

SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF EMPLOYEES

The Board of Education recognizes that harassment of employees (including all staff, applicants for employment, both paid and unpaid interns, exempt and non-exempt status, part-time, seasonal, and temporary workers, regardless of immigration status) and certain “non-employees” (which includes contractors, subcontractors, vendors, consultant and other persons providing services pursuant to a contract, or their employees) on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity and expression is abusive and illegal behavior that harms targets and negatively impacts the school culture by creating an environment of fear, distrust, intimidation and intolerance. The Board further recognizes that preventing and remedying such harassment in the workplace is essential to ensure a healthy, nondiscriminatory environment in which employees and “non-employees” can work productively.

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is unlawful under federal, state, and (where applicable) local law. For purposes of this policy, sexual harassment includes harassment on the basis of perceived or self-identified sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and transgender status.

Sexual harassment is unlawful when it subjects an individual to inferior terms, conditions or privileges of employment. Such harassment need not be severe or pervasive to be unlawful, and can be any harassing conduct that consists of more than petty slights or trivial inconveniences.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome conduct which is either of a sexual nature, or which is directed at an individual because of that individual's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and transgender status, when:

- a. submission to that conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- b. submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting an individual's employment; or
- c. the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's or “non-employee's” work or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, even if the complaining individual is not the intended target of the sexual harassment;

Sexual harassment can include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, or verbal, nonverbal or physical aggression, intimidation or hostility that is based on actual or perceived gender and sexual stereotypes. Examples of sexual harassment can be found in the accompanying regulation (0110-R).

The Board is committed to providing a working environment that promotes respect, dignity and equality and that is free from all forms of sexual harassment. To this end, the Board condemns and strictly prohibits all forms of sexual harassment on school grounds, school buses and at all school-sponsored activities, programs and events, including those that take place at locations outside the district, or outside the work setting if the harassment impacts the individual's employment in a way that violates their legal rights, including when employees and “non-employees” travel on district business, or when harassment is done by electronic means (including on social media). For employees, sexual harassment is considered a form of employee misconduct. Sanctions will be

enforced against all those who engage in sexual harassment or retaliation, and against supervisory and managerial personnel who knowingly allow such behavior to continue.

Sexual harassment may subject the district to liability for harm done to targets. Harassers may also be individually subject to civil liability if sued in a court of law or criminal liability if prosecuted.

Under various state and federal laws, students, employees and "non-employees" have legal protections against sexual harassment in the school environment as described above. Those laws are listed in the references section. Additionally, local laws (e.g., county, city, town, village) may apply to the district. The district's Code of Conduct also addresses appropriate behavior in the school environment. Sexual harassment can occur between persons of all ages and genders.

In order for the Board to effectively enforce this policy and to take prompt corrective measures, it is essential that all targets of sexual harassment and persons with knowledge of sexual harassment report the harassment immediately. The district will promptly investigate all complaints of sexual harassment, either formal or informal, verbal or written. To the extent possible, all complaints will be treated in a confidential manner. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation. If the complainant reports that they feel unsafe at work due to the nature of the complaint, the district will determine if accommodations need to be made until the issue is resolved.

If, after appropriate investigation, the district finds that a person has violated this policy, prompt corrective action will be taken in accordance with the applicable collective bargaining agreement, contract, district policy and state law. Individual nondisclosure agreements may only be used as permitted by law, described in the accompanying regulation.

All complainants and those who participate in sexual harassment complaints or the investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment have the right to be free from retaliation of any kind, when they do so with a good faith belief that sexual harassment has occurred. Such prohibited retaliation can include, but is not limited to, discipline, discrimination, demotion, denial of privileges, or any action that would keep a person from coming forward to make or support a sexual harassment claim. Such actions need not be job-related, or occur in the workplace, to constitute unlawful retaliation.

The Superintendent of Schools is directed to develop and implement regulations for reporting, investigating and remedying allegations of sexual harassment. These regulations are to be attached to this policy. In addition, the Board directs that training programs be established for students, and annually for employees, to raise awareness of the issues surrounding sexual harassment and to implement preventative measures to help reduce incidents of sexual harassment. Age-appropriate instructional materials will be incorporated into the curriculum to educate students so that they can recognize and reduce the incidence of sexual harassment.

This policy, or a simplified version, will be posted in a prominent place in each district facility, on the district's website, and shall also be published in employee handbooks, and other appropriate school publications.

A committee of administrators, teachers, parents, students and the school attorney will be convened annually to review this policy's effectiveness and compliance with applicable state and federal law, and to recommend revisions to Board.

Ref:

Education Amendments of 1972, Title IX, 20 U.S.C. §1681 *et seq.*; 34 CFR 106 *et seq.*
Title VII of Civil Rights Act (1964), 42 U.S.C. §2000-e; 34 CFR §100 *et seq.*
Executive Law §296-d (prohibition of sexual harassment of employees and non-employees)
Labor Law §201-g (required workplace sexual harassment policy and training)
Civil Practice Law and Rules §§5003-b (nondisclosure agreements optional); 7515 (mandatory arbitration prohibited)
General Obligations Law §5-336 (nondisclosure agreements optional)
Faragher v. City of Boca Raton, 524 U.S. 775 (1998)
Burlington Industries v. Ellerth, 524 U.S. 742 (1998)
Oncale v. Sundowner Offshore Services, Inc., 523 U.S. 75 (1998)
Meritor Savings Bank, FSB v. Vinson, 477 U.S. 57 (1986)

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