

Policy 4218: Dismissal/Suspension/Disciplinary Action

Classified Personnel

The Governing Board expects all employees to perform their jobs satisfactorily, to exhibit professional and appropriate conduct, and serve as positive role models both at school and in the community. A classified employee may be disciplined for unprofessional conduct or unsatisfactory performance in accordance with law or any applicable collective bargaining agreement, Board policy, or administrative regulation.

Disciplinary actions shall be based on the particular facts and circumstances involved and the severity of the employee's conduct or performance.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that disciplinary actions are taken in a consistent, nondiscriminatory manner. In addition, an employee shall not be suspended, disciplined, reassigned, transferred, dismissed, or otherwise retaliated against solely for engaging in protected activities, or for acting to protect a student engaged in exercising any free speech or press right authorized by, or for refusing to infringe upon a student's conduct protected pursuant to, Education Code 48907 or 48950.

Disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to, verbal and written warnings, involuntary reassignment, demotion, suspension or leave without pay, reduction of wages, or dismissal.

A probationary classified employee may be dismissed without cause anytime before the probationary period expires.

Permanent classified employees shall be subject to disciplinary action only for cause as specified in the accompanying administrative regulation. (Education Code 45113)

Procedures for Serious Disciplinary Proceedings

The Superintendent or designee shall develop disciplinary procedures for use when dismissal, suspension, demotion, involuntary reassignment, or other serious disciplinary action is contemplated against an employee. The procedures for such discipline shall include an opportunity for an employee for whom any such disciplinary action is recommended to meet with, or respond in writing to, a designated district official ("Skelly officer") who will determine whether the recommended discipline should proceed further or be modified or withdrawn.

After meeting with the employee or considering the employee's written response, if the Skelly officer determines that the recommended discipline should proceed, the Superintendent or designee shall send the employee a notice of the recommended disciplinary action, a statement of

charges, and the results of the Skelly review process. The notice shall include a statement advising the employee of the right to request a Board hearing on the matter. (Education Code 45113, 45116)

If the employee fails to request a hearing within the time specified in the notice, the employee is deemed to have waived the right to do so, and the Governing Board may order the recommended disciplinary action into effect immediately.

If a timely request is submitted, a hearing shall be conducted by the Governing Board or by a third-party hearing officer, in accordance with law. (Education Code 45113, 45312)

A classified employee who timely requests a hearing may only be suspended, demoted, or dismissed pending the outcome of the hearing in accordance with Education Code 45113 and as specified in the accompanying administrative regulation.

The hearing shall be held at the earliest convenient date, taking into consideration the established schedule of the Governing Board and the availability of legal counsel and witnesses. The employee shall be notified of the time and place of the hearing.

The hearing shall be held in closed session unless the employee requests that the matter be heard in an open session meeting. (Government Code 54957)

The employee shall be entitled to appear personally, produce evidence, and be represented by legal counsel.

The Governing Board may use the services of its legal counsel in ruling upon procedural questions, objections to evidence, and issues of law. The Governing Board may review and consider the records of any prior personnel action proceedings against the employee in which disciplinary action was ultimately sustained, and any records contained in the employee's personnel files and introduced into evidence at the hearing. The Governing Board shall not be bound by rules of evidence used in California courts. Informality in any such hearing shall not invalidate any order or decision made by the Governing Board.

At any time before a matter is submitted to the Governing Board for decision, the Superintendent or designee may, with the consent of the Governing Board, serve on the employee and file with the Governing Board an amended or supplemental recommendation of disciplinary action. If the amended or supplemental recommendation includes new causes or allegations, the employee shall be afforded a reasonable opportunity to prepare a defense. Any new causes or allegations shall be deemed controverted and any objections to the amended or supplemental causes or allegations may be made orally at the hearing and shall be noted on the record.

Following the hearing or, if the employee has not requested a hearing, after reviewing the Superintendent or designee's recommendation for disciplinary action, the Governing Board shall affirm, modify, or reject the recommended disciplinary action. The decision of the Governing Board shall be in writing and shall contain findings of fact and the disciplinary action approved, if any. The decision of the Governing Board shall be final.

Within 10 working days of the Governing Board's final decision, a copy of the decision shall be delivered to the employee and/or designated representative personally or by registered mail.

Except for an allegation of egregious misconduct in which a minor is involved, the Governing Board may delegate the authority to determine whether sufficient cause exists for disciplinary action to an impartial third-party hearing officer. When a matter is heard by a third-party hearing officer, the Governing Board shall review the determination and adopt or reject the recommended decision. (Education Code 45113)

When any matter involves an allegation of egregious misconduct as defined in Education Code 44932 and involves a witness who is a minor, the matter shall be referred to an administrative law judge to determine whether sufficient cause exists for disciplinary action against the employee. In such cases, the ruling of the administrative law judge shall be binding on the district and the employee. (Education Code 45113)

Compulsory Leave of Absence

Upon being informed that a classified employee has been charged with a mandatory leave of absence offense, the Superintendent or designee shall immediately place the employee on a compulsory leave of absence. (Education Code 44940, 44940.5, 45304)