

Community Relations

Connection with the Community

The Superintendent is the District's chief spokesperson and shall plan and implement a District public relations program which will:

- Develop community understanding of school operation.
- Gather community attitudes and desires for the District.
- Secure adequate financial support for a sound educational program.
- Help the community feel a more direct responsibility for the quality of education provided by their schools.
- Earn the community's good will, respect, and confidence.
- Promote a genuine spirit of cooperation between the school and the community.
- Keep the news media provided with accurate information.

The public relations program should include:

1. Regular news releases concerning District programs, policies, and activities, which will be sent to the news media;
2. News conferences and interviews, as requested or needed. Individuals may speak for the District only with prior approval from the Superintendent;
3. Publications having a high quality of editorial content and effective format. All publications shall identify the District, school, department, or classroom and shall include the name of the Superintendent, the Building Principal, and/or the author and the publication date; and
4. Other efforts that highlight the District's programs and activities.

CROSS REFERENCE: 2:110 (Qualifications, Term, and Duties of Board Officers)

ADOPTED: **June 12, 2006 (Effective July 1, 2006)**

AMENDED: **August 8, 2011 (Effective September 1, 2011)**

Community Relations

Community Use of School Facilities

School facilities are available to community organizations during non-school hours when such use does not: (1) interfere with any school function or affect the safety of students or employees, or (2) affect the property or liability of the School District. The use of school facilities for school purposes has precedence over all other uses. The District reserves the right to cancel previously scheduled use of facilities by community organizations and other groups. The use of school facilities requires the prior approval of the Superintendent or designee and is subject to applicable procedures.

Persons on school premises must abide by the District's conduct rules at all times.

Student groups, school-related organizations, government agencies, and non-profit organizations are granted use of school facilities at no costs during regularly staffed hours. Fees and costs shall apply during non-regularly staffed hours and to other organizations granted use of facilities at any time. A fee schedule and other terms of use shall be prepared by the Superintendent and be subject to annual approval by the School Board.

LEGAL REFERENCE: 20 U.S.C. §7905.
10 ILCS 5/19-2.2.
105 ILCS 5/10-20.40, 5/10-22.10, and 5/29-3.5.
Good News Club v. Milford Central School, 121 S.Ct. 2093 (2001).
Lamb's Chapel v. Center Moriches Union Free School District, 113 S.Ct. 2141 (1993).
Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of Univ. of Va., 515 U.S. 819 (1995).

CROSS REFERENCE: 7:330 (Student Use of Building – Equal Access)
8:25 (Advertising and Distributing Materials in Schools Provided by Non-School Related Entities)
8:30 (Visitors to and Conduct on School Property)

ADOPTED: **June 12, 2006 (Effective July 1, 2006)**

AMENDED: **February 11, 2008 (Effective March 1, 2008)**

AMENDED: **August 12, 2013 (Effective September 1, 2013)**

Community Relations

Advertising and Distributing Materials in Schools Provided by Non-School Related Entities

No material or literature shall be posted or distributed that would: (1) disrupt the educational process, (2) violate the rights or invade the privacy of others, (3) infringe on a trademark or copyright, or (4) be defamatory, obscene, vulgar, or indecent. No material, literature, or advertisement shall be posted or distributed without advance approval as described in this policy.

Community, Educational, Charitable, or Recreational Organizations

Community, educational, charitable, recreational, or similar groups may, under procedures established by the Superintendent, advertise events pertinent to students' interests or involvement. All advertisements must (1) be student-oriented, (2) prominently display the sponsoring organization's name, and (3) be approved in advance by the Superintendent or designee. The District reserves the right to decide where and when any advertisement or flyer is distributed, displayed, or posted.

Commercial Companies and Political Candidates or Parties

Commercial companies may purchase space for their advertisements in or on: (1) athletic field fences; (2) athletic, theater, or music programs; (3) student yearbooks; (4) scoreboards; or (5) other appropriate locations. The advertisements must be consistent with this policy and its implementing procedures and be appropriate for display in a school context. Prior approval from the Board is needed for advertisements on athletic fields, scoreboards, or other building locations. Prior approval is needed from the Superintendent or designee for advertisements on athletic, theater, or music programs; student yearbooks, and any commercial material related to graduation, class pictures, or class rings.

No individual or entity may advertise or promote its interests by using the names or pictures of the School District, any District school or facility, staff members, or students, except as authorized by and consistent with administrative procedures and approved by the Board.

