



THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Governance | Accountability | Achievement | Oversight | Career & College Readiness

Title:	Discipline Discussion and Resolution	
As Related To:	<input type="checkbox"/> Goal One: Effective and accountable P-13 governance. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Two: Comprehensive statewide K-12 accountability. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Three: Closing achievement gap.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Four: Strategic oversight of the K-12 system. <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Five: Career and college readiness for all students. <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Relevant To Board Roles:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> System Oversight <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Convening and Facilitating
Policy Considerations / Key Questions:	What are the State Board of Educations priorities in addressing the issue of discipline? Do the federal guidelines align with the SBE goals for addressing the issue of discipline? What are the Board's next steps?	
Possible Board Action:	<input type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	
Materials Included in Packet:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Memo <input type="checkbox"/> Graphs / Graphics <input type="checkbox"/> Third-Party Materials <input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint	
Synopsis:	The Board will engage in a discussion about its goals around the issue of discipline and its potential role and next steps in impacting discipline policies and practices in Washington State. The Board will also hear about the recently released federal guidelines on discipline policies and practices and consider the adoption of a resolution affirming the Board's commitment to engaging the issue of discipline and encouraging districts to evaluate their policies in light of the federal guidelines.	



DISCIPLINE RESOLUTION AND FEDERAL GUIDANCE

Policy Consideration

1. Does the federal discipline guidance align with the Board's goals for engaging the issue of discipline?

Background

On January 8, 2014 the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice released guidance for student discipline policies. This guidance is intended to help districts, schools, and policymakers create effective discipline policies that are equitably administered across student groups. The guidance cites research that has found disparities in discipline rates based on race, income, and special education status, similar to what we have seen in Washington state. The Departments have engaged in investigations of districts and schools suspected of violating Title IV and Title VI, which require that discipline policies be applied without discrimination on the basis of race. Currently in Washington, Seattle Public Schools is being reviewed for discipline related issues. The guidance issued by the Departments is intended to notify stakeholders and districts of the concerns and provide solutions for creating safe and effective discipline policies that do not disproportionately impact particular student groups, either through design or implementation.

Summary

Concerns

The concerns of the Departments are outlined in the "Dear Colleague Letter." The letter cites research that correlates suspension and expulsion with decreased academic achievement, higher dropout rates, school avoidance and disengagement, increased behavioral problems, substance abuse, and juvenile justice involvement. In terms of racial disparity, the Departments are concerned with the different treatment of students under seemingly neutral policies and the disparate impact that policies may have on students of a particular group. Different treatment can manifest as:

- The inconsistent enforcement of a policy with a particular student group,
- The inconsistent and more severe punishment of a particular student group, or
- A policy that targets a particular students group, such as a dress code that prohibits a style of clothing officials believe a particular student group would be likely to wear.

Disparate impact of policies is commonly seen in policies that impose mandatory interventions and exclusions for offenses.

The "Dear Colleague Letter" also asks districts and schools to examine their discipline policies in terms of the educational goals the policy may support.

Solutions

The Departments also issued a “Guiding Principles” document that provides strategies for creating a safe and welcoming environment for all students. The three guiding principles are:

1. “Create positive climates and focus on prevention;”
2. “Develop clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations and consequences to address disruptive student behaviors; and”
3. “Ensure fairness, equity, and continuous improvement.”

Under each guiding principle, the Departments outline actions and strategies. Under guiding principle 1, there are strategies such as using a positive behavior and intervention system, promoting social and emotional learning, and increasing staff training on engaging in positive behavior. For guiding principle 2, strategies include setting high expectations for student behavior, engaging the entire school community and families in developing discipline policies, and removing students from the classroom as a last resort. Under guiding principle 3, strategies focus on the use of data to track the fair use of discipline practices and areas for improvement.

Alignment with State Board of Education Goals

The guidelines and supporting actions and strategies were developed with the intention of reducing disproportionality in discipline practices and improving the school environment for all students. This aligns with the Board’s strategic plan goal of reducing the achievement and opportunity gaps and promoting equity, and the Board’s mission to advance the academic achievement of all students.

The attached resolution asserts the Board’s intent to continue to engage the issue of discipline, potentially through a system health indicator, and improve discipline practices. The federal guidelines may serve as a means for the SBE to communicate to districts what it considers to be best practices in ensuring fair treatment of all students and the creation of safe and welcoming schools. The resolution, therefore, encourage districts to use the federal guidelines to examine their discipline policies and practices.

Action

Approval of a school discipline resolution encouraging districts to examine their policies in light of the federal guidelines.

2014 School Discipline Resolution on Federal Guidance

Whereas, schools in Washington state removed over 47,000 students in 2012-13.

Whereas, similar to national trends, the majority of suspensions and expulsions in Washington state are for non-violent behavior;

Whereas, in Washington state students of color, low-income students, and special education students are suspended and expelled at disproportionate rates;

Whereas, being suspended or expelled has been found to impact a student's academic success;

Whereas, the State Board of Education affirms its commitment to improving school discipline practices;

Whereas, the State Board of Education recognizes that data in new categories developed by the Discipline Data Task Force will be collected in the future and will allow for better understanding and measurement of current practices and discipline's impact on students;

Whereas, the State Board of Education intends to continue to explore the potential incorporation of discipline into the State's Healthy Schools indicators framework;

Whereas, on January 8, 2014 the United States Departments of Education and Justice issued school discipline guidance that calls for improving school climate and discipline policies with the goal of reducing disproportionality in discipline practices;

Whereas, the guidance draws on emerging research and best practices to help guide state and local efforts to improve school climate and school discipline;

Whereas, the guidance encourages schools to develop safe, inclusive, and positive school climates that provide students with supports such as evidence-based tiered supports and social and emotional learning;

Whereas, the guidance encourages schools to develop clear, consistent, and appropriate expectations and consequences regarding student behavior;

Whereas the guidance encourages schools to ensure equity in their discipline practices and monitor their discipline data to facilitate continuous improvement of practice and policy;

Whereas, the guidance encourages schools to only remove students from the classroom as a last resort and return students to class as soon as possible; and

Whereas, the guidance asserts that if students are removed from class they should receive comparable academic instruction and educational services as those received in the classroom.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Washington State Board of Education encourages schools and school districts to review their discipline policies and practices in light of the federal guidance issued on January 8, 2014.



DISCIPLINE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the State Board of Education's priorities in addressing the issue of discipline?
 - a. Impact on student achievement
 - b. Disproportionality of discipline practices
 - c. Impact on opportunity and achievement gaps
 - d. Others?

2. What aspects of the discipline issue are most important for the Board to measure?
 - a. How would these translate into an indicator?
 - b. When and how would they be measured? In what system?

3. What are the Board's next steps in addressing this issue?
 - a. Information gathering
 - b. Raising awareness
 - c. Others?