

VOLUNTEER



LEANDER  ISD

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Purpose

The purpose of the Leander ISD Volunteer Program is to enrich the quality of education for the district's students by providing opportunities for parents and community members to become actively involved in Leander ISD schools.

Welcome, Volunteers!

The staff and administration wish to express their appreciation to you for assuming an active role in our schools. Your interest, time and energies will enhance the services our schools can provide for all Leander ISD students. In your work as a volunteer, it is important to know that our students look to you as role models. Because of this we have created a volunteer handbook that explains the important role you play as a volunteer. We hope you will find personal satisfaction in giving back to our students.

There has never been a more exciting time to be a part of the education community in Leander ISD. Thank you for giving of your time and talents!

Shannon Lombardo

Director, School/Community Relations

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512-570-0029

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for serving as a volunteer in Leander ISD and demonstrating to countless students your commitment to high-quality education.

Because your time as a volunteer benefits all children throughout the district, you are joining with us to create links in a chain. These links—accessing college- and career-readiness opportunities; closing the achievement gap; focusing on the critical factors in the Learning Model; and emphasizing students' physical, social and emotional well-being—are forming a support structure that we believe will guarantee success for every student. We cannot do this alone and will continue to rely on our volunteers, parents and community partners to help strengthen our school system.

Since our volunteer program began in 1984, many of the faces have changed, but our volunteers' enthusiasm for education and passion for serving our schools remains the same. Whether you spend your day interacting with students, stuffing Wednesday folders, serving as a Room Representative or Watch DOGS, you are making a world of difference. Though you may not realize it, you are helping to mold a child's confidence and attitude toward school in a positive way.

We believe that the LISD volunteer program is a vital part of the district's purpose to educate all students to their highest level of academic performance, while fostering self-esteem and responsibility.

Again, thank you for volunteering and putting our students first!

Sincerely,



Bret A. Champion
Superintendent of Schools Leander ISD

As parents, we are the owners of the public school system. As owners, we bear a responsibility to participate in the schools. Accountability for the schools, its employees and funding, rest with us and the rest of the school's owners. Our children's future depends on the improvement of the public schools, and school improvement depends on our participation.
- President Woodrow Wilson

The Importance of Parent & Community Involvement

We know that each of you contributes an amazing amount of time and talent to Leander ISD campuses. But one of the most important aspects of parental involvement in our schools is what your presence says - not only to your own child - but to all students... **“Education is Important!”**

Who can become a volunteer?

Any family member or community partner who is at least 18 years of age who has completed the LISD volunteer application and been approved through a Criminal Record Check (CRC).

- Parent volunteers
- Community volunteers
- Business volunteers
- Staff volunteers
- Mentors and tutors
- Guest speakers
- Science fair judges
- Booster club members
- PTA/PTO groups
- Everyone who gives their time without pay

Currently enrolled Leander ISD students may volunteer in our district under the supervision of a district employee. Homeschool, private and/or charter school students (any non-LISD students) must comply with the age requirement listed above.

What does a volunteer do?

An approved LISD volunteer may serve in a variety of ways depending on their interests, availability and the campuses needs. Stuffing envelopes, cutting box tops, laminating, relieving receptionists for lunch, working carnivals, chaperoning field trips, acting as a mentor, Watch DOGS participant, PTA member or literacy partner are just a few of the endless opportunities to volunteer in LISD!

How do I become an approved volunteer?

