



Responsible Office: Office of the Board of Trustees and Superintendent

BOARD POLICY 9215

CREATING AND MAINTAINING A POSITIVE CULTURE AND CLIMATE

PURPOSE

The Board of Trustees (“Board”) is committed to the ideal that every person who enters a school or other property, or attends an event of the Washoe County School District (“District”) shall be welcomed and treated with courtesy, dignity, and respect. While students are the primary recipient of the services of the District, staff and volunteers, parents/guardians and family members, and the community are all partners in creating a positive culture and climate by setting the example for the students of Washoe County and in providing them the preparation, education, and social development necessary to be successful and productive adults. The Board and Superintendent recognize the importance of creating and maintaining a positive and respectful culture and climate that ensures all individuals are treated with civility. Compassion, understanding, and acceptance of the diverse nature of the people of the Washoe County community are a top priority in the District and all individuals shall be treated promptly, with courtesy, respect, and dignity.

POLICY

1. Guiding Principles
 - a. The Board recognizes that public education is a service industry where the needs of students, their families, District staff, and members of the community must be acknowledged and valued. While creating and maintaining an environment of civility in District schools, the Board recognizes the importance of being data- and results-driven related to student academic achievement. Through this policy and implementing practices and protocols, the Board acknowledges the importance of those parallel goals and the role they play in student success.
 - b. The District strives to create a learning and working environment that is people-oriented, respectful, civil, and professional. Within such an atmosphere, all students, staff, and visitors regardless of their real or perceived race, gender, religion, disability, socio-economic level, citizenship/immigration status, or any other distinguishing characteristic shall be welcomed and treated with respect.

- c. Individuals throughout the Washoe County community are the recipients and beneficiaries of the services provided by the District. Internally, these individuals include students, administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers. Externally, they are generally parents/guardians and family members of students, the Washoe County community, vendors/suppliers, and members of government agencies. The District seeks to build positive customer-responsive interactions within every aspect of the organization.
 - i. A civil and respectful environment is essential to:
 - 1. Student and staff engagement, retention, and achievement;
 - 2. Mutually respectful and trusting relationships between all individuals that go beyond acceptance and tolerance;
 - 3. Creating and maintaining successful partnerships between the District and the parents/guardians and family members of students, as well as community members;
 - 4. Productive collaboration where all persons may participate in an open, respectful, free exchange of ideas and opinions that are central to a quality educational process;
 - 5. Effective communication that lends itself to an environment of continuous improvement and a self-renewing culture; and,
 - 6. The development of students as thoughtful citizens.
 - ii. Conversely, uncivil conduct interferes with productivity and can negatively impact the learning environment for students, the working environment for staff, and harm the partnership that should exist among school staff and students and their families, and the community at large.
- d. Through these commitments, the District expresses its goal to actively cultivate and promote safe, orderly, and respectful environments to ensure equitable opportunities for all students to learn, employees to work to optimal capacity, and families to participate as partners in education. To that end, structures, systems, policies, and procedures shall be implemented and maintained based on a positive, productive culture of meaningful, collaborative relationships focused on student achievement.

2. Guiding Practices

- a. The Superintendent shall encourage, implement, and maintain initiatives and standards to communicate a positive climate and culture and the District's goal that all individuals be treated with respect, courtesy, dignity, and civility. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. Implementation and maintenance of the District's commitment to valuing diversity and promoting equity for all through District policies and practices;
 - ii. Student support initiatives such as social emotional learning (SEL), positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS), and multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS);
 - iii. Family and community engagement and communication efforts;
 - iv. Climate surveys where feedback for continuous systems improvement is encouraged from staff, students, families, and the community;
 - v. Professional learning opportunities for all staff, to include methods of positive communication techniques;
 - vi. Recruitment and retention efforts for employees to represent the diverse nature of the Washoe County community; and
 - vii. Efforts to celebrate school, student and staff successes while continuously addressing areas in need of improvement.
- b. An environment of civility and respect among all individuals begins with the mission, vision, and core beliefs adopted by the Board of Trustees and incorporated into the District's strategic plan through collaboration with the Superintendent. This "tone from the top" approach reinforces the importance of creating a positive culture and climate that will result in a positive customer experience for those being served in and by the District, primarily through its schools.
- c. The Board of Trustees, Superintendent, and Senior Leadership shall identify through the policies of the Board and the District's strategic planning process what the District's organizational culture and climate should look like, where deficiencies may exist, and any opportunities for improvement. In developing and maintaining a culture of respect and civility, the District shall consider the needs of the Washoe County community, which includes District staff and volunteers, students and their families, and other members of the community. This requires

considering the community as a whole, as well as the diverse needs and cultures of the individuals who make up the community.

- d. Strategic decisions shall be driven by the culture of the District and individual school communities and efforts to ensure a positive and effective experience for all individuals. The Board, Superintendent, and District leadership understand that goals and metrics are shaped by this culture and students are regarded as individuals.
- e. To achieve a respectful climate and culture, the Board adopts and is committed to the following philosophy and ideals:
 - i. Effective outcomes begin with an engaged workforce that is committed to purposefully contributing to the success of the District. Through their engagement and inclusion in the decision-making process, employees shall be invited to shape the culture and climate of the District and be empowered to deliver outstanding customer service.
 - ii. Employees shall be well informed on the policies, procedures, mission, and vision of the District so they can quickly and accurately answer questions and offer assistance to internal and external individuals such as students, parents/guardians, colleagues, and the community.
 - iii. The District's intent with respect to culture and climate shall be well communicated and staff shall receive clear guidance on those values and beliefs.
 - iv. Visitors to District schools and buildings, as well as events and activities, shall feel respected and valued in all aspects of their experience with the District.
 - v. Staff recognize that the tone and tenor of communication, including verbal, written, electronic communication, and visual communication with others is integral toward setting a positive culture and climate in the schools.

DEFINITIONS

1. For the purposes of this policy, the tenets discussed include the following:
 - a. Culture refers to the values and standards defined and understood to exist within a school or the District. School culture is defined as the shared values, rules, belief patterns, teaching and learning approaches, behaviors, and relationships among or across the individuals in a school.

- b. Climate refers to the environment and relationships found within a school, school community, or the District. A positive climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviors and interactions. School climate is commonly defined as the “quality and character of school life.”
 - c. Respect refers to a feeling of deep admiration for someone or something elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements.
 - d. Civility refers to politeness and courtesy in behavior or speech.
 - e. Customer Service refers to the way in which the District delivers its service to students, staff, parents/guardians, and the community through satisfaction, cost-effectiveness, efficiency, and accessibility.
2. “Uncivil conduct” refers to behavior and actions that may include, but are not limited to: directing vulgar, obscene or profane gestures or words at another individual; taunting, jeering, inciting others to taunt or jeer at an individual; raising one’s voice at another individual, repeatedly interrupting another individual who is speaking at an appropriate time and place; imposing personal demands at times or in settings where they conflict with assigned duties and cannot reasonably be met; using personal epithets, gesturing in a manner that puts another in fear for his/her personal safety, invading the personal space of an individual after being directed to move away, physically blocking an individual’s exit from a room or location, remaining in a classroom or school area after a teacher or administrator in authority has directed one to leave, violating the privacy of another individual’s belongings (except for lawful searches by school officials conducted in connection with the administration of school rules and applicable laws), or other similar disruptive conduct.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. Through this policy, the Board and Superintendent state their commitment to:
 - a. Promote a work and learning environment that is safe, productive and nurturing for all staff, volunteers, and students and their families, and to encourage the free flow of ideas without fear or intimidation;
 - b. Provide school staff members with an overview of customer service skills, while recognizing both the importance of high standards of service and the need to avoid dissatisfied customers.
 - c. To provide our students with appropriate models for respectful problem-solving; and

- d. To reduce the potential triggers for violent conduct, such as fear, anger, frustration and alienation-especially by making problem-solving procedures and alternatives to violence readily accessible to both youth and adults who need them.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES & ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- 1. This policy reflects the goals of WCSD’s Strategic Plan and aligns/complies with the governing documents of the District, to include:
 - a. Board Policy 9200, Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited
 - b. Board Policy 5700, Safe and Respectful Learning Environment
- 2. This policy complies with Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) and Nevada Administrative Code (NAC), to include:
- 3. This document complies with applicable federal laws and regulations.

REVIEW AND REPORTING

- 1. This document shall be reviewed as part of the bi-annual review and reporting process, following each regular session of the Nevada Legislature. The Board of Trustees shall receive notification of any required changes to the policy as well as an audit of the accompanying governing documents.
- 2. Administrative regulations, and/or other associated documents, will be developed as necessary to implement this policy.

REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision	Modification
11/27/2018	1.0	Adopted