

SCHOOL DISTRICT - COMMUNITY RELATIONS

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PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Successful education programs require the support of the school district community. The board addresses the importance of the role of the school district community in the school district in this series of the policy manual. The board recognizes this support is dependent on the school district community's understanding of participation in the efforts, goals, problems and programs of the school district.

In this section, the board sets out its policies defining its relationship with the school district community. In striving to obtain the support of the school district community, the board will:

- Provide access to school district records;
- Inform the school district community of the school district's goals, objectives, achievements, and needs;
- Invite the input of the school district community; and,
- Encourage cooperation between the school district and the school district community.

PUBLIC EXAMINATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT RECORDS

Public records of the school district may be viewed by the public during the regular business hours of the administration offices of the school district. These hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, except for holidays and recesses.

Persons wishing to view the school district's public records will contact the board secretary and make arrangements for the viewing. The board secretary will make arrangements for viewing the records as soon as practicable, depending on the nature of the request.

Persons may request copies of public records by telephone or in writing, including electronically. The school district may require pre-payment of the costs prior to copy and mailing.

Persons wanting copies may be assessed a fee for the copy. Persons wanting compilation of information may be assessed a fee for the time of the employee to compile the requested information. Printing of materials for the public at the expense of the school district will only occur when the event is sponsored by the school district.

Records defined by law as confidential records are viewed or copied upon receipt of written permission by the board secretary or superintendent from the person or entity whose confidential records are being requested.

It is the responsibility of the board secretary to maintain accurate and current records of the school district. It is the responsibility of the board secretary to respond in a timely manner to requests for viewing and receiving public information of the school district.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 21.4; 22; 291.6 (2005).
1980 Op. Att'y Gen. 88.
1972 Op. Att'y Gen. 158.
1968 Op. Att'y Gen. 656.

Cross Reference: 215 Board of Directors' Records
401.5 Employee Records
506 Student Records
708 Care, Maintenance, and Disposal of School District Records
902.1 News Media Relations

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The board recognizes the need for a communications program to provide effective two-way communication between the school district and the school district community. The school district's communications program shall strive to meet the following goals.

- To keep citizens informed through a regular flow of information about the school district and its programs;
- To encourage and organize the interchange of ideas between the school district and the community by developing and implementing techniques for community involvement in the school district and for school district involvement in the community; and
- To assess public knowledge, attitudes and concerns on a regular basis.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to establish and maintain an on-going communications program with the community. The superintendent shall make a recommendation to the board annually for changes in the communications program.

Each board meeting will have a communication and visitor section which provides the public the opportunity to speak in public forum. The following guidelines will be read prior to this agenda item laying out the parameters to be followed:

On behalf of fellow Board members, at this time I would like to invite any member of the audience to step forward with comments about items of interest or concern that do not appear on the agenda this evening. If you have thoughts to share about items that are included on tonight's agenda we would invite those comments at this time as well. Please begin by stating your name and address. Please limit your comments to three (3) minutes so that we can keep the meeting moving in a timely fashion and allow others an opportunity to speak. We ask that you remember that Iowa Law prohibits us from discussing specific employees or their job performance. Thank you for your support of our school district.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 21; 22; 279.8 (2005).

Cross Reference: 104 The People and Their School District
209 Committees of the Board of Directors
217 Board of Directors' Relationships
302 Administration Relationships
402 Employees and Outside Relations
902 Press, Radio and Television News Media
904 Public Participation in the School District

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NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS

The board recognizes the value of and supports open, fair and honest communication with the news media. The board will maintain a cooperative relationship with the news media. As part of this cooperative relationship, the board and the media will develop a means for sharing information while respecting each party's limitations.

Members of the news media are encouraged and welcome to attend open board meetings. The board president shall be the spokesperson for the board, and the superintendent shall be the spokesperson for the school district. It shall be the responsibility of the board president and superintendent to respond to inquiries from the news media about the school district.

Members of the news media seeking information about the school district shall direct their inquiries to the superintendent. The superintendent shall accurately and objectively provide the facts and board positions in response to inquiries from the news media about the school district.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 21.4; 22; 279.8 (2005).

Cross Reference: 901 Public Communications
902 Press, Radio and Television News Media

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NEWS CONFERENCES AND INTERVIEWS

The superintendent, on behalf of the board and the school district, may hold a news conference or respond to a request for an interview with the news media.

