Policy 5144.1: Suspension And Expulsion/Due Process **Status:** ADOPTED

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CSBA NOTE: Education Code 35291 requires the Governing Board to prescribe rules and regulations for maintaining discipline in the schools under its jurisdiction. Education Code 48918 mandates the setting of rules and regulations for student expulsion as specified in this Board policy and the accompanying administrative regulation.

While recognizing that suspension or expulsion of students is sometimes necessary, legislative, administrative, regulatory, civic, and educational leaders are united in the belief that instructional time should be used for student learning purposes and that school discipline should be imposed in a way that, as much as possible, does not exclude students from school or limit their ability or opportunity to learn. The U.S. Department of Education's (USDOE) March 2023, "Guiding Principles for Creating Safe, Inclusive, Supportive, and Fair School Climates," states that unfair student discipline can result in a negative school climate, and an array of serious educational, economic, social, and emotional problems, including school avoidance and diminished educational engagement, decreased academic achievement, increased behavior problems, an increased likelihood of repeating a grade or dropping out, and involvement with the juvenile justice system. Consequently, USDOE recommends districts ensure the fair administration of student discipline in ways that treat students with dignity and respect while using a continuum of supports to increase student success and promote positive and supportive school environments that support students and keep them in the classroom learning as much as possible. Additionally, USDOE recommends schools to adopt a coordinated system of whole school evidence-based intervention practices that are more effective than exclusionary discipline in addressing student behavior and improving school climate and safety, such as positive behavioral interventions and supports; trauma-informed practices; social and emotional wellbeing; and restorative practices.

Pursuant to Education Code 48900.5, a district is not authorized to suspend a student for certain specified violations unless the student has been subjected to other means of correction which have failed to bring about proper conduct. Such other means of correction include, but are not limited to, conferences between school personnel, the student, and the student's parent/guardian; use of study, guidance, or other intervention teams to develop a plan to address the behavior in partnership with the student; referral for behavioral supports; and participation in restorative justice programs. Additionally, pursuant to Education Code 48900.5, as amended by AB 1165 (Ch. 22, Statutes of 2023), districts are encouraged to have a student who has been suspended, or for whom other means of correction have been implemented, for an incident of racist bullying, harassment, or intimidation, as well as the victim, to engage in a restorative justice practice suitable to address the needs of both the victim and the perpetrator, as specified in the accompanying administrative regulation. For further information about specific disciplinary strategies, including alternatives to class or school removals, see BP/AR 5144 - Discipline.

Education Code 48900.5 authorizes a district to document in a student's records the alternative means of correction used to address the student's behavior. Furthermore, when a student is being suspended by the Superintendent, principal, or designee, Education Code 48911 requires that the student be informed, during the informal conference that precedes the suspension, of the other means of correction that were attempted before the suspension.

Pursuant to Education Code 48913.5, when a student in any of grades 1-12 has been suspended for two or more school days, the student's parent/guardian, or other person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student, may request homework that the student would otherwise have been assigned, and the student's teacher is required to provide such homework; see BP 6154 - Homework/Makeup Work.

The Governing Board desires to provide district students access to educational opportunities in an orderly school environment that protects their safety and security, ensures their welfare and well-being, and promotes their learning and development. The Board shall develop rules and regulations setting the standards of behavior expected of district students and the disciplinary processes and procedures for addressing violations of those standards, including suspension and/or expulsion.

The grounds for suspension and expulsion and the procedures for considering, recommending, and/or implementing suspension and expulsion shall be only those specified in law, in this policy, and in the accompanying administrative regulation.

CSBA NOTE: Pursuant to Education Code 48900(s), a student may be subject to discipline only when the violation is related to a school activity or school attendance as specified below. A student may also be disciplined for a violation committed away from school if it is related to a school activity or to school attendance. For example, Education Code 48900 defines bullying by means of an electronic act as including an act that originates off campus; see the accompanying administrative regulation and BP/AR 5131.2 - Bullying. Another example is the hostile school environment which a victim may suffer from sexual harassment that occurs off campus; see BP/AR 5145.7 - Sexual Harassment.

Except when otherwise permitted by law, a student may be suspended or expelled only when the behavior is related to a school activity or school attendance occurring within any district school or another school district, regardless of when it occurs, including, but not limited to, the following: (Education Code 48900(s))

1. While on school grounds
2. While going to or coming from school
3. During the lunch period, whether on or off the school campus
4. During, going to, or coming from a school-sponsored activity

CSBA NOTE: The following paragraph addresses the problem of unlawful discrimination in the administration of student discipline. In their joint March 2023 publication, "Resource on Confronting Racial Discrimination in Student Discipline," the USDOE Office for Civil Rights and Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division noted that, based on decades of enforcement activity, discrimination based on race, color, and national origin in student discipline continues to be a significant concern and that disparities by race have persisted in the application of student discipline in schools.

District staff shall enforce the rules concerning suspension and expulsion of students fairly, consistently, equally, and in accordance with the district's nondiscrimination policies.

Appropriate Use of Suspension Authority

CSBA NOTE: Education Code 48900.5 requires districts to use other means of correction instead

of suspension, except when a student commits certain enumerated offenses. The following section reflects legislative intent regarding appropriate use of suspension as a means of disciplining students and may be modified to reflect district practice.

Except when a student's act violates Education Code 48900(a)-(e), as listed in Items #1-5 under "Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion: Grades K-12" of the accompanying administrative regulation, or when the student's presence causes a danger to others, suspension shall be used only when other means of correction have failed to bring about proper conduct. (Education Code 48900.5, 48900.6)

CSBA NOTE: The following optional paragraph may be revised to reflect district practice.

A student's parents/guardians shall be notified as soon as possible when there is an escalating pattern of misbehavior that could lead to on-campus or off-campus suspension.

CSBA NOTE: Education Code 48900(k), as amended by SB 274 (Ch. 597, Statutes of 2023), extends the prohibition from suspending a student for disruption or willful defiance, formerly applicable to students in grades K-8, to all students. Suspension of a student in grades 6-12 for disruption or willful defiance is prohibited until July 1, 2029. However, teachers may still suspend a student from class for willful defiance pursuant to Education Code section 48910. As part of the other means of correction specified in Education Code 48900.5, employees may also refer students for timely in-school interventions or supports for disruption or willful defiance.

Pursuant to Education Code 48900, if a student is referred on this basis, school administrators, are required to inform the referring employee within five business days, verbally or in writing, of the actions taken and, if none, the rationale for not providing any timely in-school interventions or supports. See "Suspension from Class by a Teacher" in the accompanying administrative regulation.

No student may be suspended for disruption or willful defiance, except by a teacher pursuant to Education Code 48910. (Education Code 48900)

CSBA NOTE: Pursuant to Education Code 48900(w), as amended by SB 274, a student may not be suspended or expelled based solely on the fact that they are truant, tardy, or otherwise absent from school activities.

Students shall not be suspended or expelled based solely on a student's truancy, tardiness, or absenteeism from assigned school activities. (Education Code 48900)

On-Campus Suspension

CSBA NOTE: As an alternative to off-campus suspension, Education Code 48911.1 authorizes a supervised suspension classroom program for students who pose no imminent danger to anyone at school and who have not been recommended for expulsion, as specified below.

The following optional section is for use by districts implementing a supervised suspension classroom program. Such districts may continue to claim funding apportionments for students so assigned, provided they meet specific criteria which are set forth under "On-Campus Suspension" in the accompanying administrative regulation. A district does not receive funding for off-campus suspensions.

To ensure the proper supervision and ongoing learning of students who are suspended for any of the reasons enumerated in Education Code 48900 and 48900.2, but who pose no imminent danger or threat to anyone at school and for whom expulsion proceedings have not been initiated, the Superintendent or designee shall establish a supervised suspension classroom program which meets the requirements of law.

Except where a supervised suspension is permitted by law for a student's first offense, supervised suspension shall be imposed only when other means of correction have failed to bring about proper conduct. (Education Code 48900.5)

Authority to Expel

A student may be expelled only by the Board. (Education Code 48918(j))

As required by law, the Superintendent or principal shall recommend expulsion and the Board shall expel any student found to have committed any of the following "mandatory recommendation and mandatory expulsion" acts at school or at a school activity off school grounds: (Education Code 48915)

1. Possessing a firearm which is not an imitation firearm, as verified by a certificated employee, unless the student had obtained prior written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the principal or designee's concurrence

2. Selling or otherwise furnishing a firearm

3. Brandishing a knife at another person

4. Unlawfully selling a controlled substance listed in Health and Safety Code 11053-11058

5. Committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault as defined in Penal Code 261, 266c, 286, 287, 288, or 289, or former 288a, or committing a sexual battery as defined in Penal Code 243.4

