

# **FLIPPIN SCHOOL DISTRICT**

## **POLICY MANUAL**

### **SECTION 6**

#### **SCHOOL, HOME, AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

LAST REVISED: 06/24/2013

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## **6.1—COMMUNICATION GOALS**

The single most significant factor in student achievement is the teacher. The teacher's effectiveness is greatly enhanced when supported by the school community as a whole, the student's home, and the community at large. The Arkansas General Assembly and the Department of Education have demonstrated their understanding of the importance of involving such groups by repeatedly mandating their inclusion in the educational system and process. Communication with staff, parents, grandparents, legal guardians, business, and community members is fundamental to increasing their concern for, and involvement in, raising student achievement.

Communication should be two-way between the District and the public.

The communications program shall strive to:

1. Increase mutual understanding, trust, and support between the District and parents, business, and the community as a whole;
2. Keep District staff regularly informed of upcoming District programs and events as well as noteworthy staff and student accomplishments to enable all the staff to help promote positive public relations;
3. Create and disseminate brochures, flyers, and fact sheets that will help parents and community members better understand school policies and procedures and acquaint them with areas where their volunteer services are most needed;
4. Inform legislators of the accomplishments of the District's students and staff, as well as how proposed legislation could affect the district;
5. Maintain good relations with the news media and provide the media with pertinent news releases; and
6. Increase the participation of parents, grandparents, legal guardians, business, and community members in school activities and programs.

The Board will appoint committees, when appropriate, to help the District examine Issues facing it. Such committees may include members of the public, students, parents, and school employees, as well as members of the Board. Members may serve until the committee makes its non-binding recommendations to the Board.

Any committee, which includes among its members a member of the School Board, shall operate according to the requirements of the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act.\*

The Board shall hold a public meeting, at least annually, to report on the District's progress toward attaining its goals and to review its long-range plan. Those individuals attending shall have an opportunity to ask questions.

## **6.1—COMMUNICATION GOALS (cont.)**

Legal References:     A.C.A. § 6-18-1003 (2)  
                              A.C.A. § 6-18-1005 (a) (1) (HA.C.A. § 6-15-1005  
                              (c), (f) (1) (2)  
                              A.C.A. § 6-16-603 (a) (3)  
                              \*A.C.A. § 25-19-106  
                              Arkansas State Board of Education: Standards  
                              for Accreditation: II (B)(1); III (A);  
                              XI (B) (2)  
                              Arkansas Department of Education:  
                              Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards:  
                              4.0; 10.03

Date Adopted: 7/25/2005

## **6.2—RELATIONS WITH SCHOOL SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS**

The Board recognizes and values the many contributions support organizations make to the District's schools. Parent/teacher organizations and booster clubs work to augment and strengthen the District's educational and extracurricular objectives through the goods and services they provide.

Groups wishing to be recognized as a support organization must have open membership and have their by-laws approved by the school principal, the Superintendent, and the Board. School personnel shall assist approved booster organizations in their efforts to the extent practicable. Meetings of such organizations, cleared through the principal, shall not be subject to school use fees. School staff members are encouraged to attend and participate.

Fund-raising activities are to be approved in advance by the principal or his/her designee. Prior to the donation of equipment and/or supplies to the school, the organization should seek the advice of the principal to help ensure the compatibility of the donation with present school equipment. All equipment donated to the District becomes the property of the District.

Date Adopted: 07/25/2005

### **6.3—PUBLIC GIFTS AND DONATIONS TO THE SCHOOLS**

The District and the Board of Education may receive monetary gifts or donations of goods or services which serve to improve or enhance the goals of the District. Any gifts to the District become the property of the District and are subject to the same regulations as any other District owned property.

It is a breach of ethical standards and a violation of Arkansas law for any Board member, administrator, or District employee to, in any manner, receive a gift in return for employment, or to influence the award of any contract or transaction with the District. Prior to accepting any gift or donation in the name of a school or the District, all personnel shall examine the "reasonableness" of the gift against its potential for real or perceived violation of the afore-mentioned ethical standards.

The Board reserves the right to not accept any gift or donation that would not contribute to the attainment of District goals or that would obligate the District to unacceptable outlays of District resources. The administration shall present for Board consideration and approval any gifts or donations that they deem could so obligate the District.

