



ARIZONA STATE SENATE
Fifty-Sixth Legislature, Second Regular Session

AMENDED
FACT SHEET FOR S.B. 1459

school letter grades; student discipline

Purpose

Requires each school district and charter school to include a rubric for student discipline in every student handbook and annually report to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) information relating to student discipline referrals. Prohibits a public school or administrator from discouraging a teacher from submitting a student discipline referral and authorizes ADE to investigate violations of the prohibition. Requires ADE to reduce a school's annual achievement profile letter grade by two letter grades if disciplinary action is implemented in fewer than 75 percent of a school's discipline referrals.

Background

A school district governing board (governing board), in consultation with school district teachers and parents, must prescribe rules for the discipline, suspension and expulsion of students. The rules must contain: 1) penalties for excessive absenteeism; 2) procedures for the reasonable use of physical force by certificated or classified personnel in self-defense or defense of others; 3) procedures for students who have, or are believed to have, committed a crime; 4) procedures for expulsions or suspensions of more than 10 days; and 5) procedures for confining students who are left in an enclosed space. A governing board must assist teachers in enforcing the rules and develop additional procedures that allow teachers and principals to temporarily remove disruptive students from a class and recommend the suspension or expulsion of a student. A school principal must ensure that all rules pertaining to discipline, suspension and expulsion are communicated to students at the beginning of each school year and are provided to a student's parents when enrolling the student ([A.R.S. § 15-843](#)).

ADE must annually recommend to the State Board of Education (SBE) an achievement profile for each public school and local education agency using classifications based on an A through F letter grade system. The A through F letter grade system is applied to each performance indicator of the prescribed annual achievement profile and the SBE must assign an overall letter grade for each public school or local education agency ([A.R.S. § 15-241](#)).

There is no anticipated fiscal impact to the state General Fund associated with this legislation.

Provisions

1. Requires a school district or charter school to include a rubric for student discipline in every student handbook.

2. Specifies that the student discipline rubric must include only objective criteria for student discipline and may not consider a student's religion, race, sex, color, ethnicity, ancestry or national origin.
3. Requires a school district or charter school to annually report to ADE:
 - a) the total number of student discipline referrals submitted by teachers in each school;
 - b) the number of student discipline referrals reported for which the school administration implemented the teacher's recommended disciplinary action or another disciplinary action; and
 - c) the percentage of student discipline referrals reported for which the school administration did not implement the teacher's recommended disciplinary action or any other action.
4. Requires ADE to reduce the annual achievement profile letter grade assigned to a school that is operated by a school district or charter school by two letter grades if:
 - a) the school does not implement the teacher's recommended disciplinary action or another disciplinary action in at least 75 percent of the total number of student discipline referrals reported in a single school year; and
 - b) the school has no reasonable justification, as determined by ADE, for implementing disciplinary actions in fewer than 75 percent of student discipline referrals in a single school year.
5. Specifies that a disciplinary action does not include social emotional learning or restorative discipline.
6. Prohibits a school district, charter school or school administrator from discouraging a teacher from submitting a student discipline referral consistent with the student discipline handbook and the teacher's authority.
7. Specifies that *discourage* includes any formal or informal action, policy, guideline or statement that limits a teacher's authority to submit a student discipline referral or penalizes the teacher for submitting a student discipline referral.
8. Allows a teacher to report any alleged violation of the prohibition on discouragement to ADE.
9. Allows ADE to investigate reports of an alleged violation of the prohibition on discouragement.
10. Requires ADE, if ADE determines that a student discipline referral was warranted but not submitted by a teacher due to discouragement, to adjust the school district's or charter school's reported student discipline referral information by:
 - a) adding the student discipline referral to the reported total number of student discipline referrals submitted by teachers in the school;
 - b) recalculating the percentage of student discipline referrals reported for which the school administration did not implement the teacher's recommended disciplinary action or any other action to include the additional student discipline referral; and
 - c) recalculating whether a school implemented disciplinary action in at least 75 percent of the total number of student discipline referrals reported in a single school year for the purposes of ADE's requirement to reduce a school's annual achievement profile letter grade by two letter grades.

11. Requires ADE to administer an annual survey of teachers who are employed by a school district or charter school to assess whether, during the previous school year, any school district, charter school, administrator or teacher considered a student's religion, race, sex, color, ethnicity, ancestry or national origin when determining whether to submit a student discipline referral or what disciplinary action was appropriate.
12. Becomes effective on the general effective date.

Amendments Adopted by Committee

1. Prohibits a public school or administrator from discouraging a teacher from submitting a student discipline referral.
2. Allows a teacher to report an alleged violation of the prohibition on discouragement to ADE and allows ADE to investigate alleged violations.
3. Requires ADE, if ADE determines a referral was warranted but not submitted due to discouragement, to adjust a school's reported student discipline referral information as outlined.
4. Specifies that a student handbook's student discipline rubric may not consider outlined information relating to a student's identity.
5. Requires ADE to administer a survey of public school teachers to determine whether a teacher considered outlined information relating to the student when considering whether to submit a student discipline referral or determining an appropriate disciplinary action.
6. Makes conforming changes.

Senate Action

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Prepared by Senate Research

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MH/slp