

**SPOKANE PUBLIC SCHOOLS,
DISTRICT #081
SPOKANE COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

JOINT STATEMENT OF BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT

**Spokane Public Schools
Joint Statement Regarding Equitable and Inclusive School
Environment**

A **JOINT STATEMENT** of the Board of Directors and Superintendent of the Spokane Public Schools, District No. 081, Spokane County, Washington, supporting an equitable and inclusive learning school environment.

WHEREAS as we begin a new year, that follows one in which some elements of public discourse and rhetoric caused some people in our community to feel threatened, unsafe, or marginalized, we believe it is important to reaffirm our commitment to providing and maintaining safe and healthy environments conducive to learning, where all of our students thrive, regardless of their background, language, race, sexual orientation, status or other exceptionalities; and

WHEREAS we recognize that encouraging, inclusive and respectful environments help students achieve their highest potential. To guarantee our students' access, opportunity, success, and achievement, we must ensure that students know they are safe, nurtured, welcomed, respected and included; and

WHEREAS we are committed to an equitable education system that upholds and reflects the principles of fair and inclusive education, which should permeate all levels of the organization all the way to the classroom level; and

WHEREAS building level administrators and staff are charged with helping students know and understand what constitutes discrimination, harassment, intimidation and bullying, as well as ensuring that students know such conduct is not permitted.

NOW THEREFORE, with the new year of 2017 beginning and the mid-point of School Year 2016-17 approaching, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND SUPERINTENDENT OF SPOKANE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, DISTRICT NO. 081 wish to take this opportunity to Reaffirm, Remind, and Commend, as follows:

1. **Reaffirm**. We reaffirm our commitment to providing an equitable and inclusive environment for all students, free of discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying, and to ensure each student has a voice, a dream, and a bright future. We also reaffirm our commitment to addressing student misbehavior through restorative practices as discussed in Policy and Procedure 3240.
2. **Remind**. We want to remind students, parents and community members of the protections that exist for students who experience or observe improper behavior (including discrimination, bullying, intimidation and harassment), and how students and parents can exercise those protections. Those protections are set forth in Board policies and administrative procedures, which can be found on the District website. Parents with questions are encouraged to contact their building's principals or assistant principals.

In addition, we want to remind everyone of the need to notify building administrators and/or central administrators of prohibited discrimination, bullying, harassment and intimidation so that such behavior can be properly addressed. Building administrators include principals and assistant principals. Central administrators include:

- Adam Swinyard (Harassment, intimidation and Bullying/Student Civil Rights Officer) (Adamsw@spokaneschools.org; 354-5901)
- Tennille Jeffries-Simmons (Title IX (gender equity) Officer; Americans with Disabilities Officer; and Staff Civil Rights Officer) (Tennillej@spokaneschools.org; 354-7291)
- Ramon Alvarez (Equal Opportunity Officer) (Ramonal@spokaneschools.org; 354-7344)

3. Commend. We commend our school staff and administrators throughout the District for their diligent efforts to make students feel safe, secure, and respected. These efforts include, but are not limited to:

1. **Commitment to Safety in our Strategic Plan** – Asserting and implementing a goal (Goal II of our 2014-20 Strategic Plan) entitled, "Provide a Safe, Productive Learning and Working Environment";
2. **Ongoing Commitment to Anti-Discrimination, Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying** – The District Administration's recent communications to staff reiterated how important it is for adults to encourage and model inclusive learning environments as well as the imperative for staff to report inappropriate student behavior. Further annual and ongoing communication and training regarding preventing, reporting, and responding to incidents of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying have been delivered to staff and students with additional printed materials promoting awareness to be delivered to each school.
3. **Superintendent's Work Group** - The Superintendent published a Resolution on student behavior June 9, 2016, and convened a workgroup which includes representatives from the ACLU, the NAACP, Team Child, higher education, the Spokane Education Association, school directors, Campus Safety, other administrators, and parents. The purpose of the community-wide work group is to discuss and provide input on the district's approach to addressing student behavior. The group is focusing on five topics: Restorative Practices, Campus Resource Officers, Parent and Student Engagement, Cultural and Racial Equity, and Special Needs Equity;
4. **Policies and Procedures Updates** – Policy 3240 has been revised and makes clear that misbehavior (for which consequences are described) includes Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying conduct, the victims of which are protected by Policy 3207. That policy affirms:
"The Board believes that responsible, respectful and safe student behaviors are positively associated with learning. The two main goals in dealing with student behavior are thus to: (1) develop and maintain a school environment where students and staff are responsible, respectful, and safe; and (2) help students behave in ways that contribute to academic achievement and school success.";
5. **Staff Training** - Training on restorative practices has been delivered throughout the district to administrators, classroom teachers, intervention specialists, and support staff.

This has included training administrators and other staff in helping students understand the difference between prohibited harassment, intimidation or bullying behaviors under our policies versus protected expression under the 1st Amendment. Additional training is planned for the second half of the school-year. Building administrators are regularly calibrating on best practices related to preventing and addressing student behavior;

6. **Data Collection and Analysis** – The district data system has been developed to provide ongoing data collection and analysis for staff. This has supported the identification of trends and deployment of additional resources to schools. School Directors are frequently examining data related to the occurrence of HIB. Ongoing data updates are provided to the Superintendent’s Work Group and are made available to the public on the district’s website. The continued use of data allows the Board and the District to make informed decisions about disproportional impact on protected classes;
7. **Campus Resource Officers: Role Revisions** – Training focused on addressing unique needs of adolescent students was provided to Campus Resource Officers, and included training on ACE’s (adverse childhood experiences), 504’s and IEP’s. New guidelines have been implemented to standardized how officers deal with misdemeanor behaviors, including a departmental review of all recommendations for arrest. An improved focus on preventative measures and relationship building has been incorporated into the CROs’ positions;
8. **Intervention and Support** – Schools have been provided additional resources to address student behavior, and implement restorative practices. This included the addition of Principal Assistants and School Support Specialist at the Elementary Level, and In-School Intervention Staff at the Secondary Level. A new position entitled, Family Support and Community Engagement Coordinator, is serving as a resource for students and parents. That person is: Oscar Harris, OscarH@spokaneschools.org, (509) 354-7970.

APPROVED by the Board of Directors and Superintendent of Spokane Public Schools, No. 081, Spokane County, Washington, in a special meeting thereof held on the 11th day of January, 2017.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SPOKANE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, DISTRICT #081**

President

Director

Director

Director

Director

Superintendent