

Students

Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation

To promote student safety and contribute to the maintenance of a positive school climate, the Governing Board encourages the development of school-based conflict resolution programs designed to help students learn constructive ways of handling conflict. The Board believes that such programs can reduce violence and promote communication, personal responsibility, and problem-solving skills among students.

Conflict resolution programs shall not supplant the authority of staff to take appropriate action as necessary to prevent violence, ensure student safety, maintain order in the school, and institute disciplinary measures.

Schoolwide programs may include curriculum in conflict resolution, including, but not limited to, instruction in effective communication and listening, critical thinking, problem-solving processes, and the use of negotiation to find mutually acceptable solutions. In addition, the curriculum may address students' ethical and social development, respect for diversity, and interpersonal and behavioral skills.

Conflict resolution programs may incorporate peer mediation strategies in which selected students are specially trained to work with their peers in resolving conflicts.

Students' participation in any peer mediation program shall be voluntary and kept confidential by all parties involved.

In developing a conflict resolution and/or peer mediation program, school-site teams shall address, as appropriate:

1. The grade levels and courses in which the conflict resolution curriculum shall be delivered
2. Staff development related to the implementation of the curriculum and modeling of appropriate behaviors and communication skills
3. The selection of peer mediators involving, to the extent possible, a cross-section of students in terms of grade, gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, and including some students who exhibit negative leadership among peers
4. Training and support for peer mediators, including training in mediation processes and in the skills related to understanding conflict, communicating effectively and listening
5. The process for identifying and referring students to the peer mediation program
6. The types of conflicts suitable for peer mediation
7. Scheduling and location of peer mediation sessions
8. Methods of obtaining and recording agreement from all disputants
9. The appropriate involvement of parents/guardians, the

community and staff,
including counseling and
guidance staff

10. Communications to
students,
parents/guardians, and
staff regarding the
availability of the program

11. Methods of following
up with students to
determine the effectiveness
of the process

12. Development of
assessment tools to
periodically evaluate the
success of the program
including, but not limited
to, measurements of whether
there has been a reduction
in violence at the school
and whether the school's
suspension rates have
fallen since the program
has been introduced.