

## **ADVERTISING**

### **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 school-business advertising relationships 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 such relationships have a clear educational advantage for students.

### **Definitions**

*Advertising:* An oral, written or graphic statement, made by the producer, manufacturer, or seller of products, equipment, or services, which intends to arouse a desire in the public to buy, use, or patronize the product, equipment, or services. Advertisements may be attached to a specific event but more commonly are long-term placements on property. Advertising is not the sale of goods/services to the District or the schools for market value where items have brand names, trademarks, logos or tags for product/service identification.

*Sponsored Educational Materials:* Educational materials and programs developed and/or funded by commercial enterprises, trade or industry organizations, or non-profit organizations with significant corporate funding whose aim is to increase the sales of products or services of the funding industry. These materials are intended for use or distribution at schools, and can be intended for use as either primary or supplemental curriculum.

### **Policy**

Advertising is a source of revenue enhancement that is accepted by the Mt. Lebanon School District under limited circumstances. It is, however, the policy of the District that most facilities, the staff or the students of the District shall not be used to promote commercial, cultural, organizational or other non-school interests.

Revenue from advertisements shall 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 acceptance of advertisements must be judged by the fact that our schools are tax-supported public institutions and the District has a duty to protect students and their families from exploitation by non-school interests. The District has the exclusive discretion to determine whether to pursue, accept or decline any advertising. The factors to be considered by the District include, but are not limited to:

- The extent to which such advertising 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 advertising 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 advertising constitutes a conflict of interest or creates the appearance of or potential for a conflict of interest;
- The extent to which advertising affects the appearance of District property or disrupts the operation of the District; and
- The extent to which advertising interjects commercialism into the schools or classrooms.

The Board designates the Superintendent or his/her designee to investigate, evaluate and/or consider potential advertising opportunities. A final report of findings and recommendations must be made to the Board for advertising opportunities that represent revenues in excess of \$10,000.

Preferred advertisements include messages that encourage student achievement and the establishment of high standards of personal conduct.

Acceptable advertising must meet the needs and/or desires of the District and its students. Advertisements 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.

Because the District has a duty to protect students' privacy and personal information, students and schools shall not be required to complete questionnaires or surveys to provide marketing information to vendors, or distribute to vendors any personal student information, including but

not limited to names, addresses and telephone numbers, except as may be required by law. No canvassing of students for commercial purposes is allowed on school property.

In general, advertisements 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; or
- Use the District logo without prior approval of the Superintendent.

Advertisements will not be permitted in classrooms unless in the forms noted below. If advertising is included in the curriculum, such as in commercially sponsored or provided material or programs, the Superintendent retains discretion over how or whether to use the material or program. The District shall not purchase or use any sponsored educational materials that contain promotional information about a product, service, company, or industry that is inappropriate to the lesson being taught in the context of the curriculum.

Students may be exposed to advertising in class or on school property when:

- Advertisements are connected with courses of study which have specific lessons related to advertising within curriculum administration guidelines.
- Advertisements are sold in publications such as yearbooks, school newspapers, newsletters, brochures, handbooks and event programs.
- A student opts to participate in an essay, art, science or similar contest sponsored by an outside interest. Such activities must parallel the curriculum and contribute to the educational program.
- Advertisements are used in supplementary classroom and library materials, such as newspapers, magazines, television, the internet and similar media, where they are used for educational purposes.
- Information is distributed about educational activities or opportunities of interest to students and others in the school community. This information may include but is not limited to flyers and brochures regarding sports camps, music lessons, tutors, daycares, performances or events. These advertisements can be posted or placed in an area accessible to students and parents provided that the school principal or designee reviews the material in advance.
- Advertisements are placed on certain athletic facilities.

