

Policy 5145.3: Nondiscrimination/Harassment

Status: ADOPTED

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This policy shall apply to all acts constituting unlawful discrimination or harassment related to school activity or to school attendance occurring within a district school, to acts which occur off campus or outside of school-related or school-sponsored activities but which may have an impact or create a hostile environment at school, and to all acts of the Governing Board and the Superintendent in enacting policies and procedures that govern the district.

The Board desires to provide a welcoming, safe, and supportive school environment that allows all students equal access to and opportunities in the district's academic, extracurricular, and other educational support programs, services, and activities. The Board prohibits, at any district school or school activity, unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, and bullying, of any student by anyone, based on the student's actual or perceived race; color; ancestry; nationality; national origin; immigration status; ethnic group identification; ethnicity; age; religion; pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy or lactation, including related medical conditions or recovery; parental, marital, and family status; physical or mental disability; medical condition; sex; sex stereotypes; sex characteristics; sexual orientation; gender; gender identity; gender expression; or genetic information; or, association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.

Unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying, may result from physical, verbal, nonverbal, or written conduct based on any of the categories listed above. Unlawful discrimination also occurs when prohibited conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; has the effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with a student's academic performance; or otherwise adversely affects a student's educational opportunities.

Unlawful discrimination also includes disparate treatment of students based on one of the categories above with respect to the provision of opportunities to participate in school programs or activities or the provision or receipt of educational benefits or services.

Because unlawful discrimination could occur when disciplining students, including suspension and expulsion, the Superintendent or designee shall ensure that staff enforce discipline rules fairly, consistently and in a non-discriminatory manner, as specified in Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 5144 - Discipline, Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process, and Administrative Regulation 5144.2 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process (Students With Disabilities).

The Board also prohibits any form of retaliation against any individual who reports or participates in the reporting of unlawful discrimination, files or participates in the filing of a complaint, or investigates, participates, or refuses to participate in the investigation of a complaint or report alleging unlawful discrimination. Retaliation complaints shall be investigated and resolved in the same manner as a discrimination complaint.

The Superintendent or designee shall facilitate students' access to the educational program by publicizing the district's nondiscrimination policy and related complaint procedures to students, parents/guardians, and employees. In addition, the Superintendent or designee shall post the district's policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying and other required information on the district's website in a manner that is easily accessible to parents/guardians and students, in accordance with law and the accompanying administrative regulation. (Education Code 234.1, 234.6; 34 CFR 106.8)

The Superintendent or designee shall provide training and/or information on the scope and use of the policy and complaint procedures and take other measures designed to increase the school community's understanding of the requirements of law related to discrimination. The Superintendent or designee shall regularly review the implementation of the district's nondiscrimination policies and practices and, as necessary, shall take action to remove any identified barrier to student access to or participation in the district's educational program. The Superintendent or designee shall report the findings and recommendations to the Board after each review.

Regardless of whether a complainant complies with the writing, timeline, and/or other formal filing requirements, all complaints alleging unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying, shall be investigated and prompt action taken to stop the discrimination, prevent recurrence, and address any continuing effect on students.

Students who engage in unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, retaliation, or bullying, in violation of law, Board policy, or administrative regulation shall be subject to appropriate consequence or discipline, which may include suspension or expulsion when the behavior is severe or pervasive as defined in Education Code 48900.4. Any employee who permits or engages in prohibited discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, retaliation, or bullying, shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

When a student has been suspended, or other means of correction have been implemented against the student for an incident of racist bullying, harassment, or intimidation, the principal or designee shall engage both the victim and perpetrator in a restorative justice practice suitable to the needs of the students. The principal or designee shall also require the perpetrator to engage in a culturally sensitive program that promotes racial justice and equity and combats racism and ignorance and shall regularly check on the victim to ensure that the victim is not in danger of suffering from any long-lasting mental health issues. (Education Code 48900.5)

When appropriate based on the severity or pervasiveness of the bullying, the Superintendent or designee shall notify the parents/guardians of victims and perpetrators and may contact law enforcement.

Allegations of unlawful discrimination in district programs and activities shall be brought, investigated, and resolved in accordance with Board Policy 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures, when required by law. However, complaints alleging sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment, under Title IX shall be investigated and resolved in accordance with the procedures specified in 34 CFR 106.44 and 106.45 and Administrative Regulation 5145.71 - Title IX Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment Complaint Procedures.

Record-Keeping

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain a record of all reported cases of unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying, to enable the district to monitor, address, and prevent repetitive prohibited behavior in district schools.