The superintendent shall respond accurately, openly, honestly, and objectively to inquiries from the news media about the school district.

News conferences and interviews planned or pre-arranged for school district activities shall include the board and the superintendent. News conferences for issues requiring an immediate response may be held by the superintendent. It shall be within the discretion of the superintendent to determine whether a news conference or interview shall be held to provide an immediate response to an issue.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to keep the board apprised of news conferences and interviews.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 21.4; 22; 279.8 (2005).

Cross Reference: 901 Public Communications
902 Press, Radio and Television News Media

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NEWS RELEASES

The superintendent shall determine when a news release about internal school district and board matters will be issued. In making this determination, the superintendent shall strive to keep the media and the school district community accurately and objectively informed. Further, the superintendent shall strive to create and maintain a positive image for the school district. It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to approve news releases originating within the school district prior to their release.

News releases will be prepared and disseminated to news media in the school district community. Questions about news releases shall be directed to the superintendent.

Legal Reference: Widmer v. Reitzler, 182 N.W.2d 177 (Iowa 1970).
Dobrovolny v. Reinhardt, 173 N.W.2d 837 (Iowa 1970).
Iowa Code §§ 21.4; 22.2 (2005).
1980 Op. Att'y Gen. 73.
1952 Op. Att'y Gen. 133.

Cross Reference: 902 Press, Radio and Television News Media

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STUDENTS AND THE NEWS MEDIA

Generally, students may not be interviewed during the school day by members of the news media. The students, while on the school district premises, shall refer interview requests and information requests from the news media to their principal.

It shall be within the discretion of the principal, after consulting with the superintendent, to allow or disallow the news media to interview and to receive information from the student while the student is under the control of the school district. The principal may also contact the student's parents.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to develop administrative regulations regarding this policy.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code § 279.8 (2005).

Cross Reference: 502.11 Interviews of Students by Outside Agencies
902 Press, Radio and Television News Media

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EMPLOYEES AND THE NEWS MEDIA

Employees shall refer interview requests and information requests from the news media to the superintendent's office. Employees may be interviewed or provide information about school district matters after receiving permission from the superintendent.

It shall be within the discretion of the superintendent to allow the news media to interview and to receive information from employees.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to develop guidelines for assisting employees in complying with this policy.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code § 279.8 (2005).

Cross Reference: 901 Public Communications
902 Press, Radio and Television News Media

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LIVE BROADCAST OR VIDEOTAPING

Individuals may broadcast or videotape public school district events, including open board meetings, as long as it does not interfere with or disrupt the school district event and it does not create an undue burden in adapting the buildings and sites to accommodate the request.

It shall be within the discretion of the superintendent to determine whether the request is unduly burdensome and whether the broadcast or videotaping will interfere with or disrupt the school district event.

Videotaping of classroom activities will be allowed at the discretion of the superintendent. Parents will be notified prior to videotaping of classroom activities.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to develop administrative regulations outlining the procedures for making the request and the rules for operation if the request is granted.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 21.4, .7; 22; 279.8 (2005).

Cross Reference: 506.2 Student Directory Information
901.2 Board of Directors and Community Relations
902.1 News Media Relations
904.3 Visitors to School District Buildings and Sites

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OTHER INTRADISTRICT RELATIONS

The board shall work with other local government units, colleges and universities, technical schools, businesses and industries, private schools, education associations, local community organizations and associations to provide additional education opportunities for the students in the school district.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to bring opportunities for cooperation to the attention of the board.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code § 279.8 (2005).

Cross Reference: 217 Board of Directors' Relationships
302 Administration Relationships
402 Employees and Outside Relations

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SCHOOL - COMMUNITY GROUPS

The board values the participation and the support of school district-community groups, including, but not limited to, the booster club and parent-teacher organizations, which strive for the betterment of the school district and the education program. The board will work closely with these groups.

Prior to any purchase of, or fund raising for, the purchase of goods or services for the school district, the group shall confer with the superintendent to assist the group in purchasing goods or services to meet the school district's needs.

Funds raised by these groups for the school district may be kept as part of the accounts of the school district.

It shall be the responsibility of the building principal to be the liaison with the school district-community groups affiliated with the building principal's attendance center.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 279.8; 291.13 (2005).

