

RCW 28A.600.015 Expulsions and suspensions—Rules incorporating due process—Short-term and long-term suspensions—Emergency removals—Discretionary discipline.

(1) The superintendent of public instruction shall adopt and distribute to all school districts lawful and reasonable rules prescribing the substantive and procedural due process guarantees of pupils in the common schools. Such rules shall authorize a school district to use informal due process procedures in connection with the short-term suspension of students to the extent constitutionally permissible: PROVIDED, That the superintendent of public instruction deems the interest of students to be adequately protected. When a student suspension or expulsion is appealed, the rules shall authorize a school district to impose the suspension or expulsion temporarily after an initial hearing for no more than 10 consecutive school days or until the appeal is decided, whichever is earlier. Any days that the student is temporarily suspended or expelled before the appeal is decided shall be applied to the term of the student suspension or expulsion and shall not limit or extend the term of the student suspension or expulsion. An expulsion or suspension of a student may not be for an indefinite period of time.

(2) Short-term suspension procedures may be used for suspensions of students up to and including, 10 consecutive school days.

(3) Emergency removals must end or be converted to another form of corrective action within ten school days from the date of the emergency removal from school. Notice and due process rights must be provided when an emergency removal is converted to another form of corrective action.

(4) School districts may not impose long-term suspension or expulsion as a form of discretionary discipline.

(5) Any imposition of discretionary and nondiscretionary discipline is subject to the bar on suspending the provision of educational services pursuant to subsection (8) of this section.

(6) As used in this chapter, "discretionary discipline" means a disciplinary action taken by a school district for student behavior that violates rules of student conduct adopted by a school district board of directors under RCW 28A.600.010 and this section, but does not constitute action taken in response to any of the following:

(a) A violation of RCW 28A.600.420;

(b) An offense in RCW 13.04.155;

(c) Two or more violations of RCW 9A.46.120, 9.41.280, 28A.600.455, 28A.635.020, or 28A.635.060 within a three-year period; or

(d) Behavior that adversely impacts the health or safety of other students or educational staff.

(7) Except as provided in RCW 28A.600.420, school districts are not required to impose long-term suspension or expulsion for behavior that constitutes a violation or offense listed under subsection (6) (a) through (d) of this section and should first consider alternative actions.

(8) School districts may not suspend the provision of educational services to a student as a disciplinary action. A student may be excluded from a particular classroom or instructional or activity area for the period of suspension or expulsion, but the school district must provide an opportunity for a student to receive educational services during a period of suspension or expulsion.

(9) Nothing in this section creates any civil liability for school districts, or creates a new cause of action or new theory of

negligence against a school district board of directors, a school district, or the state. [2023 c 242 s 9; 2016 c 72 s 105; 2013 2nd sp.s. c 18 s 302; 2006 c 263 s 701; 1996 c 321 s 2; 1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 97 s 1; 1971 ex.s. c 268 s 2. Formerly RCW 28A.305.160, 28A.04.132.]

Finding—Intent—2016 c 72: "(1) The legislature has already established that it is a goal of the state to provide for a public school system that gives all students the opportunity to achieve personal and academic success. This goal contains within it a promise of excellence and opportunity for all students, not just some students. In 2012, in *McCleary v. State of Washington*, the Washington supreme court reaffirmed the positive constitutional right of every student by noting, "No child is excluded." In establishing the educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee in 2009, the legislature recognized that additional work was needed to fulfill the promise of excellence and opportunity for students of certain demographic groups, including English language learners.

(2) In its 2015 report to the legislature, the educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee made the following recommendations in keeping with its statutory purpose, which is to recommend specific policies and strategies to close the educational opportunity gap:

(a) Reduce the length of time students of color are excluded from school due to suspension and expulsion and provide students support for reengagement plans;

(b) Enhance the cultural competence of current and future educators and classified staff;

(c) Endorse all educators in English language learner and second language acquisition;

(d) Account for the transitional bilingual instruction program instructional services provided to English language learner students;

(e) Analyze the opportunity gap through deeper disaggregation of student demographic data;

(f) Invest in the recruitment, hiring, and retention of educators of color;

(g) Incorporate integrated student services and family engagement; and

(h) Strengthen student transitions at each stage of the education development pathway: Early learning to elementary, elementary to secondary, secondary to college and career.

(3) The legislature finds that these recommendations represent a holistic approach to making progress toward closing the opportunity gap. The recommendations are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Closing the opportunity gap requires highly skilled, culturally competent, and diverse educators who understand the communities and cultures that students come from; it requires careful monitoring of not only the academic performance but also the educational environment for all students, at a fine grain of detail to assure adequate accountability; and it requires a robust program of instruction, including appropriately trained educators, to help English language learners gain language proficiency as well as academic proficiency.

(4) Therefore, the legislature intends to adopt policies and programs to implement the six recommendations of the educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee and fulfill its promise of excellence and opportunity for all students." [2016 c 72 s 1.]

**Application—Enforcement of laws protecting health and safety—
2013 2nd sp.s. c 18:** See note following RCW 28A.600.022.

Findings—Purpose—Part headings not law—2006 c 263: See notes
following RCW 28A.150.230.