CONFLICT RESOLUTION/PEER MEDIATION

To promote student safety and contribute to the maintenance of a positive school climate, the Board of Trustees 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 strategies may be considered as part of each school's comprehensive safety plan and incorporated into other district discipline procedures as appropriate. 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
CONFLICT RESOLUTION/PEER MEDIATION (continued)

2. Staff development related to the implementation of the curriculum and modeling of appropriate behaviors and communication skills

(cf. 4131 - Staff Development)

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

(cf. 5131 - Conduct)
(cf. 5131.1 - Bus Conduct)
(cf. 5131.4 - Campus Disturbances)
(cf. 5136 - Gangs)
(cf. 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment)
(cf. 5145.9 - Hate-Motivated Behavior)
(cf. 5145.7 - Sexual Harassment)

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/guidance and security staff

(cf. 1020 - Youth Services)
(cf. 1400 - Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies and the Schools)
(cf. 3515.3 - District Police/Security Department)
(cf. 6020 - Parent Involvement)
(cf. 6164.2 - Guidance/Counseling Services)

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
CONFLICT RESOLUTION/PEER MEDIATION  (continued)

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.

Legal Reference:
EDUCATION CODE
32280-32288 School safety plans
32295.5 Teen court programs
35291-35291.5 Rules
44807 Duty concerning conduct of students
CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION
Article 1, Section 28(c) Right to safe schools

Management Resources:
CSBA PUBLICATIONS
Protecting Our Children: Board of Trustees Strategies to Combat School Violence, revised 1999
CDE PUBLICATIONS
USDE PUBLICATIONS
WEB SITES
U.S. Department of Education, Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program:
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/
California Department of Education, Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office:
http://www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/safety/