cir.N.	Boca Raton, FL. 33496
Peggy Johnson	108 Half Moon CRE – 3	Hypoluxo, FL. 33462
Zsa Zsa Graham-Miller	351 Ross Dr.	Delray Beach, FL. 33445
Catherine A. Lewis	4000 Majestic Palm Way	Delray Beach, FL. 33446
Antonio Vasquez	15015 Michaelangelo Blvd.	Delray Beach, FL. 33446
Richard Norman	12698 Headwater Circ.	Wellington, FL. 33414
Robert Howell	899 SW 16 th Streeet	Boca Raton, FL. 33486
Clarence Vaughn	17650 Woodview Terr.	Boca Raton, FL. 33487

FILED
03 AUG - 1 PM 1:23
SECRETARY OF STATE
TALLAHASSEE, FL 32304

ARTICLE VI

This Corporation is organized under a non-stock basis.

ARTICLE VII

In the event of dissolution, the residual assets of the organization will be turned over to one or more organizations which themselves are exempt as organizations described in Section 501 (c) (3) and 170(c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or corresponding sections of any prior or future law, or to the Federal, State, or Local Government of exclusive public purpose.

ARTICLE VIII

The name and address of the initial registered agent and the incorporator are:

Norman A. Bleshman
9954 Harbor Lake Circle
Boynton Beach, FL 33437

In witness whereof, the undersigned Incorporator has executed these Articles of Incorporation.

Norman A. Bleshman
Norman A. Bleshman,
Incorporator

7/31/03
Date

REGISTERED AGENT CERTIFICATE

Having been named as registered agent to accept service of process for the above stated Corporation at the place designated in this certificate, I am familiar with and accept the appointment as Registered Agent and agree to act in this capacity.

Norman A. Bleshman
Norman A. Bleshman,
Registered Agent
9954 Harbor Lake Circle
Boynton Beach, FL 33437

7/31/03
Date

SouthTech Preparatory Academy, Inc.
Articles of Incorporation

N120000007253

(Requestor's Name)

(Address)

(Address)

(City/State/Zip/Phone #)

☐ PICK-UP

☐ WAIT

☐ MAIL

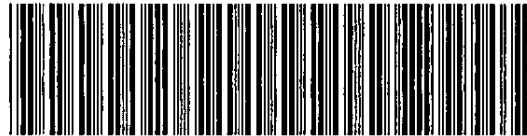
(Business Entity Name)

(Document Number)

Certified Copies _____ Certificates of Status _____

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07/20/12--01023--004 **70.00

FILED
12 JUL 20 AM 9:09
SECRETARY OF STATE
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

7/24

8

W120000039142

SAS INC
School Accounting Services Inc.

On behalf of Client:

Phone:

Fax:

South Tech Charter Academy, Inc.
1300 SW 30th Avenue
Boynton Beach, FL 33426

561-369-7011

561-369-7024

FL Division of Corporations,

Attached please find the articles of incorporation of a new middle school opening in Boynton Beach, FL. The high school corporation has been operating since 8.1.2003 document # N03000006586. The same registered agent and members of the board will operate the new entity. Enclosed please find documentation and payment for registering the new school corporation, "South Tech Preparatory Academy, Inc." The EIN has been applied for.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact the registered agent "Jim" James R Kidd at 561-369-7011.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.
Sincerely,



Cyndee J Zeck, CEO
SASINC

FILED
12 JUL 20 AM 9:09
SECRETARY OF STATE
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

2012 NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATION ANNUAL REPORT

DOCUMENT# N03000006586

FILED
Jan 09, 2012
Secretary of State

Entity Name: SOUTH TECH CHARTER ACADEMY, INC.

Current Principal Place of Business:

1300 SW 30TH AVE.
BOYNTON BEACH, FL 33426

New Principal Place of Business:

Current Mailing Address:

1300 SW 30TH AVE.
BOYNTON BEACH, FL 33426

New Mailing Address:

FEI Number: 32-0089102

FEI Number Applied For ()

FEI Number Not Applicable ()

Certificate of Status Desired (X)

Name and Address of Current Registered Agent:

KIDD, JAMES R
1300 SW 30TH AVE
BOYNTON BEACH, FL 33426 US

Name and Address of New Registered Agent:

The above named entity submits this statement for the purpose of changing its registered office or registered agent, or both, in the State of Florida.

