



SUNSET RIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT 29

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Cultivating a learning community that engages the hearts and minds of students, one child at a time

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SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Priority Objectives

The community's understanding of our schools' programs is important in developing and maintaining a positive relationship between the District and the community. To this end the District will:

1. Provide an information program to aid public understanding of the District and its programs which shall include, but not be limited to, a regular district-wide community newsletter, the district website, regular news releases and stories and periodic community meetings;
2. Assess public opinion as a means to assist the School Board in policy determination and to assist the professional staff in the operation of the schools;
3. Recognize the right of the news media to inquire, and report to the public information about the District and its schools;
4. Foster community understanding and a sharing of responsibility for the quality of education; and
6. Conduct its business in accordance with the Illinois Open Meeting Act.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

News Releases

All District 29 press releases shall be reviewed by the Superintendent.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Illinois Freedom of Information Act

The School Board recognizes that all persons are entitled to request information regarding the official acts and policies of the Board. Accordingly, access to the District's public records shall be granted or denied in accordance with the Illinois Freedom of Information Act and the policies and administrative procedures adopted by the School Board which are available at the District Office at Sunset Ridge School.

Freedom of Information Act

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SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Bond Campaigns

While the Board may, and should, provide the public with information on school building needs, it may not use District funds to advocate “yes” votes on bond issues or referendums.

It is the policy of the Board to activate a Citizens Advisory Committee to examine District needs in advance of any so that the committee may make its finding known both to the Board and to the public.

As the need for bond issue support arises, a Citizens Committee for Better Schools may be encouraged for the purpose of promoting the passage of the bond issue and collecting funds needed for such promotion.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Use of Students in Public Information Programs

Students of the District can stimulate and increase public awareness of school operations by being highlighted in the public information program of the District and their respective schools.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

News Media Relations

The news media represents the public interest in reporting information concerning the District's schools. It is in the interests of both the District staff and the residents of the District that there be free and open communication with the news media.

Employees of the District should channel outgoing information to the media through the Superintendent's office. An employee contacted by the news media regarding the District should exercise discretion and respond within the realm and scope of his personal responsibilities and knowledge. The employee is strongly encouraged to notify the Superintendent of any news media content regarding the District. Employees of the District should not attempt to discuss District related topics with which they have limited familiarity and knowledge.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

News Conferences and Interviews

News conferences shall be held as deemed appropriate by the School Board and/or the Superintendent.

Interviews with District employees can provide the news media with information regarding District programs and policies. Individuals shall not speak for the District without prior approval from the Superintendent and shall avoid answering questions or making statements beyond the scope of their knowledge and responsibilities.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

News Media Services at Board Meetings

One of the primary responsibilities of the School Board is to keep the public informed of its deliberations, policies and actions. Press representatives are encouraged to attend all meetings except closed sessions.

A copy of the meeting agenda will be sent in advance to members of the working press upon request. Additionally, all reports approved by the Board shall be considered matters of official record and shall also be made available to the press upon request.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Broadcasting and Taping of Board Meetings

Any person may tape or film an open meeting of the School Board provided that the recording does not interfere with the overall decorum of the meeting. The School Board may establish reasonable rules to govern such recording.

LEG. REF: Open Meetings Act, Sec. 2.05

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SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Correspondence

When the School Board President or Superintendent receives a written correspondence from a resident within the District requesting the consideration of a matter before the Board, the person shall receive a written reply from an appointed official of the Board. The reply from the District shall be provided to the resident as soon as possible, but no later than sixty (60) days following the receipt of request as required by statute.

Included in the School Board's response shall be a time, date and place for the person to appear before the Board or a list of reasons for denying the person's request.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Community Involvement in Decision-Making

The public has vast resources of training and experience useful to schools. The School Board may call upon persons both as individuals and as groups to act as advisors and resource people as appropriate.

The advice of the public will be given careful consideration.

Public Conduct on School Property

For purposes of this policy, "school property" means school buildings, District buildings not being used as a school, vehicles used for school purposes, any location during a school athletic and other school-sponsored event, and the school grounds.

Visitors are welcome on school property, provided their presence will not be disruptive. All visitors must initially report to the Building Principal. Any person wishing to confer with a staff member should contact that staff member by telephone or e-mail to make an appointment. Conferences with teachers are held to the extent possible, outside school hours or during the teacher's conference/preparation period.

