

SAFE SCHOOLS EXHIBIT**CHARGE TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SAFE SCHOOLS**

The Board of Education welcomes the participation of all committee members in this effort to ensure a safe, healthy and wholesome environment for students and staff, in which respect for the rights and property of others is fostered.

Your charge is to review and make recommendations on specific policies, regulations, and practices of the district directed at preventing or controlling vandalism or violence in the schools. Your efforts shall assist the Board in establishing a system-wide anti-violence program.

Each of the identified policies, regulations, plans, and procedures shall be reviewed to ensure that they are:

1. Consistent with law and regulation;
2. Clear, complete and enforceable; and
3. Appropriately disseminated to students, staff, parents and are available to the general public, upon request.

Issues for Review**I. Student Conduct and Discipline**

Commissioner's regulations require each Board to adopt student conduct and discipline policies which include:

1. A student bill of rights and responsibilities;
2. A discipline code for student behavior; and
3. A range of penalties that may be imposed for violation of the discipline code.

In addition to the above, the Committee shall also review the district's policies and procedures governing student drug and alcohol abuse, vandalism, as well as student conduct on school buses and at interscholastic sporting events. The advisory committee should ensure that:

1. There are written codes of expected behavior communicated to students and parents;
2. The discipline policies include warnings that anyone engaging in violent acts on school property risks serious penalties;
3. Due process and appeal procedures are clearly stated and provided;
4. Parents and students are fully aware of the district's policy on drug and alcohol abuse and that there are procedures in place for referring students for treatment; and
5. Students and parents are held financially liable for willful acts of vandalism.

II. Public Order on School Property

State Education Law requires the school district to adopt rules and regulations for the maintenance of public order on school property and to provide a program for the enforcement of such rules. The rules and regulations, including all amendments, must be filed with the Board of Regents and the Commissioner.

The committee shall review this policy to ensure that it comprehensively defines the conduct that is prohibited and the enforcement program. The committee should further ensure that the policy is disseminated to appropriate persons.

III. Training for Students and Staff

The committee shall establish whether or not students and staff are receiving training and, if so, whether it is effective. Training for students should be provided in an age-appropriate manner, addressing non-violent means for handling frustrations, preparing students for the future, and reducing the potential for violence on school property.

Teachers and administrators should be receiving instruction to assist them in the early identification and handling of discipline problems, covering such issues as the methods for breaking up fights and obtaining help in a hurry.

IV. Searches and Seizures

The district should have a policy stating its right, in certain instances, to conduct a search of a student and his/her possessions for a weapon (or other contraband) and seize it. Particular attention should be given to determining whether the policy provides sufficient direction to staff to protect them from being charged with violating a student's constitutional rights. The committee should also ensure that staff is receiving adequate training in this area.

V. Emergency Management Plans

The committee should review whether the district adopted an emergency plan by October 1, 1990; whether the district updates the plan every year by October 1, as required; and whether the plan provides adequate direction in the case of rioting or other violence in or near a school.

VI. Weapons on School Property

The committee should ensure that the district has a policy banning dangerous weapons in school which is sufficient and properly enforced, containing adequate penalties for its violation, and about which students are informed.

EXHIBIT

2003

Support Services

Federal and state law requires school districts apply a suspension of at least one year for any student who is determined to have brought a weapon to school. (The penalty may be modified by the Superintendent of Schools or the Board on a case-by-case basis.)

VII. Involvement of Parents and Community

Parents and the community may serve as valuable resources in helping to make the anti-violence program work. The committee shall determine whether parents and the public are made aware of the district's policies, regulations, and practices in preventing violence and are involved in the program as appropriate.

VIII. Coordination with Appropriate Law Enforcement Agencies

The committee should also examine whether the district's program is coordinated with local authorities to ensure adequate police protection at district events and quick police response when necessary. Efforts may also be made to see if the district should work with members of the local police to help students understand how law enforcement agencies work to prevent violence.

IX. Building Security

The committee should examine the school's security measures including procedures governing access to school buildings, student dismissal precautions and visitors to the schools.

Summary

The advisory committee shall report its findings and recommendations to the Board, by May 30, and prior to public release. Final reports shall be delivered to the Board by June 30, at a meeting scheduled by the Board to receive the report.

Any official policy level action is the sole discretion of the Board. The Board is in no way obligated to follow committee recommendations. The Board has the right to accept, reject or modify all or any part of a committee recommendation.

The Board values your assistance in this project. Welcome and thank you for participating.

Adoption date: July 2003