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SECTION K: SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

(continued)

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*These topics are not currently covered by Board policy.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS

Staff members have a responsibility to promote good school-community relations. The school-community relations program is directed by the Superintendent and is based upon the following principles.

1. The school-community relations program is a systematic, two-way process of communications between the District and the community.
2. The District may use media sources and other forms of communications available to effectively communicate with the citizens and employees.
3. Communications with the public should promote involvement, objective appraisal and support.
4. Communications should be internal as well as external and provide factual, objective and realistic data.
5. School communications should be responsive both to events as they arise and to evaluations of the process.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: ORC 3315.07
OAC 3301-35-03(J)

CROSS REFS.: AE, School District Goals and Objectives
KBA, Public's Right to Know

PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW

Introduction

It is the policy of the Board that openness leads to better informed citizenry, which leads to better government and better public policy. It is the policy of the Board to adhere to the State's Public Records Act.

Section 1. Public Records

This Board, in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code, defines records as including the following: Any document – paper, electronic (including, but not limited to, e-mail) or other format – that is created or received by or comes under the jurisdiction of public office that documents the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities of the office. All records of the District are public unless they are specifically exempt from disclosure under the Ohio Revised Code.

Section 1.1

It is the policy of the Board that, as required by State law, records will be organized and maintained so that they are readily available for inspection and copying (See Section 4 for the e-mail record policy). Additionally, record retention schedules are to be updated regularly and posted prominently.

Section 2. Records Request

Each request for public records should be evaluated for a response using the following guidelines:

Section 2.1

Although no specific language is required to make a request, the requester must at least identify the records requested with sufficient clarity to allow the public office to identify, retrieve and review the records. If it is not clear what records are being sought, the records custodian may deny the request but shall provide the requester with an opportunity to revise the request by informing the requester of the manner in which the office keeps its records.

Section 2.2

There is no requirement that an individual making a public records request put a records request in writing or provide his/her identity or the intended use of the requested public record. However, the Board may ask a requester to make the request in writing, may ask the requester's identity and may inquire about the intended use, but only after disclosing to the requester that a written request is not mandatory and that the requester may decline to reveal the requester's identity or intended use and when a written request or disclosure of the identity or intended use would benefit the requester by enhancing the ability of the public office or person responsible for public records to identify, locate or deliver the public records sought by the requester.

Section 2.3

Public records are to be available for inspection during regular business hours, with the exception of published holidays. Public records shall be made available for inspection promptly. Copies of public records must be made available within a reasonable period of time. "Prompt" and "reasonable" shall take into account the volume or records requested; the proximity of the location where the records are stored; and the necessity for any legal review of the records requested.

Section 2.4

Any denial of public records requested shall include an explanation, including citation to legal authority. If portions of the record are public and portions are exempt, the exempt portions are to be redacted and the public portions released. If there are redactions, each redaction must be accompanied by a supporting explanation, including citation to legal authority.

Section 3. Costs for Public Records

Those seeking public records will be charged only the actual cost of making copies.

Section 3.1 The charge for paper copies is 10 cents per page.

Section 3.2 The charge for downloading computer files to a compact disc is \$1 per disc.

Section 3.3 There is no charge for documents sent via e-mail.

Section 3.4 Requesters may ask that documents be mailed to them. They will be charged the actual cost of postage and mailing supplies.

Section 4. E-mail

Documents in electronic mail format are records as defined by the Ohio Revised Code when their content relates to the business of the office. E-mail is to be treated in the same fashion as records in other formats and should follow the same retention schedules.

Section 4.1

Records in private e-mail accounts used to conduct public business are subject to disclosure, and all employees or representatives of this District are instructed to retain their e-mails that relate to public business (see Section 1 Public Records) and to copy them to their business e-mail accounts and/or to the office's records custodian.

Section 4.2

The records custodian is to treat the e-mails from private accounts as records of the public office, filing them in the appropriate way, retaining them per established schedules and making them available for inspection and copying in accordance with the Public Records Act.

