

COMMUNICATION POLICIES

Free Materials Distribution in Schools

The Board reserves the right to refuse distribution of any material by outside individuals or groups to the students of the District.

Advertising in the Schools

No advertising of materials used for commercial purposes shall be permitted in the school buildings or on the grounds of the District without prior approval of the Superintendent. The decision of the Superintendent shall be final.

Advertising in student publications shall be regulated by rules and regulations developed by the Superintendent. Ads concerning drug paraphernalia and any controlled substance are prohibited in any school-sponsored publication or on school property.

Advertising in the student publications may promote products by brand name except that commercial ads promoting the sales of any controlled substance or drug paraphernalia are prohibited.

Distribution or posting of materials that are obscene, libelous or that may inflame or incite students so as to create a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts on school property, or physical disruption to the orderly operation of the District is prohibited.

Dissemination of Religious Materials

Materials that have a religious content may be made available to students during non-instructional time. The District shall impose content neutral, time, place, and manner restrictions on the dissemination of religious materials to ensure that students are aware that the materials are not being endorsed or sponsored by the District.

No student shall be forced to participate in the distribution of any non-school materials in the schools.

Political Campaign Materials

In order to further citizenship training, the Board encourages responsible use of political materials for use in the appropriate classroom setting.

Subject to the approval of the Superintendent, each building Principal shall establish rules and regulations governing the distribution of political campaign materials in the school building during election campaigns in order to afford opportunity for all viewpoints to be considered. No student shall be forced to participate in the distribution or receipt of any political materials.

Special Interest Materials

The Principal of each building shall establish rules and regulations governing the distribution of special interest materials in the building.

No mailing lists of students or employees of the District shall be given to individuals, organizations, or vendors for distributing materials without the written approval of the appropriate records custodian.

Use of Religious Materials

The use of any religious materials may be used in the regular classroom to study the historical or cultural aspects of religion but such material is prohibited if used to indoctrinate the practice of a religion.

Handbooks and Other Publications

In order that pertinent Board policies and administrative rules/regulations or procedures are known by all staff members and students, District administrators and Principals are granted authority to develop and issue staff and student handbooks.

The Superintendent shall review all handbooks prior to publication to ensure that the contents conform completely to Board policy and current law.

Information and Campaigns

All information campaigns of the District shall be under the direction of the Superintendent. District funds shall not be used to provide persuasive information in millage campaigns.

Use of Students

Students shall not be used by the Board in any capacity to implement any information program of the District except that notes, attendance center announcements, or related information may be sent home via students.

Interviews with Students

Any representative of the news media seeking to interview any student during regular school hours must first gain the approval of the building Principal or designated representative.

The building Principal shall regulate all interviews with students so that such interviews do not interfere with the educational activities of the students involved.

Mailing of Notices and Documents to the Public

Recognizing that the public has a right to request, in writing, a renewable 6-month subscription to receive copies of any Board documents that are created, issued or disseminated on a regular basis, such as: Notices of scheduled Board meetings, Board Committee meetings (if such meetings are posted by Board policy) agendas, minutes and newsletters, the Board hereby sets the subscription cost of such items at (\$ Amount) per month. *(Cannot exceed the "reasonable*

cost of printing and [first class] postage” - \$1.00 per month is suggested for most items.)
Printed or electronic news media are specifically exempted from any subscription fee.

Public Review and Inspection of Records

The Superintendent shall establish and publish rules for public inspection and copying of records in accord with the Michigan Freedom of Information Act, and shall serve as FOIA coordinator for the District. The Superintendent shall serve as FOIA coordinator for all records maintained at the central office of the District. Each building Principal shall serve as coordinator for all records maintained at the building level. Inspection of records by the public shall be limited to the regular office hours of the building or office that houses the records. Copies of records, which are not exempt from disclosure, will be available on request.

Appeals

If a request for disclosure of record(s) is denied, procedures for appeal of the decision shall be provided along with the denial.

If a request to inspect or copy a record is denied by a building-level coordinator, the person making the request may appeal the decision within the District by submitting the appeal to the Superintendent in a writing which details the reason(s) for requesting reversal of the denial. The Superintendent shall respond in writing to the request as provided above.

If a request to inspect or copy a record is denied by the Superintendent, the person requesting access may appeal the decision within the District by submitting the appeal in writing to the Board for consideration at the next meeting of the Board. Such request(s) shall be submitted to the Superintendent or Board President for scheduling on the agenda of the next Board meeting.

Computer Records

All new software purchased by the District to maintain records shall incorporate a feature enabling selected data to be exported in a text format for the purpose of complying with requests.

Delays

If the nature of the request requires additional time to access the records or to make a determination on whether the request will be granted, the coordinator shall give written notice to the person making the request extending the period of response. Such an extension shall be for a maximum of ten business days in accord with law.

Denials

The coordinator shall examine each request to determine whether the record requested is exempt from disclosure under the Michigan Freedom of Information Act. If the coordinator determines that the record is exempt from disclosure, he/she shall issue a written denial of the request after consultation with the Superintendent. Such a denial shall be made within five days of receipt of the request or as otherwise provided by law,

and shall include the reason(s) for the denial and the procedures for appeal of the decision to deny the request.

