

**REGION TWO COMMITMENT TO STANDARDS
FOR ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR**

The Region Two Cooperative Board believes that promoting ethical and responsible behavior is an essential part of Region Two's educational mission. The Cooperative Board recognizes that ethics, constructive attitudes, responsible behavior, and "character" are important if a student is to leave school as a "responsible and involved citizen." The Cooperative Board also recognizes that Maine law requires the adoption of a district-wide student code of conduct consistent with statewide standards for student behavior developed by the Commissioner of the Department of Education in compliance with 20-A MRSA § 254(11).

The Cooperative Board seeks to create and maintain a school climate in which ethical and responsible behavior can flourish. The Cooperative Board believes that instilling a sense of ethics and responsibility in students requires setting positive expectations for student behavior as well as establishing disciplinary consequences for behavior that violates Cooperative Board policy or school rules. Further, the Cooperative Board believes that in order to teach ethical and responsible behavior, adults who interact with students must strive to model and reinforce ethical and responsible behavior. To that end, the Cooperative Board supports an active partnership between schools and parents.

Recognizing that collaboratively identified core values are the foundation for a school culture that encourages and reinforces ethical and responsible student behavior, the Cooperative Board is committed to the establishment and implementation of a process for identifying shared values and setting and enforcing standards for behavior, including prescription of consequences for unacceptable behavior. The process for identifying such shared values will invite and include the participation of Cooperative Board members, school administrators, staff, parents, students, and the community. Core values will be reviewed periodically, with opportunity for public participation. The Cooperative Board will direct the Director/designee to develop a process to assess school system progress toward achievement of an ethical and responsible school culture.

Following the identification of core values, the Cooperative Board, with input from administrators, staff, parents, students, and members of the community, will adopt a Student Code of Conduct consistent with statewide standards for student behavior. The statewide standards are the "core values" identified in the report of the Commission for Ethical and Responsible Student Behavior, Taking Responsibility: Standards for Ethical and Responsible Behavior in Maine Schools and Communities. The core values are: Respect, Honesty, Compassion, Fairness, Responsibility and Courage. The Code of Conduct must be "consistent with," not identical to, the statewide standards developed under 20 M.R.S.A. § 254(11). This provides an opportunity for communities to identify their own core values and articulate what they "look like" when applied to behavior. The core values serve as a basis for school system expectations for student conduct. The student code of conduct shall, as required by law:

- A. Define unacceptable student behavior;
- B. Establish standards of student responsibility for behavior;

- C. Prescribe consequences for violation of the Student Code of Conduct, including first-time violations, when appropriate;
- D. Describe appropriate procedures for referring students in need of special services to those services;
- E. Provide information when further assessment of a current Individual Education Plan (IEP) is necessary;
- F. Establish policies and procedures concerning the removal of disruptive or violent students from a classroom or a school bus, as well as student disciplinary and placement decisions, when appropriate; and
- G. Establish guidelines and criteria concerning the appropriate circumstances when the Director/designee may provide information to the local police or other appropriate law enforcement authorities regarding an offense that involves violence committed by any person on school grounds or other school property.

The Student Code of Conduct will be reviewed periodically by the Cooperative Board, with input from administrators, staff, parents, students, and members of the community.

Students, parents, staff, and the community will be informed of the Student Code of Conduct through handbooks and/or other means selected by the Director/designee.

Ethics and Curriculum

The Cooperative Board encourages examination and discussion of ethical issues within content areas of the curriculum, as appropriate. The Cooperative Board also encourages school administrators and staff to provide students with meaningful opportunities to apply values and ethical and responsible behavior through activities such as problem solving, service learning, peer mediation and student government/leadership development.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA §§ 254, 1001(15)

First Reading: NOVEMBER 24, 2015

Second Reading: JANUARY 19, 2016