Section 5. Failure to Respond to a Public Records Request

The Board recognizes the legal and non-legal consequences of failure to properly respond to a public records request. In addition to the distrust in government that failure to comply may cause, the Board's failure to comply with a request may result in a court ordering the Board to comply with the law and to pay the requester attorney's fees and damages.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

[Re-adoption date: September 19, 2007]

LEGAL REFS.: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; 20 USC, Section 1232g

ORC 121.22

149.43

3319.321

OAC 3301-35-03; 3301-35-04

CROSS REFS.: BDC, Executive Sessions

BDDG, Minutes

GBL, Personnel Records

IGBA, Programs for Students with Disabilities

JO, Student Records

KA, School-Community Relations Goals

KKA, Recruiters in the Schools

NEWS RELEASES

The District is a public institution endeavoring to serve the educational needs of the community. It is important that information be disseminated concerning school activities and problems. The Superintendent develops procedures to provide wide coverage and to coordinate publicity which enhances the image of the District.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: ORC 3315.07
OAC 3301-35-03(J)

CROSS REF.: EBD, Crisis Management

NEWS RELEASES

The procedures regarding news releases are as follows.

1. The Board President is the official spokesperson for the Board, except as this duty is delegated to the Superintendent or another Board member.
2. News releases which are of a Districtwide nature or pertain to established Board policy are the responsibility of the Superintendent or a designated member of the administrative staff.
3. News releases which are of concern to only one school, or to an organization of one school, are the responsibility of the principal of that particular school.
4. The Board expects the administration to maintain a vital and effective link with the media sources of the community. This includes a variety of forms and forums. This effort is directed by the Board President or his/her designee.

(Approval date: November 19, 2003)

BROADCASTING AND TAPING OF BOARD MEETINGS

Photographic and electronic audio and video broadcasting and recording devices may be used at regular and special Board meetings legally open to the public according to the following guidelines.

1. Photographs, broadcasting and recordings of meetings are permitted only when all parties involved have been informed that cameras, broadcasting and/or recording devices are being used.
2. Persons operating cameras, broadcasting and/or recording devices must do so with a minimum of disruption to those present at the meeting. Specifically, the view between Board members and the audience must not be obstructed, interviews must not be conducted during the meeting and no commentary is to be given in a manner that distracts Board members or the audience.
3. The Board has the right to halt any recording that interrupts or disturbs the meeting.

The Board may make the necessary arrangements to have audio recordings of all regular meetings and any special meeting that it deems appropriate.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: U.S. Const. Amend. I
ORC 121.22
2911.21
2917.12
2921.31
3313.20

TAX ISSUES

The Board examines financial needs in advance of any levy or bond elections. The Board provides the public with information on school building needs and on levy and bond elections. It does not use District funds to promote approval of school-related tax issues.

Tax reduction factors are considered in coordination with the sexennial property appraisal in affected district counties. In considering a potential tax issue, the Board examines all legal options to obtain additional revenue.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: Ohio Const. Art XII, Sections 2, 5
ORC Chapter 133
3311.21
3313.37; 3313.375
3315.07
3501.01
Chapter 5705
5748.01 et seq.

CROSS REFS.: BCF, Advisory Committees to the Board
FL, Retirement of Facilities

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

Community participation in the schools is essential to promote and maintain the quality of education for all students.

In addition to electing fellow citizens to represent them on the Board, all citizens may express ideas, concerns and judgments about the schools to the administration, to the staff, to any appointed advisory bodies and ultimately to the Board. Ideas should be addressed to the responsible individual in an appropriate fashion.

Residents may be invited by the Board to act as advisors, individually and in groups, in such areas as:

1. clarifying general ideas and attitudes held by residents in regard to the schools;
2. developing Board policies under which the school system is to be managed;
3. establishing administrative arrangements and regulations designed to help implement these policies;
4. determining the purposes of courses of study and special services to be provided for students;
5. evaluating the extent to which these purposes are being achieved by present policies and/or
6. solving a specific problem or set of closely related problems about which a decision must be made.

The Board gives consideration to the advice it receives from individuals and community groups. Final authority for all decisions rests with the Board.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: ORC 121.22
OAC 3301-35-03(J)

CROSS REFS.: BCE, Board Committees
BCF, Advisory Committees to the Board
BCFA, Business Advisory Council to the Board
FL, Retirement of Facilities
IF, Curriculum Development

Reading Community City School District, Reading, Ohio

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS

All meetings of the Board and Board-appointed committees are open to the public.

In order for the Board to fulfill its obligation to complete the planned agenda in an effective and efficient fashion, a maximum of 30 minutes of public participation may be permitted at each meeting.

