

# REGULATION GUIDE

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## R5610 SUSPENSION PROCEDURES

### A. Short-Term Suspensions

1. In each instance of a short-term suspension, the Principal or designee, shall assure the rights of a student suspended for one, but not more than ten consecutive school days by providing for the following:
  - a. As soon as practicable, oral or written notice of charges to the student.
    - (1) When charges are denied, an explanation of the evidence forming the basis of the charges also shall be provided.
  - b. Prior to the suspension, an informal hearing during which the student is given the opportunity to present his or her version of the events regarding his or her actions leading to the short-term suspension and is provided notice of the school district's actions taken pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(c)2 and 5.
    - (1) The informal hearing shall be conducted by a school administrator or designee;
    - (2) To the extent that a student's presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the educational process, the student may be immediately removed from the student's educational program and the informal hearing shall be held as soon as practical after the suspension;
    - (3) The informal hearing should take place even when a school staff member has witnessed the conduct forming the basis of the charge; and
    - (4) The informal hearing and the notice given may take place at the same time.
  - c. Oral or written notification to the student's parent of the student's removal from the student's educational program prior to the end of the school day on which the Principal decides to suspend the student. The notification shall include an explanation of:
    - (1) The specific charges;

- (2) The facts on which the charges are based;
  - (3) The provision(s) of the code of student conduct the student is accused of violating;
  - (4) The student's due process rights, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(c)3 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.2; and
  - (5) The terms and conditions of the suspension.
- d. Appropriate supervision of the student while waiting for the student's parent to remove the student from school during the school day; and
- e. Academic instruction, either in school or out of school, that addresses the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.
  - (1) The student's academic instruction shall be provided within five school days of the suspension.
  - (2) At the completion of a short-term suspension, the Board of Education shall return a general education student to the general education program for which he or she was suspended.
  - (3) The academic instruction provided to a student with a disability shall be provided consistent with N.J.A.C. 6A:14.
2. The Principal suspending the student shall immediately report the suspension to the Superintendent, who shall report it to the Board of Education at its next regular meeting, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-4.
3. An appeal of the Board's decision affecting the general education student's educational program shall be made to the Commissioner, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2.4 and N.J.A.C. 6A:3-1.3 through 1.17.
4. For a student with a disability, the provisions set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.2 shall be provided in addition to all procedural protections set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14.

**B. Long-Term Suspensions**

1. In each instance of a long-term suspension, the Principal or designee shall assure the rights of a student suspended for more than ten consecutive school days by providing the following:
  - a. Notification to the student of the charges prior to the student's removal from school;

- b. Prior to the suspension, an informal hearing during which the student is given the opportunity to present his or her version of events regarding his or her actions leading to the long-term suspension and is provided notice of the school district's actions taken pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(c)2 and 5;
- c. Immediate notification to the student's parent of the student's removal from school;
- d. Appropriate supervision of the student while waiting for the student's parent to remove the student from school during the school day;
- e. Written notification to the parent by the Superintendent or designee within two school days of the initiation of the suspension, stating:
  - (1) The specific charges;
  - (2) The facts on which the charges are based;
  - (3) The student's due process rights, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(c)3 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.3; and
  - (4) Further engagement by the student in conduct warranting expulsion, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2, shall amount to a knowing and voluntary waiver of the student's right to a free public education, in the event that a decision to expel the student is made by the Board, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.4.
    - (a) The Board shall request from the parent and student written acknowledgement of the notification provided pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.3(a)5.iv subsequent to the removal of the student from his or her educational program, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.3.
- f. A list of witnesses and their statements or affidavits, if any, no later than five days prior to the formal hearing, pursuant to j. below;
- g. For a student with a disability, a manifestation determination, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.8 and the Federal regulations;
- h. Information on the student's right to secure an attorney and legal resources available in the community identified pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(c)7;
- i. Either in- or out-of-school educational services that are comparable to those provided in the public schools for students of similar grades and attainments, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, which may include a public education program provided in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-9 or 10.

- (1) The student's educational services shall be provided within five school days of the suspension.
  - (2) The Board shall make decisions regarding the appropriate educational program and support services for the suspended general education student based on the New Jersey Student Learning Standards and the following considerations:
    - (a) A behavioral assessment or evaluation including, but not limited to, a referral to the Child Study Team, as appropriate;
    - (b) The results of relevant testing, assessments, or evaluations of the student;
    - (c) The student's academic, health, and behavioral records;
    - (d) The recommendation of the Superintendent, Principal, or other relevant school or community resource;
    - (e) Considerations of parental input; or
    - (f) Consultation with the Intervention and Referral Services Team, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8.
  - (3) Educational services provided to a student with a disability shall be provided consistent with N.J.A.C. 6A:14.
- j. A formal hearing before the Board that shall, at a minimum:
- (1) Be conducted by the Board or delegated by the Board to a Board committee, a school administrator, or an impartial hearing officer for the purpose of determining facts or making recommendations.
    - (a) Before taking final action, the Board as a whole shall receive and consider either a transcript or detailed report on the hearing.
  - (2) Include the opportunity for the student to:
    - (a) Confront and cross-examine witnesses, if there is a question of fact; and
    - (b) Present his or her own defense, and produce oral testimony or written supporting affidavits.

- (3) Take place no later than thirty calendar days following the day the student is suspended from the general education program; and
    - (4) Result in the Board's decision that shall be based, at a minimum, on the preponderance of competent and credible evidence.
  - k. A written statement to the student's parent regarding the Board's decision within five school days after the close of the hearing. The statement shall include at a minimum:
    - (1) The charges considered;
    - (2) A summary of the documentary or testimonial evidence from both the student and the administration that was brought before the Board at the hearing;
    - (3) Factual findings relative to each charge and the Board's determination of each charge;
    - (4) Identification of the educational services to be provided to the student, pursuant to i. above;
    - (5) The terms and conditions of the suspension; and
    - (6) The right to appeal to the Commissioner of Education the Board's decision regarding the student's general education program, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2.4 and N.J.A.C. 6A:3-1.3 through 1.17.
  - l. If at any time it is found that the student did not commit the offense, the student shall be immediately returned to the program from which he or she was removed; and
  - m. At the completion of a long-term suspension, the Board shall return the general education student to the general education program.
2. An appeal of the Board's decision regarding the general education student's program shall be made to the Commissioner of Education, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2.4 and N.J.A.C. 6A:3-1.3 through 1.17.
3. Suspension of a general education student shall not be continued beyond the Board's second regularly scheduled meeting following the suspension, unless the Board so determines, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-5.

- a. The Board shall determine whether to continue the suspension, pursuant to B.1. above, based on the following criteria:
    - (1) The nature and severity of the offense;
    - (2) The Board's removal decision;
    - (3) The results of relevant testing, assessments, or evaluations of the student; and
    - (4) The recommendation of the Superintendent, after considering input from the Principal or Director of the alternative education program or home or other in-school or out-of-school instruction program in which the student has been placed.
  - b. The Board shall develop and adopt policies and procedures providing for action on the continuation of student suspensions in the event of cancellation of the first or second regular Board meeting pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-4 and 5. In this unlikely event,
4. When the Board votes to continue a general education student's suspension, it shall review the case, in consultation with the Superintendent, at each subsequent Board meeting for the purpose of determining:
- a. The status of the student's suspension;
  - b. The appropriateness of the suspended student's current educational program; and
  - c. Whether the suspended student's current placement, pursuant to i. above, should continue or whether the student should return to the general education program.
5. When the Board votes to continue a general education student's suspension, it shall make, in consultation with the Superintendent, the final determination on:
- a. When the student is prepared to return to the general education program;
  - b. Whether the student will remain in an alternative education program or receive home or other in-school or out-of-school instruction, based on the criteria set forth in B.3.a.(1) through (4) above; or
  - c. Whether to initiate expulsion proceedings in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2, N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.4, and Policy 5620.

6. The Board shall provide a general education student suspended under N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.3 with an appropriate educational program or services, based on the criteria set forth under B.1.i.(2) above, until the student graduates from high school or reaches the age of twenty, whichever comes first.
  - a. The educational program shall be consistent with the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:16-9.2 and 10.2 and 6A:14-2 and 4.3, whichever is applicable; or
  - b. The educational services provided, either in-school or out-of-school, shall be comparable to those provided in the public schools for students of similar grades and attainments, pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25.
7. For a student with a disability who receives a long-term suspension, the Board shall proceed in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14 in determining or changing the student's educational placement to an interim or alternate educational setting.
  - a. All procedural protections set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.3 shall be afforded to a student with a disability who is subjected to a long-term suspension.
  - b. All decisions concerning the student's educational program or placement shall be made by the student's Individualized Education Program team.
  - c. The provisions of B.2. through B.6. above shall not apply to students with disabilities.

C. Meeting with Student - Multiple Suspensions or Possible Expulsion

1. In accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2c, in the event a student has experienced multiple suspensions or may be subject to a proposed expulsion from school, the Principal shall convene a meeting, as soon as practicable, between the student and a school psychologist, a school counselor, a school social worker, a student assistance coordinator, or a member of the school's intervention and referral services team.
  - a. The Principal may convene such a meeting, if after the student has been suspended for the first time, the Principal upon evaluation deems such a meeting appropriate.
  - b. The purpose of the meeting shall be to identify any behavior or health difficulties experienced by the student and, where appropriate, to provide supportive interventions or referrals to school or community resources that may assist the student in addressing the identified difficulties.

2. The requirements of C.1. above shall not apply when a student's immediate removal or suspension from the school's regular education program is required pursuant to:
  - a. The provisions of the "Zero Tolerance for Guns Act," (N.J.S.A. 18A:37-7 et seq.);
  - b. N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2.1 – Assault by Pupil Upon Teacher, etc.; Suspension; Expulsion Proceedings;
  - c. N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2.2 – Offense by Pupil Involving Assault, Removal from Schools Regular Education Program; or
  - d. In any other instance in which the safety and security of other students or school staff requires the student's immediate removal from school.
3. In the instances provided in C.2.a. through d. above, the meeting required in C.1. above shall take place as soon as practicable following the student's removal from the school's regular education program.
4. The provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2c and C. of this Regulation shall be construed in a manner consistent with the "Individuals with Disabilities Act," 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.

First Reading: July 28, 2020

Revised: August 25, 2020