The Board will strive to honor the donor's intent regarding gifts earmarked for a specific purpose. Laws and District's needs change with time and the District reserves the right to adjust the use of any gift to meet current needs of the educational program.

Legal References:     A.C.A. § 6-24-110  
                              A.C.A. § 6-24-112

Date Adopted: 07/25/2005

### **6.4—VOLUNTEERS**

Enlisting the support of volunteers is a way in which the District can expand the scope of resources and knowledge available to enrich the students' educational experiences, while strengthening the relationship between the school and the community. Volunteers can also perform non-instructional tasks that allow certified personnel more time to devote to instruction.

The Superintendent shall be responsible for establishing and maintaining a program to coordinate the services volunteers are willing and able to contribute with the needs of District personnel. The program shall establish guidelines to ensure volunteers are aware of pertinent District policies and rules. Volunteers who violate school policies or rules, or knowingly allow students to violate school rules, may be asked to leave the school campus. The guidelines should also include provision for evaluation of the volunteer program and a method for soliciting suggestions from both the volunteers and staff for its improvement.

Date Adopted: 07/25/2005

## **6.5—VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS**

Parents, grandparents, legal guardians, business, and community members are welcome and encouraged to visit District schools. To minimize the potential for disruption of the learning environment, visitors, for a purpose other than to attend an activity open to the general public, are required to first report to the school's main office. No one shall be exempt from this requirement. Visitors who are Level 3 or Level 4 sex offenders may only enter a school campus under the provisions listed in Policy 6.10.

Parents and legal guardians are encouraged to participate in regularly scheduled visitation events such as school open houses and parent/teacher conferences. Additional conferences are best when scheduled in advance. Conferences shall be scheduled at a time and place to accommodate those participating in the conference. Visits to individual classrooms during class time are permitted on a limited basis with the principal's prior approval and the teacher's knowledge.

Parents wishing to speak to their children during the school day shall register first with the office.

The District has the right to ask disruptive visitors to leave its school campuses. Principals are authorized to seek the assistance of law enforcement officers in removing any disruptive visitors who refuse to leave school property when requested to do so<sup>1</sup>.

Cross Reference:       For non-adult visits see Policy 4.16  
                              For Level 3 and Level 4 sex offenders see Policy 6.10

Legal References:     A.C.A. § 6-21-606  
                              A.C.A. § 6-21-607

Date Adopted: 07/25/2005  
Last revised: 04/07/2008; 06/27/2011

## **6.6—FUND RAISING**

All fund raising activities held in the District or in the name of the District must be pre-approved in writing by the Superintendent and affected school principal. Approval will be predicated on the potential for return relative to the time and energy to be invested in the fund raising. Fund raising that conflicts excessively with and/or detracts from student or teacher instructional time in either the planning or the execution of the activity will not be approved.

Neither an individual school nor the District shall be liable for any contract between clubs or organizations and third parties.

Student participation in any fund raising activity shall:

1. Be voluntary. Students who choose not to participate shall not forfeit any school privileges. It shall not be considered discriminatory to reward those who participate;
2. Not influence or affect the student's grade.

### **Secondary Schools**

Fund raising in the secondary schools may only be done by officially sanctioned student clubs, spirit groups, school PTAs, or parent booster clubs. Student clubs and spirit groups must receive written approval from their sponsor and the school principal before submitting the fund raising proposal to the Superintendent.

Door to door fundraising activities are generally discouraged. If approved, students wishing to participate who are under the age of eighteen (18) must return to their sponsor a signed parental notification and permission form.

### **Elementary Schools (K-6)**

Fund raising in the elementary schools may only be done by the school or a school sponsored organization. Door to door fundraising activities are generally discouraged, but there shall be no more than one such activity per school per school year.

Schools must provide written notification of the following to parents or legal guardians of elementary students who participate in fund raising programs.

1. Student participation in fund raising programs is voluntary;
2. Students who do not participate will not forfeit any school privileges;
3. Students may not participate in fund raising programs without written parental permission returned to school authorities;
4. An elementary student who sells fund raising merchandise door to door must be accompanied by a parent or an adult; and
5. Unless the school provides supervision, parents must accept responsibility for appropriate adult supervision.

Legal Reference: A.C.A. § 6-18-1104

Date Adopted: 07/25/2005

## **6.7—COMPLAINTS**

It is a goal of the Board and the District to be responsive to the community it serves and to continuously improve the educational program offered in its schools. The Board or the District welcomes constructive criticism when it is offered with the intent of improving the quality of the system's educational program or the delivery of the District's services.