It is the policy of the District that advertising can be placed on the following athletic facilities: the high school main gym, the stadium and high school ball fields. No advertising can be placed on any other District athletic facilities. Sponsors and/or partners are permitted to be acknowledged or placed on the permitted athletic facilities. Signs, banners and other posted material must adhere to the following:

1. Any signs posted at outdoor facilities must be on the inside of the fence, and only at locations approved by the District. The signs must face toward the athletic field, and must not extend beyond the height, length or width of the existing fences.
2. The partner/sponsor that erects the sign bears full responsibility for all costs and expenses associated with the procurement, erection, maintenance and removal of the sign(s) and shall indemnify and hold the District harmless from any and all claims for injuries arising out of the presence of said sign on District property. All signs must be installed according to District standards and be maintained in good condition meeting these standards as established/determined by the Board. If any sign becomes damaged or requires repair for any reason, it is the sole and exclusive responsibility of the partner/sponsor that erects the sign to repair or remove it. In the event that the District becomes aware of a sign requiring repair or removal, the District shall notify the responsible organization. The responsible partner/sponsor must repair or remove the sign within 72 hours of notification. If the partner/sponsor does not repair or remove the sign as required, the District will remove the sign and bill the partner/sponsor.
3. The District may limit the total number of signs that may be erected, so as to avoid excessive commercialization at a venue and/or minimize distractions for athletes and spectators who use the facility for athletic events.
4. The District may limit the period of time during the year when advertising signs may be posted. If the signs are not removed in a timely fashion by the responsible organization, the District will remove the signs.
5. Signs shall include a statement that the partnership/sponsorship should not be construed as an endorsement by the District of the product or service being highlighted.
6. The responsible organization agrees that, in all contracts into which it enters into with the District for signs, the responsible organization will include a provision in the contract whereby the organization releases the District from any and all liability in any cause of action that may arise as the result of the erection or removal of the advertising signs.
7. To further the purposes of this policy, the District shall utilize an appropriate contract with advertisers/organizations which shall be developed by the District's Solicitor.

The District does not permit advertising activity that uses students to promote a product, service, or event that is being promoted for private gain. Athletic uniforms and equipment may be sponsored by an organization but may not contain advertising. If sponsored, athletic uniforms and equipment can display only the name or logo of the sponsor.

Distribution of advertising through students of a school is not permitted, unless approved by the Superintendent as being of educational value to the students or to the local community. Approved materials can be made available to be picked up at schools. Parents can be notified about these items via the school newsletter or website. The District delivery system cannot be used for the distribution of advertising matter including, but not limited to circulars, posters, lists and catalogues unless approved in advance by the Superintendent.

Under the Communications Act, the District cannot broadcast advertisements but can broadcast sponsorship announcements.

Subject to the provisions of this policy regarding, inter alia, content and appearance, advertising is permitted in or on the vehicles owned by the District or operated by contracted transportation providers.

The District will not permit exploitation of students as money collectors, ticket vendors, organization representatives, or promoters of outside organizations. Any deviation from this policy must be accompanied by written permission from the Superintendent. Students who undertake to distribute brochures or other advertising material for profit-making organizations will not be permitted to distribute such material on school property, as such promotional material, taken home by other students, is assumed by parents to have been endorsed by the District.

Advertisements on school bulletin boards or individual school websites are reviewed, approved and monitored by the building principal, subject to the parameters as defined in this policy. School-related organizations, e.g., PTA, and non-profit organizations that offer services or programs of educational value to students are permitted to publicize their activities in schools to disseminate information such as membership, activities, schedules and events. Organizations not permitted to publicize their activities in schools are usually commercial profit-making organizations that link an educational activity to the advertising of services or products.

Contracts with advertisers may be subject to any District competitive procurement requirements. Such contracts with exclusivity clauses will be considered only after alternatives have been investigated. These contracts shall include provisions allowing the District (in its sole discretion) 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.

### **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 advertising and sponsorship opportunities within the District titled Sponsorship Opportunities Guidelines.

**Communication**

This Policy shall be communicated to:

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

Adopted June 16, 2008  
Revised April 16, 2012  
Revised May 19, 2014