Submit Application:

- A new application must be completed each school year
- The application is located on the LISD [Volunteer](#) webpage
- Make sure all steps are complete
- Click the **Confirm Application** button when finished

Criminal Record Check (CRC):

- New applicant information is extracted each night and sent to the Texas Department of Public Safety (TxDPS) database for the background check
- Once the CRC is complete, reports are securely sent to LISD administration for review and approval
- This process can take **2-3 business days**

Approved:

- A list of approved volunteers will be uploaded to the campus Volunteer/PTA website
- Once approved, you will receive an email from each campus you selected on your application, acknowledging your approval and providing you access to the Volunteer/PTA website
- Attend a volunteer orientation at home campus

Volunteer Expectations and Guidelines

Attitude & Professionalism:

- Respect, care and concern for every student, parent and partnership is at the heart of everything we do
- Although the job is voluntary, the commitment is professional
- Be on time
- Be dependable
- Be confidential

Sign In & Out:

In order to maintain a safe learning and work environment, every person in the building must be identified

- Anyone entering a school building must **SIGN-IN AND SIGN-OUT** each time they visit. In the event of an emergency, the staff must be able to immediately account for everyone on site
- Signing in and out allows the district to track volunteer hours for program evaluation and recognition. The hours spent volunteering is an example of the commitment to the quality education in our school district
- Identifies the value of **ALL CAMPUS ORGANIZATIONS** and the **OPPORTUNITIES** where volunteers engage in our schools, staff and students (mentoring, PTA, Literacy Partners, booster clubs, room parent, chaperoning, etc.)

Dress Code

General Information:

- No clothing featuring pictures, emblems, writings, or slogans that are lewd, offensive, risqué, vulgar, obscene, provocative, or that convey hate messages or racially, religiously, or ethnically demeaning messages may be worn (including jewelry or accessories)
- No dress or grooming shall disrupt the learning environment or create a health or other hazard to a student's safety or the safety of others
- No apparel or accessories shall depict tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs or any other dangerous, prohibited, or controlled substance
- No clothing or accessories that promote violence, weapons, bombs, illegal acts, or anything that could be construed as provocative or offensive or otherwise distract from the learning environment, as determined by the administrators
- No pajamas, sleepwear, or house slippers of any kind
- No clothing that is too tight such as spandex/Lycra unless worn with a dress, skirt, or tunic (using the standards that are applied to shorts, skirts, and skorts)
- No holes in apparel that expose any areas that are not allowed by this dress code

Pants, Jeans:

- Shorts, skirts, and skorts must be at finger-tip or mid-thigh length as measured with relaxed shoulders
- Pants, jeans, shorts, skirts, and skorts must be worn at the hip and cover undergarments

Shirts, Blouses, Sweatshirts, Sweaters, Vests, Jackets, Coats:

- No strapless tops, spaghetti-strap tops, backless, halters, large armholes, or off-the-shoulder tops
- No low necklines (which reveal cleavage)
- No see-through or mesh shirts
- Tops must meet the beltline, and must not reveal undergarments or skin
- No full-length jackets and coats such as those commonly referred to as “trench coats” or “dusters”

Name Badges

- Approved volunteers are required to wear their printed volunteer name badge – at all times while volunteering
- Volunteers will immediately be recognized as a district approved person whose specific purpose is to assist staff and students in an important role within the school’s education team
- To Print Your Badge:
 1. **Log in** as a "Returning Volunteer" via the [LISD Volunteer Page](#).
 2. **Click "Print Badge"** to see a small image window of your tag. Click *Print Badge* to print. *(If no image appears on first try, close & repeat.)*
 3. **Bring your printed name badge** to your campus to receive a badge holder

Maintain Student Confidentiality

- FERPA: Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act protects the privacy of student records. A student record is defined as any document that contains information directly related to a student (i.e. discipline reports, attendance records, test scores, written student statements, grades, transcripts, meeting notes, Sp.Ed./504 records, etc.)
- Volunteers should understand that the academic and personal information they know about a student should be shared only with the appropriate teachers and school staff and should not be shared with neighbors, friends or other parents
- Unless otherwise specified, all communication with parents should be handled by the teacher or school staff

Cash Handling Procedures

- There may be times when Volunteers are involved in activities where money is being collected.
- Volunteers are prohibited from collecting or handling District money without the approval and direct supervision of LISD staff.
- PTA representatives are responsible for the collection and handling of PTA funds. PTA money should never be co-mingled with District funds.
- Any questions about cash handling procedures can be directed to the campus Administrative Assistant.

