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"Educating Georgia's Future"

Discipline Matrix Rationale

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-740, all school systems are required to submit annual discipline data to the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) regarding disciplinary and placement actions taken during the prior school year. Student discipline data must also be reported to the U.S. Department of Education pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Department of Education Organization Act (20 U.S.C. 3413).

The GaDOE is responsible for reviewing student discipline data to determine trends and to identify anomalies in discipline reporting. In order to effectively accomplish this task, the GaDOE has made significant changes to the data reporting platform. Overall, the goal of these changes is as follows:

- Improve data accuracy and reliability
- Improve transparency in data reporting
- Address concerns about the disproportionate use of discipline actions
- Improve ambiguous categorical definitions and the correlation between discipline incidents and discipline actions.

Additionally, the revisions in the discipline reporting platform will provide more reliable data for the computation of the School Climate Star Rating in Georgia's College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI). The School Climate Star Rating will be used as a diagnostic tool within the CCRPI to determine if a school is on the right path to school improvement.

GaDOE staff from the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program and the Policy Division communicated with stakeholders and engaged in analytical exercises pertaining to student discipline data with focus groups that included local school system student discipline administrators. Additionally, GaDOE staff members communicated with Student Record Coordinators across the state.

Based on a review of student discipline data and conversations with local school systems, it appears that the definitions for student discipline incident types are unclear, and the student discipline actions do not always relate to the incident. To address these concerns, the GaDOE developed the following:

- Discipline Matrix
 - Serves as a guidance tool and includes discipline incident types, definitions, examples and incident levels.
- Seven (7) new Discipline Incident Types:
 - (1) Other - Attendance-Related (Incident Type '30')
 - (2) Other - Dress Code Violation (Incident Type '31')
 - (3) Other - Student Incivility (Incident Type '33')
 - (4) Other - Possession of Unapproved Items (Incident Type '34')

- (5) Academic Dishonesty (Incident Type '32')
- (6) Gang-Related (Incident Type '35')
- (7) Repeated Offenses (Incident Type '36')

- New Discipline Action Type
 - (1) Detention (two or more school days or the equivalent hours)
- Differentiation of Out-of-School Suspension
 - Out-of-School Suspension (short-term)
 - Out-of-School Suspension (long-term)

The addition of the Discipline Matrix and the new Discipline Incident Types and Action Types will provide more clarity in reporting discipline incidents and actions. Definitions have been updated and specific examples are provided in the Discipline Matrix. Three-tiered discipline incident levels complete with definitions and examples are also available within the Discipline Matrix to assist school systems in the data reporting process. School systems are encouraged to align their student code of conduct to the Discipline Matrix.

The changes to the student discipline reporting platform will provide the GaDOE with the opportunity to assist local school systems in identifying areas for improvement by aligning interventions with student discipline data.

Definitions

New Discipline Incident Types

- 1) Other - Attendance-Related - Repeated or excessive unexcused absences or tardies; including failure to report to class, skipping class, leaving school without authorization, or failure to comply with disciplinary sanctions
- 2) Other - Dress Code Violation - Violation of school dress code that includes standards for appropriate school attire
- 3) Other - Student Incivility – Insubordination or disrespect to staff members or other students; Includes but is not limited to refusal to follow school staff member instructions, use of vulgar or inappropriate language, and misrepresentation of the truth
- 4) Other – Possession of Unapproved Items – The use or possession of any unauthorized item disruptive to the school environment. (Note: The use or fireworks or incendiary devices must be coded as Arson.

- 5) Academic Dishonesty – Receiving or providing unauthorized assistance on classroom projects, assignments or exams
- 6) Gang-Related - Any group of three or more persons with a common name or common identifying signs, symbols, tattoos, graffiti, or attire which engage in criminal gang behavior
- 7) Repeated Offenses – Collection of offenses not previously assigned a state reportable action that occurs on a single or across multiple school days that leads to a state reportable disciplinary action

New Discipline Action Type

- 1) Detention - Disciplinary action consisting of the assignment of students to a certain area of the school outside of regular school hours (before school, after school, on a non-school day) for two or more school days or the equivalent hours

Updated Discipline Action Types

- 1) Out of School Suspension (Short-Term) - Suspension of a student for ten school days or less (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751)
- 2) Out of School Suspension (Long-Term) - Suspension of a student for more than ten school days but not beyond the current school quarter or semester (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751)
- 3) In School Suspension - Temporary removal of a student from his or her regular classroom(s) for at least half a school day
 - Student remains under the direct supervision of school personnel.
 - Direct supervision means school personnel are physically in the same location as students under their supervision.