GAAC – Sex-Based Discrimination

(See GAF and JGEC)

The board of education is committed to providing a positive and productive working and learning environment, free from discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment. The district does not discriminate on the basis of sex in admissions, employment, or the educational programs or activities it operates. Discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, of employees or students of the district in any district education program or activity will not be tolerated in the school district and is strictly prohibited.

Sex-based discrimination, including sexual harassment, is unlawful discrimination under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Kansas Act Against Discrimination. All forms of sexual harassment are prohibited at school, on school property, and at all school-sponsored activities, programs, or events within the United States.

(Position or name, address, email address, and phone number of the Title IX Coordinator and Title VII or other compliance coordinator, if different than the Title IX Coordinator) has been designated to coordinate compliance with nondiscrimination requirements contained in Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 regarding discrimination on the basis of sex, and the Kansas Act Against Discrimination. Information concerning the provisions of these Acts, and the rights provided thereunder, are available from the designated compliance coordinator identified herein. Inquiries about the application of Title IX to the district may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator; to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington D.C. 20202-1100, (800)421-3481, or at OCR@ed.gov; or both.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply.

"Appeal decision-maker" reviews the appeal along with written statements in support of, or challenging, the outcome of the written determination regarding responsibility, and other relevant documentation collected during the formal grievance process. The appeal decision-maker shall not be the Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, or informal resolution facilitator.

"Complainant" means an individual who is alleged to be a victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

"Dating violence" means violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim where the existence of such a relationship

shall be determined based on a consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved.

"Decision-maker" reviews all the evidence and prepares an impartial written responsibility determination as to whether the alleged conduct occurred and provides an opportunity for the parties and their representatives to prepare written questions to be answered by the other party. The decision-maker shall not be the Title IX Coordinator, investigator, or informal resolution facilitator.

"Domestic violence" includes felony or misdemeanor crimes committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim under the family or domestic violence laws of Kansas.

"Formal complaint" means a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that the district investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.

"Informal resolution facilitator" is a neutral person, designated by the Title IX Coordinator, who has been trained to assist the parties through the voluntary informal resolution process. The informal resolution facilitator shall not be the Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, or appeal-decision maker.

"Investigator" is the person who carries out the investigation after the formal complaint is filed and conducts interviews of the witnesses, collects and documents evidence, and drafts an investigative report. The investigator shall not be the Title IX Coordinator, decision-maker, appeal decision-maker, or informal resolution facilitator.

"Respondent" is an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

"Sex-based discrimination" means any unfair treatment, unequal opportunity, or harassment on the basis of sex in the district's programs or activities.

"Sexual assault" means an offense classified as a forcible or nonforcible sex offense under the uniform crime reporting system of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

"Sexual harassment" means conduct on the basis of sex involving one or more of the following: (1) A district employee conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the district on an individual's participation in unwelcomed sexual conduct; (2) unwelcomed conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the district's educational program or activity; or (3) sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking.

"Stalking" means engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety or the safety of others or to suffer substantial emotional distress.

"Supportive measures" mean non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent regardless of whether a formal complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the recipient's education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the recipient's educational environment, or deter sexual harassment. Supportive measures may include counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the school, and other similar measures. The supportive measures provided to the complainant or respondent by the district must remain confidential to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair the ability of the district to provide the supportive measures. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the effective implementation of supportive measures.

"Title IX Coordinator" is the individual designated at the district level who has the responsibility to coordinate compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The Title IX Coordinator's responsibilities include, but are not limited to: developing materials and ensuring professional development occurs for staff involved in Title IX compliance, creating systems to centralize records, gathering relevant data, contacting the complainant (and/or parents or guardians, if applicable) once the district has actual knowledge of alleged sexual harassment, coordinating the implementation of supportive measures, signing a formal complaint to initiate a grievance process, and ensuring any remedies are implemented.

Reporting of Sex-Based Discrimination, including Sexual Harassment

The district takes all reports of sex-based discrimination, including sexual harassment, seriously and will respond meaningfully to every such report of which the district has actual knowledge.

The district encourages all victims of sexual harassment and persons with knowledge of such harassment to report the harassment immediately. Any person may make a verbal or written report of sex discrimination by any means and at any time.

Any act of retaliation or discrimination against any person who has opposed discrimination; filed a complaint; or testified, assisted, or participated in any investigation, proceeding, or appeal involving sex-based discrimination, including sexual harassment, is prohibited. The district will take appropriate

available action to address retaliation, which may include student or employee discipline procedures. It shall be a violation to discourage a student or an employee from filing a complaint, or to fail to investigate or refer for investigation, any complaint lodged under the provisions of this policy. Violation of this policy shall result in appropriate disciplinary action.

False or malicious complaints of sex-based discrimination, including sexual harassment, may result in corrective or disciplinary action against the complainant.

False statements made in the course of an investigation of sex-based discrimination, including sexual harassment, may result in corrective or disciplinary action against the individual.

