

Mapleton Public Schools Safe Schools Plan: Mission and Components

Mission: The Mapleton Board of Education has in place formally adopted board policy (ADD) that establishes school safety as a priority in the mission of the district. The policy states specifically that the Board recognizes that effective learning and teaching take place in a safe, secure, and welcoming environment. The following policies and procedure address how Mapleton assures student and staff safety in its schools, and together comprise the district's Safe Schools Plan.

I. Conduct and Discipline Code

The district maintains a concisely written student conduct and discipline code that is updated yearly in accordance with Board policy (JIC/JK). The district enforces the code uniformly, fairly, and consistently for all students. Copies of the code are provided to all students at the beginning of the school year or upon enrollment at a district elementary, middle, or high school. Copies are available in English and Spanish, and are kept on file at each school. The code includes all components listed in C.R.S 22-32-109.1 (2) (a). Detailed information concerning the student conduct and discipline code is contained in the elementary and secondary versions of the Student Behavior Standards, which are available for public review at any district school or at the district administration offices.

II. Safe School Reporting

Board policy (ADD) requires each the principal of each district school to comply with safe school reporting requirements. Each principal must submit annually, in a manner and by a date specified by the rule of the state board of education, a written report to the Mapleton Board of Education concerning the learning environment in the school during that school year. The Mapleton Board of Education compiles these school reports and submits this compiled report to the department of education in a format specified by rule of the state board of education. This report is made available to the general public each year, and includes all requirements listed in C.R.S. 22-32-109.1 (2) (b).

III. Agreements with State Agencies/Staff Security and Safety

Mapleton cooperates with, and where appropriate develops written agreements with law enforcement officials, the juvenile justice system, and social services to keep each school environment safe. The Mapleton Board of Education has policies and procedures in place to address assault upon, disorderly conduct toward, harassment of, the making knowingly of a false allegation of child abuse against, or any alleged criminal offense directed toward a schoolteacher or school

employee or instances of damage occurring on the premises to the personal property of a schoolteacher or school employee by a student. These policies and procedures address all provisions listed in C.R.S. 22-32-109.1 (3).

IV. Crisis Management

Board policy ADE requires timely and effective intervention be provided to those affected by a crisis in the community. The district's first priority in dealing with a crisis is to ensure the safety of staff and students. Accordingly, each school is required to develop and implement written crisis response procedures which include procedures concerning building evacuation and the designation of an alternative site for staff and students in the event of a building evacuation; communicating with law enforcement, the fire department and other emergency assistance entities; the filing of each building's layout with the local law enforcement agency; procedures for notifying parents and legal guardians; and other procedures to address crisis management concerns.

Policy ADE also designates the Superintendent or his/her designee as the district's spokesman responsible for communicating with the media and the public in the event of a crisis. In the absence of or incapacity of the district's spokesperson, the Board designates the Public Information Officer as the district's alternative spokesperson.

The district has developed and maintains a crisis management training program for all employees. This training program instructs staff on district and building crisis management procedures to be followed in the event of a crisis, and meets all requirements contained in Board policy ADE.

V. Safety and Security of District Facilities

The Mapleton Board recognizes that security for district buildings and grounds (during regular school hours as well as non-school hours) contributes to the well being and safety of students and staff as well as to that of the sites themselves. Board policy ECA/ECAB requires annual site inspections to address the removal of hazards and vandalism and any other barriers to safety and supervision. The policy further requires that:

- A. During regular school hours, flow of traffic into and out of buildings shall be closely monitored and limited to certain doors. Board policy KI further specifies that visitors to schools are limited to those persons who have provided advance notice to, and been authorized by, the school administrator's office.

- B. Access to school buildings and grounds outside of regular school hours shall be limited to personnel whose work requires it and to sponsors of approved student activities. An adequate key control system shall be established which will limit access to buildings to authorized personnel and will safeguard against entrance to buildings by persons unauthorized to have keys.
- C. Security means not only keeping buildings locked and secure but also providing protection against physical hazards and acts of violence. It also includes having available floor plans of buildings and site plans showing campus boundaries and access points, which shall be maintained at the district's central administrative office.
- D. Funds and valuable records shall be kept in a secure place.
- E. Alarm systems and other devices that protect buildings against illegal entry and vandalism shall be installed where appropriate. Employment of security personnel may be approved by the Board where special risks are involved.

