

Policy 5144: Discipline

The Governing Board is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and positive school environment which is conducive to student learning and achievement and desires to prepare students for responsible citizenship by fostering self-discipline and personal responsibility. The Governing Board believes that high expectations for student behavior, use of effective school and classroom management strategies, provision of appropriate intervention and support, and parent/guardian involvement can minimize the need for disciplinary measures that exclude students from instruction as a means for correcting student misbehavior.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop effective, age-appropriate strategies for maintaining a positive school climate and responding appropriately to student misbehavior at district schools. The strategies shall focus on providing students with needed supports; communicating clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations and consequences for student conduct; and ensuring equity and continuous improvement in the implementation of district discipline policies and practices.

In addition, the Superintendent or designee's strategies for responding to student misconduct shall reflect the Governing Board's preference for the use of positive interventions and alternative disciplinary measures over exclusionary discipline measures.

Disciplinary measures that may result in loss of instructional time or cause students to be disengaged from school, such as detention, suspension, and expulsion, shall be imposed only when required or permitted by law or when other means of correction have been documented to have failed. (Education Code 48900.5)

School personnel and volunteers shall not allow any disciplinary action taken against a student to result in the denial or delay of a school meal. (Education Code 49557.5)

A student shall not be denied recess unless the student's participation poses an immediate threat to the physical safety of the student or to the physical safety of one or more of the student's peers. If, due to such immediate threat, a student is denied recess, staff shall make all reasonable efforts to resolve the threat and minimize the student's exclusion from recess, to the greatest extent practicable. (Education Code 49056)

Seclusion and behavioral restraint are prohibited as a means of discipline and shall not be used to correct student behavior except as permitted pursuant to Education Code 49005.4 and in accordance with district regulations. (Education Code 49005.2)

The Superintendent or designee shall create a model discipline matrix that lists violations and the consequences for each as allowed by law.

The principal or designee at each school may develop disciplinary rules to meet the school's particular needs consistent with law, Board policy, and administrative regulations. The Governing Board, at an open meeting, may review the approved school discipline rules for consistency with Board policy and state law. Site-level disciplinary rules shall be included in the district's comprehensive safety plan. (Education Code 32282, 35291.5)

At all times, the safety of students and staff, providing interventions and supports to students, as well as the maintenance of an orderly school environment, shall be priorities in determining appropriate discipline. When misconduct occurs, staff shall attempt to identify the causes of the student's behavior and implement appropriate support and/or discipline. When choosing between different disciplinary strategies, staff shall consider the effect of each option on the student's health, well-being, and opportunity to learn.

Staff shall enforce disciplinary rules fairly, consistently, and in accordance with the district's nondiscrimination policies.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide professional development as necessary to assist staff in developing the skills needed to effectively and equitably implement the disciplinary strategies adopted for district schools, including, but not limited to, knowledge of school and classroom management skills and their consistent application, effective accountability and positive intervention techniques, and the tools to form strong, cooperative relationships with parents/guardians.

District goals for improving school climate, based on suspension and expulsion rates, surveys of students, staff, and parents/guardians regarding their sense of school safety and connectedness to the school community, and other local measures, shall be included in the district's local control and accountability plan, as required by law.

At the beginning of each school year, the Superintendent or designee may report to the Governing Board regarding disciplinary strategies used in district schools in the immediately preceding school year and their effect on student learning.