SIGNATURE:

Electronic Signature of Registered Agent

Date

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS:

Title: COB
Name: KESTEN, ROBERT M
Address: 7284 BRUNSWICK CIRCLE
City-St-Zip: BOYNTON BEACH, FL 33472

Title: S
Name: BAIZE, DONNA
Address: 886 GARNETT STREET
City-St-Zip: LANTANA, FL 33462

Title: M
Name: BURDSALL, JEANNE
Address: 3219 VINCENT ROAD
City-St-Zip: WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33405

Title: VC
Name: LEWIS, CATHERINE
Address: 7329 SERRANO TERRACE
City-St-Zip: DELRAY BEACH, FL 33446

Title: M
Name: DAVIS, STEVEN
Address: 233 IOWA AVENUE
City-St-Zip: FT LAUDERDALE, FL 33312

Title: T
Name: JARRETT, PETER A
Address: 1820 NEW PALM WAY, #304
City-St-Zip: BOYNTON BEACH, FL 33435

I hereby certify that the information indicated on this report or supplemental report is true and accurate and that my electronic signature shall have the same legal effect as if made under oath; that I am an officer or director of the corporation or the receiver or trustee empowered to execute this report as required by Chapter 617, Florida Statutes; and that my name appears above, or on an attachment with all other like empowered.

SIGNATURE: JAMES R KIDD

P

01/09/2012

Electronic Signature of Signing Officer or Director

Date

COVER LETTER

Department of State
Division of Corporations
P. O. Box 6327
Tallahassee, FL 32314

SUBJECT: South Tech Preparatory Academy Inc
(PROPOSED CORPORATE NAME - MUST INCLUDE SUFFIX)

Enclosed is an original and one (1) copy of the Articles of Incorporation and a check for :

☒ \$70.00
Filing Fee

☐ \$78.75
Filing Fee &
Certificate of
Status

☐ \$78.75
Filing Fee
& Certified Copy

☐ \$87.50
Filing Fee,
Certified Copy
& Certificate

ADDITIONAL COPY REQUIRED

FROM: James R. Kidd
Name (Printed or typed)

1300 SW 30th Avenue
Address

Boynton Beach, FL 33426
City, State & Zip

561-369-7011
Daytime Telephone number

Zeck@sasinc.biz ✓
E-mail address: (to be used for future annual report notification)

FILED
12 JUL 20 AM 9:09
SECRETARY OF STATE
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

NOTE: Please provide the original and one copy of the articles.

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
OF
SOUTH TECH PREPARATORY ACADEMY, INC.

Following are the Articles of Incorporation for the South Tech Preparatory Academy, Inc. ("Corporation") in compliance with Chapter 617, F.S. (not for profit):

ARTICLE I

The name of the Corporation shall be:

South Tech Preparatory Academy, Inc.

The principal place of business of this Corporation shall be:

**1300 SW 30th Avenue
Boynton Beach, Florida 33426**

FILED
12 JUL 20 AM 9:09
SECRETARY OF STATE
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

ARTICLE II

The period of the duration of this Corporation is perpetual unless dissolved according to law.

ARTICLE III

The period for which the Corporation is organized are exclusively charitable, scientific, literary and educational within the meaning the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of these Articles, this organization shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law.

ARTICLE IV

The qualifications for members and directors and the manner of their appointment are:

**An interest and participating involvement in the
affairs of the Corporation with admission
approved by the Board of Directors and as
otherwise regulated by the By-Laws.**

FILED
12 JUL 20 AM 9:09
SECRETARY OF STATE
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

