

MEMORANDUM

TO: NWABSD Board of Education
Members

DATE: January 22, 2025

NUMBER: 25-047

FR: Office of the Superintendent

SUBJECT: Approval of Proposed
Revisions to BP 5125.3
Withholding Grades
Diplomas or Transcripts;
First Reading

STRATEGIC PLAN/BOARD GOAL:

Track 1: Operational Improvements
Initiative: Optimize Business Practices

ABSTRACT:

Board policy revisions require Board approval.

ISSUE:

At issue is to approve the first reading of the proposed revisions to BP 5125.3 Withholding Grades Diplomas or Transcripts and open for public comments.

BACKGROUND AND/OR PERTINENT INFORMATION:

The Superintendent/designee presents drafts or suggestions for board policy revisions when the law changes or specific needs occur. Policy revisions shall normally be given two readings prior to adoption by the Board.

This is the first reading of the proposed revisions to BP 5125.3 Withholding Grades Diplomas or Transcripts within the Students series.

This policy update reflects AASB's determination that BP 5125.3 Withholding Grades, Diplomas, or Transcripts be removed from this policy manual in its entirety.

As with BP 5121, AASB believes this policy, which permits the withholding of grades, transcripts, and diplomas if a student is indebted to a district for lost or damaged items, does not reflect best practice. AASB recommends removing and archiving this policy in its entirety for the following reasons:

- a. Withholding grades, diplomas, or transcripts can have significant long-term consequences for students and their post-secondary employment or education opportunities, and in turn, for their families and communities.
- b. Students earn their grades and diplomas by demonstrating mastery of the content. If a student has earned their grades or diploma, they should not be withheld as a punishment or deterrence.
- c. School districts have other means to seek reparations or recover losses from equipment or property damages, rather than withholding grades, diplomas, or transcripts.
- d. The language suggesting that students who are unable to pay for assessed damages should provide voluntary work instead is inequitable. Voluntary work and community service can be an appropriate assignment for all students. Those students whose parents can afford to pay for damages should not be exempt from community service if the district deems this an appropriate response to property or equipment damage.

The Board Policy Committee reviewed the proposed changes, recommends approval and to open for public comments.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the first reading of the proposed revisions to BP 5125.3 Withholding Grades Diplomas or Transcripts as presented and open for public comments;
2. Do not approve the first reading of the proposed revisions to BP 5125.3 as presented;
3. Take no final action.

ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATION:

The administration recommends the Board approve the first reading of the proposed revisions to BP 5125.3 Withholding Grades Diplomas or Transcripts as presented and open for public comments.

~~BP 5125.3 WITHHOLDING GRADES, DIPLOMA OR TRANSCRIPTS~~

~~Note:~~ *The following optional policy is intended as a means to obtain reparation for damages or losses to district property.*

~~When school property has been willfully damaged or not returned upon demand, the Superintendent or designee shall inform the parent/guardian in writing of the responsible student's alleged misconduct and the reparation that is due.~~

~~This notice shall include a statement that the district may withhold grades, progress reports, diploma or transcripts from the student and parent/guardian until reparation is made, except that records will be released to another school district to which the student has transferred.~~

~~(cf. 5131.5 – Vandalism, Theft and Graffiti)~~

~~(cf. 6161.2 – Damaged or Lost Instructional Materials)~~

~~Upon notification that grades, progress reports, diploma, and/or transcript will be withheld, the student, parents or guardian may request an opportunity to meet with the appropriate school official to receive an explanation of the evidence of property damage and to provide their own evidence disputing the cause of the property damage and/or the amount of damage. This meeting must be requested within five (5) school days of the student/parents' receipt of the notice, or the right to a meeting is waived.~~

~~If the student and parent/guardian are unable to pay for the damages or return the property, the Superintendent or designee shall provide a program of voluntary work for the student. When this voluntary work is completed, the student's grades, progress reports, diploma or transcripts shall be released. Alternatively, at the Superintendent's discretion, the district may release grades, progress reports, diploma, or transcript if the student and parent/guardian are unable to pay reparations due to severe financial hardship.~~

~~Note:~~ *School districts may bring a civil action against one or both parents of a student who knowingly or intentionally destroys district property. Parents are liable for damages in an amount not to exceed \$15,000 and are also responsible for the court costs incurred by the district in bringing the action. If the parents have insurance that covers the damages claimed by a school district, and the policy limit is in excess of \$15,000, the district can recover up to \$25,000, or the policy limits, whichever amount is lower.*

~~Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent inspection of a student's records by his or her parents or guardians, or by the student if 18 or older.~~

Legal Reference:

~~ALASKA STATUTES~~

~~09.65.255~~ ~~Liability for acts of minors~~

~~14.03.115~~ ~~Access to school records by parent, foster parent or guardian~~

~~14.30.710~~ ~~Required records upon transfer~~

~~UNITED STATES CODE~~

~~20 USC 1232g~~, ~~Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act~~

~~CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS~~

~~34 C.F.R. 99.10~~, ~~Parent inspection of education records~~

~~Revised: August 31, 2010~~

~~Adopted: April 28, 2004~~

~~Northwest Arctic Borough School District~~