Each person addressing the Board shall give his/her name and address. If several people wish to speak, each person is allotted three minutes until the total time of 30 minutes is used. During that period, no person may speak twice until all who desire to speak have had the opportunity to do so. Persons desiring more time should follow the procedure of the Board to be placed on the regular agenda. The period of public participation may be extended by a vote of the majority of the Board, present and voting.

Agendas are available to all those who attend Board meetings. The section on the agenda for public participation shall be indicated. Noted at the bottom of each agenda shall be a short paragraph outlining the Board's policy on public participation at Board meetings.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: ORC 121.22
3313.20

CROSS REFS.: BCE, Board Committees
BD, School Board Meetings
BDDC, Agenda Preparation and Dissemination

COMMUNITY INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

Helping each student develop to his/her full potential and to become a citizen contributing to the welfare of the community are important objectives of the District's educational program. The Board encourages administrative and instructional personnel to rely on the community as one of its educational resources. The administration directs community instructional resources designed to involve the citizens, institutions and environment of our community in the education of its children.

The Superintendent has supervisory control over community relations, which includes school volunteer service. Members of the staff and of the community are encouraged to offer their ideas and services through the channels that the administration develops.

The Superintendent reports to the Board on the involvement and effectiveness of the community relations.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: ORC 3315.07
OAC 3301-35-06

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES
(Equal Access)

Although the basic purpose of public school facilities is to provide the youth of the community a sound education program, the complete function of education is not achieved until the school facilities are made to serve the entire community. To accomplish this objective, the Board shall, upon payment of the prescribed fee and subject to the requirements of applicable regulations, permit the use of school facilities for auxiliary, educational, recreational, cultural, civic, social, religious or other Board-approved purposes.

Any school within the District receiving Title I funding must offer the same facilities access to Boy Scouts as to other organizations.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: The Elementary and Secondary Education Act; 20 USC 1221 et seq.
Title VIII, Section 801
ORC 3311.215
3313.75; 3313.76; 3313.77; 3313.79
4303.26
OAC 3301-35-02

CROSS REFS.: KGB, Public Conduct on District Property
KI, Public Solicitations in the Schools

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES
(Equal Access)

The Board encourages the community use of school facilities. It is necessary, however, to ensure that such use does not interfere with the regular school purposes, impose undue burden upon personnel or strain the limited funds allotted for building services and maintenance; therefore, specific regulations have been established.

Conditions Governing Use of School Facilities

1. An employee of the Board must be on duty whenever a school building is used by an organization or group.
2. No building is used for any fund-raising activity unless the proceeds are for approved charitable, educational, character-building or other community welfare purposes.
3. Out-of-school groups do not begin with their activities until school is dismissed in the afternoon and the students have left the building.
4. Building use is not permitted for private individuals or family affairs. Buildings are to be reserved for community group use only.
5. No group will, under any circumstances, tamper with any electrical or heating controls.
6. There is no smoking in the building.
7. The Board reserves the right to require, if it should deem necessary, that groups using the building post a cash bond and/or a certificate of liability insurance to cover any damages which might be done to any property, equipment or grounds.
8. School-sponsored student groups must have a teacher present at the activity. Nonschool-sponsored student groups must have an adult present and approved by the building principal.
9. Groups which use school facilities must possess liability insurance.

Applications

A permit is necessary when a group or organization not part of the District wants to use a school building or grounds. An applicant for a permit must assure the Superintendent that the group/organization complies with all regulations and respects the property, equipment and grounds of the school.

A sponsoring organization or group must indicate that it:

1. intends to provide a program which promotes the welfare of the community and be for community purposes;

2. guarantees orderly behavior;
3. underwrites any damages due to its use of the premises;
4. pays for the use of equipment, property or grounds at the established rates and
5. possesses liability insurance.

The following described activities are those which are permitted in school buildings or on school grounds without charge to the using organization or group. The Superintendent is responsible for approving or disapproving requests for such use.

