

“Community Engagement on School Discipline”

A Model Resolution for School Boards



WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 6A-16-7.1 provides that each district board of education must adopt a Code of Student Conduct that establishes disciplinary standards, policies, and procedures in the district's schools; and

WHEREAS, (Board of Education) understands that the Code of Student Conduct is an effective tool in improving student achievement if it incorporates current best practices in school discipline, involves families, parents, and the community in its development and implementation, and if its policies are communicated to the entire school community regularly and clearly; and

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 6A-16-7.1(a)(1) provides that a school district's Code of Student Conduct may be based on parent, student, and community involvement that represents, where possible, the composition of the school district's schools and community; and

WHEREAS, research has demonstrated the powerful effect that engaged families can have on a student's educational outcomes, including improved behavior; and

WHEREAS, (Board of Education) recognizes that student dropout is a serious nationwide problem that stems from outdated discipline practices and policies that discourage or prevent young people from completing their education; and

WHEREAS, such practices include use of zero-tolerance practices and exclusionary discipline measures such as suspensions and expulsions, lack of opportunity for family and community participation in school decision making, and poor or limited teacher training and support; and

WHEREAS, school dropout can have severe and lasting consequences for students, schools and communities, including diminished academic opportunities, increased risk of youth involvement in the criminal justice system, diminished future job opportunities for youth, and community decline from the perpetuation of cycles of poverty, segregation and crime; and

WHEREAS, (Board of Education) understands that there are alternative disciplinary practices that promote positive learning environments through prevention and intervention techniques, and through restorative justice practices that hold students accountable for misbehavior while ensuring that each student remains in school and completes their education; and

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 6A-16-7.1(a)(2) provides that the district board of education shall establish a process for the annual review and update of the Code of Student Conduct; and

WHEREAS, (Board of Education) is committed to updating the Code of Student Conduct with input and collaboration from school personnel, students, families and community members, and incorporating evidence-based best practices in positive student development; and

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 6A-16-7.1(a)(4) provides that the district board of education shall provide to all district board of education employees annual training on the Code of Student Conduct, including training on the prevention, intervention, and remediation of student conduct that violates the district board of education's Code of Student Conduct; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the (Board of Education) that it shall:

1. Establish an annual process for the review and update of the Code of Student Conduct pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A-16-7.1(a)(2), which shall include:
 - a) Within ninety (90) days of approval of this resolution, a detailed plan for outreach to the community in order to gather meaningful input on the development of the Code of Student Conduct and feedback on school disciplinary policies, in formats such as informational meetings which invite constructive input and information materials which shall be made available in all languages primarily spoken and understood in the community; and
 - b) Within one-hundred and eighty (180) days of approval of this resolution, a process for ongoing evaluation, which will include a method of collecting data on all discipline incidents over the course of the year, consistent with the applicable privacy laws, which can supplement data schools may already be collecting, through which an Annual Outcome Review will be prepared and presented in a written report to the (Board of Education), which will address whether the issues identified at the prior Code of Student Conduct annual review have been improved upon, and provide suggestions for further improvement; and
2. Within ninety (90) days of approval of this resolution, appoint an advisory Code of Student Conduct Committee to implement the process for annual review and update of the Code of Student Conduct
3. Establish an annual training program of all (Board of Education) employees on the Code of Student Conduct required pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A-16-7.1(a)(4)

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that The Code of Student Conduct Committee ("Committee"):

1. Shall have a minimum of nine appointed members, who shall designate one of the members to serve as Chairperson and presiding officer; and
2. Shall have broad representation from key stakeholders in the community, and specifically:
 - a) Must include from the (School District) at least one teacher, one guidance counselor, and one other member of school personnel such as a bus driver, crossing guard, security officer, custodial staff member, or teacher's assistant; and
 - b) Must include at least one student, one parent, and one PTO representative who are residents of (Municipality); and
 - c) Must include at least one (Board of Education) member; and
 - d) Must include at least one (Municipality) resident who has the demonstrated skills and/or experience in community outreach to facilitate the plan for outreach discussed in 1(a) above; and

- e) A majority of its members must not currently be employed by the (Board of Education); and
 - f) May include representatives from youth organizations, juvenile division of the Police Department, ministry leaders, local businesses, education specialists, school administrators, and other concerned members of the community who live and/or work in (Municipality); and
3. May include one elected student representative from (Municipality) High School, who shall be nominated by the student body of the (Municipality) High School, through a method to be determined by the (Board of Education); and
4. Shall require the following commitments of its members regarding the implementation of the annual process for review and update of the Code of Student Conduct:
- a) Members shall serve without compensation for a term of two years for appointed members and one year for elected members; and
 - b) Committee meetings shall be held no less than eight times per year, and shall be called by the Chairperson; and
 - c) Any member of the Committee who shall, during a calendar year, be absent for three regularly scheduled consecutive meetings of the Committee, shall be subject to removal by the (Board of Education); and
 - d) Each member shall serve as advocate for and liaison to the constituency whom they represent, and are encouraged to:
 - i. Perform outreach specifically to their constituency beyond that which is required in the plan for outreach developed pursuant to 1(a); and
 - ii. Hold regular meetings with their constituency to keep them informed of the Committee's work, gather feedback, and answer questions and concerns; and
5. May form subcommittees of representative stakeholder groups should the Committee deem it reasonable and necessary to do so.