Adhere to Rules for School District

- Keep in mind that you are a role model for students.
- Know your campus resources. Learn which restrooms, cafeteria lines, phones, parking lots, libraries, copiers, and bulletin boards, etc., are available for use and when.
- Smoking and/or tobacco use is strictly prohibited on the campus. This includes parking lots, stadiums and outside fields.
- Respect teacher's time. All personal concerns should be addressed at a scheduled parent conference.
- Be flexible to changing needs and schedules at each campus.
- School equipment should not be used for personal purposes.
- Make sure your cell phone is silent while on campus
- Please ask your campus volunteer coordinator for individual campus administrator guidelines regarding bringing young children to the campus when volunteering.
- Remember that you are included in the day's lesson plan – the staff and students count on you to be there. If illness or any emergency arises, please call the campus office as soon as possible.
- Your home or meeting place is considered an extension of the school whenever the interest of the school is involved on or off school grounds in conjunction with/or independent of classes and school-sponsored activities. All rules and policies are to be enforced.
- As a representative of Leander ISD, avoid expressing differences of opinion or dissatisfaction with teachers, staff or other volunteers while on campus.

Volunteer Placement

- Your volunteer assignment is determined by your skills, interests and preferences, as well as the volunteer service needs of individual schools and teachers.
- Volunteers are placed in classrooms where teachers have specifically requested assistance. Feel free to discuss your preference with the school's volunteer coordinator.
- Sometimes a volunteer placement may not be the right fit for the volunteer, the teacher or the campus. If your volunteer placement does not work for you, for whatever reason, please let your campus volunteer coordinator know immediately.
- In supporting the best interests of our students and the district; a principal or district administrator has the authority to remove a volunteer from their position, if the partnership has proven to be unsuitable.

List of LISD Schools & Addresses

A list of the district schools with addresses and phone numbers is a helpful resource.

Click here: [LISD Schools](#)

The Principal Is the LEADER

Volunteers should always work within the rules of the school as set by the principal. The campus principal has the final say as to what can and cannot be done on the campus. Teachers are responsible for the curriculum, content, techniques and discipline in the classroom.

You Are Part of Our Education Team

Volunteers who are committed to helping students be successful are important members of the school team. These individuals are essential to bringing the community into the school. Students need contact with individuals who can share experiences and bring other perspectives into the classroom. They need adults who can guide them through the learning process.

Goals:

- Enrich the curriculum
- Enrich children's learning opportunities
- Provide help for individual students
- Provide opportunities for meaningful service
- Relieve teachers of some non-instructional tasks
- Enhance a school and community partnership for quality education
- Enhance all aspects of the educational process

Working closely with the classroom teacher and school staff includes:

- Following the direction of a school staff member
- Respecting the privacy of teachers and students by not discussing school matters away from the classroom
- Understanding that evaluation of a student's learning can only be done by the teacher

Committing to working in a classroom to support and improve education for all students.

- Seeking help from the teacher when you need additional information or instruction
- Sharing ideas and constructive comments with the teacher
- Enjoy working with students by:
 - ❖ Finding ways to establish a good rapport with students
 - ❖ Providing help and assistance without doing the work for students
 - ❖ Showing a genuine interest in each student
 - ❖ Accepting each student and encouraging the best from him or her
 - ❖ Using patience and kindness

Leander ISD's Sexual Harassment Prevention

What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment is any unwelcomed, unsolicited behavior of sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with the life of the targets. Consequences of sexual harassment are listed in the [Student Code of Conduct](#) and Employee Handbook.