1. Permits are not required for activities such as school activities on school days which do not require the assignment of overtime to custodial personnel and which do not extend beyond the hour of 6:00 p.m. A permit is not required for the principal's use of the building for such purposes as holding conferences or small group meetings of faculty, parents or students. When the building is used without the services of the custodial staff, the principal is responsible for the care and security of the building.
2. A "Superintendent's Permit" must be issued on a designated form. The following conditions are to be observed:
 - A. Fees are assessed in accordance with a schedule adopted annually by the Board. The Board has the authority to waive fees as it deems appropriate.
 - B. Permission must be obtained from the principal for the use and re-arrangement of any school equipment or furniture. If such items are to be moved, they are moved by the using organization and replaced in the original location.
 - D. Snacks, only, may be served provided that care is taken to ensure that the area used is left as clean as it was before the meeting.
 - D. Service from the custodial staff is to be limited to admitting the organization after its sponsor arrives, assisting the sponsor in an advisory capacity concerning the facilities to be used and closing up and properly securing the facilities when the organization has left.

Processing the Permit Application

Application forms are available in the office of the building principal. The application of a community group for a permit to use a school building or facilities is filed with the building principal at least 30 days prior to the date of the proposed use.

After the application is cleared by the principal, a copy is sent back to the Superintendent at least 10 days in advance of anticipated use. The Superintendent arranges for special custodial help.

After checking for any type of District conflict on the composite calendar, the responsible school official notifies the applicant of the approval or disapproval of the request at least seven days in advance of the requested date of use.

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Use of Special Equipment

Arrangements for the use of special equipment such as projectors, pianos, public address systems, scoreboard controls or other equipment belonging to a school must be made with the Superintendent at the time application is filed. The use of kitchen equipment for food preparation and sanitizing of dishes, utensils and tableware requires the assignment of a food service worker.

School equipment must be carefully maintained, accounted for and properly used since it involves a considerable expenditure. It is a general policy not to loan school equipment to outside groups. An exception may be made if a staff member accompanies the group and operates the equipment and the request is approved by the Superintendent.

(Approval date: November 19, 2003)

APPLICATION
(For Use of Buildings or Facilities)

Date of Application _____

Facility requested _____

Purpose _____

Organization making request _____

Person in charge _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Date(s) requested _____ Time _____

Number of participants _____

Specific activities _____

Special custodial services needed _____

Equipment needed _____

(Do not complete this section until charges are established)

Charges \$ _____

\$ _____ rental fee per day x _____ days requested

\$ _____ custodian hourly rate x 1.5 x _____ hours to be worked plus 16%

\$ _____ Total

I understand that organizations using the school or its facilities assume full responsibility in cases of damage to property and hereby agree to pay any charge incurred.

(Indemnitor) agrees to indemnify and HOLD HARMLESS the Board of Education and its agents and employees from all liability, claims, demands, damages or costs for, or arising out of _____ (subject of indemnity) whether it be caused by the negligence of indemnitor or the Reading Board of Education or either party's agents or employees, or otherwise.

I understand the payment of the full amount of the charges must be submitted to the Treasurer's office at least 10 days prior to the event. I further understand that failure to submit the full payment may result in the cancellation of the rental agreement. I further understand that if custodial costs exceed the charges listed below, the group will be responsible for an additional charge to cover Board expenses.

Signed _____

(To be completed by school officials)

Permission is hereby granted to use the school premises for purpose outlined above on the date and times shown.

Proof of insurance date: _____

Paid in full date: _____

Comments: _____

Date approved: _____

Signed: _____

Position: _____

Building Principal: _____

(Signature)

<u>Fee Schedule for Building Use</u>		
	Daily (anything over 4 hours)	Hourly (up to 4 hours)
Auditorium	\$250 + custodial charges	\$50/hr. + custodial charges
Central Gym	\$125 + custodial charges	\$25/hr. + custodial charges
Hilltop Gym	\$100 + custodial charges	\$20/hr. + custodial charges
High School Gym	\$200 + custodial charges	\$40/hr. + custodial charges
Kitchen & Cafeteria	\$125 + custodial charges	\$25/hr. + custodial charges
Cafeteria Only	\$125 + custodial charges	\$25/hr. + custodial charges
Classroom	\$ 20 + custodial charges	\$20/hr. + custodial charges

These rates would be charged on a per day basis.

Custodial rates will be calculated at time and one-half per hours worked plus 16% (the 16% covers Board costs related to retirement and benefits).

THE SCHOOL RESERVES THE RIGHT TO RELOCATE OR CANCEL ANY GROUP MEETING SITE WHICH CONFLICTS WITH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES OR FOR ANY OTHER JUST CAUSE.

