

**Issaquah School District
Executive Limitations Monitoring Report
EL – 11: DISCIPLINE
(Annual Internal June 9, 2010)**

**The Superintendent certifies that the District is in compliance with EL-11
with no exceptions**

The superintendent shall not fail to establish and consistently enforce policies to maintain dignified, safe and effective environments for all students.

GENERAL INTERPRETATION

I interpret this policy to be primarily focused on student discipline rules and procedures, but expanded to include adult behavior in the specific areas of illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, weapons and violence. All of these are fully prohibited on school property and at school-sponsored activities. Employee discipline is not the focus of EL-11, but is addressed under *EL-3: Personnel*.

EL-11 calls for rules policies and procedures that are effective in maintaining a safe and orderly learning environment. To that end, both written rules / procedures and staff implementation must be effective in achieving the desired result. Further, implementation by staff must be fair and consistent to be supportable by District officials and, if necessary, by the courts.

Accordingly, I interpret compliance, not as the absence of incidents requiring discipline, but as the consistent, supportable application of appropriate rules and procedures to maintain the learning environment such that incidences of misconduct in each school are clearly the exception within the environment.

The appeal processes available to students and their parents may serve as one measure of the degree to which discipline rules are accepted as fair and appropriately applied. All student discipline letters mailed home contain information on an appeal and or grievance process.

EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE

- a. Each school has codified student discipline rules in a handbook and distributed those handbooks to all students and/or parents. Student handbooks for all of our comprehensive secondary schools are available on the building web sites.
- b. All discipline leading to emergency expulsions, suspensions, or expulsions imposed on students by the administration was recorded in the Skyward student records system.

- c. The incidence of misconduct at every school was small enough to be clearly understood as the exception rather than the rule. Moreover, unscheduled campus visitations by District administrators including the Superintendent routinely verify that our school environments are, without exception, safe, orderly, and highly conducive to learning.
- d. It has been verified that the district had no unresolved discipline appeals as of June 1, 2010. There is one pending discipline appeal hearing that has been delayed due to student illness.

Accordingly, the Superintendent may not:

- 1. Permit student behaviors that disrupt learning. Prohibited behaviors include:**
 - a. the use of illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco products by students and adults on school property and at school-sponsored events;**
 - b. the presence of firearms and other dangerous weapons on school property and at school-sponsored events;**
 - c. any form of violence on school property and at school-sponsored events.**

INTERPRETATION

I interpret this to mean that rules and procedures must clearly prohibit all student and/or adult behaviors named above; any infractions must be addressed in accordance with school rules in a manner that reaffirms prohibitions in these areas, and the total incidence of infractions must be small enough to clearly represent an exception to the norm.

EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE

- a. Building administrators are required to notify and provide copies of all emergency expulsion and suspension letters to their supervisors. I verify that this occurred during this monitoring period and copies of those letters are on file at the central administration building.
- b. It has been verified through the annual Executive Limitations Monitoring Survey and through the direct supervision of building administrators that all known *student* infractions related to illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, weapons or violence (fighting or aggressive physical acts which caused or could cause bodily harm) at school or at school-sponsored events have been appropriately addressed by the administration in a manner that preserves the learning environment.
- c. It has been verified through the annual Executive Limitations Monitoring Survey and through the direct supervision of building administrators that any known *adult* behaviors related to illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, weapons or violence at school or

at school-sponsored events have been appropriately addressed by the administration in a manner that preserves the learning environment.

- d. All student incidents related to drugs/alcohol, bullying, violent offenses, assault/fighting, guns, knives, for the 2008-09 school year are summarized on the attached tables (most recent data available). The data show no gun incidents in any school. Given the size of schools and length of school year, I believe a reasonable person would conclude that the number of incidents in all other categories reflects a learning environment at all schools that is effectively protected from infractions of this type.

... the Superintendent may not:

- 2. Permit teachers, students and parents to be uninformed of the disciplinary expectations of students and the consequences of non-compliance. The Superintendent shall not fail to:**
 - a. appropriately involve teachers, administrators, students and the community in developing student discipline policy;**
 - b . distribute annually to each student a student handbook which outlines the student discipline policy;**
 - c. ensure that a copy of the student discipline policy, and any significant changes to it, are posted or available for inspection in each school building and on the district website.**

INTERPRETATION

I interpret this to mean that when the district develops written procedures for administering corrective action teachers, administrators, students and the community participate in the development of those procedures. This can be achieved through site council meetings, special committees, or other means available.