Complaint Process for Sex-Based Discrimination (Not Sexual Harassment)

Complaints of sex-based discrimination that do not allege sexual harassment will be investigated through the complaint procedure outlined in policy KN to determine whether, under the totality of the circumstances, the alleged behavior constitutes a violation of this policy. Actions determined to be in violation of this policy shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination for employees and expulsion for students. Actions which are in violation of other policies but do not constitute sex-based discrimination may also result in appropriate discipline.

Grievance Process for Sexual Harassment

Any employee who witnesses an act of sexual harassment or receives a complaint of harassment from another employee or a student shall report the complaint to the Title IX Coordinator, the employee's supervisor, or other designated district official. Employees who fail to appropriately report complaints or incidents of sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator, the employee's supervisor, or other designated district official may face disciplinary action.

Use of this complaint procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of any other remedies including the right to file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or the Kansas Human Rights Commission.

The Title IX Coordinator, any investigator, decision-maker, appeal decision-maker, or any informal resolution facilitator shall not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against the complainant or respondent. These individuals shall receive training on the definition of sexual harassment; the scope of the education program and activities; how to conduct an investigation, including appeals and informal resolution processes; and how to serve impartially, including avoiding prejudgment of the facts, conflicts of interest, and bias.

Investigators shall receive training on issues of relevance of questions and evidence in order to create investigative reports that fairly summarize relevant evidence. Decision-makers shall receive

training on issues of relevance of questions and evidence, including when questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant.

Within 10 business days of any reports of sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator shall, contact the complainant and discuss the availability of supportive measures, with or without the filing of a formal complaint; consider the complainant's wishes as to supportive measures; and inform the complainant of the right to a formal complaint investigation consistent with Title IX and the informal resolution process.

Informal Resolution Process for Sexual Harassment Complaints

At any time during the formal complaint process regarding alleged sexual harassment and prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility, the district may facilitate an informal resolution process, such as mediation, that does not involve a full investigation and determination of responsibility.

The informal resolution process requires:

- The informal resolution facilitator is to be a trained educational professional, consultant, or other individual selected by the Title IX Coordinator who has received training on their role;
- the parties to be provided a written notice disclosing the allegations, the requirements of the informal resolution process, and information on when it may preclude the parties from resuming a formal complaint arising from the same allegations;
- at any time prior to agreeing to a resolution, any party to have the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the investigation of the formal complaint and to be informed of any consequences resulting from participating in the informal resolution process;
- that the parties voluntarily consent, in writing, to the informal resolution process; and
- that the informal resolution process is not used to resolve allegations that an employee has sexually harassed a student.

If the matter is resolved to the satisfaction of the parties, the facilitator shall document the nature of the complaint and the resolution, have both parties sign the agreement, provide a copy of the agreement to both parties, and forward it to the Title IX Coordinator. If the matter is not resolved, the informal resolution facilitator will notify the Title IX Coordinator, who will resume the formal complaint process.

Formal Grievance Process for Sexual Harassment Complaints

No formal investigation of alleged sexual harassment may occur until after a formal complaint has been filed.

The procedures for filing a formal complaint are as follows.

- At the time of filing a formal complaint, a complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of the district concerning which the formal complaint is filed.
- A formal complaint should be filed in writing and contain the name and address of the person filing the complaint. The complaint should briefly describe the alleged violation. Filing of the complaint with the Title IX Coordinator may be done in person, by mail, or by email. If an individual does not wish to file a written complaint, and the matter has not been adequately resolved, the Title IX Coordinator may initiate the complaint. Forms for filing written complaints are available in each school building office and the central office.
- A complaint should be filed as soon as possible after the conduct occurs, but not later than 180 calendar days after the complainant becomes aware of the alleged violation, unless the conduct forming the basis for the complaint is ongoing.

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator shall either dismiss the formal complaint or initiate the formal grievance process by providing notice to the parties of the complaint.

Dismissal of a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment

The Title IX Coordinator must dismiss the complaint if it is determined that:

- Even if all the facts alleged are true, the conduct alleged in the formal complaint would not constitute sexual harassment as defined herein;
- the conduct did not occur in the recipient's education program or activity; or
- the conduct did not occur against a person in the United States.

During the course of the formal grievance process, the Title IX Coordinator may dismiss the complaint if:

- A complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the complainant would like to withdraw the formal complaint or any allegations therein;
- the respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the district; or
- specific circumstances prevent the recipient from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the formal complaint or allegations therein.

Upon a dismissal of a complaint, the Title IX Coordinator must promptly send written notice of the dismissal and reason(s) therefor simultaneously to the parties.

Dismissal of a formal complaint does not preclude an investigation or disciplinary action under another district policy.

Initiation of Formal Grievance Process for Sexual Harassment Complaints

Upon filing of a formal complaint of sexual harassment, the district shall provide written notice to the known parties including:

- Notice of the allegations of sexual harassment including sufficient details to prepare a response before any initial interview including:
    - the identities of the parties involved, if known;
    - the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment; and
    - the date and location of the alleged incident, if known.
- The district's investigation procedures, including any informal resolution process;
- A statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility will be made by the decision-maker at the conclusion of the investigation;
- Notice to the parties they may have an advisor of their choice and may inspect and review any evidence; and
- Notice to the parties of any provision in the district's code of conduct or policy that prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information.