Material from candidates and political parties will not be accepted for posting or distribution, except when used as part of the curriculum.

LEGAL REFERENCE: Berger v. Rensselaer Central School Corp., 982 F.2d 1160 (7th Cir. 1993), *cert. denied*, 113 S.Ct. 2344 (1993).
DiLoreto v. Downey Unified School Dist., 196 F.3d 958 (9th Cir. 1999).
Hedges v. Wauconda Community Unit School Dist. No. 18, 9 F.3d 5 (7th Cir. 1993).
Lamb's Chapel v. Center Moriches Union Free School District, 113 S.Ct. 2141 (1993).
Sherman v. Community Consolidated School Dist. 21, 8 F.3d 1160 (7th Cir. 1993), *cert. denied*, 114 S.Ct. 2109 (1994).
Victory Through Jesus Sports Ministry v. Lee's Summit R-7 Sch. Dist., 640 F.3d 329 (8th Cir. 2011), *cert. denied*, 132 S.Ct. 592 (2011).

CROSS REFERENCE: 7:325 (Student Fund-Raising Activities)
 7:330 (Student Use of Building – Equal Access)

ADOPTED: **June 12, 2006 (Effective July 1, 2006)**

AMENDED: **August 11, 2008 (Effective September 1, 2008)**

AMENDED: **August 12, 2013 (Effective September 1, 2013)**

Community Relations

Visitors to and Conduct on School Property

The following definitions apply to this policy:

School property - District and school buildings, grounds, parking areas; vehicles used for school purposes; and any location used for a School Board meeting, school athletic event, or other school-sponsored event.

Visitor – Any person other than an enrolled student or District employee.

All visitors to school property are required to report to the Building Principal's office and receive permission to remain on school property. All visitors must sign a visitors' log, show identification, and wear a visitor's badge. When leaving the school, visitors must return their badge. On those occasions when large groups of parents and friends are invited onto school property, visitors are not required to sign in but must follow school officials' instructions. Persons on school property without permission will be directed to leave and may be subject to criminal prosecution. The Superintendent or designee may post certain school facilities for the community's use on non-school days when they are not being used for school purposes.

Except as provided in the next paragraph, any person wishing to confer with a staff member should contact that staff member by telephone or email to make an appointment. Conferences with teachers are held, to the extent possible, outside school hours or during the teacher's conference/preparation period.

Requests to access a school building, facility, and/or educational program, or to interview personnel or a student for purposes of assessing the student's special education needs, should be made at the appropriate building. Access shall be facilitated according to guidelines from the Superintendent or designee.

The School District expects mutual respect, civility, and orderly conduct among all people on school property or at a school event. No person on school property or at a school event (including visitors, students, and employees) shall perform any of the following acts:

1. Strike, injure, threaten, harass, or intimidate a staff member, a Board member, sports official or coach, or any other person.
2. Behave in an unsportsmanlike manner, or use vulgar or obscene language.
3. Unless specifically permitted by State law, possess a weapon, any object that can reasonably be considered a weapon or looks like a weapon, or any dangerous device.
4. Damage or threaten to damage another's property.
5. Damage or deface school property.
6. Violate any Illinois law, or town or county ordinance.
7. Smoke or otherwise use tobacco products.
8. Consume, possess, distribute, or be under the influence of an alcoholic beverage or illegal drug.
9. Use or possess medical cannabis.
10. Impede, delay, disrupt, or otherwise interfere with any school activity or function (including using cellular phones in a disruptive manner).
11. Enter upon any portion of school premises at any time for purposes other than those that are lawful and authorized by the Board.
12. Operate a motor vehicle: (a) in a risky manner, (b) in excess of 20 miles per hour, or (c) in violation of an authorized District employee's directive.

13. Engage in any risky behavior, including roller-blading, roller-skating, or skateboarding.
14. Violate other District policies or regulations, or a directive from an authorized security officer or District employee.
15. Engage in any conduct that interferes with, disrupts, or adversely affects the District or a School function.

Convicted Child Sex Offender

State law prohibits a child sex offender from being present on school property or loitering within 500 feet of school property when persons under the age of 18 are present, unless the offender is:

1. A parent/guardian of a student attending the school and has notified the Building Principal of his or her presence at the school for the purpose of: (i) attending a conference at the school with school personnel to discuss the progress of his or her child academically or socially, (ii) participating in child review conferences in which evaluation and placement decisions may be made with respect to his or her child regarding special education services, or (iii) attending conferences to discuss other student issues concerning his or her child such as retention and promotion, or
2. Has permission to be present from the School Board, Superintendent or Superintendent's designee. If permission is granted, the Superintendent or Board President shall provide the details of the offender's upcoming visit to the Building Principal.