The Board formulates and adopts policies to achieve the District's vision and elects a Superintendent to implement its policies. The administrative functions of the District are delegated to the Superintendent who is responsible for the effective administration and supervision of the District. Individuals with complaints concerning personnel, curriculum, discipline (including specific discipline policies), coaching, or the day to day management of the schools need to address those complaints according to the following sequence:

1. Teacher, coach, or other staff member against whom the complaint is directed
2. Principal
3. Superintendent

Other than in the few instances where statutorily allowed or required, student discipline and personnel matters may not be discussed in Board meetings. Individuals with complaints regarding such matters need to follow the sequence outlined above.

Unless authorized by the Board as a whole for a specific purpose, no individual Board member has any authority when acting alone. District constituents are reminded that the Board serves as a finder of fact, not unlike a jury in matters regarding student suspensions initiated by the Superintendent, expulsions, and personnel discipline. For this reason, the board may not be involved or informed prior to a board hearing on particular disciplinary matters.

Complaints that are related to district use or administration of federal funds generated through specific programs identified by the Arkansas Department of Education and authorized in the 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act<sup>1</sup> may be taken directly from a patron or by referral from the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE). If taken directly from a patron, the complaint may be submitted by either a signed statement or by a certified, recorded deposition or statement in which the complainant is identified. The complaints shall be addressed in the following manner.

1. The complaint shall be referred to the federal programs director, who shall assemble a team of at least two people to investigate the complaint.
2. Throughout the investigation, sufficient notes and records will be taken and maintained to substantiate the position of the findings of the investigation.
3. The team will interview the complainant and others as necessary to enable the team to make a determination of the validity of the complaint. The team may consult with individuals with knowledge or expertise in the matter which is the subject of the complaint, including legal counsel.
4. The investigation of complaints referred by the ADE shall be completed within 30 work days of receipt of the complaint, unless a longer time period has been approved by the ADE.



## **6.7—COMPLAINTS (cont.)**

5. The investigation of complaints made directly to the district shall be completed within 40 work days unless there are extenuating circumstances; in such a case, a preliminary report shall be made within 40 work days of receipt of the complaint, which shall include an explanation of the unusual circumstances requiring additional time to complete the investigation.
6. The report of the conclusions of the investigation shall be given to the complainant. It shall contain: a summary of the allegations of the complaint; a summary of the investigative actions taken by the team; a summary of the findings concerning each alleged violation or implied violation; a statement of corrective actions needed to resolve the issues involved in each allegation and finding of complaint.

Notes: <sup>1</sup> The ADE's Complaint Resolution Procedures which are part of Commissioner's Memo LS-07-013, specify which specific federal programs are covered by this policy.

Date Adopted: 07/25/2005

Last Revised: 04/07/2008

## **6.8—DISTRIBUTION OF PRINTED MATERIALS**

The District shall devise and maintain a system for distributing District communications and other printed materials between the Administration and the schools. Use of the system by employees or employee organizations shall be with prior approval of the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Distribution of printed materials, flyers, photographs, or other visual or auditory materials not originating within District schools to students or staff shall have prior approval of the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Date Adopted: 07/25/2005

## **6.9—MEDIA RELATIONS AND NEWS RELEASES**

It is important that the District maintain good relations with the media. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall devise and implement a plan for the release of pertinent information to the media regarding educational programs, awards, or other student and staff achievements, and special events. The plan shall not require schools to clear the release of public service announcements through the District Administration prior to their release, but may require Schools to obtain the approval of the Superintendent prior to the release any statistical type data.

The District shall attempt, within reason, to accommodate media requests for interviews and shall endeavor to be fair and impartial in its treatment of media representatives.

The release of information to the media shall be done in a timely manner, either by written releases or by telephone interviews, to keep patrons abreast of newsworthy District achievements and shall strive to be factual and objective with personal opinions duly noted.

The Board encourages students and staff to participate in academic competitions and programs. Awards earned in such endeavors shall be communicated to the media. Award recipients may also be recognized at Board meetings.

