

Section 8000 – Students

8018 Discriminatory Harassment of Students

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The Grand Rapids Board of Education strives to create and maintain an education environment in which students, parents, and staff are treated with dignity, decency, and respect. Discriminatory harassment of students, by District elected officials, employees, vendors, contractors, or other doing business with the District, students, parent(s)/guardian(s), invitees, volunteers, or guests will not be tolerated. Similarly, student-on-student discriminatory harassment is prohibited, and will not be tolerated.

Discriminatory harassment means any verbal or physical conduct, intimidation, ridicule, disparagement, purposeful embarrassment, or chiding of any person because of their race, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression, height, weight, color, hair texture, hair type or hair style, religion, national origin, age, marital status, pregnancy, disability, or veteran status when:

- Submission to such conduct or communication is made either an explicit or implicit condition of utilizing or benefiting from the services, activities, or programs of the District,
- Submission to, or rejection of, the conduct or communication is used as the basis for a decision to exclude, expel or limit the harassed student in the terms, conditions, or privileges of the District, or
- The harassment substantially interferes with the student's education, creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment, or otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Sexual Harassment

If students, or parents/guardians on their behalf believe that they are being sexual harassed, the provisions in Board Policy 8575 – Sexual Harassment of Students and its rules (8575-R) shall apply.

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Federal Title Programs

If any student, or parent/guardian on behalf of a their student, believes the District or an employee of the District has inadequately applied the principles and/or regulations of a federal Title program or believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of their race, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression, height, weight, color, hair texture, hair type or hair style, religion, national origin, age, marital status, pregnancy, disability or veteran status, that person may make a complaint to the Civil Rights Coordinator at the following address:

The Civil Rights Coordinator
Grand Rapids Public Schools
1331 Franklin SE., PO Box 117
Grand Rapids, MI 49501-0117
Phone: (616) 819-2000

The person who believes they have a valid basis for the complaint shall discuss the matter informally and verbally with the Civil Rights Coordinator,

Reporting

Any student who believes that he or she has suffered harassment shall immediately report the incident(s) to his/her school Principal, or an Assistant Principal, or to the following person:

Civil Rights Coordinator
Grand Rapids Public Schools
1331 Franklin SE., PO Box 117
Grand Rapids, MI 49501-0117
Phone: (616) 819-2000

Should the complaint be against the Superintendent, the incident shall be reported to:

Vice-President of the Board of Education
Grand Rapids Public Schools
1331 Franklin SE., PO Box 117
Grand Rapids, MI 49501-0117
Phone: (616) 819-2000

Reports may also be made to the Ethics Hotline at <https://reportanissue.com/grps/welcome.php>, or call 1-800-345-7377. The hotline will take anonymous complaints.

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No student or parent/guardian reporting an incident of discriminatory harassment or participating in an investigation of discriminatory harassment, will suffer any form of retaliation.

In determining whether the alleged conduct constitutes discrimination or harassment, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the harassment and the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred will be investigated. The District's Civil Rights Coordinator, or designee has the responsibility of investigating complaints of discriminatory harassment of students. In cases where the alleged harassment involves a member of the Board of Education, the School District will appoint outside legal counsel to investigate the complaint. The results of an investigation and any action taken thereon will be communicated to the parties.

The District considers discriminatory harassment based on race, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression, height, weight, color, hair texture, hair type or hair style, religion, national origin, age, marital status, pregnancy, disability or veteran status to be a major offense, which, if substantiated, will result in disciplinary action of the offender. Disciplinary action against a District employee may include suspension or termination of employment. Disciplinary action against a student may include expulsion. Disciplinary action against a Board of Education member may include any remedy available under law.

The Superintendent shall develop rules to implement this policy. Those rules are incorporated by reference as a part of this policy.

Notification

Notice of this policy and its accompanying rules will be posted on the District website. Notice will also be provided to students and parents/guardians in the student handbook on an annual basis.

Approved: March 7, 2016

Revised: August 3, 2020

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Revised: November 8, 2021

LEGAL REF: MCL 37.2101 *et seq.*, (Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act); 380.11a; 20 USCA §1681; 34 CFR §106.8; 34 CFR §106.9 (Title IX of the Education Amendments)