The School District expects mutual respect, civility, and orderly conduct among all individuals on school property or at a school event. No person on school property or at a school event shall:

1. Injure, threaten, harass, or intimidate a student, staff member, a School Board member, sports official or coach, or any other person;
2. Damage or threaten to damage another's property;
3. Damage or deface School District property;
4. Violate any Illinois law, or town or county ordinance;
5. Smoke or otherwise use tobacco products;
6. Consume, possess, distribute, or be under the influence of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs, or possess dangerous devices or weapons;
7. Impede, delay, disrupt, or otherwise interfere with any school activity or function (including using cellular phones in a disruptive manner);
8. Enter upon any portion of school premises at any time for purposes other than those that are lawful and authorized by the School Board;
9. 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;
10. Engage in any risky or dangerous behavior; or
11. Violate other District policies or regulations, or an authorized District employee's directive.

Convicted Child Sex Offender

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

1. A parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student attending the school and the parent(s)/guardian(s) has notified the Building Principal of his/her presence at the school and is: (i) attending a conference at the school with school personnel to discuss the progress of his/her child academically or

socially, (ii) participating in child review conferences in which evaluation and placement decisions may be made with respect to his/her child regarding special education services, or (iii) attending conferences to discuss other student issues concerning his/her child such as retention and promotion.

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.

Enforcement

Any staff member may request identification from any person on school grounds or in any school building; 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, including contacting Law Enforcement as necessary.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Smoking and Using Tobacco on Premises

Illinois statutes prohibit smoking on all school premises.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Exclusive Bargaining Representative Agent

Authorized agents of an exclusive bargaining representative, upon notifying the Building Principal, may meet in a school building before or after the employee's work day and during the employee's duty-free lunch period.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Public Gifts to the Schools

The Superintendent shall recommend to the School Board appropriate gift(s) that individuals or organizations wish to contribute to the District. Guidelines shall be determined by the School Board regarding the acceptability of public gifts to the District.

The School Board will approve all public gifts to the School District.

All gifts received become the property of the School District.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Relations with Community Organizations

The School District has the primary responsibility for the formal education of the students of the District. However, the School Board recognizes that many governmental agencies and community organizations, while not primarily concerned with education, play a definite role in education.

Therefore, the School Board may establish positive working relationships with public and private organizations which contribute to the educational process and to the general welfare of all persons of the community.

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall serve as liaison between the District and community organizations and report to the School Board all communications, contacts and activities between the District and an organization.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Health Authorities

The District shall cooperate with the Cook County Health Department and utilize the services provided by the Department and implement recommendations concerning health matters and sanitation.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Police Authorities

It is the policy of the schools to cooperate with federal, state and local police agencies in the prevention and investigation of unlawful activities. This cooperation is contingent upon respect for the civil and constitutional rights of students and employees as well as the interests and concerns of parent(s)/guardian(s).

Interrogations or interviews by police authorities shall be completed in private and a school district representative may be present. In cases where a student is interrogated or interviewed, his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) must be notified before the commencement of the interrogation or interview and be given reasonable opportunity to attend unless there is good cause why this would be inappropriate. Good cause can include, but is not limited to, situations where the life, safety or well-being of the child might be compromised by the presence of the parent(s)/guardian or in an emergency situation when the health or safety of other members of the public or school community might be threatened before the parent(s)/guardian(s) can be notified. The school representative present at the interrogation or interview may maintain an informal record of the proceedings.

The District shall coordinate a program with the Northfield Police Department which emphasizes safety, security, the dangers of substance abuse, and the nature of police work.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Fire Authorities

The District shall cooperate with the Northfield Fire Department in its efforts to protect the District's buildings and students from danger of fire.

The administration may request the fire department's assistance in the education of students, especially in the areas relating to fire hazards and prevention.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Zoning Authorities

The School Board shall represent the interests of the District before the local zoning authority regarding zoning issues which may have an effect on the District, its operations, facilities, enrollment, tax base, traffic, etc.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Planning Authorities

Acting in its own best interest, the District may cooperate with the local planning authority which guides the development and use of property within or adjacent to the School District.

The School Board will represent the District's interests before the planning authority concerning current and planned use of property within or adjacent to the District and as it may relate to the District's future needs.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Student Teaching and Internships

The School Board may enter into agreements with post-secondary institutions which provide for personnel and facilities during student teaching and/or internship assignments.

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