Date Adopted: 07/25/2005

## 6.10—SEX OFFENDERS ON CAMPUS (MEGAN’S LAW)

The Flippin School District shall work with area law enforcement in a manner consistent with applicable state law and Arkansas Department of Education Regulations to communicate the presence of a sexual offender. When necessary, law enforcement may contact building principals and give them information concerning registered sex offenders. The decision regarding which school principals to notify rests solely with law enforcement officials who use a rating system to determine those needing to be notified according to the offender’s dangerousness to the community.

Building principals should, in turn, notify any person who in the course of their employment is regularly in a position to observe unauthorized persons on or near the school’s property. Those notified could include employees such as aides, bus drivers, coaches, maintenance staff, professional support staff, school level administrative staff, security personnel, teachers’ assistants, and teachers.

It is important that school personnel receiving notice understand that they are receiving sex offender notifications in their official capacity and are **not** to disseminate information about an offender to anyone outside the school. If school personnel are asked about notification information by an organization using school facilities, they should be referred to the area law enforcement agency that issued the notice.

Persons **not** to be notified except at the specific discretion of area law enforcement officials include members of parent-teacher organizations, other schools, organizations using school facilities, students, parents or guardians of students, and the press. Personnel may inform the press about procedures which have been put in place and other general topics, but may not reveal the name or any other specifics regarding an offender.

A parent or guardian who is a Level 1 or Level 2 sex offender shall be allowed to enter the school campus to attend parent-teacher conferences or any other activity which is appropriate for a parent or guardian, or community member.

Level 3 and Level 4 sex offenders may only enter the school campus in the following instances.

1. The offender is a student attending school in the district;
2. To attend a graduation or baccalaureate ceremony, or a school sponsored event for which an admission fee is charged or tickets are sold or distributed;
3. It is a non-student contact day according to the school calendar or no school-sponsored event is taking place on campus;
4. The offender is a parent or guardian of a student enrolled in the district and goes directly to the school office to have school personnel deliver medicine, food, or personal items for the student;
5. The offender is a parent or guardian of a student and enters the school campus where the student is enrolled to attend a scheduled parent-teacher conference **and** the offender is escorted to and from the conference by a designated school official or employee.

## **6.10—SEX OFFENDERS ON CAMPUS (MEGAN’S LAW) (cont.)**

A Level 3 and Level 4 sex offender who is the parent or guardian of a child enrolled in the district and who wishes to enter the school campus in which the student is enrolled for any other purpose than those listed above, must give reasonable notice to the school principal or his/her designee. The principal or designee may allow the sex offender to enter upon the campus provided there is a designated school official or employee to escort and supervise the sex offender while they remain on campus. The sex offender shall not enter upon the school campus until such time as a designated school official or employee is available.

Copies of the notification from law enforcement should be kept in a secure place accessible to teachers and staff, but should not be posted on school bulletin boards or made available to students or members of the community at large.

Legal References:     A.C.A. § 12-12-913 (g) ~~(2)~~(3)  
                                 Arkansas Department of Education Guidelines for  
                                 “Megan’s Law”  
                                 A.C.A. § 5-14-131

Date Adopted: 07/25/2005  
Last Revised: 04/07/2008

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR 6.11 AND 6.12**

This information is offered to assist you in developing your parental involvement policies/plans and is not to be included in your district's policy manual.

### **Parental Involvement Plan Checklist for ACA § 6-15-1701-1705**

Below is a list of questions that districts can use as a checklist. The purpose of the checklist is to assist school districts in creating a Parental Involvement Plan. Careful attention should be paid to ACA §§ 6-15-1702, 1703, and 1704 as schools and school districts create their Parental Involvement Plans.

1. Who are the people who participated in creating the district's parental involvement plan? Suggestion: create a list of participants, and indicate whether each person is a parent, staff member or member of the community. In the case of parents, reference the parents' names and grade levels of their children, and the school(s) the children attend. Document the dates, times and places that the group met to create the district's parental involvement plan.
2. Do you have copies of each parent packet developed for the various ages and grades of children in the school district? Parent packets must be distributed at least annually. Suggestion: retain copies of each packet and document when and where the packet are distributed to parents.

My school district uses \_\_\_\_\_ (number) different parents' packet for the following age groups (list).

These are given to parents \_\_\_\_\_ (insert occasion(s) or time(s) of year distributed).