VI. Sharing of Information

Board policy JRA requires student records be maintained in accordance with the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and the Colorado Open Records Law. District regulations assure that parents (and students eighteen years of age and older) have access to their child's educational records and that each student's right to privacy is protected by limiting the transferability of education records without prior written consent of the parent or eligible student. Notwithstanding any provision in these or other applicable laws to the contrary, the district or individual schools may share or release information directly related to a student in the interest of making schools safer in accordance with C.R.S 24-72-204 (3).

VII. Open School Policy

It is the Board's policy (KI) to encourage parents and all citizens of the community to visit the schools throughout the school year. Parents, citizens, and members of the Board of Education shall have reasonable access to observe classes, activities, and functions at the school upon advance notice to, and authorization by, the school administrator's office.

Teachers are encouraged to avoid conferring with parents about students during class session. Parents desiring an individual conference should make an appointment in advance.

The district shall notify the public in an appropriate manner that persons violating the criminal law by using, selling, or distributing any controlled substance on school grounds, on school buses transporting students, or within 1000 feet of the perimeter of the school grounds shall be subject to enhanced criminal penalties.

Visitations by non-enrolled juveniles unaccompanied by adults shall be prohibited unless approved by the principal. Loitering, trespassing, and remaining on school property by non-students or visitors without permission of the principal is against the law. Violators are subject to arrest by law enforcement authorities.

VIII. Employee Screening

Colorado law (C.R.S. 22-32-109.1 (8)) requires school districts to have a policy of making inquiries upon good cause to the Colorado Department of Education for the purposes of screening licensed and non-licensed employees hired after January 1, 1991. The law further requires that licensed employees employed after January 1, 1991 be screened upon good cause to check for any new instances of criminal activity listed in C.R.S. 22-32-109.9 (1) (a). The law requires that non-licensed employees employed after January 1, 1991 be screened for any new instances of criminal activity listed in C.R.S. 22-32-109.8 (2) (a).

Mapleton Board policies regarding employee screening (GCE, GCF, GDE, GDF) go beyond those required by Colorado law [C.R.S 22-32-109.1 (8)]. Prior to hiring a licensed professional staff member, the district checks with the Colorado Department of Education to determine if there is any information on record indicating the applicant has been convicted of any felony or misdemeanor crime involving unlawful sexual behavior involving children. The district also conducts a thorough background check and contacts the previous employer of the applicant to obtain information or recommendations relevant to the applicant's fitness for employment.

Prior to hiring a non-licensed (classified) staff member, the district conducts a thorough background check, conducts a fingerprint check, and contacts the previous employer to obtain information or recommendations relevant to the applicant's fitness for employment.

Subsequent to hiring any staff member, if the district has good cause to believe a staff member has been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor, other than a misdemeanor traffic offense, the district checks with the Colorado Department of Education and other agencies, as appropriate, to determine if there is any information indicating the employee has been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor. These subsequent screenings may include fingerprint checks.

IX. Violence Prevention

The Board recognizes that effective efforts to prevent violence are critical to ensuring safe schools. All district schools are required by Board policy (JICB) to address bullying prevention and education. Further, this policy requires specific steps to overcome the “code of silence” dimension often associated with bullying and violence. Students and staff are encouraged to come forward with information about bullying or violence, and provisions are made to protect the identity and safety of those students who do report incidents or concerns. Each school has a threat assessment team to evaluate threats of violence reported by students, teachers, school staff, and law enforcement.

Note: Copies of relevant Board policies and state statutes referenced in this Plan are contained in the 2001 Colorado Revised Statutes and district Board Policy Manual. These documents are available for public review at any district school or at the District Administration Building.

Created: October 2002