

**Issaquah School District
Executive Limitations Monitoring Report
EL – 11: DISCIPLINE
(Annual Internal September 21, 2021)**

**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. The report has been expanded to include adult behavior in the specific areas of illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, weapons and violence. All of these behaviors 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 Regulations 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 in order to be supported by District officials and, if necessary, upheld by the courts.

Moreover, the Issaquah School District has implemented some pro-active strategies, curriculums and practices in order to positively influence the learning environment and culture of our schools. These pro-active approaches when combined with appropriate enforcement of our disciplinary rules and expectations help us to create and maintain a dignified, safe and effective environment for our students.

Accordingly, I interpret compliance, not as the absence of incidents requiring discipline, but as the consistent, supportable application of appropriate rules, procedures, curriculum and programs 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.

Since March of 2020, normal school operations have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Washington State closed all public schools to in-person learning for the final three months of the 2019-20 school year. The Issaquah School District began the 2020-21 school year in a fully remote teaching and learning modality. As the year progressed, small groups of students began to return for some in-person instruction and experiences. By the end of the 2020-21 school year all students had an in-person option, but a large percentage of our students chose to remain in a fully remote setting. As a result of having so few students attending in-person on a regular basis, our annual incidents of discipline were significantly lower than in previous years. I do not believe that data from the pandemic effecting this period of time should be used in comparison to previous year's data nor

should the discipline data in this report be used to draw conclusions or inform program decisions moving forward. However, the regulation and procedures outlined in this report remain in place and all of our previous approaches are once again being implemented for the 2021-22 school year which is currently in session full-time and in-person, so I anticipate a more accurate discipline data picture for next year's report.

EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE

- 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 websites.
- It is the expectation that all discipline leading to emergency expulsions, suspensions, or expulsions imposed on students by the administration are recorded in the Skyward student records system. Periodic trainings are provided to building secretarial staff on how to appropriately complete this task.
- 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.
- Positive Behavioral Social Emotional Support or PBSES has been implemented across the ISD with PBSES coaches assigned to all of our elementary and middle schools.
- Board Adopted Social Emotional Learning curriculum is now being taught in all grades Kindergarten through 8th with individual lessons being delivered at the High School level when available and applicable.
- When students are expelled, a Psychological Evaluation and Risk Assessment may be recommended before a student can re-enter the school. The Assistant Principal or Principal communicates the requirement to the family that a Risk Assessment will be scheduled with a Clinical Psychologist that has been selected by the ISD. Some of the tools used by the Psychologist include: Child Behavior Checklist for Ages 6-18, Youth Self-Report Inventory for Ages 11-18, Personality Assessment Inventory-Adolescent Version, Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth. In 2018-19 there were 2 HS, 3 MS and 2 ES. In 2019-20 there were 5 HS, 6 MS and 0 ES. There were no Risk Assessments for the 2020-21 school year. These evaluations are done at the District's expense.
- 2018-19 Student Discipline work group formed to examine individual school and ISD practices related to student discipline sanctions and the issues of disproportionality among certain groups of students.
- Continued follow-up with students whose behavior resulted in a suspension or expulsion including strategic interventions and educational services.
- Cultural Competency and Equity related learning for staff and students in order to help our staff better understand cultural aspects that we should be aware of when addressing student behavioral issues.

- Tremendous increase in counseling and Mental Health supports for students as a pro-active measure to help students address concerns as one strategy to head off possible behaviors that can result in disciplinary sanctions.
- It has been verified that the District had no unresolved discipline appeals as of the end of the 2020-21 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

- Building administrators are required to notify and provide copies of all emergency expulsion, expulsion and suspension letters to their supervisors. I verify that this practice occurred during this monitoring period (2020-21 school year) and copies of those letters are on file at the central administration building. In addition, all discipline letter templates were updated by legal counsel in consultation with the Executive Director of High School Education. They remain available at our Staff Hub for administrator use.
- 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.
- It has been verified through the ongoing supervision of building administrators that any adults on campus who engaged in these known 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.
- All student incidents related to drugs/alcohol, bullying, violent offenses, assault/fighting, guns, knives, for the 2020-21 school year are summarized on the linked tables. The data shows no handgun, rifle or shotgun incidents in any school. Given the enrollment, number 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.

