

TEACHER DISCIPLINE

The Board of Education believes that maintaining appropriate procedures and standards for addressing teacher misconduct and other inappropriate behavior is a critical ingredient in furthering an effective educational environment and in providing quality educational services necessary for the attainment of successful educational outcomes for students. This policy is intended to provide standards and procedures by which administrative personnel shall make determinations as to whether teacher discipline is warranted and, if so, in arriving at an appropriate disciplinary response.

Although discipline is corrective, other significant purposes of discipline are to promote accountability of teachers to maintain proper conduct, to provide notice to teachers of behavioral expectations, and to inform teachers of the consequences of any future disciplinary infractions, offenses or other misconduct.

For purposes of this policy, the term "teacher" shall refer to those employees of the school district whose employment is regulated by the Teachers' Tenure Act, MCL 38.71 *et seq*, and those professional staff members covered by the SLEA master agreement.

Discharge, demotion, or other discipline of teachers under this policy shall be made only for a reason(s) that is not arbitrary or capricious. This standard signifies that a disciplinary decision must be supported by results of a disciplinary investigation and that any resulting disciplinary action must have a rational relationship to the teacher's conduct which forms the basis for a disciplinary decision.

Before imposing any disciplinary measure under this policy, the administrator shall investigate whether a teacher has engaged in an offense, infraction, or other misconduct which could result in a disciplinary consequence. An administrator shall investigate the alleged violation before imposing a disciplinary measure upon the teacher. The investigation should include discussions with any witnesses to the event(s) upon which possible teacher discipline is premised, including witnesses or other sources suggested by the teacher being investigated. The teacher who is the subject of the disciplinary allegation shall be provided with an opportunity to respond to those allegations as part of the investigation process.

The following procedures shall be used for disciplinary actions taken against teachers, up to and including a recommendation for discharge:

1. Oral or written notice will be given by the administration to the teacher of the incident, complaint, or charge that forms the basis for the investigation and potential disciplinary action.

2. If the complaint alleges child abuse or neglect, the matter shall be reported to Child Protective Services.
3. The teacher will be given written notice of the time, date, and location of a meeting to provide the teacher with an opportunity to respond to the disciplinary incident, complaint, or charge. This opportunity to respond shall include the right of the teacher to dispute the factual basis of the incident, complaint, or charge, as well as the nature of any contemplated disciplinary action in the event that the disciplinary incident, complaint, or charge is factually substantiated.
4. A teacher represented by an exclusive bargaining agent under the Public Employment Relations Act shall, upon request, be entitled to union representation at any investigative meeting which the teacher reasonably believes could ultimately result in disciplinary action. Alternatively, a teacher shall, upon his/her request, be entitled to have another member of their bargaining unit accompany him/her to any investigative meeting which the teacher under investigation is required to attend when that teacher reasonably believes that the investigation may ultimately result in his/her discipline. The obtaining of a representative shall not unreasonably delay an investigative meeting.
5. The Superintendent, or his/her designee, is authorized to place a teacher on administrative leave, with pay, pending the completion of a disciplinary investigation of the alleged or suspected offense, infraction, or misconduct. This authority can be exercised in those circumstances when, in the judgment of the Superintendent, or his/her designee, the nature of the charges, the behavior or record of the teacher, or other circumstances make it inadvisable for the teacher to remain at work while the investigation is ongoing. Placement on administrative leave under this provision is not regarded as, in itself, a disciplinary measure or penalty.
6. If criminal charges are filed against a teacher before or during the pendency of a disciplinary investigation, a probationary teacher may be placed on unpaid leave during the pendency of the investigation after notice and an opportunity to be heard. Under these circumstances, a tenured teacher's salary shall not be discontinued other than through observance of the pertinent standards and procedures specified in the Teachers' Tenure Act. The District need not delay the institution of tenure charges or other disciplinary action against a teacher during the pendency of any criminal charges against the teacher.
7. If an investigation of teacher conduct supports a determination that the teacher has engaged in an offense, infraction, misconduct, or other behavior warranting disciplinary action, the administrative decision as to the level of discipline shall be guided by the following standards:

- a. The seriousness of the offense, infraction, or misconduct;
 - b. The teacher's prior disciplinary and employment record;
 - c. How teachers engaging in similar or like offenses, infractions, or misconduct have been disciplined in past comparable circumstances involving similarly situated teachers; and
 - d. The existence of aggravating or mitigating factors.
8. Disciplinary measures include but are not limited to: verbal reprimand (memorialized in writing), written reprimand, paid or unpaid suspension, and discharge. All disciplinary measures are to be reviewed by the Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services prior to action. Nothing in this policy or the identification of these levels of discipline requires that the above disciplinary measures be applied progressively or sequentially. The administration reserves the right to apply the disciplinary sanction it determines to be appropriate to a specific set of circumstances.
9. When disciplinary action is taken against a teacher it shall be confirmed in writing. The document confirming the discipline will be provided to the teacher and placed in the teacher's personnel file.
10. The Superintendent (or designee) is delegated the authority under this policy to impose all teacher discipline with the exception of:
- a. The discharge of either a probationary or tenured teacher;
 - b. The non-renewal of a probationary teacher; and
 - c. The demotion of a tenured teacher, as defined in the Teachers' Tenure Act.
 - d. The discharge or demotion of an administrator
 - e. The non-renewal of an administrator.

Each of the above disciplinary actions may only be imposed by this Board of Education upon written recommendation of the Superintendent and upon adherence to any applicable procedures set forth in the Teachers' Tenure Act.

Approved:

Legal Reference: MCL 380.11a (K-12), MCL 380.601a (ISD), MCL 423.215, MCL 38.71, *et seq.*

BOARD OF EDUCATION
SOUTH LYON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

PERSONNEL
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