

SCHOOL SYSTEM COMMITMENT TO STANDARDS FOR ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR

The School Board believes that promoting ethical and responsible behavior is an essential part of the school unit's mission. The Board recognizes that ethics, constructive attitudes, responsible behavior, and "character" are important for a student to leave school as a "responsible and involved citizen". The Board also recognizes that Maine law requires the adoption of a district-wide student code of conduct consistent with statewide standards for student behavior developed by the Commissioner of the Department of Education in compliance with 20-A MRSA § 254(11).

The Board seeks to create and maintain a school climate where ethical and responsible behavior can flourish. The Board believes that instilling a sense of ethics and responsibility in students requires setting positive expectations as well as establishing disciplinary consequences for behavior that violates Board policy or school rules. Further, the Board believes that adults who interact with students must strive to model and reinforce ethical and responsible behavior. To this end, the Board supports an active partnership between schools and parents.

Recognizing that collaboratively identified core values are the foundation for a school culture, the Board is committed to the establishment and implementing a process for identifying shared values and setting and enforcing standards for behavior, including consequences for unacceptable behavior. The process for identifying such shared values will invite and include Board members, school administrators, staff, parents, students, and the community. Core values will be reviewed periodically, with opportunity for public participation. The Board will direct the Superintendent/designee to develop a process to assess school system progress toward achievement of an ethical and responsible school culture.

Following the identification of core values, the Board, with input from administrators, staff, parents, students, and members of the community, proposes a Student Code of Conduct consistent with statewide standards for student behavior¹ that shall, as required by law:

- A. Define unacceptable student behavior;
- B. Establish standards of student responsibility for behavior;
- C. Prescribe consequences for violation of the Student Code of Conduct, including first-time violations, when appropriate;
- D. Describe appropriate procedures for referring students in need of special services to those services;
- E. Establish criteria to determine when further assessment of a current Individual Education Plan (IEP) is necessary, based on removal of the student from class;

¹ The statewide standards are the "core values" identified in the report of the Commission for Ethical and Responsible Student Behavior, Taking Responsibility: Standards for Ethical and Responsible Behavior in Maine Schools and Communities. The core values are: Respect, Honesty, Compassion, Fairness, Responsibility and Courage. The Code of Conduct must be "consistent with", not identical to, the statewide standards developed under 20 MRSA § 254(11). This provides an opportunity for communities to identify their own core values and articulate what they "look like" when applied to behavior. The core values serve as a basis for school system expectations for student conduct.

- F. Establish policies and procedures concerning the removal of disruptive or violent students from a classroom or a school bus, or other school functions, as well as student disciplinary and placement decisions, when appropriate; and
- G. Establish guidelines and criteria concerning when the Superintendent/designee may provide information to the local police or other appropriate law enforcement authorities regarding an offense that involves violence committed by any person on school grounds or other school property.

The student Code of Conduct will be reviewed periodically by the School Board, with input from administrators, staff, parents, students, and members of the community.

Students, parents, staff, and the community will be informed of the Student Code of Conduct through handbooks and/or other means selected by the Superintendent/designee.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA §§ 254, 1001(15)

Approved: April 5, 2012