PUBLIC CONDUCT ON DISTRICT PROPERTY

All persons on District grounds are expected to abide by applicable laws, local ordinances, Board policies and building regulations.

No person on District property may assault, strike, threaten, menace or use improper, indecent or obscene language toward a teacher, instructor, other employees of the schools, parents, students or Board member.

No person may disrupt, disturb or interfere with the teaching of any class of students or any other activity conducted in a school building or upon the campus or grounds.

Whoever violates the above policy and building regulations will be asked to leave the property by whoever is in charge. Should that person refuse, the law enforcement officials will be called. If the offender should be a student, the person in charge should report the student to the appropriate principal. The administration cooperates in any prosecution pursuant to the criminal laws of the state of Ohio and local ordinances.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: ORC 2907.03
2909.05-2909.07
3313.20

CROSS REFS.: KG, Community Use of School Facilities (Equal Access)
KGC, Smoking on District Property
KK, Visitors to the Schools

SMOKING ON DISTRICT PROPERTY

The Board is dedicated to providing a healthy, comfortable and productive environment for its staff, students and citizens. Health professionals have determined that smoking poses health hazards not only for the smoker, but for the nonsmoker as well.

Recognizing these health issues, the Board prohibits smoking in all District-owned, leased or contracted buildings and vehicles. The Board may designate legally compliant outdoor smoking areas.

Citizens failing to comply with this policy are educated as to State law and the Board's policy on smoking. Persons refusing to extinguish smoking materials are directed to leave school property and may be fined by the Ohio Department of Health or its designees.

A notice to this effect is posted at the entrance to all school buildings and in a visible place in all school vehicles.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

[Re-adoption date: August 1, 2007]

LEGAL REFS.: The Elementary and Secondary Education Act; 20 USC 1221 et seq.
ORC 3313.20; 3313.751
3794.01; 3794.02; 3794.03 (F); 3794.04; 3794.06

CROSS REFS.: GBK, Smoking on District Property by Staff Members
JFCG, Tobacco Use by Students
KGB, Public Conduct on District Property

PUBLIC GIFTS TO THE DISTRICT

Gifts, grants or bequests are accepted by the Board provided the conditions of acceptance do not remove any portion of the control of the District from the Board.

Any person or organization desiring to give a gift or make a grant or bequest to the Board must contact the Superintendent, who submits the request to the Board.

Proposals for giving funds, equipment or materials to the District with a “matching” agreement or restriction are discouraged. Acceptance of donated equipment or materials may depend upon the compliance with, or experience related to, the Board’s policy of standardizing materials and equipment.

Whenever the District has an established project, contributions which reduce the cost or hasten the completion are welcome.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: ORC 9.20
3313.36; 3313.47

CROSS REFS.: BHD, Board Member Compensation and Expenses
FEE, Site Acquisition Procedures

PUBLIC SOLICITATIONS IN THE SCHOOLS

No person may sell or offer for sale within school buildings or on school property any articles or services or solicit contributions except those approved by the Superintendent or the Board. This policy does not prohibit any school fund-raising activity authorized by the Superintendent or other appropriate building administrator.

Salespeople representing educational companies may be granted the opportunity to speak to teachers by making arrangements through the principal's office. Such appointments must not interfere with the classroom work of the teachers.

The school directory or lists of students are not made available to any outside person or agency for a profit-making purpose.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

[Re-adoption date: August 1, 2007]

LEGAL REFS.: ORC 2921.43
3319.321

CROSS REFS.: GBI, Staff Gifts and Solicitations
JL, Student Gifts and Solicitations
KG, Community Use of School Facilities (Equal Access)
KK, Visitors to the Schools

ADVERTISING IN THE SCHOOLS

Notices, advertisements or written matter of any nature on behalf of persons or organizations not officially connected with the District shall not be distributed or displayed in any school building or on District property without permission of the Superintendent. All notices, including those by personnel, shall be approved by the building principal and, in case of doubt, by the Superintendent. Appeal of the Superintendent's decision may be made to the Board.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

The Board encourages parents and other citizens of the District to visit classrooms to observe the work of the schools and to learn what the schools are doing.

To ensure that no unauthorized persons enter buildings, all visitors must first report to the school office to receive authorization to visit elsewhere in the building. (This policy does not apply when parents have been invited to a classroom or assembly program.)

Unauthorized persons are not permitted in school buildings or on school grounds. School principals are authorized to take appropriate action to prevent such persons from entering buildings and loitering on the grounds.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

LEGAL REF.: ORC 3313.20

CROSS REFS.: BG, Board-Staff Communications (Also GBD)
KGB, Public Conduct on District Property
KI, Public Solicitations in the Schools

RECRUITERS IN THE SCHOOLS

All recruiters, military, nonmilitary, commercial and educational, are treated uniformly in the conduct of on-campus student recruitment. Scheduling of recruiting visits to the District is announced to the student body in advance. Recruiters are afforded the opportunity to conduct meetings during the school day with those students who are interested.

All group meetings are to be scheduled through the principal's or guidance office. Classroom teachers who schedule recruiters as a career awareness activity should coordinate these activities through the appropriate building administrator.

In order to maintain the privacy of its students, the Board prohibits the disclosure of any student list to any commercial organization which intends to use the list for commercial purposes. "Student list" is defined as Board-approved directory information. "Commercial organization" is defined as any entity which is a for-profit organization. "Commercial purpose" is defined as any activity which is an attempt to solicit business for profit. The Superintendent shall establish a procedure to be followed by all corporation employees when a request for a student list is made by a commercial organization.

Names and addresses of students in grades 10 through 12 must be released to a recruiting officer of the armed forces unless a parent or student (age 18 or older) submits a written request not to release the information.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: The Elementary and Secondary Education Act; 20 USC 1221 et seq.
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; 20 USC Section 1232g
ORC 149.41; 149.43
1347.01 et seq.
3317.031
3319.32; 3319.321; 3319.33
3321.12; 3321.13
3331.13

CROSS REFS.: JO, Student Records
KBA, Public's Right to Know

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

Constructive criticism of the District is welcomed by the Board. Although no member of the community is denied the right to bring his/her complaints to the Board, he/she is referred to the proper administrative channels for solution before investigation or action by the Board. Exceptions may be made when the complaints concern Board actions or Board operations.

The Board believes that complaints and grievances are best handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible. The staff should be given the opportunity to consider the issues and attempt to resolve the problems prior to involvement by the Board. The proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline or learning materials is employee, principal, the Superintendent and then the Board.

If a complaint, which was presented to the Board and referred through the proper channels, is resolved before it comes back to the Board, a report of the disposition of the matter is made to the Board and then placed in the official files.

The Board expects the staff to receive complaints courteously and to make a proper reply to the complainant.

Matters referred to the Superintendent and/or Board must be in writing and are expected to be specific in terms of the action desired.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

LEGAL REF.: ORC 121.22

CROSS REFS.: KLB, Public Complaints About the Curriculum or Instructional Materials
KLD, Public Complaints About District Personnel

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CURRICULUM OR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The Board recognizes the need and right of students to free access to many different types of books and materials. It also recognizes the right of the credentialed staff to select books and other materials supportive of the Board's educational philosophy and goals.

Criticism of a book or other materials used in the District may be expected from time to time. In such instances, the following guidelines shall apply.

1. If a parent requests that his/her own child not read a given book, the teacher and/or school administrator should resolve the issue, perhaps by arranging for use of alternative material meeting essentially the same instructional purpose.
2. The Board does not permit any individual or group to exercise censorship over instructional materials and library collections, but it recognizes that, at times, a re-evaluation of certain material may be desirable. Should an individual or group ask to have any book or other material withdrawn from school use, the following steps are taken.
 - A. The person who objects to the book or other material is asked to sign a complaint on a standard form documenting his/her criticism.
 - B. Following receipt of the formal complaint, the building principal provides for a re-evaluation of the material in question. He/She arranges for the appointment of a review committee from among the faculty and community to consider the complaint.
 - C. The review committee reviews the complaint and re-evaluation and renders a decision in the matter. Copies of the decision are given to the complainant, Superintendent and the Board.

The Board assumes final responsibility for all books and instructional materials which it makes available to students, and it holds its credentialed staff accountable for their proper selections. The Board also recognizes rights of individual parents with respect to controversial materials used by their own children and provides for the re-evaluation of materials in library collections upon formal request.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: ORC 121.22
3329.07; 3329.08; 3329.09

CROSS REFS.: IIA, Instructional Materials
IIAA, Textbook Selection and Adoption
IIAC, Media Center Materials Selection and Adoption
INB, Teaching About Controversial Issues
KL, Public Complaints
KLD, Public Complaints About District Personnel

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CURRICULUM OR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

In the event that any citizen has a complaint or question concerning material used in conjunction with a class and/or library, the following regulation is used to handle such concerns.

1. If a citizen calls the Board office, the Superintendent or building principal with a concern about material:
 - A. The individual responding to the citizen shall get the name, address and phone number of the citizen and inform the citizen of the following:
 - 1) the member conducting the class;
 - 2) times during the day when the member can be reached to answer any questions and
 - 3) existence of a formal policy for reconsideration of materials.
 - B. The member is informed of any initial inquiries and/or complaints.
2. If the citizen contacts the member:
 - A. The member shall attempt to answer any questions the citizen may have.
 - B. The citizen is mailed or given a copy of the “Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material” form which follows this procedure.
3. If the citizen completes the reconsideration form and returns it to the member, this procedure is followed:
 - A. A review committee is established by the principal that includes the following persons:
 - 1) principal;
 - 2) department chairperson (if applicable);
 - 3) additional member and
 - 4) the Superintendent/designee.
 - B. All members of the review committee shall familiarize themselves with the material in questions.
 - C. The principal shall call a meeting of the members of the review committee, the member and the citizen. During this meeting, the citizen shall inform the committee of any and all objections to the materials. The member shall inform the committee of the use of the material, how it was received by the class, why it was chosen, whether the choices of materials were given to the students, and any other information requested by the review committee pertinent to the situation.

- D. After hearing all of the information, the review committee renders a decision concerning the material in question, and supplies copies of its decision to the citizen, the member, the Superintendent and to the Board. A copy of this shall also be available for public information and filed in the Superintendent's office.

(Approval date: November 19, 2003)

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL

(Citizens or staff members should use this format in submitting "Requests for Reconsideration" to the supervising principal.)

Author (or producer) _____

Title _____

Publisher _____

Request initiated by _____

Complainant represents: Himself/herself _____ Other _____

Address _____ Telephone _____

1. To what do you object? (Please be specific, cite pages, passages, etc.)
2. What do you feel might be the result of exposure to this material?
3. For what age group would you recommend this material?
4. In your opinion, is there anything good about this material, any redeeming quality?
5. If the object of this complaint is printed material, have you read it through? If not, what portions have you read?
6. Have you had an opportunity to become familiar with the judgment of professional evaluators concerning this material?
7. What do you believe is the theme or the central text of this material?
8. What would you like the school to do about this material?

_____ Do not assign it to my child.

_____ Withdraw it from circulation and use.

_____ Other _____

9. What material of equal quality or with as effective a presentation of salient facts would you recommend in its place?
10. Comments:

Signature _____ Date _____

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT DISTRICT PERSONNEL

Complaints about personnel are investigated fully and fairly. Before any such complaint is investigated, it must be submitted in writing and signed. Anonymous complaints are disregarded.

Whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board as a whole or to a Board member as an individual, it is referred to the Superintendent for study and possible solution.

The Superintendent develops, for approval by the Board, procedures that ensure prompt and fair attention to complaints against school personnel. The procedure requires that an employee who is the object of a complaint be informed promptly and afforded the opportunity to present the facts as he/she sees them before an investigation takes place.

If it appears necessary, the Superintendent, the person who made the complaint or the employee involved may request an executive session of the Board for a hearing. Statutory restrictions on executive sessions are observed. Any Board action on the matter is taken in public session.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

LEGAL REFS.: ORC 121.22
149.43

CROSS REFS.: BDC, Executive Sessions
BDDH, Public Participation at Board Meetings (Also KD)
GBL, Personnel Records
KL, Public Complaints
KLB, Public Complaints About the Curriculum or Instructional Materials

CONTRACT REF.: Teachers' Negotiated Agreement

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT DISTRICT PERSONNEL

The following procedures are to ensure that a citizen's complaint is given respectful attention and that the integrity of the educational program is upheld. "Complaint" in this regulation is restricted in meaning to that criticism of a particular employee by a citizen of the District which includes or implies a demand for action by District authorities. Other comments and suggestions are referred informally to appropriate personnel.

