

BOARD AGENDA ITEM

August 13, 2024

SUBJECT:

Revised policies and administrative rules, Second Reading

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Administration cyclically reviews policies, administrative rules, and files in the Policy Manual. As part of the cyclical review process, the attached policies and administrative rules were reviewed.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION:

The attached policies and administrative rules have been reviewed and revisions have been recommended. Minor revisions have been made to reflect current district practices and/or title changes.

Policy IKD Honor Rolls, Second Reading
Policy IMB Teaching about Controversial/Sensitive Issues, Second Reading
Policy JFC Student Withdrawal from School/Dropouts, Second Reading
Policy JH Student Absences and Excuses, Second Reading
Policy JICEA School-Related Student Publications, Second Reading

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Approve the review of the policies and administrative rules.

Policy IKD Honor Rolls, Second Reading
Policy IMB Teaching about Controversial/Sensitive Issues, Second Reading
Policy JFC Student Withdrawal from School/Dropouts, Second Reading
Policy JH Student Absences and Excuses, Second Reading
Policy JICEA School-Related Student Publications, Second Reading

ATTACHMENT:

Policy IKD Honor Rolls
Policy IMB Teaching about Controversial/Sensitive Issues
Policy JFC Student Withdrawal from School/Dropouts
Policy JH Student Absences and Excuses
Policy JICEA School-Related Student Publications

PREPARED BY:

Dr. Salvatore Minolfo

TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL/ SENSITIVE ISSUES

Code **IMB** Issued **1/028/24**

Purpose: To establish the direction for teaching about controversial/sensitive issues in district schools.

The presentation and discussion of controversial issues in the classroom should be on an informative basis. The teachers should guard against giving their personal opinions on sectarian or political questions or any other controversial issues until the students have had the opportunity to find, collect and assemble factual material on the subject; to interpret the data without prejudice; to reconsider assumptions and claims and to reach their own conclusions. By refraining from expressing personal views before and during the period of research and study, the teacher is encouraging students to search for truth and to think for themselves. The development of an ability to meet issues without prejudice and to withhold judgments while facts are being collected, assembled and weighted and relationships seen before drawing conclusions is among the most valuable outcomes of a free educational system.

The policy can best be described by listing three basic rights of the student.

- The right to study controversial issues which have political, economic or social significance about which he/she should begin to have an opinion.
- The right to study under competent instruction in an atmosphere free from bias and prejudice.
- The right of access to all relevant information freely available in the school or public libraries.

Students must participate in various activities and course requirements as dictated by the teacher to demonstrate knowledge of content, be the content factual or theoretical in nature. The teacher may permit the student to write a brief statement opposing a certain theory if requested by the student.

Emotional criticism and the promotion of a cause within the classroom are inappropriate and unscholarly. The teacher's attitude should be that of the true scholar which is truth-seeking, open-minded and tolerant.

Before launching a class in the study of an obviously controversial topic, teachers will discuss it through their ~~councils~~, committees, departments and faculties as to the following.

- appropriateness to the course
- appropriateness for the maturity of the students
- approach to instruction
- teaching materials to be used

The principal must approve the instruction ~~on all counts in line with the statements above on related to~~ teaching controversial issues.

Adopted 9/9/75; Revised 1/8/02, 8/13/24

STUDENT WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL/DROPOUTS

Code **JFC** Issued **4/028/24**

Purpose: To establish the board's vision for the district dropout program.

The board believes that a high school diploma signifies the minimum preparation for life. Therefore, the board strongly urges every teacher, ~~guidance counselor~~ school counselor, principal, parent and citizen to exert influence to keep all students in school at least through high school graduation.

The administration and instructional staff should organize and modify the school programs to suit the needs and aspirations of the students. The instructional staff should recognize potential dropouts and do everything possible to give necessary guidance to such students.

Adopted 4/23/02, Revised 8/13/24

BOARD AGENDA ITEM

August 13, 2024

SUBJECT:

Revised policies and administrative rules, Second Reading

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Administration cyclically reviews policies, administrative rules, and files in the Policy Manual. As part of the cyclical review process, the attached policies and administrative rules were reviewed.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION:

The attached policies and administrative rules have been reviewed and revisions have been recommended. Minor revisions have been made to reflect current district practices and/or title changes.