ARTICLE V

**The number constituting the initial Board of Directors of the Corporation is 13,
and their names and addresses are:**

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	
Robert M. Kesten	7284 Brunswick Circle	Boynton Beach, FL 33472
Donna L. Baize	886 Garnett Street	Lantana, FL 33462
Aram C. Bloom	775 Jeffrey St. #301	Boca Raton, FL 33487
George Bosselman	1220 NW 8th Street	Boynton Beach, FL 33426
Roger Dunson, Sr.	4766 Poseidon Place	Lake Worth, FL 33463
Nancy Ernst	2106 SW 22nd Street	Boynton Beach, FL 33426
Russell Feldman	8429 Myakka Court	Lake Worth, FL 33467
Nicole L. Handy	10396 Peachtree Circle	Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418
Dan Heller	147 Orange Drive	Boynton Beach, FL 33436
Peter A. Jarrett	1820 New Palm Way Seacrest Villas Unit 304	Boynton Beach, FL 33435
Carl McKoy	69 Citrus Park Lane	Boynton Beach, FL 33436
James F. Notter	303 North Riverside Dr. #906	Pompano Beach, FL 33062
John Sluth	1320 W. Jennings Street	Lantana, FL 33462

ARTICLE VI

This corporation is organized under a non-stock basis.

ARTICLE VII

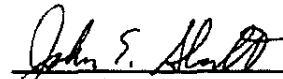
In the event of dissolution, the residual assets of the organization will be turned over to one or more organization which themselves are exempt as organizations described in Section 501(c)(3) and 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or corresponding sections of any prior or future law, or to the Federal, State, or Local Government of exclusive public purpose.

ARTICLE VIII

The name and address of the initial registered agent and the incorporator are:

James R. Kidd
1300 SW 30th Avenue
Boynton Beach, FL 33426

In witness whereof, the undersigned Incorporator has executed these Articles of Incorporation.



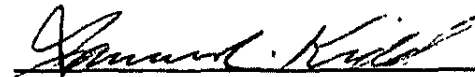
John Sluth
Incorporator
1320 W. Jennings Street
Lantana, FL 33462

Date

7-12-12

REGISTERED AGENT CERTIFICATE

Having been named as registered agent to accept service of process for the above-stated Corporation at the place designated in this certificate, I am familiar with and accept the appointment as Registered Agent and agree to act in this capacity.



James R. Kidd
Registered Agent
1300 SW 30th Avenue
Boynton Beach, FL 33426

7/16/12

FILED
12 JUL 20 AM 9:09
SECRETARY OF STATE
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

SouthTech Schools Holdings, LLC
Articles of Incorporation

**Electronic Articles of Organization
For
Florida Limited Liability Company**

L20000149803
FILED 8:00 AM
June 08, 2020
Sec. Of State
wlawrence

Article I

The name of the Limited Liability Company is:
SOUTH TECH SCHOOLS HOLDINGS, LLC

Article II

The street address of the principal office of the Limited Liability Company is:
1300 SW 30TH AVENUE
BOYNTON BEACH, FL. US 33426

The mailing address of the Limited Liability Company is:
1300 SW 30TH AVENUE
BOYNTON BEACH, FL. US 33426

Article III

Other provisions, if any:
ANY LAWFUL BUSINESS

Article IV

The name and Florida street address of the registered agent is:
ROBERT M. KESTEN, PA
2300 NW CORPORATE BOULEVARD
SUITE 215
BOCA RATON, FL. 33431

Having been named as registered agent and to accept service of process for the above stated limited liability company at the place designated in this certificate, I hereby accept the appointment as registered agent and agree to act in this capacity. I further agree to comply with the provisions of all statutes relating to the proper and complete performance of my duties, and I am familiar with and accept the obligations of my position as registered agent.

Registered Agent Signature: ROBERT M. KESTEN

Article V

The name and address of person(s) authorized to manage LLC:

Title: AMBR
SOUTH TECH SCHOOLS
1300 SW 30TH AVENUE
BOYNTON BEACH, FL. 33426 US

L20000149803
FILED 8:00 AM
June 08, 2020
Sec. Of State
wlawrence

Article VI

The effective date for this Limited Liability Company shall be:

06/08/2020

Signature of member or an authorized representative

Electronic Signature: ROBERT M. KESTEN, ESQ.

I am the member or authorized representative submitting these Articles of Organization and affirm that the facts stated herein are true. I am aware that false information submitted in a document to the Department of State constitutes a third degree felony as provided for in s.817.155, F.S. I understand the requirement to file an annual report between January 1st and May 1st in the calendar year following formation of the LLC and every year thereafter to maintain "active" status.