

PARTNERSHIPS AND SPONSORSHIPS

Background

Development of alternate sources of funding for the District's educational programs and facilities is a desirable goal of the Mt. Lebanon Board of School Directors. Opportunities are available to enhance or supplement traditional sources of School District revenue through the pursuit of advertising, sponsorships, donations, gifts, partnerships, fundraising, grants and other similar revenue enhancement activities.

Objective

The Mt. Lebanon School District recognizes its responsibility as a provider of public education to protect the welfare of students and maintain the integrity of the learning environment. Since parents entrust their children to the District for education and instruction, it is imperative that students are shielded from undesirable forms of marketing. Yet partnerships and sponsorships based on sound principles can contribute to high quality education. The District's objective is to ensure that educational values are not compromised when schools and individuals/businesses/organizations work together in this manner and participation in such a manner has a clear educational advantage for students.

Definitions

Partnership: An agreement between the District and an organization, wherein the basis and the terms of the relationship are set by the District, and agreed upon by the organization/private entity, or reached mutually. In many instances a partnership is less formal than a contractual relationship and continues for an unspecified length of time. Partners of the District can be individuals, businesses, corporations (profit and nonprofit), trusts, foundations or educational/financial institutions or other organizations/entities interested in aiding the District in meeting its educational mission and goals. Examples of partners include but are not limited to organizations such as the PTA, the Municipality, the Mt. Lebanon Foundation for Education, etc.

Sponsorship: A form of a partnership that links a company or brand to the District for mutually beneficial purposes. Sponsorship is an agreement that is attached to an event or function and is usually limited to the listing of the sponsor's name or logo as opposed to overt promotion of the sponsor's product/service. It is a strategic positioning tool that requires a contractual arrangement between the District and the sponsor in which the District benefits directly from funding or services and the sponsor benefits from marketing its product(s) and services and community goodwill. Tax receipts for charitable purposes are not issued for sponsorships.

Recognition: Any form of acknowledgment provided by the District for a sponsorship or partnership.

Policy

Partnerships/sponsorships are revenue enhancement opportunities encouraged by the Mt. Lebanon School Board. Board approval is required for any partnership/sponsorship that involves revenue in excess of \$10,000.

Partnerships/sponsorships can provide resources to complement public funding for education when they appropriately support the mission and goals of the District. Revenue from partnerships/sponsorships must be used for activities designed to enhance student achievement and/or school-approved student activities; assist in the maintenance of existing District educational and athletic programs and facilities; assist in the development and funding of new educational and athletic programs and facilities; and/or provide scholarships for students participating in athletic, academic and activity programs who demonstrate merit or financial need.

The District has the exclusive discretion to determine whether to pursue, accept or decline any partnership or sponsorship. The factors to be considered by the District include, but are not limited to:

- The extent to which a partnership/sponsorship limits or restrains the District's discretion or its ability to pursue other opportunities;
- The duration of the arrangement or agreement and the District's ability/discretion to terminate the arrangement/agreement;
- The extent to which the partnership/sponsorship imposes any obligation on the District, either presently or in the future, financial or otherwise and whether the opportunity is subject to conditions acceptable to the District;
- The extent to which the partnership/sponsorship constitutes a conflict of interest or creates the appearance of or potential for a conflict of interest;
- The extent to which the partnership/sponsorship affects the appearance of District property or disrupts the operation of the District; and
- The extent to which the partnership/sponsorship interjects advertising or commercialism into the schools or classrooms.

Mutually beneficial partnerships with individuals, businesses, corporations (profit and nonprofit), trusts, foundations, educational and financial institutions, etc., will undergo an evaluation procedure to assess the effectiveness of that particular partnership/sponsorship. The Board designates the Superintendent or his/her designee to investigate, evaluate and/or consider potential sponsorships or partnerships. The Superintendent may refer any partnership/sponsorship for approval to the Board.

Partnerships/sponsorships must meet the needs and/or desires of the District and its students. They must be consistent with codes of conduct and District policies, including those prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, age or mental/physical disability, and must be age-appropriate for the students involved. Partnerships/sponsorships that model and promote positive values for students through proactive educational messages such as those that encourage student achievement and high standards of personal conduct are encouraged by the District.

