

Contact

Rochester Community Task Force on School Climate

Rosemary Rivera

585.520.6542

rivera@citizenactionny.org

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Task Force Extends Comment Period for Community Feedback on Proposed Rochester City School District Code of Conduct

ROCHESTER — The Rochester Community Task Force on School Climate wants additional community input on the proposed new Code of Conduct for Rochester city schools and is extending the comment deadline until **September 19**.

The 50-plus member task force released a draft version of the new Code for students in late July that incorporates language that is supportive of developmentally appropriate rules and interventions that will help students, families, and school personnel address behaviors when they arise in schools. In the past, for example, suspensions have been used as a response to any infraction. The proposed Code outlines four levels of student behavior and would permit suspensions only for actions deemed to be Level 3 or 4 — and only as a last resort.

As of August 21, about 280 survey responses were submitted comparing the current code of conduct and the draft Code. Almost 30 percent of the respondents are teachers, 20 percent are students, and 20 percent interested community members. Fewer than 15 percent of the survey participants are parents or guardians of students.

By extending the timeframe to participate in the survey, the Community Task Force hopes to encourage more overall participation, but would especially like to hear from parents and family members of City School District students.

The proposed 65-page Code is available to download or read in English and Spanish on the district website at www.rcsdk12.org/CodeofConduct. The public is also encouraged to review a document comparing the existing and proposed codes (on the same web page) and complete the online survey. Comments and suggestions also may be emailed to CTF@racf.org. This input will be reviewed by task force members before it is submitted to the district's Board of Education for adoption.

In addition to new guidelines for suspensions, the proposed student segment of the Code also includes:

- Student rights, including a grievance process;
- Language that shows a strong preference for keeping students in school;
- Description of training for all school staff that is rooted in restorative practices;
- A matrix of infractions with clear definitions and guidance on what level of interventions and consequences are appropriate; and
- Specific ways to address and eliminate racial disparities in suspensions and expulsions.

The task force stresses that the formation of the entire Code is an ongoing process and that meaningful community feedback is needed now so that it can begin to be introduced in the fall.

The Community Task Force has committed to a multi-year process to develop recommendations, engage a wide range of stakeholders, and guide effective implementation with the Rochester City School District to improve school climate for all.