



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

August 18, 2015

TO: The Honorable Lance Mizumoto
Chairperson, Board of Education

FROM:  Kathryn S. Matayoshi
Superintendent

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item: Board Action on Student Achievement Committee recommendation concerning Board Policy 101.7, School Climate and Discipline**

1. Description

During the June 16, 2015 Board of Education meeting, the Board voted to defer action on proposed policy 101.7 until August 18, 2015, to providing the Department time to work with principals to collect feedback. This memo provides Department of Education feedback on the proposed policy on School Climate and Discipline (Board of Education Policy 101.7).

The policy has five key provisions:

- i. Requirement for school climate goals and action plan: "School shall identify school climate goals that complement the school's academic goals. School climate goals and action plans developed by each school community will identify practices that serve to create an environment where all members are respected, welcomed, supported and feel safe in school."
- ii. Removal from classroom as last resort: "Schools shall strive to keep students in school and engaged in learning to the greatest extent possible. Schools should only remove students from the classroom as a disciplinary consequence only as a last resort and only for appropriately serious infractions."
- iii. Instruction and behavior support for students who are not in class: "Students who are removed from class shall be provided with meaningful academic instruction and behavioral supports."
- iv. Documentation of factors considered upon suspension: "The administrator with discretion and authority to affect an off-campus suspension shall in every case, prior to such suspension and in addition to other factors required to be considered by law, balance the long term best interests of the student against overall safety concerns. Such determination shall be in writing."

- v. **School-based law enforcement officers:**
 - a. **“Schools shall provide clear definition of officers’ roles and responsibilities on campus and document those expectations in a written agreement designed to avoid inappropriate student referrals to the justice system, violation of civil rights laws, and information exchanges that may violate student privacy rights.”**
 - b. **“Role of the officer shall primarily focus on safety and reducing inappropriate student referrals to law enforcement. Such officers shall not be involved in routine disciplinary matters.”**
 - c. **“Department shall provide training to such officers necessary and relevant to the (officers’) role on campus, including adolescent brain development and school-wide discipline policies.”**

2. Presentation

Since June 16, 2015, the Department solicited feedback on the policy through the Deputy Superintendent’s Roundtable of principals, via email, and via an online survey. In addition to the discussion with the Deputy’s Roundtable of 24 principals and individual conversations with other principals, the Department received 50 individual or group responses via email and through our online survey.

The respondents affirmed the importance of a positive school climate as a critical component to supporting student success, in line with the intent of the proposed policy. There were a range of responses to the specific policy provisions. However, as a whole, principals affirmed the importance of a positive school climate and described their current efforts and ongoing commitment to implementing positive behavior interventions and supports at their school as part of Comprehensive Student Supports, a priority strategy of the Department. They also expressed the challenge of balancing interests and concerns when addressing serious behavior infractions since they need to consider the offender, offended, and entire school community.

Many principals wanted the confirm that the Board was aware of the data on student suspensions which have been low, relative to other states, and declining:

2011-12:	4.8%
2012-13:	4.4%
2013-14:	3.8%.

Source: *Hawaii Department of Education Trend Report, 2014.*

Some questioned the need for a policy that establishes additional requirements for all schools, suggesting targeted interventions for identified schools instead. They also expressed their need for additional resources to provide more options to support students’ needs and alternatives

3. Recommendation

The Department requests that the Board refer the policy to the Student Achievement Committee for more in-depth briefing on principals’ feedback.

- c: **Board of Education Members**
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent
Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance