

# 2000 SCHOOL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS



## 2010 Responsibilities to the School Community

The ultimate goal of school/community relations is to improve the quality of education for all children. In order to achieve this goal, and to evaluate progress toward it, the Board establishes the following objectives:

1. To develop public understanding of all aspects of school operation; to ascertain public attitudes toward issues in education; and to discover the public's aspirations for the education of their children.
2. To secure adequate financial support for a sound educational program.
3. To help citizens feel a direct responsibility for the quality of education provided by their schools.
4. To earn the good will, respect, and confidence of the public with regard to school staff and services.
5. To foster public understanding of the need for constructive change, and solicit public advice on how we can achieve our educational goals.
6. To involve citizens in the work of the schools and the solving of educational problems.
7. To promote a genuine spirit of cooperation between the school and the community and to set up channels for sharing the leadership in improving community life.

Achieving these objectives requires that the Board and staff, individually and collectively, express positive attitudes toward the schools in their daily contacts with parents, people of the community, and one another; make systematic, honest, and continuing efforts to discover what the public thinks and what citizens want to know, and to interpret school programs, problems, and accomplishments; develop an active partnership with the community in working toward improvement of the educational program; and take an active interest in the needs of the total community to find ways to make the community a better place in which to live.

## 2020 Parent Organizations

The Board recognizes that parents are a valuable source of interest and support in the public schools. The School Corporation views parent organizations as a means of promoting a finer educational program by achieving better understanding among students, parents, teachers, and administrators. The School Corporation will provide every encouragement to the maintenance of enthusiastic and industrious parent organizations.

## 2030 School Volunteers

Citizens, who voluntarily contribute their time and talents to the improvement and enrichment of the public schools, instructional and other programs are valuable assets. The Board encourages constructive participation of groups and individuals in local schools and in central and area offices to perform appropriate tasks during and after school hours under the direction and supervision of professional personnel. Whenever possible, community volunteers will be recruited from the neighborhood served by the school in which they work.

Recruitment, utilization, coordination and training of volunteers shall be the responsibility of the school

administration and shall be carried out as directed or delegated by the Superintendent. Every effort should be made to utilize volunteer resources in a manner that will ensure maximum contribution to the welfare and educational growth of pupils.

All chaperones/volunteers must complete a Chaperone/Volunteer Form which can be obtained at your child's school prior to chaperoning or volunteering.

## **2035 School or Classroom Visits**

Parents, patrons, and other guests are welcome to visit our schools. Visitors must proceed immediately to the School office and check-in with the building principal or building secretary. As a courtesy to our teachers and to avoid unnecessary interruptions to instructional time, persons wanting to visit a class in session should receive approval from the principal unless prior arrangements have been coordinated with the teacher. If it is not possible to accommodate a particular visit, arrangements may be made to reschedule the visit at a mutually agreeable time.

## **2040 Public Complaints/Appeal Procedures**

The Board recognizes that situations may arise in the operation of the system that are of concern to parents or the public. Such concerns are best dealt with through communication with appropriate staff members and officers of the system, such as the faculty, the principals, the central office, and the Board.

The following guidelines are suggested as the proper procedure to be followed by persons with questions or complaints:

1. Matters concerning individual students should first be addressed to the teacher, sponsor, bus driver, or coach.
2. Unsettled matters from (1) above or problems and questions concerning individual schools should be directed to the appropriate building level administrator.
3. Unsettled matters from (2) above should be directed to the building principal.
4. Unsettled matters from (3) above, problems and questions concerning the school district in general, or the interpretation of school board policies should be directed to the Superintendent.
5. If the matter cannot be settled satisfactorily by the Superintendent, it may be appealed to the Board by submitting a written request to the Board president.
6. Board Members have an obligation to listen to concerns from the public. However, Board Members are obligated to advise patrons to handle concerns in accordance with steps 1-5 above. Neither the Board as a whole nor any individual member shall officially consider communications, complaints, or appeals from parents or patrons until they have first been referred to the Superintendent.
7. After reviewing information submitted by the Superintendent in such an event, the Board may, if appropriate, consider the appeal at a regular meeting or an executive session, depending upon the nature of the matter.

## **2050 Access to Public Records**

1. To ensure a smooth implementation of the Indiana Access to Public Records Act, the Superintendent shall be designated as the person responsible for public records release decisions and shall be referred to as the "Records Access Officer."
2. Requests shall be received during normal business hours and must identify, on forms provided

by the School Corporation, the record for which disclosure is sought. Any person(s) who orally requests public records should be informed that such requests must be made, in writing, on the appropriate forms provided by the School Corporation.

3. Records may be inspected only at the office or location where they are regularly maintained.
4. The Records Access Officer or his/her designee must respond, in writing, to a hand-delivered written request within 24 business hours after such request is received. If such request is received on a Friday or on a day preceding a legal holiday, the person responsible for release decisions shall have until the same hour on the next business day to respond.
5. If a written request is received by the School Corporation by facsimile, mail, or electronic mail, the Records Access Officer or his/her designee must respond to the request, in writing, within 7 calendar days after the request was received.
6. The substance of the written response should include any statements similar to those set forth below that apply to a particular request:
  1. a) A statement identifying the public records maintained by the School Corporation that will be provided in response to the request and the estimated date the records will be produced.
  - b) A statement indicating: (i) that the record request is denied, in whole or in part, (ii) that the record(s) will be withheld because the record is confidential or non-disclosable, (iii) the statutory authority for the statement that the record is confidential or otherwise non-disclosable, and (iv) the name and title or position of the person responsible for the denial.
  - c) A statement that the School Corporation does not have a record that is responsive to the record request.
  - d) A statement that the School Corporation may have records responsive to the request and is in the process of reviewing and/or retrieving files in response to same.
  - e) A statement that an additional response will be provided on or before a specific date to advise the requestor of the School Corporation's progress on the request.
7. If the School Corporation is denying access to any or all of the requested public records, the response must include the name and title or position of the person responsible for the denial.
8. Requests by mail for copies of records may be addressed to the Records Access Officer.
9. The requestor will be charged applicable copying fees and other fees and/or costs as prescribed by statute. Such fees and/or costs must be paid in advance of the requestor receiving any disclosable records.
10. The Records Access Officer shall be guided by: (i) the Indiana Access to Public Records Act and amendments, if any, (ii) any other applicable state and/or federal laws regarding privacy, confidentiality, and disclosure requirements of certain public records, and (iii) this policy, which excludes certain records from disclosure.
11. The School Corporation will not create or provide lists of names and addresses unless it is required to publish such lists and disseminate them pursuant to applicable law.
12. The Board exempts the following public records from disclosure (unless access to the records is specifically required by state or federal statute or is ordered by a court under the rules of discovery):
  - a) Those declared confidential by state statute.
  - b) Those declared confidential by rule adopted by a public agency under specific

authority to classify public records as confidential granted to the public agency by statute.

- c) Those required to be kept confidential by federal law.
- d) Confidential financial information obtained, upon request, from a person (excluding information that is filed with or received by a public agency pursuant to state statute).
- e) Records containing information concerning research including research conducted under the auspices of an institution of higher learning.
- f) Grade transcripts and license examination scores obtained as a part of a licensure process.
- g) Documents made confidential by rules adopted by the Indiana Supreme Court.
- h) Patient medical records and charts created by a health care provider unless the patient provides written consent for the record's disclosure.
- i) Application information declared confidential by the Twenty-First Century research and technology board.
- j) Investigatory records of law enforcement agencies (except certain records that must be made available for inspection and copying).
- k) The work product of attorneys representing the School Corporation, Board Members, or any employee, including correspondence between officials of the School Corporation and its attorney which contain the attorney's opinion, theories, and/or conclusions. Work product also includes the attorney's notes and statements taken from potential witnesses.
- l) Test questions, scoring keys, and other examination data used in administering a licensing examination, examination for employment, or academic examination before the examination is given or if it is to be given again.
- m) Scores of tests if the person is identified by name and has not consented to the release of the scores.
- n) Intra-agency or inter-agency advisory or deliberative materials that express opinions or are of a speculative nature, and are used for decision-making.
- o) Diaries, journals, or other personal notes serving as the functional equivalent of a diary or journal.
- p) Personnel files of public employees, except for:
  - (1) the name, compensation, job title, business address, business telephone number, job description, education and training background, previous work experience, or dates of first and last employment of present or former officers or employee of the agency.
  - (2) information relating to the status of any formal charges against the employee; and
  - (3) information concerning disciplinary actions in which final action has been taken and that resulted in the employee being disciplined or discharged.
- q) Administrative or technical information that would jeopardize a record-keeping or security system.
- r) Computer programs, computer codes, computer filing systems, and other software that are owned by the public agency or entrusted to it.
- s) Records specifically prepared for discussion, or developed during discussion in an executive session (except the information required to be available for inspection and copying under subparagraph (p)).