Principals and certificated employees in each building confer at least annually for the purpose of developing and/or reviewing building discipline standards and the uniformed enforcement of those standards. (WAC 392-400-225 and RCW 28.A.400.110)

Students and others in the community may be involved as needed at the discretion of the principal.

After consultation, student discipline remains the purview of the administration. The recommendations of students, parents and teachers are appreciated, but they are not binding.

Central administrators may request a review of discipline policy/practices with the School

Board for purposes of modification and alignment with Board direction/philosophy when deemed necessary (such as the student athletic drug/alcohol policy).

Annual distribution of student handbooks containing discipline rules and consequences should be ensured through a sign-off procedure. Elementary and middle school parents/guardians should sign to verify receipt of the handbook. High school students sign on their own behalf. All signatures are kept on file during the school year.

High school coaches and club advisors distribute discipline rules and consequences to participants with a sign-off procedure, maintaining student signatures on file throughout the period for which rules apply.

EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE

- a. Rules of Conduct and other building rules are reviewed annually by the Executive Directors of Elementary, High Schools and the Associate Superintendent who has responsibility over the middle schools in collaboration with building administrators. Any additions, deletions or revisions are done after processing through principal meetings. Rules changes are then communicated uniformly to the schools for inclusion within their student handbooks.
- b. In 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-2009 the principals of all schools met with an advisory group as defined above to review discipline rules.
- c. All principals affirm the distribution of a student handbook and/or student behavior expectations outlining the current discipline rules and consequences to each student (or parent) at the beginning of the current school year. Signatures acknowledging receipt of student handbooks and/or student behavior expectations are required of all high school students and all parents of middle and elementary school students. Buildings continually monitor and adjust the record keeping procedures for the collection and tracking of these required signatures and make every reasonable effort to ensure that all signature forms have been returned.

High school athletic handbooks outlining discipline rules and consequences were distributed to each student athlete for each sports season. Signature sign-offs were and continue to be required for sports eligibility. Additionally, athletic handbooks were and continue to be posted on each high school's website. Each student athlete was also required to attend one pre-season seminar per year where rules were highlighted within the context of our drug/alcohol policy.

- d. Student handbooks were and continue to be available for inspection in each school building. The elementary handbook was posted on the district website. Secondary student handbooks were posted on their respective school websites. All secondary schools distributed student handbooks in the form of student planners.
- e. All schools and facilities have drug free and weapons free signage posted throughout the campuses. This is an item that the States consolidated program

review team monitors for and we passed this requirement during our districts last CPR.

. . . the Superintendent may not:

3. Permit any unruly behaviors to disrupt learning.

INTERPRETATION

Incidents involving unruly or disruptive behaviors which occur outside the classroom can connect to and affect classroom behavior and learning. Therefore, I interpret this to mean that principals may not allow any known instance of unruly or disruptive behavior by any persons (at school, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity) to remain unaddressed.

Further, school administrators who learn informally that unruly or disruptive *in-class* behavior may be occurring have an obligation to investigate and take appropriate action if a problem is found.

EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE

- a. Principals and District administrators have verified through regularly scheduled meetings and frequent discussions with their supervisors that all reported incidents of misconduct resulting in unruly or disruptive behavior by any persons at school, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored event have been appropriately addressed. As of this report date we have no credible information suggesting unreported, ongoing learning disruptions.
- b. All principals met or exceeded standard on their annual evaluation in the areas of Leadership #1 *influencing, establishing and sustaining a school culture conducive to continuous improvement for students and Leadership #2 Promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient and effective learning environment.*

. . . the Superintendent may not:

4. Fail to ensure that all policies and procedures regarding discipline are enforced consistently using reasonable judgment.

INTERPRETATION

Students and parents all enjoy protected appeal rights through both the Student Discipline and Parent Complaint policies, including protection against retaliation. It is reasonable to assume that unfair or inconsistent application of discipline rules would be addressed through one of these two formal vehicles for expressing such concerns.

EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE

- a. Building administrators receive training from legal council and their supervisors in conducting appropriate student discipline investigations and applying discipline consistent with federal/state law and district policy. In addition, principals have been trained by legal council in preparing for and conducting student hearings and provided with a packet that includes a discipline hearing preparation check list.
- b. We currently have no unresolved discipline hearings from students or parents as of Tuesday June 1, 2010.
- c. For the 2008-09 school year, eight student discipline hearings were held. All were up-held by the hearing officer. For the 2009-10 school year, three student discipline hearings were held. Two were upheld and appeal was denied. One appeal was granted and the district was overturned. The hearing officer also heard two grievances to athletic consequences.

Board acceptance: _____