Policy IKD Honor Rolls, Second Reading
Policy IMB Teaching about Controversial/Sensitive Issues, Second Reading
Policy JFC Student Withdrawal from School/Dropouts, Second Reading
Policy JH Student Absences and Excuses, Second Reading
Policy JICEA School-Related Student Publications, Second Reading

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Approve the review of the policies and administrative rules.

Policy IKD Honor Rolls, Second Reading
Policy IMB Teaching about Controversial/Sensitive Issues, Second Reading
Policy JFC Student Withdrawal from School/Dropouts, Second Reading
Policy JH Student Absences and Excuses, Second Reading
Policy JICEA School-Related Student Publications, Second Reading

ATTACHMENT:

Policy IKD Honor Rolls
Policy IMB Teaching about Controversial/Sensitive Issues
Policy JFC Student Withdrawal from School/Dropouts
Policy JH Student Absences and Excuses
Policy JICEA School-Related Student Publications

PREPARED BY:

Dr. Salvatore Minolfo

TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL/ SENSITIVE ISSUES

Code **IMB** Issued **1/028/24**

Purpose: To establish the direction for teaching about controversial/sensitive issues in district schools.

The presentation and discussion of controversial issues in the classroom should be on an informative basis. The teachers should guard against giving their personal opinions on sectarian or political questions or any other controversial issues until the students have had the opportunity to find, collect and assemble factual material on the subject; to interpret the data without prejudice; to reconsider assumptions and claims and to reach their own conclusions. By refraining from expressing personal views before and during the period of research and study, the teacher is encouraging students to search for truth and to think for themselves. The development of an ability to meet issues without prejudice and to withhold judgments while facts are being collected, assembled and weighted and relationships seen before drawing conclusions is among the most valuable outcomes of a free educational system.

The policy can best be described by listing three basic rights of the student.

- The right to study controversial issues which have political, economic or social significance about which he/she should begin to have an opinion.
- The right to study under competent instruction in an atmosphere free from bias and prejudice.
- The right of access to all relevant information freely available in the school or public libraries.

Students must participate in various activities and course requirements as dictated by the teacher to demonstrate knowledge of content, be the content factual or theoretical in nature. The teacher may permit the student to write a brief statement opposing a certain theory if requested by the student.

Emotional criticism and the promotion of a cause within the classroom are inappropriate and unscholarly. The teacher's attitude should be that of the true scholar which is truth-seeking, open-minded and tolerant.

Before launching a class in the study of an obviously controversial topic, teachers will discuss it through their ~~councils~~, committees, departments and faculties as to the following.

- appropriateness to the course
- appropriateness for the maturity of the students
- approach to instruction
- teaching materials to be used

The principal must approve the instruction ~~on all counts in line with the statements above on related to~~ teaching controversial issues.

Adopted 9/9/75; Revised 1/8/02, 8/13/24

STUDENT WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL/DROPOUTS

Code **JFC** Issued **4/028/24**

Purpose: To establish the board's vision for the district dropout program.

The board believes that a high school diploma signifies the minimum preparation for life. Therefore, the board strongly urges every teacher, ~~guidance counselor~~ school counselor, principal, parent and citizen to exert influence to keep all students in school at least through high school graduation.

The administration and instructional staff should organize and modify the school programs to suit the needs and aspirations of the students. The instructional staff should recognize potential dropouts and do everything possible to give necessary guidance to such students.

Adopted 4/23/02, Revised 8/13/24

STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Code **JH** Issued **2/128/24**

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for allowing and excusing student absences.

The board believes that attendance is a key factor in student achievement. Any absence from school represents an educational loss to the student. However, the board recognizes that some absences are unavoidable.

In order to receive credit for a high school course, a student must attend at least 85 days (for a 90-day semester course) or 170 days (for a 180-day year course). The board may grant approval of excessive absences in accordance with board policy.

