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CPS Revises Student Code of Conduct to Foster Positive, Safer Learning Environments and Limit Removal of Students from Schools
CPS Expands Anti-Bullying Policy, Eliminates Automatic 10-day Suspensions That Take Students Out of Classrooms

CHICAGO – Chicago Public Schools (CPS) today unveiled a revised Student Code of Conduct (SCC) that will be proposed at the June Board of Education meeting. The revised SCC includes substantive changes designed to promote positive learning environments for students and staff and limit the use of disciplinary actions that remove students from the classroom.

The SCC provides comprehensive guidance to administrators in responding to disruptive student behavior as well as notice to parents and students on the actions that can be taken. The revised SCC was developed over the past year in partnership with parents, teachers, students and community leaders as part of a comprehensive effort to better address the needs of all students in the District.

“I am a strong believer in limiting mandatory disciplinary actions that remove a child from their classroom and school, which, in many cases, ultimately causes more harm than good for those students,” said CPS CEO Jean-Claude Brizard. “We need to be more proactive in addressing issues before they become a disruption or a distraction for students and staff. The revised Student Code of Conduct will help the District take leaps forward in creating more positive and safe learning environments so that our children can keep their focus on the classroom.”

For the first time, the SCC will no longer require automatic 10-day suspensions for the most serious offenses. Instead, principals will have the discretion to apply a 10-day suspension but only be required to apply a five-day suspension for those behaviors that are considered the most disruptive and illegal including aggravated assault, sex violations and use of a weapon.

The SCC will also reduce the out-of-school suspension days permitted for behaviors that range from inappropriate, such as possession of tobacco products, to those that seriously disrupt the educational process, such as assault. Where the previous policy allowed for five-day suspensions, the revised SCC has reduced the suspension days permitted to three days, and where the previous policy allowed for 10-day suspensions, the revised SCC has reduced the suspension days permitted to five days.

Other changes to the SCC include:

- Allowing in-school suspensions to be used as an alternative to or in combination with out-of-school suspensions instead of requiring an assignment of one or the other, which is the current policy.
- Refocusing on the use of instructive and corrective consequences and restorative approaches. For example:
 - The new SCC will add new first and second steps for administrators responding to inappropriate behavior to emphasize a proactive approach. These steps include: “redirect to correct behavior” and “intervene to minimize disruption, resolve conflict as necessary to keep students and staff safe.”
 - In addition the SCC will outline the final step for administrators responding to inappropriate behavior to emphasize restorative approach: “restore the student’s participation in the school community.”
 - The new SCC will include a new appendix explaining use of instructive and corrective consequences.
- Expanding the Anti-Bullying Policy. For example:
 - The new Anti-Bullying Policy will provide means for bullying allegations to be reported to school administrators including the ability to report anonymously.
 - The new Anti-Bullying Policy will create protocols for principals to investigate bullying complaints, document allegations, and respond to bullying incidents with safety measures, interventions and/or consequences.
- Improving readability and accessibility to allow students, parents, staff members, and administrators to better understand and utilize the policy by:
 - Reorganizing the SCC into a four part “handbook” style document.
 - Adding introductory explanations for each member of school community (students, parents, school staff, administrators, and District staff) explaining relevance of the policy to each group.
 - Eliminating glossary and embedding definitions instead of referring to a separate section for explanation of terms.
 - Simplifying language for the police notification guidelines.
- Emphasizing student and parent/guardian rights and responsibilities. For example:
 - SCC will include a Students and Parents/Guardians Rights and Responsibilities section.
 - SCC will provide specific instructions for students and parents to report inappropriate behavior to school and district personnel if it occurs.
 - Simplify language in the policy to increase transparency. Convey schools’ responsibilities to proactively teach positive behavior and clearly explain the responses to inappropriate behavior that parents/guardians should expect.
- Clarifying expectations for staff and principals by emphasizing steps that must be taken to guide students to positive behavior and providing step-by-step guidance for administrators responding to inappropriate behavior with more clarity and better organization.

The SCC requires that all students/parents are provided a hard copy of the Code and principals must discuss the SCC with students. Both the current code and the proposed code are accessible online at <http://cps.edu/Pages/StudentResourcesStudentCodeofConduct.aspx>.

This past year, CEO Brizard created the new Department of Youth Development and Positive Behavior Supports (YDPBS) which is working closely with the Office of Safety and Security to implement proven strategies that drive positive student behaviors and ultimately lead to greater academic achievement. YDPBS is now providing principals with social and emotional strategies that address behavioral issues on the front end—before they lead to more serious misconduct, keeping students in school and promoting positive behaviors that lead to success in the classroom and beyond. As a result of initiatives implemented over the past year, CPS is on track to reduce expulsions by 25 percent and expulsion referrals by 10 percent.

The Chicago Public Schools serves 405,000 students in more than 675 schools. It is the nation's third-largest school system.

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