

# THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

SECTION: OPERATIONS

TITLE: Use of Scanning Equipment to  
Detect Weapons

ADOPTED: December 14, 1992

REVISED:

## 817 USE OF SCANNING EQUIPMENT TO DETECT WEAPONS

### **Purpose**

The School District of Philadelphia has made a strong and determined effort to maintain its schools as safe and secure places where students and staff can pursue the educational endeavors our children deserve. The Board of Education finds that escalating violence encroaching on our national landscape has resulted in the proliferation of dangerous and deadly weapons in America's urban, suburban and rural communities.

The Pennsylvania Legislature, in an effort to stem this national trend shown by a significant increase in the presence of weapons in school settings, enacted Public Law 167 of 1980 making it a criminal offense to possess any weapon in a school building, on school grounds, or on a school bus.

The Board of Education has witnessed a significant increase in discovery of weapons in the possession of students during incidents occurring in school and while traveling to and from school. The Board of Education is committed to attempt to provide Philadelphia's public schools with the means to maintain a safe climate for all students and staff in a manner which reasonably balances limited intrusions on individual freedoms against the vital public interest in preserving an atmosphere conducive to education in our schools.

### **Authority**

The Pennsylvania Crimes Code, 18 Pa. C.S.A. Section 912 makes it a misdemeanor of the 1st degree to possess any weapon in a school, school program, or school bus.

The Public School Code, 24 P.S. Section 5-510 grants School Boards with the authority to issue rules and regulations regarding the conduct and deportment of students attending public schools in the district.

Judicial decisions have recognized the appropriateness and need to administer searches of the public upon entry into governmental buildings and programs as well as searches of individuals based upon reasonable suspicion in school programs.

### **Delegation of Responsibility**

The Superintendent of Schools is authorized to procure, within budgetary constraints, magnetometer or other scanning devices for the purpose of reducing or discouraging the presence of weapons in our schools.

The Superintendent of Schools is authorized to amend the School district's procedures for the conduct of searches and seizures currently set forth in School Operations Policy and Procedures Section 109-8 to provide for the use of magnetometers or scanning devices in individual searches based upon reasonable suspicion that a student is in possession of a weapon or where the student has engaged in assaultive conduct.

The Superintendent of Schools may, upon the issuance of detailed procedures setting forth the permissible circumstances and limitations upon the use of magnetometers or scanning devices for administrative searches, authorize the use of such equipment for comprehensive or random entry searches of students and visitors, to schools, school buses, or school programs where circumstances in a community, or information received by the school, raises a heightened likelihood of weapons possession and/or violence in a school or between segments of the student population.

The Superintendent of Schools may authorize the use of magnetometers or scanning devices for administrative entry searches by school personnel at individual school programs, athletic contests, or activities.

The Superintendent of Schools may authorize the use of magnetometers or scanning devices for administrative entry searches in designated remedial-disciplinary schools to which students are assigned as a result of a serious incident or series of disruptive behaviors.