

# C'ville OKs Student Conduct Code 5-1

By ED WENDOVER

When they return to school next month, Clanceville students will find themselves governed by a new 15-page conduct code that sets "no fixed penalties for any specific offense."

The code was approved for a one-year trial period by the board of education in a 5-1 vote Thursday night.

The board at first unanimously rejected the code as proposed by Supt. David B. McDowell but then passed the code for the trial period "with amendments" — some of which have not yet been specifically worded.

DURING THE FINAL minutes of debate on the code, several board members attacked the lack of specific punishments for offenses and questioned the practicality of applying the code to students ranging from kindergarten to high school seniors.

*"I'm recommending it because it has the due process of law built into it that our attorney says we have to have."*

—Supt. McDowell

McDowell told the board, "Don't buy it if you're going to include specific punishments," and described the code as "a nightmare for my office."

Board member Dr. Samuel J. Prisk then asked McDowell why he was recommending the code.

"I'm recommending it because it has the due process (of law) built into it that our attorney says we have to have," the superintendent said.

McDowell was referring to the appeal procedures outlined in the code for students who were disciplined for an offense.

Discipline under the trial code can range from admonishment or reprimand to expulsion.

UNDER THE TRIAL code, a principal may suspend a student for up to five days "for cause." The principal may also suspend the student for not more than 15 days "when an offense so warrants," but the action is subject to review by the superintendent. In every case where a principal recommends that a student be suspended for more than 15 days, the superintendent will make the decision.

In each case where a suspension would be in effect for more than 15 days, the superintendent will meet the student's legal guardians and advise them of the need for the action and of their right to a formal hearing before the school board.

At the formal appeal hearing before the school

board, the student or his representatives may speak on his behalf, call witnesses and present evidence.

"I think this protects the student pretty well," McDowell said. "What we're looking for is that this (code) be only punitive enough to correct."

THE CODE SPECIFICALLY mentioned 20 offenses to be covered by the guidelines including: chronic or willful breaking of school rules, chronic or repeated refusal to obey teacher's instructions, repeated tardiness or absence without cause, immoral or indecent conduct, dangerous behavior, destruction of school property, or personal property on school grounds, theft, extortion, sale or possession of narcotics and alcohol, fighting, displaying or sale of pornographic material, gambling, assault, smoking, forgery and possession of weapons.

"It is the determined policy of the board of education that no fixed penalties for any specific offense can rightfully be predetermined," the code states.

Dr. Prisk said that flexibility of punishments would lead to cries of unfairness by those receiving more severe punishments for what appear to be similar offenses.

McDowell said it was "comforting" to have set punishments but that he felt the proposed code was more fair by being flexible.

Board member Raymond Chaiken, who cast the lone vote against the amended code, questioned the application of the code to students of all age groups and in particular to 18-year-olds who will gain majority status Jan. 1 under new state law.

BOARD PRESIDENT Martin T. Wechsler challenged "the lack of distinction between young children in early grades and high school students." Wechsler questioned procedures for early dismissal of younger students from school.

McDowell explained that procedures for discipline would be changed very little from the practices in the past because the new code would be applied when applicable.

The superintendent said the code was drawn up to meet a State Board of Education directive that local school boards adopt student conduct codes.

McDowell said he felt the code did not alter present disciplinary procedures drastically but would ensure student rights.

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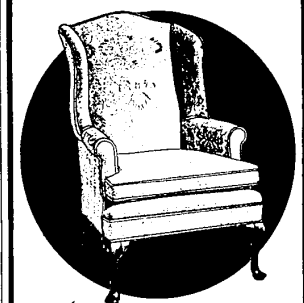
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## Teens Called Cynical, Far From Idealistic

ANN ARBOR The image of adolescents as being political idealists, consumed with utopian plans to remake society, is far off base, a University of Michigan psychologist says.

In general, the opposite is true. In interviews with over 450 young people, psychology Prof. Joseph Adelson encountered skepticism if not cynicism in their views of human nature and the limits of social change.

Other findings in his broad study are that a profound shift in political thinking occurs

during the early to middle teen years in nearly all adolescents, of all cultures. By 18 a youngster has "a firm grasp on the political system; he is forming an ideology; he is qualified to vote."

Adelson began documenting "the Political Imagination of the Young Adolescent" eight years ago. His subjects, boys and girls aged 11 through 18, of normal to high intelligence and from a full spectrum of social class. About 50 were interviewed twice within a three-year interval.

and confront other problems of government.

"We then raised hypothetical questions on such issues as the obligations of citizens and state; the limits of political authority; the nature of crime and justice, and political freedom versus the common good."

"We were surprised to find that neither sex, nor in-

telligence, nor social class count for much in the growth of political concepts," Adelson said.

"What does count, and counts heavily, is age." With few exceptions, the child of 12 or 13 is not capable of expressing himself politically, Adelson said. His ideas are simplistic: "a man commits a crime because he is a criminal," he reasons.

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