

Community Unit School District 200

A Comprehensive Approach to Student Safety



Organizational Values

- Kids First
- Positive Relationships
- Safety
- Learning



Keeping Students Safe

A Comprehensive Approach

- Student Connectedness
- Preventative Work - SOS and Erin's Law
- Risk of Harm Practices
- Referral GPS
- Parent Communication
- See Something / Say Something
- Safety Protocols
- Staff Training - Child Abuse, Grooming, Sexual Misconduct
- Relationships with Police Department (Advocacy Centers)
- Safe Hiring Practices and Faith's Law



Student Connectedness

- **Connection to School**

95% of District 200 students identified that they have an adult at school who helps them to feel safe and supported.

- **Connectedness Strategies**

Teams work to connect students through co-curricular opportunities, individualized conversations, and learning students' interests to get them involved in clubs, activities, athletics, and learning.



Prevention and Safety

- Ways to Stay Safe, Safe / Unsafe Touches
- Communicating / Reporting
- Sexual Abuse, Healthy Relationships, Communication
- Mandatory Annual Trainings
- Staff Orientation
- Support Team Structures in Schools
- Resource Guide
- Parent Communication
- Referral GPS / Access to Care

Our Current Hiring Process

STATE MANDATED

Illinois School Code and CUSD200 Board Policy 5:30 require school districts to initiate a fingerprint-based criminal background check for all applicants before their date of hire. The background check includes three components.

School districts must:

1. Submit the applicant's identifying information to the State Police for a fingerprint-based criminal history records check of State Police and FBI records;
2. Perform a check of the Statewide Sex Offender Database; and
3. Perform a check of the Statewide Murderer and Violent Offender Against Youth Database



Our Current Hiring Process

A 4th screening component was added through Faith's Law

4. (Effective July 1, 2023) Signed affidavit from employee regarding Faith's Law-Illinois State Board of Education Sexual Misconduct Disclosure for Applicant.

In addition...

Employment History Review (EHR)

- The recommended candidate must sign an affidavit that they are not disqualified from employment. *They are not cleared to start employment in our District until the affidavit has been successfully completed.*
- Provide a list, including the name, address, telephone number, and other relevant contact information of recommended candidate's current employer, and all former employers that were schools or school contractors. Including former employers where the recommended candidate had direct contact with children or students.
- A written authorization that consents to and authorizes disclosure by the recommended candidate's current and former employers of the information requested and which releases those employers from any liability that may arise from such disclosure.

Our Current Hiring Process

CUSD200 Practice In Addition To State Mandate

CUSD 200 uses the Illinois State Police: Criminal History Information Response Process for FBI and State fingerprinting. The District has a unique ORI # for the organization in order to submit and receive the fingerprints/results. Crossmatch is the technical system we use for the processing.

1. Successful review of FBI, State fingerprint results, check of sex offender database, check of statewide murderer/violent offender against youth database and signed affidavit - Illinois State Board of Education Sexual Misconduct Disclosure for Applicant (Faith's Law). All must be cleared for a candidate to be employed and start working for the district.
2. If there are any convictions that have occurred, a review is done against the enumerated felony offenses in the Illinois school code that could preclude employment (there is a 7 year look back for specific felony charges) they would not be employed with the District.



Our Current Hiring Process

CUSD200 Practice In Addition To State Mandate

3. If there are any convictions that could prohibit employment outside of the enumerated felony offenses, the Assistant Superintendent and/or Director of Human Resources will have the attorney's review the convictions regarding precluding employment.
4. If there are any convictions that could prohibit employment outside of the enumerated felony offenses, the Assistant Superintendent and/or Director of Human Resources will review those convictions against District Code of Conduct and specific position expectations to evaluate employment.

***** If there is a criminal charge that has been vacated, that would have resulted in a decision not to employ, a review will be conducted by the Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with the Board of Education, prior to a final decision to hire. (Added as of August 2023)***

Our Current Hiring Process

CUSD200 Practice In Addition To State Mandate

5. Prior to finalizing clearance for employment, the Assistant Superintendent and/or Director of HR will meet with the individual to discuss convictions that have occurred to understand what were the events leading up to the arrest/convictions and the final outcome of the conviction. If necessary, additional background checks or references will be reviewed. Verification of any other arrests that have occurred outside of the background check. Once the final determination is made for employment, the expectation of adhering to board policies and expectations of an employee is explained to the individual. Additionally, it is the expectation of the employee that if any future arrests were to occur that they would notify their supervisor and/or HR immediately.
6. After an individual is fingerprinted with the District, the District does receive any subsequent convictions of new arrests that occur.



What Is Faith's Law?

Faith's Law is named after prevention advocate and child sexual abuse survivor Faith Colson, who graduated from an Illinois high school in the early 2000s. Faith was sexually abused by a teacher at her high school. Years later, during the course of legal proceedings related to the abuse, Faith learned that several adults within her high school suspected that the teacher's relationship with her was inappropriate but did not take appropriate action to report their concerns. As a result of her experiences, Faith pushed for change to state laws related to educator sexual misconduct in K-12 schools. Faith's Law was passed by the 102nd General Assembly as two separate pieces of legislation.



1st Legislation

- Took effect in December 2021
- Established the definition of sexual misconduct within the school code
- Required schools to develop and post employee code of conduct policies
- Expanded the definition of “grooming” in the IL criminal code
- Added “grooming” to the list of conduct that qualifies a child as an “abused child”



2nd Legislation

- Took effect July 1 of this year
- Focused on the prevention of sexual misconduct that was defined in 2021
- Employees, substitute employees, employees of contractors
- Adds employment history reviews as part of the hiring and vetting process
- Requires notices to be provided to parents/guardians and the applicable student when there's an alleged act of sexual misconduct
- If a district has any reasonable cause to believe a license holder has committed an act of sexual misconduct, it must be reported to the state superintendent and regional superintendent
- Could start the process of revoking or suspending their license and/or endorsement



Goal Of Faith's Law Legislation

- Give parents/guardians notice regarding allegations of sexual misconduct that involve their student
- Equip Illinois schools with better information regarding the employment history of an applicant or employee of a contractor
- Provide schools the resources necessary to make well-informed decisions about who they are employing/contracting with
- Protect students from acts of sexual misconduct by school employees, substitute employees, and employees of contractors



Future Policy and Procedural Focus Areas

- **Uniform Grievance Procedures**
- **Employee Conduct Policy and Procedures**
- **Communication Processes**



Our Goal

**A Physically and Emotionally
Safe Environment for ALL
Students and ALL Staff**

