



# ARIZONA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## **SB 1459: school letter grades; student discipline**

**Sponsor: Senator Kavanagh, LD 3**

**Caucus & COW**

### **Overview**

Requires school districts and charter schools to annually report student discipline referral data to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). Reduces a school's letter grade if the school does not implement disciplinary action in at least 75% of student discipline referrals.

### **History**

Statute declares a student must submit to the authority of teachers, administrators and the school district governing board (governing board). A teacher may, under statutorily specified conditions, remove a student from the classroom and a school district may expel a student as the school district deems appropriate ([A.R.S. § 15-841](#)).

A governing board, in consultation with teachers and parents, must prescribe rules for the discipline, suspension and expulsion of students that are consistent with a student's constitutional rights. These rules must include: 1) penalties for excessive absenteeism; 2) procedures for using corporal punishment, if allowed; 3) procedures for the reasonable use of physical force by personnel in situations of defense; 4) procedures for dealing with students who have committed or who are believed to have committed a crime; and 5) disciplinary policies for confining students who are left alone in an enclosed space. A governing board must support teachers in implementing and enforcing these rules and develop procedures that allow teachers and principals to: 1) recommend the suspension or expulsion of students; and 2) temporarily remove disruptive students from a class ([A.R.S. § 15-843](#)).

ADE, subject to final adoption by the State Board of Education (SBE), must develop an annual achievement profile for every public school and local education agency (LEA) based on an A-F letter grade system. The annual achievement profile reflects the public school's or LEA's achievement on the prescribed academic and educational performance indicators. SBE must assign an overall letter grade for a public school or LEA ([A.R.S. § 15-241](#)).

### **Provisions**

1. Mandates each school district and charter school include in every student handbook a student discipline rubric that:
  - a) includes only objective student discipline criteria; and
  - b) does not consider specified student characteristics.
2. Instructs each school district and charter school to annually report to ADE:
  - a) the total number of student discipline referrals submitted by teachers in each school;

<input type="checkbox"/> Prop 105 (45 votes)	<input type="checkbox"/> Prop 108 (40 votes)	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency (40 votes)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal Note
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- b) the number of reported referrals for which school administration implemented the teacher's recommended disciplinary action or another disciplinary action; and
  - c) the percentage of reported referrals for which school administration did not implement the teacher's recommended disciplinary action or any other action.
3. Excludes social emotional learning or restorative discipline from disciplinary action.
  4. Asserts a school district, charter school or school administrator may not discourage a teacher from submitting student discipline referrals consistent with the student discipline rubric and the teacher's authority.
  5. Allows a teacher, if the teacher alleges they were discouraged from submitting a student discipline referral, to report the violation to ADE and ADE to investigate the report.
  6. Details how ADE is to adjust the prescribed annual student discipline referral calculations for a school district or charter school if ADE determines that a student discipline referral was warranted but was not submitted because a teacher was discouraged from doing so.
  7. Instructs ADE to reduce a school's letter grade by two letter grades if the school:
    - a) does not implement disciplinary actions in at least 75% of the total number of student discipline referrals submitted by teachers in a single school year; and
    - b) has no reasonable justification, as determined by ADE, for implementing disciplinary action in fewer than 75% of student disciplinary referrals in a single school year.
  8. Directs ADE to administer an annual survey of school district and charter school teachers to assess whether, during the previous school year, any school district, charter school, administrator or teacher considered specified student characteristics when determining:
    - a) whether to submit a student discipline referral; or
    - b) what student disciplinary action was appropriate.
  9. Defines *discourage*.

### **Amendments**

#### *Committee on Education*

1. Directs ADE to notify a school that the school has failed to adequately discipline students in the current year and may be subject to penalties if the school fails to adequately discipline students in the following school year.
2. Reduces a school's letter grade by one, rather than two, letter grades if a school:
  - a) received the specified notice from ADE in the previous school year; and
  - b) fails to adequately discipline students as prescribed in the subsequent school year.