

THE WCSD PROMISE

We will know every student by **name**,
strength, and **need** so they graduate
prepared for the future they choose, and we
will deliver on this promise in partnership
with our **families** and **community**.

GOALS

for student success

Our aspirational Goals are statements of our collective commitment to learning, growth and success for every student, regardless of their background or circumstances. The Goals are the “ends” we seek for all students.



Goal #1 Strong Start for Every Child

Every student, from Pre-K through Grade 3, will experience equitable learning opportunities for success in developmentally appropriate environments.



Goal #2 Student Voice & Advocacy

Every student will have ongoing opportunities to take ownership of their educational journey.



Goal #3 Safety and Belonging

Every student will be welcomed, included and valued within a safe and supportive school environment.



Goal #4 Academic Growth & Achievement

Every student will have access to challenging academic programs, meet or exceed standards and achieve at least one year's academic growth annually.



Goal #5 Empowering All Learners for their Future

Every student will graduate with the skills necessary to thrive in a diverse and rapidly evolving world.

SAFE AND CONNECTED SCHOOLS

The goal of Safety and Belonging will be achieved in part through a district-wide culture that supports the social, emotional, and physical well-being of students and staff. The building blocks for action and decision making, or Pillars, each have the overarching idea of Safety and Connection woven through them. Consistent standards-aligned curriculum and instruction, strong partnerships among families, community

and schools, commitment to elevating educators and a culture of excellence and accountability each rely on students and staff feeling safe and connected. Therefore, we are committed to creating and maintaining safe learning environments free from violence and disruption. Violent and disruptive behavior must be addressed immediately to ensure the safety of the school community, and to ensure the opportunity to learn for all students.

Safe and Respectful Learning Environment

Every student and staff member has the right to learn and work in a respectful, safe, and inclusive learning environment, one that is free from distractions and disruptions that impede learning. This belief is supported by state statute (NRS 388.132) and through Board Policy 5700. The home, school, and community must work together to enhance the quality of the educational experience of all of our students. A positive school climate and culture characterized by mutual respect and meaningful relationships among students, families, and staff will result in academic, social, and emotional growth for all students in the Washoe County School District (Board Policy 5100).

Creating a safe and respectful learning environment requires the building of **meaningful relationships** with students and families. This is done by deliberately connecting with students and families, and developing clear expectations and predictable routines, to strengthen meaningful communication and help provide welcoming, valuing, and stable classrooms and schools. These safe and respectful environments will foster student engagement and optimize academic, social and emotional learning.

The best approach to supporting student behavior is to create the conditions that promote prosocial behavior and academic engagement. The student who experiences connection, caring adults, and who engages in the learning process is far less likely to behave in distracting and disruptive ways that impede their own learning and potentially the learning of others.

State and Federal Legislation

All students are entitled to a **free and appropriate public education (FAPE)** (IDEA-300.101). This is an important starting place because this and a variety of other federal and state statutes provide guiderails supporting our work, especially regarding student discipline.

Most of the relevant Nevada statutes guiding student discipline can be found in Chapter 392-Pupils. In brief, state statute outlines school-based Progressive Discipline Committees, temporary removal of students from classrooms and other settings (TAP), the use of restorative practices and MTSS, the use of out of school suspension, long term suspensions, expulsions, and permanent expulsions, and identifies specific behaviors that can and/or must result in the placement of a student in an Interim Alternative Education Setting (IAES). Two assembly bills (**AB285 & AB330**) passed in the 2023

Legislative Session mandate changes to disciplinary practice. Changes include:

1. Greater flexibility in the use of suspension and/or expulsion with respect to first offense Battery with Bodily Injury, and Distribution of a Controlled Substance.
 - a. With battery, *intent* to cause bodily harm, may result in suspension and/or expulsion.
2. Greater flexibility in the use of disciplinary practices.
3. Clarity regarding parents' rights to appeal suspensions.
4. Requirements for schools to build student plans based on restorative practices for students suspended (in-school or out-of-school) for more than 2 consecutive school days or for a cumulative 5 days of out of school suspension (plans must include provisions for educational services, positive behavior interventions, and a host of other options).
5. Changes to suspension and/or expulsion of students protected under McKinney Vento (students classified as Children in Transition (CIT)). Before suspending or expelling a student a determination must be made with support from the District Homeless Liaison regarding the extent to which living circumstances were a factor influencing the behavior in question.
6. Increased accountability with requirements to review behavior and discipline data quarterly and analyze the extent to which outcomes are disproportionate.

Chapter 392 of Nevada Revised Statute, references when and how state mandates apply to students with disabilities. In general, language allows for the discipline of students with disabilities so long as when applied it is in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Special Education

We have a legal obligation to educate students with disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment (34CFR 300.114). In short this means that to the extent possible and appropriate, students with disabilities are educated with non-disabled peers. The IEP Team (34CFR 300.321 and section 1414(d)) has authority to determine the Least Restrictive Environment based on the student's needs.

Students with disabilities can be suspended. Nevada State Statute limits the number of days that a student with a disability can be suspended for any single infraction to 5 school days. IDEA (34CFR300.530) limits the number of days in one school year that a student with a disability can be suspended before the suspension constitutes a "change of placement" to 10 days.

A *change of placement* means a proposed change to the IEP which substantially or materially affects the composition of the educational program and services provided to the student. It is the IEP Team, through the definition of the services needed to support the student, that determines a change of placement. Because of this, before a change of placement is considered,

which also means before the 10th day of suspension, a **Manifestation Determination Review** (MDR)(IDEA- 300.530) must be completed by the IEP Team. At an MDR two questions must be answered. 1) Has the school carried out the IEP with fidelity? 2) Is the behavior in question a result of (manifestation) the child's disability? If the answer to question 1 is yes and the answer to question 2 is no, a student with a disability can be disciplined just as you would discipline a student without a disability.

Quarterly Monitoring

New legislation requires that data regarding student behavior and discipline be reviewed quarterly. To comply with this requirement, schools will be expected to review major behavior events and suspension data quarterly. Business Intelligence Gateway (BIG) reports are already available that allow for ongoing review of incidences as well as some disproportionality. It will be critical for each school to be aware of the extent to which outcomes are disproportionate.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports

By and large, Tier 1 practices and some Tier 2 interventions and consequences reside with the classroom teacher. Some Tier 2 interventions, and Tier 3 interventions and consequences reside with the school administrator. And some Tier 3 interventions and consequences, including behavior support, reside with central office administration.

Generally speaking, **minor behavior** infractions should be addressed with Tier 1 practices and Tier 2 interventions and consequences. **Major behavior** infractions should be addressed through Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions and consequences. Minor behaviors that are appropriately addressed and which are repeated multiple times (e.g., 3 or more times in a 10-day period), should be classified as a major behavior.

In table 1 we include examples of practices and interventions that we might see in the classroom, the school, and at the district level. Building meaningful connections and meaningful community among all students, families and staff is at the heart of this work. Establishing predictability through clear expectations and enforcing rules also enhances the sense of a physically and emotionally safe environment for students and staff alike.

There must be a high degree of consistency among teachers regarding classroom expectations and enforcement of rules. This is particularly crucial at the secondary level when students enjoy multiple teachers daily. There should also be consistency between classroom expectations and schoolwide expectations. Noting that the ultimate responsibility for establishing and carrying out expectations lie with educators, a powerful way to build community is to include students genuinely in the development of classroom and schoolwide expectations.

The handling of what we refer to as “minor” behaviors should in most cases be handled by the teacher or duty staff. Behaviors that do not threaten the safety of the learning environment would be classified as minors. **Minor Behaviors** are breeches of classroom and school-based rules that are clearly defined by the school, regularly taught, reinforced, can be disruptive and distract from student learning, and do not significantly violate the rights of others, do not put others at risk for harm, and are not chronic. Some examples of minor behaviors may be being tardy, and misusing property and/or technology.

If a student repeats the same or similar minor behaviors 3 or more times in a 10-day period and the teacher has retaught expectations and has used progressive disciplinary steps and supports within their means, that pattern should be identified as a major behavior and referred to school administration. In these instances, administrative action would likely fall within what we describe as Tier 2 discipline and intervention. Practices such as “restore at the door”, restorative conferences including teachers, administration and at times parents regarding student conduct, skill building opportunities, and safety and support planning could be used.

If a student continues to fail to respond or exhibits behavior that in the professional judgment of the teacher is highly disruptive or alarming, the teacher can remove the child to a **temporary alternative placement** (TAP) within the building. In Table 1 we do refer to this as a Tier 3 intervention as we generally see this as an intervention of last resort on behalf of the teacher.

If a student continues to repeat behaviors when progressive steps, including exclusionary practices coupled with restorative practices, have been used, administrators do have the ability to request district support through our universal referral system.

Through the referral system, administrators can request behavior support, District Intervention Assistance Team (DIAT) support, behavior hearing support, as well as attendance support and mental health support.

District interventions fall within the level of Tier 3. These include providing consultation in behavior management from Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) and at times Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), conducting DIAT meetings providing student centered consultation with community partners, and behavior hearing support on extreme forms of behavior. Support with conducting threat assessments, and hearing support is also available.

Our goal is to foster connections and promote the behavior we hope to see students exhibit. We will still have to manage disruptive behaviors and we have many strategies we can rely on to intervene as early as possible when a student behaves inappropriately. We must discipline students in a progressive manner should students fail to respond to our reteaching and restorative practices. When a progressive system of discipline and support is not used, it can make it unclear to the student what they need to correct as well as what supports are there to help them correct the behavior.

Behaviors that threaten the safety of students and staff must be handled with immediacy. In these instances, it is paramount to think carefully about how we restore the community and reintegrate the student who has been temporarily removed. In this way, traditional disciplinary practices and restorative practices can and must work together.

Table 1. Examples of practices and interventions

	Climate Practices	Interventions		
		Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Classroom	Forming relationships Restorative Circles Clear expectations Modeling/Reteaching Ignoring behavior Reinforcing behavior	Teach/Reteach Restorative chat Conflict mediation Parent Conference SEL Activities	Writing exercise Beautification Restorative Plan Skill Building	TAP removal
School	Forming relationships Restorative Circles Clear expectations Modeling/Reteaching Ignoring behavior Reinforcing behavior	Teach/Reteach Restorative chat	Restore at door Parent Conference Beautification Restorative plan	TAP Conference Restorative Conference Suspension Threat Assessment Transition plan Outside referrals
District	Forming relationships Professional Dev. Coaching Evaluation			Behavior support Modeling DIAT Hearing Officer Referrals

Discipline Strategies

Teachers, with the support of other educators and staff, providing highly effective instruction and engaging students in learning is the greatest predictor of academic success. Instruction matters and so maximizing student time receiving instruction should be our shared goal. Traditional disciplinary strategies tend to exclude students from instruction or other school activities. By contrast, restorative strategies aim to minimize lost instruction and/or access to other school activities.

When exclusionary practices are used, we must consider how to restore the community. For example, if a student behaves dangerously in a classroom and must be immediately removed, what steps should we take with the remaining students to support them in regaining their sense of classroom safety? How do we approach this knowing that in all likelihood the student that was excluded will be returning? Anticipating that return, are there changes to be made and supports to be put in place to support other students that may have been most affected by the behavior? When the student does return, how do we reintroduce him or her to the classroom avoiding humiliation and shame?

The Board of Trustees and NRS 392.465 expressly prohibit the use of corporal punishment on any student by any staff member of the Washoe County School District. Corporal punishment means the intentional infliction of physical pain upon a pupil for disciplinary purposes.

A violation of the District's disciplinary code by a student will be dealt with in accordance with existing school rules and district regulations. This procedure shall in no way prohibit a teacher or school official from defending himself or herself using no more force than is necessary for the situation if attacked by a student.

Restorative Practices

It seems that Restorative Practices are popularly misunderstood, and it is assumed that these practices are designed to coddle disruptive students at the expense of other students. This is a faulty assumption. Restorative Practices are practices designed to **build and restore community**. Most of the practices are designed to build community. Practices such as morning circles, greeting students at the door, intentionally learning the name of each student and the proper pronunciation of names all contribute to a welcoming and inclusive community. Unfortunately, with all communities breaches of expectations occur. When this occurs in the school setting, restorative can be used to address the breach and to restore the community. Restorative Practices are victim centered and are used to clearly understand what happened, why it occurred, who it impacted and how it can be avoided in the future, and appropriate consequences for the behavior. In all instances, students who have been disruptive should be held accountable.

Within a progressive discipline plan, there is room for both restorative practices and more traditional disciplinary practices. In Table 2 we list some of the practices that should be considered.

Table 2. Disciplinary Practice

Restorative Practices	Traditional Practices
Community circles	Time out
Mindfulness activities	Writing exercise
Self and other awareness exercises	School Beautification
Brain/exercise breaks	Loss of Privilege
Private note	Detention / Saturday School
Restorative chat	In-School Suspension (TAP)
Restore at the Door	Parent Conference
Informal conferencing	Out-of-school Suspension
Formal conferencing	Long Term Suspension
Behavior/support planning	Expulsion
Threat assessment	Permanent Expulsion

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