Cross Reference: 104 The People and Their School District
904 Public Participation in the School District

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COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSONS

The board recognizes the valuable resource it has in the members of the school district community. When possible and in concert with the education program, members of the school district community may be asked to make presentations to the students or to assist employees in duties other than teaching. The school district may officially recognize the contributions made by volunteers.

Recruitment, training, utilization, and the maintenance of records for the purposes of insurance coverage and/or recognition of school district volunteers are the responsibility of the superintendent.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 279.8; 670 (2005).

Cross Reference: 603.1 Basic Instruction Program
904.3 Visitors to School District Buildings and Sites

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VISITORS TO SCHOOL DISTRICT BUILDINGS & SITES

The board welcomes the interest of parents and other members of the school district community and invites them to visit the school buildings and sites. Visitors, which include persons other than employees or students, must notify the principal of their presence in the facility upon arrival.

Persons who wish to visit a classroom while school is in session are asked to notify the principal and obtain approval from the principal prior to the visit so appropriate arrangements can be made and so class disruption can be minimized. Teachers and other employees shall not take time from their duties to discuss matters with visitors.

Visitors shall conduct themselves in a manner fitting to their age level and maturity and with mutual respect and consideration for the rights of others while attending school events. Visitors failing to conduct themselves accordingly may be asked to leave the premises. Children who wish to visit school must be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult.

It shall be the responsibility of employees to report inappropriate conduct. It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent and principals to take the action necessary to cease the inappropriate conduct. If the superintendent or principals are not available, a school district employee shall act to cease the inappropriate conduct.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 279.8; 716.7 (2005).

Cross Reference: 220 School Visitation by Board of Directors
902 Press, Radio and Television News Media
904.2 Community Resource Persons and Volunteers

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PUBLIC CONDUCT ON SCHOOL PREMISES

School sponsored or approved activities are an important part of the school program and offer students the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities not offered during the regular school day. School sponsored or approved activities are provided for the enjoyment and opportunity for involvement they afford the students.

Individuals are permitted to attend school sponsored or approved activities or visit the school building only as guests of the school district, and, accordingly as a condition of such permission, they must comply with the school district's rules and policies. Individuals will not be allowed to interfere with the education program, enjoyment of the students participating, other individuals or with the performance of employees and officials supervising the school sponsored or approved activity. Individuals, like the student participants, are expected to display mature behavior and sportsmanship. The failure of individuals to do so is not only disruptive but embarrassing to the students, the school district and the entire community.

To protect the rights of students to participate in the education program, or activities without fear of interference, and to permit the employees or sponsors and officials of sponsored or approved activities to perform their duties without interference, the following provisions are in effect:

- Abusive, verbal or physical conduct of individuals directed at students, employees, officials or sponsors of sponsored or approved activities or at other individuals will not be tolerated.
- Verbal or physical conduct of individuals that interferes with the performance of students, employees, officials or sponsors of sponsored or approved activities will not be tolerated.
- The use of vulgar, obscene or demeaning expression directed at students, employees, officials or sponsors participating in an sponsored or approved activity or at other individuals will not be tolerated.

If an individual becomes physically or verbally abusive, uses vulgar, obscene or demeaning expression, or in any way interrupts an activity, the individual may be removed from the event by the individual in charge of the event and the superintendent may recommend the exclusion of the individual from the school buildings or from future sponsored or approved activities. The Northeast Iowa Athletic Conference has approved this policy for conference-wide implementation.

Upon recommendation of the superintendent, the board will cause a notice of exclusion from the school building or from sponsored or approved activities to be sent to the individual involved. The notice will advise the individual of the school district's right to exclude the individual from school buildings, school district activities and events and the duration of the exclusion. If the individual disobeys the school official or district's order, law enforcement authorities may be contacted and asked to remove the individual. If an individual has been notified of exclusion and thereafter tries to enter a school building or attends an sponsored or approved activity, the individual will be advised that his/her attendance will result in prosecution. The school district may obtain a court order for permanent exclusion the school building or from future school sponsored or approved activities.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 279.8; 716.7 (2005).

Cross Reference: 205 Board Member Liability

504 Student Activities
802.6 Vandalism
903 Public Participation in the School District

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