Any student who misses school must present a written excuse, signed by his/her parent/legal guardian or an excuse written by a medical provider. The excuse will contain such other information as directed by the administration. Student excuses are considered to be a part of student records and such excuses will be processed by those school-based employees designated to administer attendance regulations and will be provided to other staff who have a need to know.

If a student fails to bring a valid excuse to school within five days, he/she will automatically receive an unexcused or unlawful absence. If a student brings a false (or forged) excuse, the school official receiving that note must refer the student to the school administration for appropriate action. If a student accumulates absences in excess of 10, a medical note may be required in order to assist the principal in making decisions regarding lawful absences and denial of credit.

A. Lawful and unlawful absences

1. The district will consider a student **lawfully** absent under the following circumstances.

The student is ill and attendance at school would endanger the student's health or the health of others.

There is a death in the student's immediate family. Absences of this nature should not exceed three per occurrence. Excessive absences as a result of death may be deemed unlawful.

There is a serious illness in the student's immediate family. A statement from a physician or healthcare provider may be required. Absences of this nature should not exceed three per year.

There is a recognized religious holiday of the student's faith.

The student is traveling or attending events that the principal approved in advance as an educational experience.

Emergencies and/or extreme hardships at the discretion of the principal.

Other lawful absences are explained in administrative rule JH-R.

Chronic or extended illness requires a certification of the illness from the physician or other healthcare provider. Parents/Legal guardians who anticipate a student's absence of more than

PAGE 2 - JH - STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

~~five consecutive days~~ 10 consecutive days in elementary or middle school, or five consecutive days in high school due to an extended health problem should apply immediately for homebound instruction by calling the school guidance office. A child is not counted as absent if the homebound is approved and the student receives instruction for each day approved.

2. The district will consider a student **unlawfully** absent under the following circumstances.

The student is willfully absent from school without the knowledge of his/her parents/legal guardians.

The student is absent without acceptable cause with the knowledge of his/her parent/legal guardian.

The student is absent and fails to turn in an acceptable note within five days of the student's return from an illness.

The student is absent after the parent/legal guardian has received notice that a medical note is required but the medical note is not presented.

B. Truancy

1. Truant

A child from age five until age 17 years meets the definition of a truant when the child has three consecutive unlawful absences or a total of five unlawful absences.

2. Habitual truant

A "habitual" truant is a child, ages 12 to 17 years, who fails to comply with the intervention plan developed by the school, the child, and the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) and who accumulates two or more additional unlawful absences. This child may need court intervention and an initial truancy petition may be filed. The written intervention plan and documentation of non-compliance must be attached to the truancy petition asking for court intervention.

3. Chronic truant

A "chronic" truant is a child, ages 12 to 17 years, who has been through the school intervention process, has reached the level of habitual truant, has been referred to family court and placed on an order to attend school and continues to accumulate unlawful absences. Should other community alternatives and referrals fail to remedy the attendance problem, the "chronic" truant may be referred to the family court for violation of a previous court order. All school intervention plans existing to this point for this child and family must accompany the contempt of court petition as well as a written recommendation from the school and/or attendance supervisor to the court on action the court should take.

C. Intervention plans

1. Once a child is determined to be truant as defined in Section B(1) school officials must make every reasonable effort to meet with the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) to identify the reasons for the student's unlawful absences. These efforts should include telephone calls and home visits as well as written messages. The principal or his/her designee and the ~~attendance clerk~~ student information clerk will coordinate communication between the parent/legal guardian,

PAGE 3 - JH - STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

child, community resources and school personnel in an effort to develop a written intervention plan to address the student's unlawful absences. The attendance supervisor will meet monthly with those designated school personnel to review the attendance intervention plans of those students who have been identified as truant, habitually truant and chronically truant.

2. The intervention plan must include the following.
 - a. Reasons for the unlawful absences.
 - b. Actions to be taken by the parent/legal guardian and student to resolve the cause of the unlawful absences.
 - c. Documentation of referrals to appropriate service providers and, if available, alternative school and community-based programs.
 - d. Action to be taken by school personnel.
 - e. Actions to be taken in the event unlawful absences continue.
 - f. Signature of the parent/legal guardian or evidence that attempts were made to involve the parent/legal guardian.
 - g. Results of actions taken by all the parties.
 - h. Revisions to plans as needed.