1. If a complaint comes first to the person against whom it is directed, he/she listens and may try to resolve the difficulty by explaining the background and educational purpose involved. If the complaint remains unsatisfied, the employee refers the complainant to the building principal or other immediate supervisor to have his/her views considered further. Whether the complaint terminates with the individual staff member involved or seems likely to go further, the staff member immediately informs his/her supervisor of the complaint.
2. If a complaint comes first to the principal or other supervisor of the person criticized, the principal or supervisor should make no commitments, admissions of guilt or threats. If the complaint involves a particular employee, the supervisor should suggest a conference between the complainant and the employee criticized and should inform that employee immediately of the complaint. If the complainant has already met with the employee criticized and remains unsatisfied, the supervisor should invite the complainant to file the complaint in writing.
3. If a complaint comes first to any other school employee, that employee refers the complainant to the person criticized or to his/her immediate supervisor and immediately informs both.
4. No further action on the complaint should be taken unless the complainant submits the complaint in writing.
5. When a written complaint is received, the principal or other supervisor schedules a conference with the complainant, the person criticized and, if advisable, the department chairman or other personnel who, in the opinion of either the supervisor or the person criticized, could contribute to resolution of the problem.
6. If the complainant is not satisfied with the results of the conference above, he/she should then be referred to the Superintendent, who may handle the complaint personally or refer it to other personnel, as he/she may see fit.
7. Should dissatisfaction remain after the above steps have been taken, the matter may be placed on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The decision of the Board is communicated in writing to all interested persons.

(Approval date: November 19, 2003)

RELATIONS WITH PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

The Board supports all organizations of parents whose objectives are to promote the educational experiences of District students. However, in using the name of the District or its schools and in organizing a group whose identity derives from a school(s) of the District, parental organizations share responsibility with the Board for the welfare of participating students.

Parent organizations desiring to use the name or offices of the District to organize students must obtain the approval of the Board as a prerequisite.

Principals and staff members need to work closely with the officers of all parent organizations to provide a sustained system of activities that increase and enhance the educational opportunities for students. The activities must be integrated and balanced in accordance with the total District educational program and District goals and objectives and must comply with all State and local law and regulations.

Parent organizations that wish to construct anything on school property must have the permission of the Board in advance of the construction project. The organization must provide the Board, in writing, proof of financial stability and that funds are available for the construction project.

Acceptance of donated equipment or materials may depend upon the compliance with, or experience related to, the Board's policy of standardizing materials and equipment.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

LEGAL REF.: ORC 3313.20

CROSS REFS.: AE, School District Goals and Objectives
KH, Public Gifts to the District
KI, Public Solicitations in the Schools
KJ, Advertising in the Schools
KMB, Relations with Booster Organizations

RELATIONS WITH BOOSTER ORGANIZATIONS

The Board recognizes that the endeavors and objectives of booster organizations can be a valuable means of stimulating interest and endorsement of the aims and achievements of the District.

Booster-proposed plans, projects or activities must be evaluated and promoted in light of their stated contribution to the curricular as well as the extracurricular programs of the District. Careful consideration must be given to the total value of all students, rather than to specific elements such as teams and band participants. Care must be taken to avoid compromising or diluting the responsibility and authority of the Board.

Annually, booster organizations must submit to the Superintendent/designee their tentative goals and objectives along with their fund-raising plans for the next school year for review by the Board. Should the goals and objectives or fund-raising plans change during the school year, the Superintendent/designee is to be advised before any final revisions are made.

Booster organizations must abide by all District policies and rules as well as the following list.

1. Booster organizations should not use the school's tax ID number.
2. Booster organizations should not accept checks made out to the school and vice versa.
3. District officials should not have a leadership role in booster organizations.
4. Fund-raising activities should not occur on school premises or during school hours unless permission has been given by the Superintendent/designee.
5. Documentation on ownership of property and fund-raising activities is required.
6. The use of the District name and emblems must be authorized.
7. Booster organizations must submit their bylaws to the Superintendent for review and approval as well as reports on income, expenses and balance sheets.

[Adoption date: November 19, 2003]

LEGAL REF.: ORC 3313.20

CROSS REFS.: IGDG, Student Activities Funds Management
KG, Community Use of School Facilities
KGB, Public Conduct on District Property
KK, Visitors to the Schools
KMA, Relations with Parent Organizations

Reading Community City School District, Reading, Ohio