In all cases, the Superintendent, or designee who is a certified employee, shall supervise a child sex offender whenever the offender is in a child's vicinity.

Exclusive Bargaining Representative Agent

Authorized agents of an exclusive bargaining representative, upon notifying the Building Principal's office, may meet with a school employee (or group of employees) in the school building during free-times of such employees.

Enforcement

Any staff member may request identification from any person on school property; refusal to provide such information is a criminal act. The Building Principal or designee shall seek the immediate removal of any person who refuses to provide requested identification.

Any person who engages in conduct prohibited by this policy may be ejected from school property. The person is also subject to being denied admission to school events or meetings for up to one calendar year.

Procedures to Deny Future Admission to School Events or Meetings

Before any person may be denied admission to school events or meetings as provided in this policy, the person has a right to a hearing before the Board. The Superintendent may refuse the person admission pending such hearing. The Superintendent or designee must provide the person with a hearing notice, delivered or sent by certified mail with return receipt requested, at least 10 days before the Board hearing date. The hearing notice must contain:

1. The date, time, and place of the Board hearing,
2. A description of the prohibited conduct,
3. The proposed time period that admission to school events will be denied, and

- 4. Instructions on how to waive a hearing.

LEGAL REFERENCE: Nuding v. Cerro Gordo Community Unit School Dist., 730 N.E.2d 96 (Ill. App.2, 2000).
Pro-Children Act of 1994, 20 U.S.C. §7181 *et seq.*
105 ILCS 5/10-20.5b, 5/24-24, and 5/24-25.
410 ILCS 130/, Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Pilot Program.
430 ILCS 66/, Firearm Concealed Carry Act.
720 ILCS 5/11-9.3.

CROSS REFERENCE: 4:170 (Safety)
5:50 (Drug- and Alcohol-Free Workplace; Tobacco Prohibition)
6:120 (Education of Children with Disabilities)
6:250 (Community Resource Persons and Volunteers)
7:190 (Student Discipline)
8:20 (Community Use of School Facilities)

ADOPTED: **June 12, 2006 (Effective July 1, 2006)**
AMENDED: **February 12, 2007 (Effective March 1, 2007)**
AMENDED: **August 11, 2008 (Effective September 1, 2008)**
AMENDED: **August 9, 2010 (Effective September 1, 2010)**
AMENDED: **February 14, 2011 (Effective March 1, 2011)**
AMENDED: **February 10, 2014 (Effective March 1, 2014)**

Community Relations

Accommodating Individuals with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities shall be provided an opportunity to participate in all school-sponsored services, programs, or activities and will not be subject to illegal discrimination. Where necessary, the District may provide to persons with disabilities separate or different aids, benefits, or services from, but as effective as, those provided to others.

The District will provide auxiliary aids and services where necessary to afford individuals with disabilities equal opportunity to participate in or enjoy the benefits of a service, program, or activity.

Each service, program, or activity operated in existing facilities shall be readily accessible to, and useable by, individuals with disabilities. New construction and alterations to facilities existing before January 26, 1992, will be accessible when viewed in their entirety.

The Superintendent or designee is designated the Title II Coordinator and shall:

1. Oversee the District's compliance efforts, recommend necessary modifications to the Board, and maintain the District's final Title II self-evaluation document and keep it available for public inspection, for at least 3 years after its completion date.
2. Institute plans to make information regarding Title II's protection available to any interested party.

Individuals with disabilities should notify the Superintendent or Building Principal if they have a disability which will require special assistance or services and, if so, what services are required. This notification should occur as far as possible before the school-sponsored function, program, or meeting.

Individuals with disabilities may allege a violation of this policy or federal law by reporting it to the Superintendent or designated Title II Coordinator, or by filing a grievance under the Uniform Grievance Procedure.

LEGAL REFERENCE: Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §§12101 et seq. and 12131 et seq.; 28 C.F.R. Part 35.
Rehabilitation Act of 1973 § 104, 29 U.S.C. §794 (2006).
105 ILCS 5/10-20.46.
410 ILCS 25/, Environmental Barriers Act.
71 Ill.Admin.Code Part 400, Illinois Accessibility Code.