D. Referral to the attendance supervisor

1. Once school officials have completed an intervention plan with the parent/legal guardian (and the student if he/she is 12 years of age or older) and the student accumulates ~~one~~ two additional unlawful absence, a referral must be made to the district attendance supervisor. Documentation of continued efforts by the school and/or attendance supervisor must be documented on the intervention plan form.
2. In addition, if attempts to involve the parents/legal guardians have been unsuccessful and the student has been identified as truant, a referral must be made to the district attendance office. Documentation of all attempts to involve the parent/legal guardian must be included in the referral packet.

E. Referrals and judicial intervention

At no time should a child or parent/legal guardian be referred to family court to be placed under an order to attend school prior to the written intervention planning being completed with the parent/legal guardian. Should the parent/legal guardian refuse to cooperate with the intervention planning to remedy the attendance problem, the school district has the authority to refer the student to family court in accordance with S.C. Code Ann. 59-65-50. In addition, schools must exhaust all reasonable alternatives to court action if a child or parent/legal guardian has already been placed on a school attendance order before a referral is made to family court for violation of that order.

F. Transfer of plans

If a student transfers to another public school in South Carolina, intervention plans will be forwarded to the receiving school. School officials will contact the parent/legal guardian to review the plan and revise as appropriate.

G. Approval of absences in excess of 10 days and approval of credit

1. Approval or disapproval of absences

The principal will approve or disapprove any student's absence in excess of 10 days for the purpose of awarding credit and to determine if these absences are lawful or unlawful.

PAGE 4 - JH - STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

A medical note or other documentation will be required after a student accumulates 10 absences in order to assist the principal in making that decision. A principal may decide not to include those absences that are medically excused as part of the 10 total absences provided the number of medical notes is not deemed excessive.

2. High school credit

In order to receive one Carnegie unit of credit, a student must be in attendance at least 120 hours, per unit, regardless of the number of days missed. Students whose absences are approved for the purpose of awarding credit should be allowed to make up any work missed in order to satisfy the 120-hour requirement. Principals should consider student absences giving appropriate consideration to unique situations that may arise within their districts when students do not meet the minimum attendance requirements. Therefore, principals should allow students whose excessive absences are approved, regardless of whether these absences are lawful, unlawful or a combination thereof, to make up work missed to satisfy the 120-hour requirement.

Appeals procedures for denial of promotion/credit

Appeals of the principal's decision will be processed through the district's administrative functions (academic officer, district superintendent, respectively) with the board of education being the final appeal step.

Adopted 9/9/75; Revised 8/29/79, 2/28/84, 11/13/90, 6/25/91, 4/23/02, 9/28/04, 2/7/12, 8/13/24

Legal references:

A. S.C. Code, 1976, as amended:

1. Section 59-65-90 - State Board to establish rules and regulations defining lawful and unlawful absences.

B. State Board of Education Regulations:

1. R-43-274-Student attendance.

SCHOOL-RELATED STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Code **JICEA** Issued **2/128/24**

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for student publications.

The board sanctions student publications as long as students are willing to accept the responsibilities of the freedoms of speech and of the press. The board or its designee will make rules as to time and place for distribution of such publications and any other regulations necessary to assure that student publications do not infringe on the rights of others.

The designated sponsor(s) of any officially recognized school-sanctioned and school-financed publication (e.g., newspaper, yearbook, literary magazine, et al.) will assume the initial responsibility of screening and editing all materials earmarked for publication. Although journalism students should be given meaningful editorial latitude, the sponsor(s) retains the inherent obligation to delete any article or comment likely to create substantial disruption of, or significant interference with, school activities.

Any student objecting to a sponsor's exercise of discretion in this regard should bring the objection to the attention of the sponsor in writing. The school principal will hold a conference to discuss the complaints with the complainant(s), the sponsor and the principal. It is the principal's responsibility to decide the matter in close consultation with the appropriate [assistant superintendent-academic officer](#), the district superintendent and legal counsel.

Adopted 6/10/75; Revised 4/23/02, 2/7/12, [8/13/24](#)