Policy 5145.3: Nondiscrimination/Harassment

The Governing Board desires to provide a welcoming, safe, and supportive school environment that allows all students equal access to and opportunities in the district's academic, extracurricular, and other educational support programs, services, and activities.

This policy shall apply to all acts constituting unlawful discrimination or harassment related to district activity or attendance, to acts which occur off campus or outside of district-related or district-sponsored activities but which may have an impact on or create a hostile environment at school, and to all acts of the Governing Board and the Superintendent in enacting policies and procedures that govern the district.

The Governing Board prohibits, at any district school or activity, unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, and bullying, against an individual or group based on one, or a combination of two or more, protected characteristics, which include, but may not be limited to, race or ethnicity; ancestry; color; ethnic group identification; nationality; national origin; immigration status; sex; sexual orientation; sex stereotypes; gender; gender identity; gender expression; religion; disability; medical condition; genetic information; pregnancy, false pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, or related conditions or recovery; and parental, marital, and family status; a perception of one or more, or any combination, of such characteristics; or association with a person or group with one or more, or any combination, of these actual or perceived characteristics. (Education Code 200, 210.1, 210.2, 210.3, 212, 212.1, 220, 221.51, 230, 260; Government Code 11135, 12926; 20 USC 1681-1688, 42 USC 2000d-2000d-7)

Additionally, the Board prohibits teacher instruction and district-sponsored activities that promote discriminatory bias based on any of the characteristics specified above. Discriminatory bias in instruction and school-sponsored activities does not require a showing of direct harm to members of a protected group and members of a protected group do not need to be present while the discriminatory bias is occurring for the act to be considered discriminatory bias. (Education Code 51500)

Unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying, may result from physical, verbal, nonverbal, or written conduct based on any of the categories listed above. Additionally, unlawful discrimination occurs when prohibited conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; has the effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with a student's academic performance; or otherwise adversely affects a student's educational opportunities.

In addition, unlawful discrimination includes disparate treatment of students based on one of the categories above with respect to the provision of opportunities to participate in district programs or activities or the provision or receipt of educational benefits or services.

Because unlawful discrimination could occur when disciplining students, including suspension and expulsion, the Superintendent or designee shall ensure that staff enforce discipline rules fairly, consistently, and in a non-discriminatory manner, as specified in Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 5144 - Discipline, Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process, and Administrative Regulation 5144.2 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process (Students With Disabilities).

The Governing Board also prohibits any form of retaliation against any individual who reports or participates in the reporting of unlawful discrimination, files or participates in the filing of a complaint, or investigates, participates, or refuses to participate in the investigation of a complaint or report alleging unlawful discrimination. Retaliation complaints shall be investigated and resolved in the same manner as discrimination complaints.

The Superintendent or designee shall facilitate students' access to the educational program by publicizing the district's nondiscrimination policy and related complaint procedures to students, parents/guardians, and employees. Additionally, the Superintendent or designee shall post the district's policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying and other required information on the district's website in a manner that is easily accessible to students and parents/guardians, in accordance with law and the accompanying administrative regulation. (Education Code 234.1, 234.6; 34 CFR 106.8)

The Superintendent or designee shall provide training and/or information on the scope and use of the policy and complaint procedures and take other measures designed to increase understanding of the requirements of law related to discrimination. The Superintendent or designee shall regularly review the implementation of the district's nondiscrimination policies and practices and, as necessary, shall take action to remove any identified barrier to student access to or participation in the district's educational program. The Superintendent or designee shall report the findings and recommendations to the Governing Board after each review.

Regardless of whether a complainant complies with the writing, timeline, and/or other formal filing requirements, all complaints alleging unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying, shall be investigated and prompt action shall be taken to stop the discrimination, prevent recurrence, and address any continuing effect on students.

Students who engage in unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, retaliation, or bullying, in violation of law, Board policy, or administrative regulation, shall be subject to appropriate consequences or discipline, which may include suspension or expulsion when the behavior is severe or pervasive as defined in Education Code 48900.4. Any employee who permits or engages in prohibited discrimination related to a district activity, attendance, or district-related or district-sponsored activity, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, retaliation, or bullying, shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

When a student has been suspended, or other means of correction have been implemented against the student for an incident of racist bullying, harassment, or intimidation, the principal or designee may engage both the victim and perpetrator in a restorative justice practice suitable to the needs of the students. Additionally, the principal or designee may require the perpetrator to engage in a culturally sensitive program that promotes racial justice and equity and combats racism and ignorance and regularly check on the victim to ensure that the victim is not in danger of suffering from any long-lasting mental health issues. (Education Code 48900.5)

When appropriate based on the severity or pervasiveness of the bullying or when otherwise required, the Superintendent or designee shall notify the parents/guardians of victims and perpetrators and may contact law enforcement.

Complaints alleging unlawful discrimination in district programs and activities shall be investigated and resolved in accordance with Board Policy/Administrative Regulation 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures, when required by law. However, complaints alleging sexual harassment under Title IX shall be investigated and resolved in accordance with the procedures specified in Administrative Regulation 5145.71 - Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures.

Record-Keeping

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain a record of all reported cases of unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying, to enable the district to monitor, address, and prevent repetitive prohibited behavior in district schools.