

**GOVERNING BOARD AGENDA ITEM
AMPHITHEATER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 10**

DATE OF MEETING: April 13, 2010

TITLE: Study of Proposed 2010-2011 Student Code of Conduct

BACKGROUND: State law mandates that each school district Governing Board establish rules for student behavior, to include consequences for misbehavior (A.R.S. § 15-341). State law also sets specific requirements for school disciplinary rules, including the following

1. School district governing boards must hold students to "strict account" for conduct occurring on the way to and from school (A.R.S. § 15-341); and
2. School districts must expel a student for no less than one full year if the student threatens the safety of the school environment, with exceptions made only by the governing board on a case-by-case basis (A.R.S. § 15-841).

The Governing Board promulgates a Student Code of Conduct which communicates District expectations for student behavior and also describes consequences for violations of District rules.

An effective code of responsibility must explain expectations for behavior so that all members of the school community can fully understand them; it must also provide fair and consistent guidelines for consequences to be applied when behavioral incidents do occur to help ensure schools are safe places for students, staff, and the public.

In 2007, the District began a process of reviewing the Code of Conduct as it existed at the time. The Associate to the Superintendent formed a committee for that purpose after soliciting volunteers for the purpose. The committee, composed of district staff and parents, met several times to identify recommendations for review and revision.

One of the key recommendations to emerge from the committee review process was the development of two separate codes – one for younger (elementary) students and one for older (middle and high) students. Another core suggestion was the introduction of "positive" statements for expectations of behavior, particularly for younger students; there was concern that the Code seemed too weighted toward an anticipation of violations. There was also a great deal of emphasis in the committee process on simplifying the language used in the Code to the extent possible.

As the committee review process continued, the District learned that the Arizona Department of Education was developing an new, mandatory reporting system for student disciplinary data. AZ SAFE, as it was later named, ultimately came into being and is effective for the current year. This program, in short, compels all school

districts in the state to utilize common and consistent descriptors for student disciplinary matters in order to facilitate uniform data collection and tracking on a statewide basis. The development of AZ SAFE, therefore, substantially affected and – in some respects – even controlled development of the Code revisions presented in this item. As the Board would therefore expect, the resulting and proposed drafts for an Amphitheater code of conduct represent substantially revision of the District's former code.

Attached to this item is the current version of the student code of conduct. It is provided for comparison purposes only. Also attached are two drafts for 2010-2011 – an elementary version and a middle/high school version, as suggested by the committee process.

Both drafts for next year have been drafted to be as conversational as possible. It is important to recognize, however, that any code of conduct must comply with legal mandates for public schools and must be very clear about expectations, to include precise definitions and language. Therefore, this Code provides both “plain language” definitions for behavioral incidents as well as more technical definitions directed for use by the State of Arizona Department of Education.

Other changes for this year's Code of Conduct include the following:

- The elementary code contains a more simplified section for younger readers.
- Prohibited behaviors are organized into categories to help students understand the related nature of certain behaviors and their relative impacts upon the learning environment.
- Behavioral rules and potential consequences for violations of the rules are combined together in tables to improve understanding and for ease of reference.
- Because technology has become increasingly important for students both within the school setting and in society at large, this Code incorporates rules on the use and consequences for misuse of technology, including computers and the Internet.

RECOMMENDATION: This Board item is presented to permit the Board to study proposed revisions to the Code of Conduct for the 2010-2011 school year and provide feedback and direction. The drafts will be presented again in May for adoption and final approval.

INITIATOR:



Todd A. Jaeger
Associate to the Supt. 4/5/2010

Signature

Name/Title

Date

ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT
SIGNATURE:

SUPERINTENDENT SIGNATURE:

