



STATE OF MICHIGAN
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

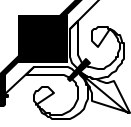

POLICIES ON SAFE SCHOOLS

Providing a safe school environment for our students is of the utmost importance for Michigan's public schools. The State Board of Education recognizes that many local schools have undertaken very successful school violence prevention programs, and we applaud those efforts. This good work should guide all schools in their efforts to provide a safer learning environment.

POLICIES

We believe that proactive approaches to preventing violent behavior by children and youth in schools and communities are more effective than reactive, punishment-based approaches. By addressing the core causes of misconduct, preventive approaches can protect society and help at-risk students become productive citizens. Such proactive approaches could include training school personnel to identify students who are likely to become serious behavior problems, incorporating preventive approaches in school safety plans, integrating school safety into one or more aspects of curriculum and programs, preparing students to be responsible citizens, integrating school safety into one or more aspects of the student culture, providing for full day, full service schools, providing early childhood education, and establishing alternative dispute mechanisms such as peer mediation. Therefore, it is the policy of the State Board of Education that public schools and state education programs over which the State Board has policymaking authority should undertake proactive, preventive approaches to ensure a safe school environment.

We recognize that public schools cannot assume sole responsibility for the behavior of the students they serve and that schools must work to secure parental involvement and develop collaborative relationships with local and state agencies and their communities to ensure a safer school environment. By marshaling the resources of the broader local and state communities, collaborative efforts can diversify safety efforts, maximize resources, and address all facets of school safety issues. Collaborative partners, for example, could include local governments, mental and physical health agencies, police, prosecutors, and correctional authorities; local businesses; civic, service, and nonprofit organizations; faith-based organizations; and the state Departments of Community Health, Career Development, Consumer and Industry Services, Corrections, and the Family Independence Agency. Therefore, it is the policy of the State Board of Education that public schools and state education programs over which the State Board



has policymaking authority should involve parents and the broader community in collaborative efforts to help ensure a safe school environment.

We believe that students and society are best served by providing alternative educational settings for troubled youth who engage in serious misconduct, including those removed from the regular classroom. By providing proper supervision and rehabilitative opportunities, as well as basic academic and work skills, alternative education can better protect society and help troubled youth become productive citizens, than providing no such supervision or options. Supervision and options for troubled youth, for example, could include alternative educational programs, supervision by law enforcement, distance learning opportunities, self-paced monitored study, vocational education, military schools, and nontraditional off-site options. Therefore, it is the policy of the State Board of Education that public schools and state education programs over which the State Board has policymaking authority should provide, or help provide, access to one or more educational or supervisory programs, options, and alternatives for troubled youth.

We recognize the traumatic effect serious violent incidents have on students and educators and believe that schools should be prepared to offer post-traumatic support to victims of violence. By providing post-traumatic support, victims are not forgotten in the wake of a tragedy and are better able to recover from such incidents. Post-traumatic support for victims, for example, could include crisis response teams, post-trauma plans, and coordinated, interagency responses with mental health services and non-profit organizations. Therefore, it is the policy of the State Board of Education that public schools and state education programs over which the State Board has policymaking authority should offer appropriate post-traumatic support to victims of school violence incidents.

These Policies on Safe Schools are guidelines for local schools as they work to achieve safer schools for Michigan's children. These Policies shall also serve as the policy framework for the Department of Education, as well as programs in other state administrative agencies in which the State Board of Education possesses policymaking authority, in developing, establishing, administering, and evaluating the operations of local school districts and schools. The State Board shall also use these policy initiatives to guide its efforts, including developing recommendations to the Legislature, the Governor, and state agencies; formulating grant criteria; and developing and implementing other State Board programs, activities and policies. These Policies on Safe Schools shall be effective with the commencement of the 2000-2001 academic school year.

Adopted May 18, 2000