Should the requested record(s) be classified as exempt but contain information, which is not exempt from disclosure, the coordinator shall delete the exempt material and release the remaining information for inspection or copying.

Fees

The Superintendent shall charge a fee to cover actual costs of providing access to and/or copies of public records in accord with law, except that disclosure to any of the following person(s) is in the public interest and shall be exempt from the first (\$ Amount) of fees incurred in a school fiscal year.

- a) A news media organization for dissemination to the public;
- b) A member of the Board;
- c) A minor for use in a school or community organization civics project (ex. Boy Scout Citizenship merit badge); and
- d) [Other person(s) designated by the Board].

[NOTE: The charging of fees for actual costs is optional, but must be included in policy if fees are to be charged. MASB recommends having a fee policy in place to protect the District from large costs associated with complex FOIA requests. Exempting groups from the fee is optional, but if desired must be included in policy and should not be done on a discretionary basis by school personnel. The groups listed are for example purposes only; Districts should consult legal counsel for wording to reflect District intent with regard to exempt groups accurately.]

Fees for responding to a request shall be assessed as follows:

- a) Photocopying charges of seven cents per page, or if the nature of the duplication necessitates duplication by outside sources, the actual cost of employing such outside sources;
- b) Actual mailing costs;
- c) Labor costs incurred in duplication and mailing assessed at the hourly wage of the lowest paid employee of the District capable of retrieving, copying, and mailing the information necessary to comply with the request;
- d) Labor costs for search, examination, review, and deletion or separation of exempt from non-exempt information, at the hourly wage of the lowest paid employee of the District capable of complying with the request. Such labor fees shall be

charged only when the request requires more than \$50 of labor. In such cases, the coordinator shall identify the nature of this unreasonably high labor cost.

Upon receiving a request, the coordinator shall inform the person making the request of the estimated cost for processing the request. If the estimated cost exceeds \$50, the coordinator shall require a good faith deposit of one half of the estimated fee before processing the request.

No charge for the first \$20 of a fee shall be made to an individual who proves indigence or receipt of public assistance. State guidelines for determining free and reduced cost meals to families shall be used as guidelines to determine indigence.

A record of fees paid shall be kept along with each request. A record of fees incurred shall be kept for any person making a request who is exempt from initial fees as a matter of Board policy, though such fees will not be charged except those in excess of the yearly maximum.

Revenue from copying open records shall be deposited monthly in the general fund of the District.

Record Listings

Employees are prohibited from giving or selling lists of any school records to any person except as authorized by law or Board policy.

Requests

Requests to inspect or copy public records must be made in writing (including FAX or e-mail) to the coordinator for the requested record(s) or his/her designee, and shall sufficiently describe the record to enable the coordinator to identify and locate the record. Separate requests shall be made for each record desired. Each coordinator shall file all requests and their dispositions in his/her office and make such reports as are requested by the Superintendent or the Board. Filed requests shall be held for a period of at least one year.

Routine Inquiries

Routine day-to-day inquiries to the District or school for information shall be handled appropriately by District staff. The procedures under this rule shall apply to requests made under the Michigan Freedom of Information Act.

Safety of Records

To ensure the safety and integrity of records, access to records shall be accorded only under the direct supervision of the coordinator or designated District employee. Inspection of record(s) by the public is limited to the regular office hours of the building or office, which houses the record(s). Original school record(s) are not permitted to leave the premises except as required by law or Board policy. Copies of records not exempt from disclosure will be furnished for the appropriate fee.

Subscriptions

Requests for a subscription to documents or records produced regularly by the District must be accompanied by appropriate payment of estimated fees for the period of the subscription or by a credit card record to be used to charge fees on an ongoing basis. Subscriptions may run for up to six months and are renewable.

Reports

The Board may require reports from the staff concerning the operation and needs of the District.

Dissemination

The Board, upon request, shall receive copies of all reports submitted to the Superintendent. Copies of staff reports may be sent to staff members for their confidential use at the discretion of the Superintendent.

Types

The Superintendent shall prepare and submit to the Board an annual report summarizing the operations of the District for the preceding school year. The Superintendent shall present a monthly budget report to the Board.

The Superintendent's annual report shall be submitted to the Board 30 days after the end of the school year. In the event the Superintendent resigns or otherwise leaves the District, he/she shall complete and submit the annual report to the Board prior to final payment of compensation under his/her employment contract.

The Board delegates to the Superintendent the authority to request certain reports from the District's staff concerning the operation of the District or on any subject relating to the educational program of the District.

School Community Relations

Goals and Objectives

Educational public relations are a planned and systematic two-way process of communication between the Board, the District, and its internal and external publics. Its program serves to stimulate a better understanding of the role, objectives, accomplishments, and needs of the organization. Educational public relations are a management function, which interprets public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual organization with the public interest, and executes a program of action to encourage public involvement and to earn public understanding and acceptance.

The Board shall, through its staff:

- a) Keep the patrons of the District regularly informed through available channels of communication on policies, programs, problems, and planning of the school system;

- b) Invite the advice and counsel of the District patrons; and
- c) Solicit input of the District patrons through advisory committees selected from the community and appointed by the Board.

The Board seeks to establish a satisfactory working relationship with all governmental, educational, and private agencies having an interest in the operation of all public schools and whose goals are compatible with those of the District.