

**Issaquah School District
Executive Limitations Monitoring Report
EL – 11: DISCIPLINE
(Annual Internal September 24, 2014)**

**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 infrequent 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 the end of the 2013-14 school year.

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 infrequent 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 (2013-14 school year) 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 (copies on file at the district office) 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 2013-14 school year are summarized on the attached tables. 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.

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, Middle, and High Schools. Any additions, deletions or revisions are done after processing through principal meetings. Rule changes are then communicated uniformly to the schools for inclusion within their student handbooks.
- b. In 2013-14 and the preceding years 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 (annual Ends/EL Monitoring Survey). 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 are available for inspection in each school building. The elementary handbook was posted on the district website. Secondary student handbooks are posted on their respective school websites and are included in the middle school agenda planners. Starting in the fall of 2011 the high school student handbooks is on-line. Staff will still review the handbooks at the beginning of the school year and a hard copy sign off sheet will be collected and stored on each student.
- 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 Consolidated Program Review from OSPI.

... 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. During the 2013-14 school year we had no credible information suggesting unreported, ongoing learning disruptions.

- b. All principals were basic, proficient or distinguished on their 2013-14 annual evaluation in the areas of:
 - Criterion 1 Creating a culture that promotes the ongoing improvement of learning and teaching for students and staff.
 - Criterion 2 Ensuring and providing for school safety.
 - Criterion 6 Managing both staff and fiscal resources to support student achievement and legal responsibilities.

. . . **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 counsel and their supervisors in conducting appropriate student discipline investigations and applying discipline consistent with federal/state law and district policy. As an example ISD administrators have had three trainings since last spring in the area of Just Cause and The 7 Test of Just Cause. In addition, principals have been trained by legal counsel in preparing for and conducting student hearings and provided with a packet that includes a discipline hearing preparation check list.
- b. During the 2013-14 school year we had nine student discipline appeals hearings. The district was upheld on all nine of these appeals were denied.
- c. For the 2011-12 school year five discipline hearings were held. The district action was upheld and the appeals were denied. For the 2012-13 school year there was also five discipline hearings. The district action was upheld and the appeals were denied. One of the discipline actions that was upheld was also appealed to the Board of Directors and the district action was upheld at this level as well.

Board acceptance: