

WESTFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Westfield, New Jersey 07090

BYLAWS
0167
Public Participation in Board Meetings

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0167 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS

The Board of Education recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and the importance of allowing members of the public to express themselves on school matters of community interest.

In order to permit the fair and orderly expression of such comment, the Board shall provide a period for public comment at every public meeting.

Public participation shall be permitted only as indicated on the order of business in Board Bylaw No. 0164 (Conduct of Board Meetings).

Public participation shall be extended to residents of this district, persons having a legitimate interest in the actions of this Board, persons representing groups in the community or school district, representatives of firms eligible to bid on materials or services solicited by the Board, and employees and pupils of this district, except when the issue addressed by the participant is subject to remediation by an alternate method provided for in policies or contracts of the Board.

Public participation shall be governed by the following rules:

1. after being recognized by the President, the individual shall stand and give his or her name and address;
2. all questions, statements, or inquiries must be directed to the President of the Board of Education or his/her designee. Any questions or inquiries directed by a participant to another Board member shall be redirected to the presiding officer who shall determine if such question, statement or inquiry shall be addressed by the presiding officer on behalf of the Board or by the individual Board member;
3. no participant may speak more than once on the same topic until all others who wished to speak on that topic have been heard;
4. discussion directed at other members of the audience will not be permitted; public criticism of individual staff members will not be permitted;

5. the Board or committee reserves the right to adjourn the meeting any time the public does not accept directions from the President of the meeting;
6. recording devices may be used by the public and the Board or committee may announce this as a point of information;
7. photographers and television camera operators are permitted if in the judgment of the President their activities do not interrupt or detract from the orderly conduct of the meeting;
8. The President may:
 - a. interrupt, warn, and/or terminate a participant's question, statement, or inquiry when the statement is too lengthy;
 - b. interrupt, warn, and/or terminate a participant's question, statement, or inquiry when the statement is abusive, obscene, or may be defamatory;
 - c. request any person to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum;
 - d. request the assistance of law enforcement officers in the removal of a disorderly person when that person prevents or disrupts a meeting with an act that obstructs or interferes with a meeting;
 - e. call for a recess or an adjournment to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting; and
 - f. waive these rules when necessary for the protection of privacy or to maintain an orderly operation of the Board meeting.

If the Board is conducting a virtual board meeting, pursuant to Board Policy 0170, sufficient mechanisms shall be provided to ensure that the rights of the public to view and participate in the Board meeting and the right to submit public comments to the Board during the designated portions of the meeting agenda are maintained, to the greatest extent practicable.

In addition to the rules outlined above for public participation, participation in virtual meetings shall be governed by the following:

1. The district shall allow public comments to be submitted by electronic mail and in written letter form to the Board Secretary. Letters must be received no later than 24 hours prior to the start of the Board meeting;
2. The Board shall provide a telephonic conference line allowing members of the public with limited or no internet access to listen and provide public comment;
3. The procedures and requirements for making public comment along with an explanation of the audio muting function of the communications technology being used shall be announced at the beginning of the remote public meeting;
4. A member of the public may type in their name and address if they wish to and ask a question verbally;

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5. After being recognized by the President, the person will be unmuted in order to ask their question;
6. There will be a three (3) minute time limit per speaker.

N.J.S.A. 2C:33-8
N.J.S.A. 10:4-12
Board Policy 0170 – Virtual Board Meetings

Approved: March 7, 2000
Revised: December 2, 2008
Reviewed: May 29, 2013
Revised: January 7, 2020
Revised: April 28, 2020
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5610 SUSPENSION

The Board of Education recognizes that even the temporary exclusion of a pupil from the educational program of this district is a severe sanction and one that cannot be imposed without due process.

Any pupil who is guilty of continued and willful disobedience, or of open defiance of the authority of any teacher or person having authority over him, or of the habitual use of profanity or of obscene language, or who shall cut, deface or otherwise injure any school property, shall be liable to punishment and to suspension or expulsion from school. Conduct which shall constitute good cause for suspension or expulsion of a pupil guilty of such conduct shall include, but not be limited to, the conduct as defined in N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2 and the school district's Pupil Discipline/Code of Conduct Policy and Regulation in accordance with the N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1. et seq.

For the purposes of this Policy, "suspension" means the temporary removal of a pupil from the regular instructional program.

For the purposes of this Policy, "short term suspension" means a suspension for a term of ten consecutive school days or less and "long term suspension" means a suspension for more than ten consecutive school days.

In accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:37-4, a student may be suspended only by the Principal or designee who shall report any suspension to the Superintendent as soon as possible. The Superintendent shall report the suspension to the Board at its next regular meeting. The suspended student may be reinstated by the Principal or by the Superintendent prior to the second regular meeting of the Board following the suspension, unless the Board reinstates the student at the first regular meeting. No student suspended for reasons of assault upon a person in authority may be reinstated before the Board has held a hearing, within thirty calendar days of the suspension, to consider that student's expulsion from school. At its second regular meeting after the suspension and thereafter, the Board alone may reinstate the student or continue the suspension.

In accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2a, a student in Kindergarten through grade two shall not receive an out-of-school suspension, except when the suspension is based on conduct that is of a violent or sexual nature that endangers others. Students in preschool shall not receive an out-of-school suspension except as provided pursuant to the "Zero Tolerance for Guns Act," N.J.S.A. 18A:37-7 et seq.

The district shall implement an early detection and prevention program to identify students in preschool through grade two who are experiencing behavioral or disciplinary problems and provide behavioral supports for these students which may include, but not be limited to, remediation of

problem behaviors, positive reinforcements, supportive interventions, and referral services. An early detection program may be incorporated into the intervention and referral services required to be established in each school pursuant to State Board of Education regulations.

In each instance of a short-term suspension, the pupil and their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) will be provided oral or written notice of the charges and an informal hearing conducted by the Principal or designee in accordance with the procedures outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.2. To the extent the pupil's presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the educational process, the pupil may be immediately removed from the pupil's educational program and the informal hearing shall be held as soon as practical after the suspension.

In each instance of a long-term suspension, the district shall assure the rights of the pupil pursuant to N.J.A.C. 16A:16-7.3.

The district will comply with the requirements of N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.2 and 7.3, in addition to all the procedural protections set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14, for each pupil with a disability who is subject to a short-term or long-term suspension.

In each instance of a short- or long-term suspension, the district shall provide academic instruction, either in school or out of school, that addresses the Standards adopted by the State of New Jersey pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1, which may include a public education program provided in accordance with the provisions pursuant to Home Instruction Policy (2421) (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-9 or 10). These services shall be provided within five school days of the suspension. Educational services provided to a pupil with a disability shall be provided consistent with the pupil's Individualized Education Program, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14.

In the event a student has experienced multiple suspensions or may be subject to a proposed expulsion from school, the Principal shall convene a meeting, as soon as practicable, between the student and a school psychologist, a school counselor, a school social worker, a student assistance coordinator, or a member of the school's intervention and referral services team in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2c.

Pupil records are subject to challenge by parents and adult students in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:32-7.7 and Policy and Regulation 8330. The name of a disciplined pupil will not appear in the agenda or minutes of a public meeting or in any public record of this district; any such pupil will be designated by code.

N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1., 18A:37-2 et seq.; 18A:37-4; 18A:37-5
N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.2; 6A:16-7.3; 6A:14-2.8; 6A:32-7.7

Approved: December 11, 2007
Revised: March 19, 2018
First Reading: October 27, 2020
Second Reading:

R 5610 -- SUSPENSION PROCEDURES

A. Short-Term Suspensions

1. In each instance of a short-term suspension, the Principal or designee, shall assure the rights of a pupil suspended for ten or fewer consecutive school days by providing for the following:
 - a. As soon as practicable, oral or written notice of charges to the pupil.
 - (1) When charges are denied, an explanation of the evidence forming the basis of the charges shall also be provided.
 - b. An informal hearing prior to the suspension in which the pupil is given the opportunity to present the pupil's side of the story regarding the actions leading to the short-term suspension and the school district's actions taken pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(c)2. and 5.
 - (1) The informal hearing shall be conducted by the Principal or designee;
 - (2) To the extent that a pupil's presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the educational process, the pupil may be immediately removed from the pupil's educational program and the informal hearing shall be held as soon as practical after the suspension;
 - (3) The informal hearing should take place even when a school staff member has witnessed the conduct forming the basis of the charge; and
 - (4) The informal hearing and the notice given may take place at the same time.
 - c. Oral or written notification to the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the removal from the pupil's educational program prior to the end of the school day on which the Principal or designee makes the decision to suspend the pupil, which shall include an explanation of:
 - (1) The specific charges;
 - (2) The facts on which the charges are based;

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- (3) The provision(s) of the pupil code of conduct the pupil is accused of violating;
 - (4) The pupil's due process rights, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(c)3 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.2; and
 - (5) The terms and conditions of the suspension.
 - d. Appropriate supervision of the pupil while waiting for the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) to remove the pupil from school during the school day; and
 - e. Academic instruction, either in-school or out-of-school, that addresses the Standards adopted by the State of New Jersey.
 - (1) Academic instruction shall be provided within five school days of the suspension.
 - (2) Educational services provided to a pupil with a disability shall be provided consistent with the pupil's Individualized Education Program in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14.
 - (3) At the completion of a short-term suspension, the district Board of Education shall return the general education pupil to the general education program.
2. The Principal or designee shall immediately report the suspension to the Superintendent, who is required to report it to Board of Education at its next regular meeting, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-4.
3. A Board may deny the pupil participation in extracurricular activities, school functions, sports, or graduation exercises as disciplinary sanctions, where such measures are designed to maintain the order and integrity of the school environment.
4. For a pupil with a disability, the provisions set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.2 shall be provided in addition to all procedural protections set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14.
5. An appeal of the Board's decision affecting the general education student's educational program shall be made to the Commissioner, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2.4 and N.J.A.C. 6A:3-1.3 through 1.17.

B. Long-Term Suspensions

1. In each instance of a long-term suspension, the Principal or designee shall assure the rights of a pupil suspended for more than ten consecutive school days by providing the following:
 - a. Immediate notification to the pupil of the charges, prior to the pupil's removal from school;
 - b. An informal hearing prior to the suspension in which the pupil is given the opportunity to present the pupil's side of the story regarding the pupil's actions leading to the long-term suspension and the school district's actions taken pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(c)2 and 5;
 - c. Immediate notification to the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the pupil's removal from school;
 - d. Appropriate supervision of the pupil while waiting for the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) to remove the pupil from school during the school day;
 - e. Written notification to the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) by the Superintendent or designee within two school days of the initiation of the suspension, stating:
 - (1) The specific charges;
 - (2) The facts on which the charges are based;
 - (3) The pupil's due process rights, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(c)3 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.3; and
 - (4) That further engagement by the pupil in conduct warranting expulsion, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2, shall amount to a knowing and voluntary waiver of the pupil's right to a free public education, in the event that a decision to expel the pupil is made by the Board, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.4.
 - (a) The Board shall request written acknowledgement of the notification of the provisions of B.1.e.(4) above from the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and the pupil subsequent to the removal from the pupil's educational program, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.3.
 - f. A list of witnesses and their statements or affidavits, if any, no later than five days prior to the formal hearing, pursuant to B.1.j. below;

- g. For a pupil with a disability, a manifestation determination, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.8 and the Federal regulations;
- h. Information on the right of the pupil to secure an attorney and legal resources available in the community identified pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(c)7;
- i. Educational services, either in school or out of school, that are comparable to those provided in the public schools for pupils of similar grades and attainments, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, which may include a public education program provided in accordance with the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:16-9 or 10.
 - (1) The services shall be provided within five school days of the suspension.
 - (2) The Board shall make decisions regarding the appropriate educational program and support services for the suspended general education pupil, at a minimum, based on the Standards adopted by the State of New Jersey and the following considerations:
 - (a) A behavioral assessment or evaluation including, but not limited to, a referral to the Child Study Team, as appropriate;
 - (b) The results of any relevant testing, assessments or evaluations of the pupil;
 - (c) The pupil's academic, health, and behavioral records;
 - (d) The recommendation of the Superintendent, Principal or designee, or other relevant resource;
 - (e) Considerations of parental input; or
 - (f) Consultation with the Intervention and Referral Services Team, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8, as appropriate.
 - (3) Educational services provided to a pupil with a disability shall be provided consistent with the pupil's Individualized Education Program, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14.
- j. A formal hearing before the Board, which, at a minimum, shall:

- (1) Be conducted by the Board or delegated by the Board to a Board committee, a school administrator or an impartial hearing officer for the purpose of determining facts or making recommendations.
 - (a) The Board as a whole shall receive and consider either a transcript or detailed report on such hearing before taking final action.
 - (2) Include the opportunity for the pupil to:
 - (a) Confront and cross-examine witnesses, when there is a question of fact; and
 - (b) Present his or her own defense and produce oral testimony or written supporting affidavits.
 - (3) Take place no later than thirty calendar days following the day the pupil is suspended from the general education program; and
 - (4) Result in a decision by the Board, which at a minimum, shall be based on the preponderance of competent and credible evidence.
- k. A written statement to the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the Board's decision within five school days after the close of the hearing that includes, at a minimum:
- (1) The charges considered;
 - (2) A summary of the documentary or testimonial evidence from both the pupil and the administration that was brought before the district Board of Education at the hearing;
 - (3) Factual findings relative to each charge and the Board's determination of each charge;
 - (4) Identification of the educational services to be provided to the pupil pursuant to B.1.i. above;
 - (5) The terms and conditions of the suspension; and

- (6) The right to appeal the Board's decision regarding the pupil's general education program to the Commissioner of Education in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2.4 and N.J.A.C. 6A:3-1.3 through 1.17.
 - l. Immediate return to the general education program if at any time it is found that the general education pupil did not commit the offense; and
 - m. At the completion of a long-term suspension, the Board shall return the general education pupil to the general education program.
2. Any appeal of the Board's decision regarding the general education pupil's program shall be made to the Commissioner of Education, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2.4 and N.J.A.C. 6A:3-1.3 through 1.17.
3. Suspension of general education pupils shall not be continued beyond the Board's second regular meeting following the suspension, unless the Board so determines, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-5.
 - a. The Board shall determine whether to continue the suspension, pursuant to B.1 above, based on the following criteria:
 - (1) The nature and severity of the offense;
 - (2) The Board's removal decision;
 - (3) The results of any relevant testing, assessments or evaluations of the pupil; and
 - (4) The recommendation of the Superintendent, after considering input from the Principal or Director of the alternative education program or home or other in-school or out-of-school instruction program in which the pupil has been placed.
 - b. The Board shall develop and adopt policies and procedures providing for action on the continuation of pupil suspensions in the event of cancellation of the first or second regular Board meeting pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-4 and 5. In this unlikely event, a special committee of the Board, which will include the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee, will be appointed by the Board President to make a decision on the continuation of the suspension. The committee's decision will be implemented subject to ratification of the committee's decision at the next regular Board meeting.

4. When the Board votes to continue the suspension of a general education pupil, the Board, in consultation with the Superintendent, shall review the case at each subsequent Board meeting for the purpose of determining:
 - a. The status of the pupil's suspension;
 - b. The appropriateness of the current educational program for the suspended pupil; and
 - c. Whether the suspended pupil's current placement, pursuant to B.1.i. above, should continue or whether the pupil should return to the general education program.

5. When the Board votes to continue the suspension of a general education pupil, the Board, in consultation with the Superintendent, shall make the final determination on:
 - a. When the pupil is prepared to return to the general education program;
 - b. Whether the pupil shall remain in an alternative education program or receive home or other in-school or out-of-school instruction, based on the criteria set forth in B.3.a.(1) through (4) above; or
 - c. Whether to initiate expulsion proceedings in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2, N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.4 and Policy 5620 (Expulsion)

6. The Board shall provide a general education pupil suspended under N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.3 with an appropriate educational program or appropriate educational services, based on the criteria set forth under B.1.i.(2) above, until the pupil graduates from high school or reaches the age of twenty, whichever comes first.
 - a. The educational program shall be consistent with the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:16-9.2 and 10.2 and 6A:14-2 and 4.3, whichever is applicable; or
 - b. The educational services provided, either in-school or out-of-school, shall be comparable to those provided in the public schools for pupils of similar grades and attainments, pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25.

7. For a pupil with a disability who receives a long-term suspension, the Board shall proceed in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14 in determining or changing the pupil's educational placement to an interim or alternate educational setting.
 - a. All procedural protections set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.3 shall be afforded to each pupil with a disability who is subjected to a long-term suspension.
 - b. All decisions concerning the pupil's educational program or placement shall be made by the pupil's Individualized Education Program team.
 - c. The provisions of B.2. through B.6. above shall not apply to pupils with disabilities.

C. Meeting with Student - Multiple Suspensions or Possible Expulsion

1. In accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2c, in the event a student has experienced multiple suspensions or may be subject to a proposed expulsion from school, the Principal shall convene a meeting, as soon as practicable, between the student and a school psychologist, a school counselor, a school social worker, a student assistance coordinator, or a member of the school's intervention and referral services team.
 - a. The Principal may convene such a meeting, if after the student has been suspended for the first time, the Principal upon evaluation deems such a meeting appropriate.
 - b. The purpose of the meeting shall be to identify any behavior or health difficulties experienced by the student and, where appropriate, to provide supportive interventions or referrals to school or community resources that may assist the student in addressing the identified difficulties.
2. The requirements of C.1. above shall not apply when a student's immediate removal or suspension from the school's regular education program is required pursuant to:
 - a. The provisions of the "Zero Tolerance for Guns Act," (N.J.S.A. 18A:37-7 et seq.);
 - b. N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2.1 – Assault by Pupil Upon Teacher, etc.; Suspension; Expulsion Proceedings;
 - c. N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2.2 – Offense by Pupil Involving Assault, Removal from Schools Regular Education Program; or

- d. In any other instance in which the safety and security of other students or school staff requires the student's immediate removal from school.
3. In the instances provided in C.2.a. through d. above, the meeting required in C.1. above shall take place as soon as practicable following the student's removal from the school's regular education program.
4. The provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2c and C. of this Regulation shall be construed in a manner consistent with the "Individuals with Disabilities Act," 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.

In Effect: December 11, 2007
Revised: March 19, 2018
Revised:

5620 EXPULSION

The Board of Education recognizes that expulsion from this district is the most severe sanction that can be imposed upon a pupil.

The Board may expel a general education pupil from school, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2, only after the Board has provided the procedural due process rights set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(c) 3 and 7.3, and as outlined in Policy and Regulation 5610 (Suspension), subsequent to a long-term suspension pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.3; and only after the Board has provided an appropriate educational program or service, based on the criteria set forth under N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.3(f) and as outlined in Regulation 5610. The educational program or service shall be consistent with the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:16-9.2 - Program Criteria; N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10.2 - Home or Out-of-School Instruction for General Education Students; N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.1 et seq. - Special Education, Procedural Safeguards; and N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.3 - Special Education, Program Options, whichever are applicable; or the educational services provided, either in school or out of school, shall be comparable to those provided in the public schools for pupils of similar grades and attainments, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25.

An appeal of the Board's decision regarding the cessation of the pupil's general education program shall be made to the Commissioner of Education in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:6-9 and N.J.A.C. 6A:3-1.3 through 1.17. The Board shall continue to provide an appropriate educational program or service in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.4(a)2 until a final determination has been made on the appeal of the Board's action to expel a pupil.

In accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2a, a student in Kindergarten through grade two shall not be expelled from school, except as provided pursuant to the "Zero Tolerance for Guns Act," N.J.S.A. 18A:37-7 et seq. Students in preschool shall not be expelled, except as provided pursuant to the "Zero Tolerance for Guns Act," N.J.S.A. 18A:37-7 et seq.

The district shall implement an early detection and prevention program to: identify students in preschool through grade two who are experiencing behavioral or disciplinary problems; and provide behavioral supports for these students which may include, but not be limited to, remediation of problem behaviors, positive reinforcements, supportive interventions, and referral services. An early detection program may be incorporated into the intervention and referral services required to be established in each school pursuant to State Board of Education regulations.

In accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2c, in the event a student may be subject to a proposed expulsion from school, the Principal shall convene a meeting, as soon as practicable, between the student and a school psychologist, a school counselor, a school social worker, a student assistance coordinator, or a member of the school's intervention and referral services team. The purpose of the meeting shall be to identify any behavior or health difficulties experienced by the student and, where appropriate, to provide supportive interventions or referrals to school or community resources that may assist the student in addressing the identified difficulties.

The requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2c shall not apply when a student's immediate removal or suspension from the school's regular education program is required pursuant to: the provisions of the "Zero Tolerance for Guns Act," (N.J.S.A. 18A:37-7 et seq.); N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2.1 – Assault by Pupil Upon Teacher, etc.; Suspension; Expulsion Proceedings; N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2.2 – Offense by Pupil Involving Assault, Removal from Schools Regular Education Program; or in any other instance in which the safety and security of other students or school staff requires the student's immediate removal from school. In these instances, the meeting required pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2c shall take place as soon as practicable following the student's removal from the school's regular education program.

The provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2c shall be construed in a manner consistent with the "Individuals with Disabilities Act," 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.

A student with a disability shall only be expelled from his or her current program in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14 et seq. An expulsion of a pupil with a disability from a receiving school shall be handled in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14 et seq.

N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-9; 18A:37-2 et seq.

N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.4; 6A:14 et seq.

Approved: December 11, 2007

Revised: March 19, 2018

First Reading: October 27, 2020

Second Reading:

8320 PERSONNEL RECORDS

The Board of Education believes that the orderly operation of the school district requires the retention of all records bearing upon an employee's qualifications for employment and employment history.

The Board requires that sufficient records be compiled and maintained to demonstrate an employee's qualifications for the position assigned; compliance with federal, state, and local benefit programs; conformity to district rules; the proper conduct of evaluations; and the employee's entitlement, as appropriate, to tenure and seniority.

The Superintendent or designee shall consult with the board attorney regarding which personnel records are mandated to be kept by law, and those to be kept for administrative purposes. The Superintendent or designee and the board attorney shall be responsible for limiting access to administrative records to those that are consistent with New Jersey and Federal law.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish the necessary regulations for maintaining both public and confidential employee records.

- A. The public file shall consist of an alphabetic index of those presently employed by the district in whatever capacity. . A Board of Education and private agencies that provide educational services by means of public funds shall make employee records and information available for public access pursuant to N.J.S.A. 47:1A-10, the Open Public Records Act, but in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A: 6-129,(d) and 121.(d), and as provided in Policy and Regulation 8320 – Section
- B. The confidential file shall consist of an individual personnel folder and other computerized records. The information in these files shall include all records mandated by state and federal law; evaluation of performance; original application filed by the employee, original salary and increments; date of tenure; notations of commendation and disciplinary actions consistent with law.

Confidential personnel records may be inspected by school administrators to the extent that such inspection is required in the performance of the administrator's duties.

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Board members may have access to confidential information in the personnel files of only those employees recommended for or subjected to an employment action requiring a vote of the Board or where access to the information is essential for the performance of the Board member's duties. Board member access to personnel files is limited to the relevant portion of the file and is available only through the Superintendent. Board members may freely inspect employment applications filed by candidates for district positions.

An employee may inspect his or her personnel file provided that the employee requests such access in writing, reviews the record in the presence of the administrator designated to maintain the file, makes no alteration or addition to the file nor removes any material from it, and signs a log attached to the file indicating the date on which it was inspected.

An employee may appeal to the Superintendent the inclusion or exclusion of records or for appropriate administrative review of the accuracy of any record in his or her personnel file.

The Superintendent shall prepare rules enumerating the records to be maintained for each employee of this district, including, as a minimum and as appropriate to the position, the completed application form, employee verification forms, employment contract(s), a copy of the employee's qualifying certification, transcripts, report of an employment physical examination, oath of allegiance, criminal background check, income tax forms, retirement registration, hospitalization forms, annuity forms, rate of compensation, attendance record, assignments to positions, completed evaluations, reports of disciplinary incidents, records of special awards or distinctions, and reports of special physical and mental examinations.

N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-14.2

N.J.S.A. 18A:40-19

N.J.S.A. 18A:66-32

N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq.

N.J.A.C. 6A:32-4.3

Approved: November 16, 2004

Revised: February 5, 2019

First Reading: October 27, 2020

Second Reading:

R 8320 PERSONNEL RECORDS

A. Content of Record

1. A personnel file shall be assembled and maintained for each person employed by this district. Each file shall contain the original or copies, as appropriate, of the following documents regarding the employee:
 - a. The employee's current correct name, address, telephone number, and birthdate;
 - b. Application form, including transcripts of all academic work, records of prior military service, and other supporting documents;
 - c. Annual employment contract and/or annual salary notice, signed by the employee;
 - d. Certificates and/or licenses required for employment;
 - e. Documentation of fulfillment of requirements for any change in salary classification;
 - f. Income tax forms;
 - g. Retirement registration;
 - h. Health Insurance forms;
 - i. Annuity forms;
 - j. Rate of compensation;
 - k. Attendance record, including the starting and ending dates of all leaves of absence, whether the leave was paid or unpaid, and the purpose for which such leaves were granted;
 - l. Assignment to positions, including position title and building to which assigned;
 - m. Completed evaluations;
 - n. Reports of disciplinary incidents;
 - o. Records of special awards, commendations, or distinctions;

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- p. Oath of allegiance;
 - q. Reports of routine physical examinations;
 - r. Reports of physical and mental examinations required for cause
 - s. Employee Verification (NJ Public Law 2018, Chapter 5)
- 2. No information will be placed in an employees' file that does not pertain to the employee's position in this district and the performance of the employee's duties.
 - 3. The content of personnel files will be reviewed periodically by the Human Resources Specialist and material no longer required will be destroyed.
- B. Custodian of Personnel Records
- 1. The Superintendent or designee is custodian of all personnel records.
 - 2. Personnel records shall be maintained in the office of the Human Resources Specialist, who shall be records manager responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of the files and for supervising access to the files.
- C. Notice of Content of Files
- 1. Each employee shall be informed of the content of his or her personnel file upon request. Each employee will be notified of the inclusion in his or her file of any document that was not received from the employee or at the direction of the employee.
 - a. No evaluation form will be placed in a personnel file until it has been reviewed and signed by the employee.
 - b. No copy of a memorandum or letter sent by an administrator or other school official to an employee will be placed in the employee's file unless the original and copy include the notation "cc: Personnel File" or other clear indication of the author's intention to place the memorandum or letter in the employee's file.
 - c. No report or letter or memorandum from any source, other than documents referred to in C1b above, may be placed in an employee's file until a copy of the same has been delivered to the employee.

D. Employee Access to Personnel Records

1. Each employee shall be granted access to his or her personnel file in accordance with these regulations, except as may have been negotiated with the employee's majority representative.
2. Written request for access shall be submitted to the Human Resources Specialist. Except in unusual circumstances, access shall be granted only during the regular working hours of the office in which the file is kept.
3. The employee shall review the record in the presence of the Human Resources Specialist or designee and, at the employee's request, a representative of the employee.
4. No alteration or addition or deletion may be made to the file, except that the employee may append to any document in the file his or her comment on that document.
5. The employee may hand copy any portion of his or her file and may receive photocopies of records on payment of the copying fees established for copies of public records.

E. Appeal of Content of the File

1. The employee may appeal to the Superintendent the exclusion or inclusion of any portion of his or her personnel file or the accuracy of any information in the file.
2. An appeal must be made in writing on a form available in the office of the Superintendent.
3. The Superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal as soon as possible, but not later than ten working days from the time the written appeal is submitted. The Superintendent's decision shall be in writing and shall be delivered to the employee and the records manager responsible for the employee's file.
4. Except as may be otherwise provided by contract negotiated with the employee's majority representative, the appellant may appeal the Superintendent's decision to the Board; a decision of the Board may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education.

F. Access by Board Members and School Officials

1. Personnel files may be inspected by school officials only as required in the discharge of their professional or statutory duties and to the extent required in the discharge of those duties.
2. Personnel files may be inspected by Board members when such inspection relates to the Superintendent's recommendation of a candidate for employment, promotion, transfer, dismissal, or discipline.
3. Much of the information included in an employee's file is confidential; access to the employee's file for professional reasons necessarily imposes on the person reviewing the file the duty to respect the confidentiality of the record.

G. Public Access to Employee Records and Information

1. A Board of Education and private agencies that provide educational services by means of public funds shall make employee records and information available for public access, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 47:1A-10, the Open Public Records Act, but in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:6-120(d) and 121.(d) in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:32-4.3 and as outlined in this Regulation.
2. In accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 47:1A-10, notwithstanding the provisions of N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq. or any other law to the contrary, the personnel or pension records of any individual in the possession of a public agency, including but not limited to, records relating to any grievance filed by or against an individual, shall not be considered a government record and shall not be made available for public access, except that:
 - a. An individual's name, title, position, salary, payroll record, length of service, date of separation and the reason therefore, and the amount and type of any pension received shall be a government record;
 - b. Personnel or pension records of any individual shall be accessible when required to be disclosed by another law, when disclosure is essential to the performance of official duties of a person duly authorized by the State of New Jersey or the United States, or when authorized by an individual in interest; and

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- c. Data contained in information which disclose conformity with specific experiential, educational, or medical qualification required for government employment or for receipt of a public pension, but not including any detailed medical or psychological information, shall be a government record.
3. Information related to the evaluation of a particular employee shall be maintained by the school district, be confidential, and not be accessible to the public pursuant to N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq., as amended and supplemented, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:6-120.d and 18A:6-121.d.

In Effect: November 16, 2004

Revised: February 5, 2019

Revised: