

# LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Schenectady Parents, Guardians, Caregivers, Students, Staff and Community,

I am pleased to present a revised student code of conduct for the 2019-2020 School Year.

The new Schenectady City School District Code of Conduct is designed to promote equity and strongly supports our principles and efforts to be trauma-sensitive, culturally responsive and presents a strong focus on restorative practices.

In addition to outlining guiding principles, rights, responsibilities and various types of discipline, this document serves to provide a preventative approach and therapeutic response as we aim to keep students in the classroom and out of the juvenile justice system.

In the Schenectady City School District, we approach student behaviors as teachable moments and opportunities for learning instead of punishment. While it is important that we hold students accountable for their actions, consequences without re-teaching and reflection do little to change behavior in the long run. In order to improve educational outcomes for our students, we must provide interventions and behavior support that is directed at addressing academic gaps and the causes of misbehavior.

We know that suspension does not improve school climate or outcomes for students. In this document, we outline and describe practices and alternative pathways that are diagnostic and prescriptive, such as diversion. This alternative pathway provides an opportunity for mental and behavior health treatment, potentially reducing the amount of time a student is out of school.

Our code of conduct also emphasizes the importance of implementing strategies, practices, interventions and plans that address student need before behavior issues rise to a most serious level. Students are most likely to make positive decisions when they understand the expectations, know that adults care about them and when they feel respected.

Among the changes in 2019-2020, is a chart that outlines ranges for grade-appropriate responses to behaviors. This should be used as a reference to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to a child's grade level when determining a response or intervention.

I encourage you to read the code of conduct in its entirety. It should be used as a guide and reference throughout the upcoming school year.

Our top priorities are to ensure that our schools are safe, that all students have what they need to be academically successful and that race, economics and disability are never predictors of student achievement.

We are partners in the education of our students. Together we can ensure that every student is academically successful and on the path to graduation.

If you have any questions, concerns or comments, please contact us through Let's Talk. Visit our website at [www.schenectady.k12.ny.us](http://www.schenectady.k12.ny.us) and click on the tab on the left hand side and select code of conduct.

Sincerely,

Laurence T. Spring  
Superintendent of Schools

2019-2020

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