



Board Policy Equity Lens Tool

Title of board policy being reviewed:

JGDA/JGEA-Discipline of Students with Disabilities

Describe the purpose of this policy:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that disciplinary actions involving students with disabilities comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and protect students' rights to procedural safeguards and a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). It establishes clear guidelines for removals, manifestation determinations, and continued access to educational services.

What is your experience with this policy:

Policies governing discipline of students with disabilities are essential to protecting civil rights and ensuring FAPE. Effective implementation depends on strong staff training, consistent data review, and alignment with inclusive and restorative discipline practices to prevent disproportionate removal.



What is the plan to communicate this policy to staff, students, and/or families?

What is the plan to communicate this policy to linguistically diverse students and their families?

Is this policy:

Easy to locate for staff?

This policy and a summary of this policy will be available on the MESD web page. The summary of this policy is also available on the MESD website in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Somali, and Vietnamese and, upon request, the summary and/or policy may be translated into other languages.

Accessible to students and families?

This policy and a summary of this policy will be available on the MESD web page. The summary of this policy is also available on the MESD website in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Somali, and Vietnamese and, upon request, the summary and/or policy may be translated into other languages.

Included in onboarding, intake, or other training?

This policy will be communicated to staff through inclusion in the student and employee handbook. The policy will also be posted on the district website for easy access.



Clear and easy to understand?

The policy clearly outlines when IDEA protections apply and describes removal limits, manifestation determinations, and interim placements. However, due to the technical nature of special education law, implementation requires staff training to ensure consistent understanding and equitable application.

People

How are people affected positively or negatively by the policy? What potential barriers might people encounter? What barriers might be reduced by this policy?

The policy positively impacts students with disabilities by ensuring due process, requiring manifestation determinations, and maintaining access to educational services during removals. It protects against unlawful exclusion and ensures disability-related behaviors are not automatically punished.

Potential negative impacts may arise if removals are used frequently, even within legal limits, or if staff lack training in positive behavioral supports. Barriers may include capacity challenges in providing appropriate interim placements.

The policy reduces barriers related to denial of FAPE, discriminatory discipline, and lack of procedural safeguards.



Can you identify the racial or ethnic groups affected by this policy, program, practice, or decision? Do you know the potential impacts to these populations? If you don't know, how will you find out?

Students with disabilities are disproportionately students of color, particularly Black and Native American students, who historically experience higher rates of disciplinary removal. The intersection of race and disability increases the risk of exclusionary discipline.

This policy helps mitigate disparities by requiring manifestation determinations and continued services. Ongoing monitoring of discipline data disaggregated by race, disability category, and gender is necessary to assess impact.

Were these populations involved in any way, at any point in the development, implementation, and evaluation of this policy? If so, when and how?

The policy reflects federal IDEA requirements and established special education procedures. Implementation and evaluation can include feedback from families of students with disabilities, special education staff, and disability advocacy partners to ensure equitable practice.

What priorities and commitments are communicated by this policy?

The policy communicates a commitment to legal compliance, procedural fairness, and continued access to education for students with disabilities. It prioritizes due process, individualized consideration, and maintaining educational services even during disciplinary action.



Place

What kind of positive or negative environment are we creating?

What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes? (e.g. mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic or managerial)

The policy creates an environment grounded in legal protections and individualized review. It reinforces that disability-related behaviors require careful evaluation rather than automatic punishment.

Barriers to equitable outcomes may include implicit bias, insufficient behavioral supports, limited alternative placement resources, or inconsistent manifestation determinations. Financial and staffing constraints may also affect implementation.

Power

How is the power of decision-making shared with those it affects?

How have you intentionally involved the communities affected by this policy, program, practice, or decision?

The policy supports shared decision-making through IEP team involvement and procedural safeguards that give parents the right to participate, challenge decisions, and request due process hearings. Families have formal mechanisms to engage in disciplinary placement decisions.

Continued engagement with families and disability advocacy groups can strengthen transparency and trust.



Process

Does the policy, program, or decision improve, worsen, or make no change to existing disparities?

Does it create other unintended consequences?

The policy is designed to improve disparities by protecting students with disabilities from unlawful or discriminatory discipline and ensuring continued services. However, disparities may persist if removals are applied disproportionately to certain racial groups within the disability population.

Unintended consequences could include overuse of interim alternative settings or reliance on exclusionary discipline rather than proactive behavioral interventions.

Plan

How will you reduce the negative impacts and address the barriers?

Negative impacts can be reduced by:

- Providing training on IDEA discipline requirements and manifestation determinations.
- Expanding positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS).
- Monitoring discipline data for intersectional disparities.
- Ensuring families understand their procedural safeguards.
- Reviewing interim placement quality and access to services.