CROSS REFERENCE: 2:260 (Uniform Grievance Procedure)
4:150 (Facility Management and Expansion Programs)

ADOPTED: **June 12, 2006 (Effective July 1, 2006)**

AMENDED: **February 8, 2010 (Effective March 1, 2010)**

Community Relations

Service Animals in the School District

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the use of service animals in Sesser-Valier Community Unit School District No. 196, including school buildings, vehicles and other property.

Policy

Sesser-Valier Community Unit School District No. 196 will comply with all state and federal laws, regulations and rules regarding the use of service animals by disabled staff or students under appropriate circumstances.

Definition of a Service Animal

This policy applies to any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items. Service animals do not include wild animals, farm animals and rodents and animals whose sole function is to provide emotional support, comfort, therapy, companionship, therapeutic benefits, or to promote emotional well-being.

Procedures and Requirements

- A. Staff members or parents must submit a request for the use of a service animal to the Principal. Such request must identify and describe the need for the service animal as it relates to the staff member or student's disability and describe the manner in which the service animal will meet the individual's particular need(s) and provide a letter from their physician who is the health care provider regarding the need for a service animal.

- B. Requests for the use of service animals on School District property must, whenever possible, be made no less than nine (9) weeks prior to the proposed use of the service animal. Under no circumstances may a service animal be on School District property without prior approval by the Principal.

- C. As part of the School District's consideration of a request for the use of a service animal, the School District may require certain documentation, including, but not limited to:
 - 1. documentation that the service animal is properly trained and licensed;
 - 2. certification of proper vaccinations verified by a veterinarian;
 - 3. documentation that the handler for the service animal is properly trained; and
 - 4. documentation of adequate liability insurance.

- D. The School District's review of a request for the use of a service animal may include consideration by a student's special education team and/or Section 504 team. Also, the School District may require a meeting with and/or additional information from the staff member or parent requesting the use of a service animal, including, but not limited to, documentation/consultation from the staff member's or student's health care provider.
- E. The use of a service animal on School District property may be subject to a plan which introduces the service animal to the school environment, any appropriate training for staff and students regarding interaction with the service animal, and other activities or conditions deemed necessary by the School District. The School District's approval of the use of a service animal on School District property is subject to periodic review, revision or revocation by the Principal and/or Superintendent.
- F. Service animals must wear proper identification and always be on a leash or other form of restraint mechanism. It is the responsibility of the staff person or student who uses a service animal pursuant to this Policy to be the certified handler, providing proper handling of the service animal. Any cost incurred to handle the service animal will be the responsibility of the staff person or parent of the student who uses the service animal.
- G. The School District retains discretion to exclude or remove a service animal from its property if:
1. the animal is out of control and/or the animal's handler does not effectively control the animal's behavior;
 2. the animal is not housebroken or the animal's presence or behavior fundamentally interferes in the functions of the School District; or
 3. the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by reasonable modifications.

Liability

The staff member or student/parent is liable for any damage to School District or personal property and any injuries to individuals caused by their service animal. The staff member or student/parent who uses a service animal on School District property will hold the School District harmless and indemnify the School District from any such damages. Further, the staff member, student/parent will be required to submit a certificate of liability insurance covering the service animal and identifying the School District as an additional insured. The amount of required insurance coverage shall be determined by the School District.

ADOPTED: **August 9, 2010 (Effective September 1, 2010)**

Community Relations

Gifts to the District

The School Board accepts gifts from any education foundation or other entity or individual, provided the gift can be used in a manner compatible with the Board's educational objectives and policies. While the Board encourages unrestricted gifts, donations to fund specific projects are acceptable if the project is approved by the Board. The Superintendent shall develop procedures for review and approval of donations that involve incorporating messages into or placing messages upon school property. All gifts received become the School District's property.

LEGAL REFERENCE: 105 ILCS 5/16-1.

ADOPTED: **June 12, 2006 (Effective July 1, 2006)**

AMENDED: **February 14, 2011 (Effective March 1, 2011)**

Community Relations

Parent Organizations and Booster Clubs

Parent organizations and booster clubs are invaluable resources to the District's schools. While parent organizations and booster clubs have no administrative authority and cannot determine District policy, the School Board welcomes their suggestions and assistance.