- t) The identity of a donor or a gift made to a public agency if the donor requires nondisclosure of his identity as a condition of making the gift or a member of the donor's family requests non-disclosure after the gift is made.
- u) School safety and security measures, plans, and systems, including emergency preparedness plans.
- v) Any other records which current or future legislation allows a public agency to exempt. Further action by the Board is unnecessary to exempt such records.

## **2060 Sales/Fundraising**

1. Salesmen or business agents shall not be permitted to solicit or interview students or school employees on the school premises without the approval of the building principal and/or Superintendent.
2. The sale of tickets, merchandise, or the collection of money in the schools for any activities or services other than those sponsored by the schools shall not be permitted except by approval of the building principal.
3. The sale of supplies in the classroom as a fund-raising project for student activities is prohibited. This does not preclude the operation of a school store under the control and supervision of the principal or the nonprofit sale of industrial art (arts, crafts, etc.) supplies, which are used by pupils in making articles that become the individual's property.
4. Collecting monies, which may take the time of students or teachers during the school day, is expressly prohibited unless the monies collected represent regular fees, payment for books or instructional materials that have been approved, payment for school lunches, insurance premiums, or other monies that will directly benefit the school or its students.
5. The Superintendent must approve all fund solicitations and major money-raising activities by student groups or school-connected adult groups that solicit funds. By September 1st of each year, each principal shall submit a plan of such activities for the entire year for the school, and such annual plans shall be reviewed by the Superintendent in an effort to ensure fairness and to avoid conflicting events, overlapping dates, etc. Emergency requests shall be handled in the same manner.
6. All non-MSDWC school groups must be properly organized (i.e. charter, bylaws), file for tax exempt status with the IRS, and follow appropriate state and federal guidelines.

## **2070 Dissemination of Materials**

It is the intent of this policy to prevent businesses, groups, or organizations from using the captive audience of public school students to promote or advertise for profit or to expound principles or philosophies of a religious nature.

1. School related memoranda and correspondence or materials of a non-commercial nature that supplement or aid instruction, as well as information about programs and activities of educational institutions or nonprofit youth serving organizations in the community, may be distributed with the approval of the Superintendent.
2. Printed material used as commercial or business advertising shall not be distributed to students or staff on the school premises without the approval of the Superintendent.
3. Literature expounding philosophies or principles of an organization, individual, or group of individuals with ideas of a religious nature shall not be distributed to students or staff on the school premises without the approval of the building principal and Superintendent.
4. Printed materials of a subversive nature shall not be distributed to students or staff on the

school premises.

5. Materials not classified in items 1-4 shall be independently evaluated by the building principal and Superintendent, who shall then make appropriate decisions pertaining to same.

## **2080 Political Advertising**

Advertisements for political offices or other political purposes shall not be permitted in any publications sponsored by the School Corporation nor shall any political advertisements be distributed on any school premises except as prescribed by applicable law regarding the use of school facilities for polling purposes. Exceptions shall be allowed when such advertisements are used for instructional purposes in appropriate classroom activities.

## **2090 Gifts and Contributions**

The administration is authorized to accept gifts of appropriate instructional equipment, materials, or contributions of money for same from the Community Foundation of Wabash County or other third parties. Any gift donated by classes or student groups must have the approval of the building principal, and students should not be assessed for the purpose of providing a gift to the school.

Prior to acceptance, all donations shall be reviewed by the Superintendent and/or Assistant Superintendent, who shall ensure the donation:

1. Has a purpose consistent with the purposes of the School Corporation.
2. Places no restrictions on the school program.
3. Does not require the endorsement of a business product.
4. Is not in conflict with policies or actions of the Board and not otherwise contrary to applicable law.
5. Becomes the property of the School Corporation.

## **2095 Grants**

The Board must approve all grants to the School Corporation. Prior to an employee submitting a proposal, the proposal shall be reviewed and approved by the Chief Academic Officer (or designee), who shall ensure that the grant:

1. Is consistent with the curriculum and instructional purposes of the School Corporation.
2. Places no unreasonable restrictions on the school program.

## **2100 Conduct on School Premises**

It is the desire of the Board of School Trustees for the Metropolitan School District of Wabash County to provide a meaningful and enriching educational experience for students. Part of this experience includes after school activities for the benefit of students, their friends and relatives. It is both necessary and appropriate for the School Board to maintain control of school property in order to protect and serve the community. This requires all individuals to conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner, when attending school activities or otherwise using the school premises.

Being under the influence of, using or possessing alcoholic beverages and/or controlled substances on school premises is strictly prohibited, with the exception of drugs prescribed by a doctor. Conduct on school premises, which causes substantial disruption or materially interferes in any manner with school purposes, is prohibited. Violence, loitering or engaging in criminal activity of any kind will not be tolerated, and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Motor vehicles in school parking lots must be driven in a safe manner, and at a safe rate of speed. Driving in excess of posted speeds, drag racing or engaging in any other reckless or hazardous activity with a motor vehicle which endangers the health and safety of others, is prohibited. All applicable rules of the road must be respected when motor vehicles are used in school parking lots.

In order to discourage inappropriate activities, individuals are not permitted on school premises after 11:00 p.m. and before 5:00 a.m. unless they are present in connection with a recognized school activity, or they otherwise have permission from an appropriate school official.

All persons witnessing a violation of the above-described policy are encouraged to notify the proper school and/or legal authorities. To the fullest extent possible, the county police department and other legal authorities are requested, and are hereby authorized, to assist with and enforce this policy.

## **2110 School Delays and Cancellations**

The following procedures shall apply to student activities, events, and programs on days when school is delayed, dismissed, or cancelled:

### Morning Delay or Early Dismissal

Students should not arrive at school prior to the announced beginning of the school day.

If schools are dismissed early, all afternoon student activities shall be cancelled and all students dismissed at the announced time.

It is the intent of this policy that students not be requested to arrive or remain beyond the regular hours of school, except in emergency situations involving weather conditions or the safety of students. In such instances, the building principal shall be informed immediately of such circumstances.

### School Day Events -- School Cancelled

If school is cancelled for the day, all student activities or programs scheduled for that day shall be cancelled. The building principal and the Superintendent shall authorize any exception to this policy, when in their judgment, emergency or special circumstances warrant such an exception.

If an exception is authorized, activities shall be scheduled after 12:00 pm. All student participation on such days shall be considered voluntary.

### Week Night Events -- School Cancelled

In the event that school is cancelled for the day, decisions regarding evening extracurricular activities shall be made by involved school officials before 3:00 p.m.

### Saturday Events -- School Cancelled Friday

If schools are closed on Friday, all elementary, middle school, and high school activities or events scheduled for the following Saturday must be approved by the respective building principal prior to continuing with the event. The principal or his designee shall determine and authorize the use of school facilities for non-school events on such days.

## **2120 Use of School Facilities**

The public-school buildings are provided primarily for the regular program of M.S.D. Wabash County and they must be maintained at all times in a satisfactory manner for this essential purpose. The public schools ought also to serve as a community center for the promotion of the cultural and educational life of the community.

In furtherance of this purpose, the use of the public-school facilities outside of school hours may be granted for worthwhile religious, educational, recreational, civic, and cultural activities as freely as is consistent with the statutes, the primary purposes of the schools, and the rules and regulations of the Board of School Trustees. Such activities shall be sponsored by a responsible citizen or group of responsible citizens and pertain to the general welfare of the community.

Rules, regulations, and procedures for the use of school facilities, are contained in the Use of School Facilities contract.

## **2130 School District Calendar**

School calendars for the succeeding school year will be adopted annually. The Board will consider the following parameters as the basis for its calendar adoption decision.

### Parameters

1. Aligning with area school districts for instructional purposes
2. Allowing for teacher association input
3. Balancing the number of days each quarter as much as possible
4. Providing a consistent school calendar formation annually
5. Maximizing instructional time before high stakes exams
6. Providing students early opportunities for summer internships/jobs
7. Complying with state statute which dictates a minimum of 180 student days per academic year