If, in the course of an investigation, the investigator decides to investigate allegations about the complainant or respondent that are not included in the notice initially provided, the Title IX Coordinator shall provide notice of the additional allegations to known parties.

Formal Complaint Investigations Regarding Sexual Harassment

To ensure a complete and thorough investigation of any sexual harassment complaint and to protect the parties, the investigator shall:

- Ensure that the preponderance of the evidence burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility rests on the district and not the parties;
- Provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses and evidence;
- Not restrict either party's ability to discuss the allegations under investigation or to gather and present relevant evidence;
- Allow the parties to be accompanied by an advisor of their choice;
- Provide written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of any interview or meeting at which a party or witness is expected to participate;
- Provide the parties equal access to review all the evidence collected which is directly related to the allegations raised in a formal complaint of sexual harassment, including the

investigative report, and the opportunity to respond to that evidence before a determination is made;

- Be impartial and objectively evaluate all relevant evidence without relying on sex stereotypes;
- Not have conflicts of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents;
- Not make credibility determinations based on the individual's status as complainant, respondent, or witness.

The investigator shall prepare an initial investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence and share the report with the parties and their advisors simultaneously.

The parties shall have 10 days to submit a written response to the initial report for the investigator's consideration.

Following the opportunity for the parties and their advisors to review and respond to the initial report, the investigator shall submit a final report to the parties and the Title IX Coordinator simultaneously. Upon receipt, the Title IX Coordinator shall provide a copy of the final report and supporting documentation to the decision-maker.

Decision-Maker's Determination Regarding Sexual Harassment Complaints

Upon receiving the investigator's final report, but prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility, the decision-maker must afford each party the opportunity to submit written, relevant questions that a party wants asked of any party or witness, provide each party with any answers provided, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions.

The decision-maker must issue a written determination regarding responsibility based on a preponderance of the evidence. The decision-maker's written determination shall:

- Identify the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment;
- describe the procedural steps taken, including any notifications to the parties, site visits, methods used to gather evidence, and interviews;
- include the findings of fact supporting the determination;
- address any district policies and/or conduct rules which apply to the facts;
- a statement of, and rational for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility; and
- the procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and/or respondent to appeal the determination.

The written determination may, but is not required to, recommend that, based on respondent's action, respondent be subject to disciplinary sanctions and any remedies designed to preserve access to the educational program or activity that may be provided by the district to the complainant.

Actions determined to be in violation of this policy shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination for employees and expulsion for students. Actions which are in violation of other policies but do not constitute sex-based discrimination may also result in disciplinary action.

A copy of the written determination shall be provided to both parties and the Title IX Coordinator simultaneously.

The decision becomes final on the date the parties receive the results of an appeal, if any appeal is filed, or on the date the opportunity for an appeal expires.

If the formal grievance process determines the actions constituted sexual harassment in violation of this policy, the respondent shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination for employees or expulsion for students. If the formal grievance process determines the actions were in violation of other policies but do not constitute sexual harassment, the respondent may be subject discipline under those policies.

If it is determined that sexual harassment has occurred, the district will take prompt, remedial action to prevent its reoccurrence.

Appeals Regarding Sexual Harassment Complaints

The complainant or respondent may appeal the decision-maker's determination regarding responsibility of a sexual harassment complaint or a dismissal of a formal complaint, on any of the following:

- Procedural irregularity that affected the outcomes;
- new evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal of the complaint was made that could affect the outcome; and/or
- the Title IX Coordinator, investigator, or decision-maker had a conflict of interest or bias against either party that affected the outcome.

The request to appeal shall be made in writing to the Title IX Coordinator within 10 days after the date of the written determination. Appeals shall be a review of the record by an attorney, an independent hearing officer appointed by the board, or the board. The appeal decision-maker may not be the Title IX Coordinator, the investigator, the decision-maker, or informal resolution facilitator that participated in any level of the grievance process that led to the original determination.

The Title IX Coordinator shall notify the parties in writing of the filing of an appeal and implement appeal procedures equally for both parties.

The appeal decision-maker shall give the parties an equal opportunity to submit a written statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome of determination of responsibility. Within 30 days after the appeal is filed, the appeal decision-maker shall issue a written decision, including the rationale for the decision, and

provide the written decision simultaneously to both parties and to the Title IX Coordinator.

Recordkeeping

Records relating to sexual harassment complaints filed and their resolution shall be maintained by the Title IX Coordinator for seven years.

Dissemination of Policy

A summary of this policy and the complaint procedures including how to report or file a formal complaint of sex discrimination or sexual harassment shall be published in district handbooks and on the district's website as directed by the Title IX Coordinator. Notification of the policy may include posting informational notices in district or school publications, publishing in local newspapers, , or distributing memoranda or other written communications to students and employees.

In addition, the district is required to include a statement of nondiscrimination in any bulletins, announcements, publications, catalogs, application forms, or other recruitment materials that are made available to participants, students, applicants, or employees.

Approved:

KASB Recommendation – 7/96; 8/98; 7/03; 4/07; 6/13; 6/15; 12/18; 6/20; 7/20; 6/21; 6/26