Skyward In-School Suspension Links:

[2018-19 Skyward Behavior Report – All, Special Need and Poverty In-School Suspensions](#)

[2019-20 Skyward Behavior Report - All, Special Need and Poverty In-School Suspensions](#)

[2020-21 Skyward Behavior Report – All, Special Need and Poverty In-School Suspensions](#)

Skyward Out-of-School Suspension Links:

[2018-19 Skyward Behavior Report – All, Special Needs and Poverty Out-of-School Suspensions](#)

[2019-20 Skyward Behavior Report – All, Special Needs and Poverty Out-of-School Suspensions](#)

[2020-21 Skyward Behavior Report – All, Special Needs and Poverty Out-of-School Suspensions](#)

OSPI/Skyward Weapons Report Links:

[2018-19 OSPI Weapons Report – All Incidents with Suspensions and Expulsion by Grade](#)

[2019-20 Skyward Weapons Report – All Incidents with Suspensions and Expulsion by Grade](#)

[2020-21 Skyward Weapons Report – All Incidents with Suspensions and Expulsion by Grade](#)

[All Suspensions by Race, three year trend, OSPI](#)

[All Suspensions by Special Program, three year trend, OSPI](#)

OSPI Exclusion Rates

[OSPI Issaquah Report Card - includes Student Discipline Rates and Exclusion Days Rate](#)

... 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 Regulations/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 is conducted at the beginning of each school year and includes a sign-off procedure. At the elementary level parents/guardians sign to verify receipt of the rules. At the middle and high school level parents/guardians and students sign to verify receipt of the rules. All signatures are kept on file during the school year. Much of this process has moved to an electronic digital system.

High school coaches 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

- Rules of Conduct and other building rules are reviewed annually by the Executive Directors of Elementary, Middle, and High Schools and legal counsel as appropriate. 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.
- In 2019-20 and the preceding years, administrators from all schools annually review their school rules and behavior expectations and gather input from their school community from a variety of processes outlined above. Due to the pandemic, not all buildings conducted a review with a parent group during the 2020-21 school year. The review will take place in all building during the 2021-22 school year.

- All principals affirm the distribution of a student handbook and/or student behavior expectations outlining the current discipline rules and consequences to each student and/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 and Middle School students and parents, as well as, all parents of 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 provided electronically to each student athlete for each sports season for which they registered. 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 Regulation.
- Student handbooks are available for inspection in each school building. The elementary handbook was posted on the District website. Elementary and Secondary student handbooks are posted on their respective school websites and are included in the middle school agenda planners. Staff review the handbooks at the beginning of the school year and a copy of the sign-off sheet will be collected and stored on each student.
- 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 District's 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 and staff 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.

School based staff also implement a PBSES philosophy and approach and overtly teach social emotional learning strategies with students in order to provide them with skills and strategies to help address issues and conflicts so they don't result in inappropriate behaviors that can lead to disciplinary sanctions.

EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE

- 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.

- All principals were basic, proficient or distinguished on their 2019-20 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.

- All schools implement a PBSES approach to student behavior management; PBSES Coaches at Middle School and Elementary, and administrators at High School support this work with their Tier 1 and Tier 2 teams. This work includes student behavior data collection and analysis to look for trends and patterns as a strategy to decrease incidences. This work can also help us identify where additional resources may be needed.
 - Data sources may include Skyward, SWIS, Internalizing/Externalizing questionnaires and rating forms.
 - Universal Screeners of Internalizing and Externalizing Behaviors (Brief Externalizing and Internalizing Screener for Youth—Elementary; Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire—Secondary), nurse/counselor visits
 - SWIS (School-Wide Information System) tracks behavior based on referrals submitted by staff members. These referrals track behavior for analysis of patterns and trends. Most referrals do not result in discipline response or coding in Skyward but rather result in re-teaching or consideration by a team to determine system changes to support student behavior changes.

. . . 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 Regulations, 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

- With the departure of our Executive Director of Compliance and Legal Affairs, our Education Exec Directors supported all administrators in their efforts to consistently enforce rules, regulations and procedures regarding discipline. The Executive Director of Human Resources and the Directors of Human Resources support all District administrators in regards to

concerns or complaints regarding employees. This practice continued during the 2020-2021 school year.

- From August 2018 through February 2020, HR contracted with the former Executive Director of Compliance and Legal Affairs to provide periodic in-person trainings at the beginning of the school year to all classified and certificated staff on the District Regulations on the following seven (7) topics, (1) the Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying; (2) Prohibition of Sexual Harassment; (3) Nondiscrimination; (4) McKinney-Vento; (5) Americans with Disabilities Act; (6) Maintaining Professional Staff Student Boundaries; and (7) Mandatory Reporting responsibilities. The Human Resources Department provides training to new staff as part of their on-boarding process as hires are completed throughout the year. The former Executive Director of Compliance and Legal Affairs has provided lunch and recess supervision trainings to Deans of Students and Paraprofessionals. These trainings have included conducting age and developmentally appropriate student interviews and identifying and responding to allegations of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying and or retaliation. The Executive Director of Human Resources in collaboration with the Professional Learning Coach – Classified provided coaching and training to staff in the spring of 2019. Lastly, the Executive Directors of each level provided training and guidance on conducting student hearings and supplied administrators with a packet that includes a discipline hearing checklist. During the 2020-2021 school year this training was overseen by the Executive Director of Human Resources, and the Human Resources Department.

During the 2020-21 school year the District had two student discipline appeals that went before the Board and the District was upheld on both of these appeals.

Board acceptance: September 21, 2021