Adult-to-Adult Sexual Harassment

- Any unwelcome sexual conduct that affects an employee's/volunteer's work performance is sexual harassment.
- Two Types:
 - ❖ Quid Pro Quo (something for something)
 - A supervisor conditions a benefit on sexual favors such as firing, hiring, demoting, increasing pay or granting a transfer
 - Even if the other party agrees, it can still be sexual harassment
 - ❖ Hostile Environment
 - Can be created by anyone through jokes, stories, pictures or conversations
- Its effects:
 - ❖ interfering with work performance
 - ❖ creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment

Adult-to-Student Sexual Harassment

- Adult-to-student harassment is never appropriate. Don't get yourself in a situation where it even can be alleged
- If you suspect a volunteer or staff member is harassing a student, you must:
 - ❖ Report it to the campus administrator or supervisor immediately
 - ❖ Report it within 48 hours to CPS or local law enforcement if you suspect abuse
 - ❖ Cooperate in an investigation

Student-to-Student Sexual Harassment

- Respond appropriately
 - ❖ Stop the behavior and report it to a campus administrator or supervisor
 - ❖ If you suspect child abuse, report to authorities (CPS and/or police) and to a campus administrator

How is Sexual Harassment Judged?

- Using a reasonable person's point of view, it's judged by:
 - ❖ Frequency, severity; how threatening or humiliating, and affecting on ones work
- Sexual harassment is in the eye of the beholder, not in the intentions of the person doing the action.
- Use this informal test:
 - ❖ If it were reported on the front page of tomorrow's newspaper, would it be okay?
 - ❖ If your answer is, "No," then STOP!
 - ❖ Change your behavior before someone changes it for you.

If You Feel Harassed

- Tell the person to stop
- If the behavior doesn't stop, tell the campus administration
- If an administrator is doing the harassing, report it to the district

Child Abuse and Neglect

In Texas, anyone who suspects that a child is being abused or neglected has a legal obligation to report it. [Legal Definitions of Abuse](#) according to the Texas Family Code.

Recognizing Abuse

- **Physical abuse** is a physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, such as bruises, fractures, or death. It also can include a genuine threat of harm even if there is no visible injury.
- **Sexual abuse** is sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare. This includes fondling a child's genitals, penetration, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or producing pornography.
- **Emotional abuse** is an action that results in a marked impact on a child's growth, development, or psychological functioning. Emotional abuse includes extreme forms of punishment such as confining a child in a dark closet, habitual scapegoating, or belittling to the point that it results in noticeable effects on the child's daily functioning.

Neglect

- **Neglectful supervision** means placing a child in a situation that requires judgment or actions beyond what the child is physically or mentally capable of doing and results in bodily injury or a substantial risk of immediate harm to a child.
- **Medical neglect** is failing to get or follow up with medical care for a child when the lack of care results in physical injury or in a marked impact on a child's growth, development, or functioning.
- **Physical neglect** is the failure to provide a child with food, clothing, or shelter necessary to sustain the life or health of the child. Physical neglect can include a situation where the home environment presents a health or safety threat to children.
- **Abandonment and refusal to accept parental responsibility** are two other categories of neglect.
- **Failing to protect a child** from any situation described above also falls under the definitions of abuse and neglect.

Reporting

Call the Abuse Hotline toll-free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nationwide, or report with the secure website and get a response within 24 hours.

- **By Phone: 1-800-252-5400**
- **Online: [Texas Abuse Hotline](#)**

Refer to the [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services \(TxDFPS\) - Child Protective Services \(CPS\)](#) website for more information.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

Leander Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities and programs, including vocational programs in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended

Helpful Hints when Working with Students

Listening to a student is one of the most important things you can do for them. It helps to teach most of the basic skills students need.