6. Possessing an explosive as defined in 18 USC 921

For all other violations listed in the accompanying administrative regulation, the Superintendent or principal shall have the discretion to recommend expulsion of a student. If expulsion is recommended, the Board shall order the student expelled only if it makes a finding of either or both of the following: (Education Code 48915(b) and (e))

1. That other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct

2. That due to the nature of the violation, the presence of the student causes a continuing danger to the physical safety of the student or others

A vote to expel a student shall be taken in an open session of a Board meeting. (Education Code 48918(j))

CSBA NOTE: Pursuant to Education Code 48917, the Board may suspend the enforcement of an expulsion order as long as a student satisfies specific criteria. See "Decision to Suspend Expulsion Order" in the accompanying administrative regulation for criteria. In addition, the Attorney General opined, in 80 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 85 (1997), that the enforcement of an expulsion order may be suspended even in those cases where the student has committed an offense for which expulsion is required by law. CSBA's District and County Office of Education Legal Services or district legal counsel should be consulted as appropriate.

The Board may vote to suspend the enforcement of the expulsion order pursuant to the requirements of law and the accompanying administrative regulation. (Education Code 48917)

No student shall be expelled for disruption or willful defiance. (Education Code 48900)

CSBA NOTE: The following paragraph is for use by districts that contract with the California Department of Education (CDE) to operate a California State Preschool Program. Education Code 8489.1 prohibits the expulsion or disenrollment of a child in a preschool program unless the district has taken specified steps, the child's continued enrollment would present a serious safety threat to the child or other enrolled children, and the district refers the child's parents/guardians to other appropriate placements. For further details regarding the steps the district must take prior to expelling a child, see AR 5148.3 - Preschool/Early Childhood Education.

No child enrolled in a preschool program shall be expelled or unenrolled except under limited circumstances in accordance with Education Code 8489.1 and as specified in Administrative Regulation 5148.3 - Preschool/Early Childhood Education.

Due Process

The Board shall provide for the fair and equitable treatment of students facing suspension and/or expulsion by affording the students due process rights under the law. The Superintendent or designee shall comply with procedures for notices, hearings, and appeals as specified in law and administrative regulation. (Education Code 48911, 48915, 48915.5, 48918)

Maintenance and Monitoring of Outcome Data

CSBA NOTE: Education Code 48900.8 and 48916.1 require the district to maintain data related to suspensions and expulsions as provided below. Pursuant to Education Code 48916.1, the Superintendent of Public Instruction may require submission of such data as part of the Federal Program Monitoring process. In addition, 20 USC 7961 requires districts to submit to CDE a description of the circumstances surrounding any expulsions based on bringing or possessing a firearm on campus, including the name of the school, the number of students expelled, and the type of firearms involved.

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain outcome data related to student suspensions and expulsions in accordance with Education Code 48900.8 and 48916.1, including, but not limited to, the number of students recommended for expulsion, the grounds for each recommended expulsion, the actions taken by the Board, the types of referral made after each expulsion, and the disposition of the students after the expulsion period. For any expulsion that involves the possession of a firearm, such data shall include the name of the school and the type of firearm involved, as required pursuant to 20 USC 7961. Suspension and expulsion data shall be reported to the Board annually and to the California Department of Education when so required.

CSBA NOTE: Pursuant to Education Code 52060, districts are required to address school climate in the local control and accountability plan, as measured by student suspension and expulsion rates and other local measures for each school and each numerically significant student subgroup. Education Code 52052, as amended by SB 114 (Ch. 48, Statutes of 2023), defines numerically significant subgroups to include ethnic subgroups, socioeconomically disadvantaged students, English learners, long-term English learners, students with disabilities, foster youth, and homeless students, when there are at least 30 students in the subgroup or at least 15 foster youth or homeless students.

In presenting the report to the Board, the Superintendent or designee shall disaggregate data on suspensions and expulsions by school and by numerically significant student subgroups, including, but not limited to, ethnic subgroups, socioeconomically disadvantaged students, English learners,

long-term English learners, students with disabilities, foster youth, and homeless students. Based on the data, the Board shall address any identified disparities in the imposition of student discipline and shall determine whether and how the district is meeting its goals for improving school climate as specified in its local control and accountability plan.