

Crimes/firearms mean tough punishment

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**Superintendent
Gene Moore**

The punishment for a student who assaults a school employee or brings a firearm on campus is now tougher.

The School Safety Act of 1997 passed by the S.C. Legislature sets the punishment for a student who assaults a school employee at one year in jail or a \$1,000 fine.

Also, the S.C. Legislature has passed a law requiring that a student who brings a firearm to school be expelled from school for no less than one year.

“The board and the administration want to be sure parents and students understand that these laws are in place,” superintendent Gene Moore said. “Please talk with your children about these laws and be sure they understand the consequences they face.”

“The state obviously wants to be sure educators know that they’re working with students who’ve committed such acts.”

The assault law also requires the district to record the conviction in the student’s permanent record and to record any conviction of any violent crime committed in the community.

The law requires the district to notify each person who teaches the student that he has been convicted of a violent crime for as long as the student is in school.

The law leaves the district no choice but to tell teachers of a student’s criminal record.

“We don’t want to have to brand a child as a convicted felon, but the law leaves us no choice. We must notify teachers,” Moore said.

The firearm law leaves the Board of Trustees no choice but to expel a student from school for no less than one year if it is determined that the student brought a firearm to school or to a school-sponsored event.

A “firearm” means not only a gun but any explosive or incendiary type device.

“The board and the administration want to be sure parents and students understand that such an expulsion could cost them two years of school,” Moore said.

An expulsion under the law that happens after the first 10 days of the school year could result in the student losing school credit for two years in a row because the student could not return until one year later at a point too late to gain credit for that year.