When Speaking to Students:

- Use a tone of voice that will encourage and make them feel confident
- Show an interest in what each student says
- Avoid comparing students and their work
- Give students a choice only when you intend to abide by the choice
- State directions in a positive form, e.g., “Use the blocks for building” rather than “Don’t throw the blocks”
- Your goal should be the success of the students

Basic Skills Students Need That Volunteers can Help Develop:

- How to pay attention
- The desire to listen
- Body awareness: How it works and where it is in relation to the environment
- Language skills: Be able to ask questions when they do not understand
- The ability to verbally express themselves
- The ability to carry on a conversation with other students and adults
- The ability to understand different sounds
- Knowledge of time and space
- Understanding and use of numbers
- Planning a task and following it through
- Problem-solving at their own level
- A good self-image
- Getting along well with students of their own age
- Waiting for something they want

Assisting Students in their Learning:

- Students learn by doing versus passive observation.
- Students learn by asking questions and by searching for answers to their questions. Ask students questions that may lead to the correct answer instead of telling them the answer directly.
- They learn by discovery. Let students discover properties of materials by themselves, e.g., let them discover which materials are attracted by a magnet.
- They learn by using all their senses when possible. Encourage students to feel, smell, taste and listen, as well as look at objects.
- They learn by experimenting. Let students try new methods of doing things even though you already know an easier way.
- They learn by sorting and combining objects. Let students sort and combine according to their own ideas, e.g., shapes or sizes rather than colors.
- They learn by repeating experience. Give the students as much time as they need (often weeks or months) to understand a new idea.
- They learn by building confidence in themselves.



Volunteer Coordinator Duties

What is a volunteer coordinator?

The role of the campus-based volunteer coordinator is vital to the success of the school and the students it serves. The volunteer coordinator's job is to connect volunteers to specific tasks/jobs or special events at the campus. You are likely to have to act like a recruiter, a screener, a trainer, a supervisor and an advocate.

What's First?

- Make sure YOUR [volunteer application](#) is current and renewed by completing the online registration and criminal record check. Please remember that anyone interested in volunteering in Leander ISD schools, including LISD booster clubs, teachers, PTA/PTO, mentors, literacy partners, etc., must complete an online volunteer application and criminal background check. No paper applications will be accepted.
- Attend a volunteer orientation if you are a new volunteer.

Connecting

- Connect and collaborate with other volunteer leaders on your campus (PTA Presidents, WatchDOGS, Booster Presidents, etc.) to serve in the most efficient capacity.
- Meet with the campus principal and decide together what is reasonable and a priority. Helpful points to discuss:
 - Which person will you directly report to on campus?
 - Regular communication. The principal will generally be glad to get an update. This might be a monthly memo via email or simply part of your newsletter updates.
 - Discuss existing campus programs you want to continue/improve and programs you would like to implement.
 - What school procedures do the volunteers need to follow?
 - What equipment can volunteers use and when?
 - Can you attend a faculty meeting to let staff know how the volunteer program can help meet their needs and how they can contact you?
 - Recruit, recruit and recruit! (tips for recruiting on page 5)

Communication

- A list of approved volunteers will be uploaded to your campus Volunteer/PTA website at least twice a week.
- The www.my-pta.org site is the only software program (at this time) that can retrieve the most current and approved volunteers.
- Sites such as VolunteerSpot, Sign-Up Genius, etc. do not have access to LISD's APPROVED volunteers; therefore, the district cannot support the accuracy or screening of participants signing up with these other systems. For the safety and security of our students and campus staff, we ask that when an event is being created and needs to be staffed with volunteers, that it is performed through www.my-pta.org only.
- Host a volunteer orientation or two for your new volunteers.* The volunteer orientations provide new volunteers with helpful information about school procedures, student/campus confidentiality, signing in/ out procedures, name badges, knowing where materials are kept and knowing where to go for help and assistance. **All new volunteers should attend a basic campus orientation.** You may wish to have several at different times in order to accommodate busy schedules, etc.