Does each packet contain at least the following minimum content:

- description of school's parental involvement program
- state's recommended roles for parents, students, teachers and the school
- ways for parents to become involved in the school and their children's education
- lists activities planned throughout the year to encourage parental involvement
- survey which the parent is invited to complete and return to the school, regarding the parent's interest in volunteering at the school

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR 6.11 AND 6.12 (Cont.)**

-explains system in place to permit meaningful, 2-way communication with a child's teacher and principal. Example: space for teacher comments and parent notes to teacher in the required assignment notebook.

-list any other information your district includes in the parent packet as helpful to parents

3. What are the dates of the (minimum one per semester for K-6) planned parent-teacher conferences scheduled for this school year? Suggestion: retain a copy of the school calendar, with the conference dates circled.
4. What other activities is each school planning that will encourage communication with parents? Example: Weekly newsletter from school to parents sent home with students. Suggestion: collect documentation that relates to all of these activities.
5. What are the titles of the parenting books, magazines, and other informative material related to responsible parenting obtained by the school funds permitting? Have you advertised to parents explaining the existence of this material, and how to borrow this material from the school? Suggestion: retain a copy of any advertising (advertising does not have to be in a commercial medium), and the dates and methods it was communicated to parents. Consider photographing a display of parenting material in your school's media center as further documentation.
6. Where are the district's parent centers? What services and information are available there?
7. What are the other activities planned by the schools and school district that will promote responsible parenting? Suggestion: retain documentation of activities and materials used.
8. What are the dates of the planned parental involvement events? Suggestion: retain copies of any materials distributed.

The meetings must include the following:  
parents are given a report on the state of the school  
parents are given an overview of what students will be learning

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR 6.11 AND 6.12 (Cont.)**

student assessment is explained parents are told what to expect from their child's education parents are told what they can do to assist and make a difference in their child's education instruction is provided to parents on how to incorporate developmentally appropriate learning activities in the home environment such as role playing, the use of the ADE website as a parental tool, assisting in the planning and preparation of nutritional meals, or other at-home parental instruction strategies or curricula approved by the ADE.

9. What other activities are planned by each school in your school district and by the school district as a whole that will help parents assist in their children's education? Suggestion: retain documentation of all planned activities and materials used.
10. Verify that your school district has no policies which would discourage parents from appropriately visiting the school or visiting a child's classroom.
11. Is staff encouraged to utilize the returned surveys from the parent informational to create a volunteer resource book and make it available to school employees? Note that availability options listed on the survey must include the possibility of volunteering once a year as well as the option to perform volunteer work at home. Suggestion: retain a copy of your school district's volunteer resource book, which should list the interests and availability of school district volunteers.
12. What activities does each school in your school district engage in to welcome parents to the school?
13. Does your school/school district have a written process for resolving parental concerns, which includes how to define the problem, whom to approach first and how to develop solutions? The concern resolution process notice must be included in the student handbook.
14. What are the date(s) of the seminar or seminars held to inform parents of high school students about how to be involved in decisions affecting course selection, career planning and preparation for post-secondary education? Suggestion: retain any materials distributed to the parents at such seminars, as well as sign in sheets from the seminars and any material generated to invite parents to such seminars.
15. What are all the other activities that each school in your school district engages in to encourage parents to participate as full partners in the decisions that affect their child and family?

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR 6.11 AND 6.12 (Cont.)**

16. Has your district considered recruiting alumni from your district and encouraging them to form an alumni advisory committee? If so, what are the names of the members of the alumni advisory committee of each school in your school district? Suggestion: if there is such a group, note the dates that they met to provide advice and guidance for school improvement, and any suggestions they made to your school or school district.
17. Does your district have a Parent Teacher Association or Organization? If not, what steps has the district taken to enable such an organization to form which would foster parental and community involvement within your school community? Suggestion: if there is a PTA or PTO, document that the group exists. If no such group exists, document administrative efforts to encourage the formation of such a group or groups.
18. What other activities does each school engage in whereby the schools use community resources to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning?
19. What are the names of those certified staff members in each school designated by the principal to serve as Parent Facilitator? The responsibilities of the Parent Facilitator are to help organize meaningful training for staff and parents and to promote and encourage a welcoming atmosphere for parental involvement and to undertake efforts to ensure that parental participation is recognized as an asset to the school. Suggestions: list the dates of all training sessions organized by each Parent Facilitator; state how the Parent Facilitator in each school has created a welcoming atmosphere; retain a copy of the school district's salary schedule with the stipend paid to Parent Facilitators circled.

Last Revised: 4/26/2010