In general, partnerships/sponsorships cannot:

- Promote hostility, disorder or violence;
- Promote the use of illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco or weapons;
- Attack ethnic, racial or religious groups;
- Discriminate, demean, harass or ridicule any person or groups of persons;
- Be libelous;
- Inhibit the functioning of the school and/or District;
- Override or adversely affect the school or District identity;
- Promote, favor or oppose the candidacy of any candidate for election, adoption of any bond issue, referendum or public question submitted at any general, county, municipal or school election;
- Be obscene or pornographic or otherwise inappropriate for the educational setting, as determined by the District;
- Promote any religious or political organization; and
- Use the District logo without prior approval of the Superintendent.

The District is interested in sponsorships and partnerships that reflect positively on the District. The District will avoid partnerships or sponsorships with individuals or organizations that negatively represent or portray public education; are inconsistent with other District policies or with any applicable law; are related to tobacco, illegal drugs, alcohol or criminal activity; have products/services that are incompatible with a child's well-being or negatively impact school programs and services; or are otherwise objectionable as determined by the District in its exclusive discretion.

Sponsorship (on-air acknowledgement of contributions) is permitted in venues where advertising is prohibited. Pursuant to the Communications Act, advertisements are prohibited; however, sponsorship announcements are permitted. Sponsorship agreements can be developed for broadcast announcement over the Internet and digital broadcasting.

Sponsorship is permitted on District websites provided that the website does not link to the sponsor site and there is a separation page between the two sites. The name and/or logo of the sponsor are permitted to be listed.

The District will closely scrutinize any proposed partner or sponsor that requires an exclusivity arrangement and contracts with exclusivity clauses will be considered only after alternatives have been investigated. All such contracts shall include provisions allowing the District to terminate the contract if it is determined that it will have an adverse impact on implementation of curriculum or the educational experience of students.

All agreements must be in writing and the goals, objectives, benefits, and other terms and conditions of the relationships must be stated clearly at the outset. Additionally, the roles and responsibilities of all parties (students, teachers, parents, schools, the District as well as sponsors and partners) must be clearly defined and resources provided by all parties must be clearly described.

Records of the operational activities of the relationship must be maintained and performance will be reviewed regularly to ensure ongoing benefits. Sponsorships should be relatively short term (one school year at a time), be renewable if desired and have a provision for cancellation and/or

re-negotiation at the sole discretion of the District. A summary of sponsorships should be prepared by the Superintendent or his/her designee for the Board at the end of each school year.

The District does not permit business relationships that use students to promote a product, service, company or industry. However, if athletic uniforms and equipment are sponsored, the name or logo of the sponsor may be displayed on the uniform or equipment.

All sponsor logos appearing on District property, including logos on materials, supplies, or equipment purchased, rented, or leased by or donated to the District, shall be for product or sponsor identification purposes only.

Partner and Sponsor Recognition

It is appropriate that sponsors and partners receive recognition for their support. By way of example, recognition can be in the form of a mention in the school newsletter, a news release, or letter to the sponsor/partner involved. In some cases, recognition in the form of a temporary display of the logo of a sponsor may be appropriate. This could include a sign or banner at an event or the placement of a suitable plaque or nameplate in the case of significant contributions. The purpose of the display should be for sponsor or partner identification only.

The Superintendent or his/her designee must consider the appropriateness of the type of recognition at the schools as well as the quantity, location, dimensions, and duration of displays of corporate identifiers placed in the schools. Banners or other displays should also indicate the context for the appearance of the logo (e.g., banners at school tournaments could indicate that the tournament has been sponsored by the organizations whose logo appear, as opposed to simply displaying a corporate logo with no other accompanying information.)

Administrative Responsibility

It shall be the responsibility of the Administration to implement and enforce this policy, and to develop Administrative procedures for implementation or enforcement where necessary. It shall also be the responsibility of the Administration to develop and maintain a set of guidelines for sponsorship opportunities within the District titled Sponsorship Opportunities Guidelines.

Communication

This Policy shall be communicated to:

1. District Staff
2. The Mt. Lebanon Community
3. Donors and Prospective Donors

Adopted July 21, 2008
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