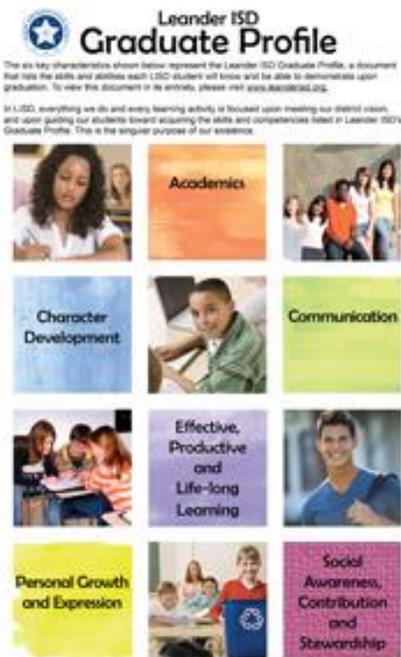
***A Volunteer Orientation PowerPoint has been designed (and can be customized for your campus) to assist with these meetings. This tool is located on the [LISD volunteer webpage](#).**

Orientation should include:

- Introductions and thank you
- District/campus guidelines
- Learning model, Graduate Profile, 10 Ethical Principles (last page of manual)
- Sign in procedures
- Overview of Volunteer/PTA website and its use in scheduling volunteer tasks and upcoming events
- Who to notify with scheduling issues or absence notification. Most scheduling conflicts can be handled through the Volunteer/PTA website as schedule changes warrant; however, volunteers should notify the volunteer coordinator or campus staff if last minute conflicts arise that would keep them from making their commitment. *Remember to review school calendar dates that could affect their volunteering, such as holidays, testing schedules, or early release days.*
- Q & A - Always give them a chance to ask questions
- Campus tour

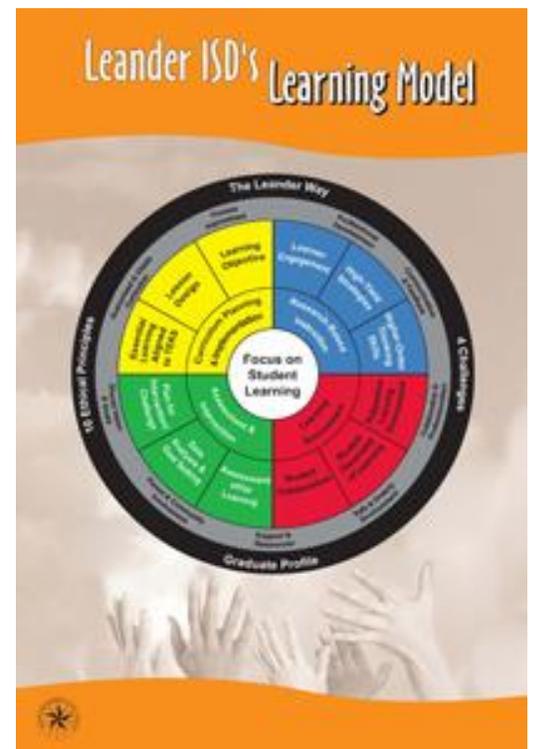
What's Important?

- Make **COMMUNICATION** with your volunteers a priority. All of our volunteers need to feel supported and that they are a part of the school community. Ongoing support is a hallmark for effective volunteer programs.
- Delegate when you can. You might be able to identify some other volunteers who can take on some of your tasks. Make it a team effort if possible.
- Establish defined boundaries. Remember that your role as volunteer coordinator is different than your role as a parent at the school. As a leader at the school, you will likely have different roles with the staff, students and their families than other parents. Try to keep those roles distinct and help others understand when you are functioning as the volunteer coordinator and when you are functioning as your child's parent. Your role at school should make a positive impact on your child's education.
- Be professional.
- Understand the school culture and system, how things work, how staff members do their jobs and interact and what other staff members expect of you.
- Keep track of hours



Volunteers are a vital piece of the district puzzle, a fit that truly contributes to the success of our students from Pre-K to graduation.

Our **volunteers** perform such tasks as tutoring and mentoring students, chaperoning school dances and field trips, serving as room parents, helping with field days and book fairs, serving Thanksgiving lunches, helping with class projects, laminating, helping in the campus office, and the list goes on. The commitment of those countless parents and community members is a key reason for LISD's success.



These principles identify character traits which promote responsible behavior. Throughout the school year, the district challenges students, teachers and **volunteers** to model these qualities in all areas of life.