Parent organizations and booster clubs are recognized by the School Board and permitted to use the District's name, a District school's name, or a District school's team name, or any logo attributable to the District provided they first receive the Superintendent or designee's express written consent. Consent to use one of the above-mentioned names or logos will generally be granted if the organization or club has by-laws containing the following:

1. The organization's or club's name and purpose, such as, to enhance students' educational experiences, to help meet educational needs of students, to provide extra athletic benefits to students, to assist specific sports teams or academic clubs through financial support, or to enrich extracurricular activities.
2. The rules and procedures under which it operates.
3. An agreement to adhere to all Board policies and administrative procedures.
4. A statement that membership is open and unrestricted, meaning that membership is open to parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school, District staff, and community members.
5. A statement that the District is not, and will not be, responsible for the organization's or club's business or the conduct of its members.
6. An agreement to maintain and protect its own finances.
7. A recognition that money given to a school cannot be earmarked for any particular expense. Booster clubs may make recommendations, but cash or other valuable consideration must be given to the District to use at its discretion. The School Board's legal obligation to comply with Title IX by providing equal athletic opportunity for members of both genders will supersede an organization or club's recommendation.

Permission to use one of the above-mentioned names or logos may be rescinded at any time and does not constitute permission to act as the District's representative. At no time does the District accept responsibility for the actions of any parent organization or booster club regardless of whether it was recognized and/or permitted to use any of the above-mentioned names or logos. The Superintendent shall designate an administrative staff member to serve as the liaison to parent organizations or booster clubs. The liaison will serve as a resource person and provide information about school programs, resources, policies, problems, concerns, and emerging issues. Building staff will be encouraged to participate in the organizations.

CROSS REFERENCE: 8:80 (Gifts to the District)

ADOPTED: **June 12, 2006 (Effective July 1, 2006)**

Community Relations

Parental Involvement

In order to assure collaborative relationships between students' families and the District, and to enable parent(s)/guardian(s) to become active partners in their children's education, the Superintendent shall:

1. Keep parent(s)/guardian(s) thoroughly informed about their child's school and education.
2. Encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to be involved in their child's school and education.
3. Establish effective two-way communication between parent(s)/guardian(s) and the District.
4. Seek input from parent(s)/guardian(s) on significant school-related issues.
5. Inform parents/guardians on how they can assist their children's learning.

The Superintendent shall periodically report to the Board on the implementation of this policy.

CROSS REFERENCE: 6:170 (Title I Programs)
6:250 (Community Resource Persons and Volunteers)
8:10 (Connection with the Community)
8:90 (Parent Organizations and Booster Clubs)

ADOPTED: **June 12, 2006 (Effective July 1, 2006)**

AMENDED: **August 8, 2011 (Effective September 1, 2011)**

Community Relations

Relations with Other Organizations and Agencies

The District shall cooperate with other organizations and agencies, including but not limited to:

- County Health Department
- Law enforcement agencies
- Fire authorities
- Planning authorities
- Zoning authorities
- Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA), local organizations for civil defense, and other appropriate disaster relief organizations concerned with civil defense
- Other school districts

CROSS REFERENCE: 1:20 (District Organization, Operations, and Cooperative Agreements)
4:170 (Safety)
5:90 (Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act)
7:150 (Agency and Police Interviews)

ADOPTED: **June 12, 2006 (Effective July 1, 2006)**

AMENDED: **February 8, 2010 (Effective March 1, 2010)**

Community Relations

Public Suggestions and Concerns

The School Board is interested in receiving suggestions and concerns from members of the community. Any individual may make a suggestion or express a concern at any District or school office. All suggestions and/or concerns will be referred to the appropriate level staff member or District administrator who is most able to respond in a timely manner. Each concern or suggestion shall be considered on its merit.

An individual who is not satisfied after following the channels of authority, may file a grievance under the Board policy 2:260, *Uniform Grievance Procedure*. Neither this policy nor the *Uniform Grievance Procedure* creates an independent right to a hearing before the Board.

- CROSS REFERENCE: 2:140 (Communications To and From the Board)
2:230 (Public Participation at School Board Meetings and Petitions to the Board)
2:260 (Uniform Grievance Procedure)
3:30 (Chain of Command)
6:260 (Complaints About Curriculum, Instructional Materials and Programs)
8:10 (Connection with the Community)

ADOPTED: **June 12, 2006 (Effective July 1, 2006)**

AMENDED: **August 8, 2011 (Effective September 1, 2011)**