

Q&A on Updated Student Discipline Rules

Background and Context

Q: What is the primary purpose of student discipline rules?

A: Washington's student discipline rules aim to reflect a commitment to fostering supportive, inclusive school communities where every student can thrive. These rules intend to guide school leaders in implementing fair disciplinary practices that keep students connected to their learning. By emphasizing collaboration with families and communities and providing strong classroom reentry support, the rules aim to promote academic growth, ensure consistent access to education, and create safe, respectful, and empowering learning environments.

Q: Why were the student discipline rules updated?

A: The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) adopted emergency rules pertaining to student discipline under [Chapter 392-400 of the Washington Administrative Code \(WAC\)](#) for the 2024–25 school year. This action was taken in response to ongoing confusion and challenges surrounding the interpretation and implementation of existing student discipline policies.

The emergency rules were intended to provide immediate clarification and support for school districts as they navigate disciplinary procedures. In parallel, OSPI initiated the permanent rulemaking process to update Chapter 392-400 WAC. This process aimed to ensure that the final regulations are equitable, clearly understood, and effectively implemented across all K–12 public schools in the state.

Q: What is the main goal of the updated student discipline rules?

A: The rulemaking process facilitated the development of permanent student discipline rules that align with existing laws, educational standards, and statewide frameworks. This alignment is intended to support the overarching goal of maximizing student engagement in learning by ensuring that disciplinary practices are consistent, equitable, and conducive to educational success.

Details on the Rule Change Process

Q: What was the process used in updating the student discipline rules?

A: OSPI adhered to the established rulemaking procedures required for state agencies to implement changes to the Washington Administrative Code (WAC). These procedures ensure transparency, interest holder engagement, and legal compliance throughout the development



and adoption of new regulations. Additional information regarding the full rulemaking process is available on OSPI's webpage on [Rulemaking Activity](#).

Q: What timeline was used for the permanent student discipline rulemaking process?

A: OSPI initiated the rulemaking process in October of 2024 by filing a preproposal statement of inquiry (CR-101), signaling its intent to update the existing student discipline rules. Subsequently, in January 2025, OSPI filed the proposed rulemaking notice (CR-102), proposing permanent rules based on the emergency rules currently in effect.

Public comment on the proposed rules was collected in late February and early March of 2025. Feedback was gathered virtually through the OSPI website and at four in-person public hearings held across the state, including in the Tri-Cities area, Spokane, Federal Way, and Vancouver. The public comment period closed on March 19th, 2025. All comments received were carefully reviewed and summarized by OSPI.

In June of 2025, OSPI filed the rulemaking order to adopt the rule (CR-103P), formally adopting the final version of the permanent student discipline rules.

These new rules will take effect 31 calendar days after the CR-103P was filed and therefore will be implemented starting in the 2025–26 school year.

Q: Who participated in the updating of the student discipline rules?

A: OSPI received input from hundreds of community members and school personnel through both online submissions and in-person rulemaking hearings in multiple areas around the state. Feedback was provided by a diverse group of interest holders, including educators, families, and community members.

Q: What were the key themes of the input received on updates to the student discipline rules?

A: Support for the proposed rule changes primarily focused on their alignment with existing laws, enhanced clarity, increased flexibility, emphasis on collaborative and data-driven decision-making, promotion of equity, and improved feasibility of implementation.

Concerns were raised regarding the potential loss of detailed requirements and the risk of inconsistent or unfair application due to the removal of specific language. Recommendations included the incorporation of review processes and student support systems, the elimination of short-term suspension options, and clearer guidelines on student and parental accountability.

OSPI remains committed to thoughtfully addressing this feedback—either through revisions reflected in the final rules or by providing supplemental guidance and continuing collaborative efforts with school boards and educational leaders.

Moving Forward

Q: Where can I find the updated student discipline rules?

A: The updated student discipline rules and accompanying resources can be found on OSPI's webpage on [Student Discipline](#).

Q: When will the updated student discipline rules go into effect?

A: The new student discipline rules take effect 31 calendar days after the CR-103P was filed and therefore will be implemented starting in the 2025–26 school year.

Q: What are the key changes included in the updated student discipline rules?

A: The updated student discipline rules include several key changes designed to enhance clarity, alignment with state law, and consistency in implementation across schools. These changes include:

- Clarification of the definition of classroom exclusion, ensuring a more consistent understanding and application of the term;
- Inclusion of the definitions of discretionary and non-discretionary discipline as outlined in [RCW 28A.600.015\(6\)](#), providing clear guidance on the types of disciplinary actions and their appropriate use;
- References to relevant RCWs pertaining to professional standards for educator certification and renewal, the Teacher and Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP), and the Cultural Competency, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CCDEI) Standards, to support alignment with broader educational frameworks;
- A requirement for school districts and school boards to review and revise district policies and procedures to ensure all staff collaborate in the consistent enforcement of student behavior expectations both schoolwide and within individual classrooms; and
- Replacement of the term “Emergency Expulsion” with “Emergency Removal” in accordance with [RCW 28A.600.495](#), aligning terminology with current statutory language.

These revisions are intended to support equitable and effective disciplinary practices that foster safe and supportive learning environments for all students.

Q: How will school districts implement the updated student discipline rules?

A: School districts will collaborate with their local school boards to review and update existing student discipline policies and procedures to ensure alignment of practices and to support effective implementation.

Q: How will families and community members be involved in the implementation of the updated student discipline rules?

A: Local school leaders shall identify and implement meaningful engagement opportunities for educators, families, and community members. In accordance with [WAC 392-190-048](#), school boards are mandated to examine their data for evidence of disproportionality and respond appropriately to address identified disparities.