

SECTION VIII

COMMUNITY SCHOOL RELATIONS

8.1 PUBLIC RELATIONS GOALS AND OBLIGATIONS

The Board is cognizant of the fact that the schools represent but one part of the total education of an individual. The Board of Education recognizes the importance of the community partnership which is necessary to ensure that our children will succeed. The Board will provide sound educational leadership to the community.

The Board believes the task of education should not be limited to the schools. The Board will support all agencies whose goals and objectives are consistent with providing the very best education possible for students.

The Board shall interpret the educational program of the District to the people and invite discussion and suggestions on important educational policies, and shall attempt, at all times, to represent the entire community.

Objectives of the Board shall be:

- To develop citizen understanding of the school system in all aspects of its operation;
- To develop citizen understanding of the need for adequate financial support for a sound educational program;
- To help citizens assume a more direct responsibility for the quality of education the school system provides;
- To earn the good will, respect, and confidence of the citizenry in the personnel and services of the school system;
- To bring about citizen understanding of the need for improvement and what must be done to facilitate essential change;
- To involve citizens in the work of the Board and the solving of its educational problems;
- To invite the assistance, cooperation, and understanding of elected and appointed local officials and committees in the development of educational programs and facilities; and
- To promote a genuine spirit of cooperation between the Board and community in sharing leadership for the improvement of the community and the schools.

8.2. PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Superintendent will be responsible for the development and implementation of an effective public information program. The program will be coordinated on a continual basis and represent all facets of the total school operation.

8.2.1. PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW

The Board will support the usage of a variety of communication techniques to inform the public of the operations in the school system.

8.2.2. HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

One of the most effective information dissemination devices is direct communication between the home and school. The Board encourages the utilization of newsletters, reports, telephone contacts, and visitations in getting information to school patrons and parents.

8.3. NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS

8.3.1. NEWS RELEASES, CONFERENCES AND INTERVIEWS

The Superintendent or designated representative will make provision for adequate dissemination of information to the public.

News conferences and interviews will be authorized by the Board or the Superintendent.

Requests for information will be referred to the Superintendent's Office for interpretation, clarification, and dissemination.

8.3.2. PRESS SERVICES

The Superintendent or designated representative will provide accommodations for press services at all Board meetings, except executive sessions, and will make available pertinent material at the meetings. Sufficient materials will be provided as necessary to provide full coverage.

8.3.3. VIDEOTAPING AND TELEVISIONING

Reasonable efforts shall be made to accommodate the use of audio and video recording devices for the purpose of recording School Board meetings.

8.3.4. SPORTS AND SPECIAL EVENTS COVERAGE

The Superintendent will designate personnel, who will, as a part of their job responsibility, maintain effective liaison with news media representatives for the purpose of adequately publicizing school sports and special events. Provisions will be made by school personnel for press services at school sports and special events when such activities warrant press coverage.

The audio and/or video broadcasting and taping of school sports and special events is authorized by the Board under the following conditions.

- Rules for such coverage as established by the New Mexico Activities Association must be followed.
- No expense for such coverage will be incurred by the Board.
- There will be no videotaping or filming on school grounds or of school activities by commercial enterprises.

8.4. SPEAKER SERVICES

The Board approves of and encourages school personnel to speak to the public about programs in the District schools. The Superintendent will inform the public that such speakers are available from the school system.

8.5. USE OF STUDENTS

The participation of students in interpreting the educational program of the schools to the community shall be encouraged; with the understanding the principal will safeguard that:

- Students shall not be exploited for the benefit of any individual or group;
- Students shall participate only in appropriate situations; and
- The use of students shall always be evaluated in terms of the effect on the student.

8.6. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT DECISION MAKING

Residents of the district shall be encouraged to take an active part in school affairs. Such persons shall be invited to act as advisers, individually and/or in groups, in areas such as the following:

- Giving active assistance to the professional staff in the actual operation of classes and services when and where the staff deems such aid valuable;
- Solving a specific problem or set of closely related problems about which a decision must be made; and
- Operating agencies outside the regular school system that have a direct bearing on the educational or school program.

8.7. ADVERTISING IN THE SCHOOLS

The school system is frequently requested by individuals, firms, groups, or organizations to be allowed to contribute items or goods for use by the school or students that contain some form of advertisement. In order to properly control such requests, the Superintendent or designee will determine the appropriateness of the contribution.

School facilities, school personnel, or students will not be used in any inappropriate manner as a means of advertising or promoting any commercial enterprise or product.

No person shall sell or use student, faculty or staff lists with personal identifying information obtained from a school or the District for the purpose of marketing goods or services directly to students, faculty or staff or their families by means of telephone or mail. The provisions of this policy shall not apply:

1. To legitimate educational purposes, which are determined by rules and regulations developed by the Public Education Department; or
2. When a parent of a student authorizes the release of the student's personal identifying information in writing to the school or District. For the purposes of this policy, "personal identifiable information" means the names, addresses, telephone numbers, social security numbers and other similar identifying information about students maintained by a school or the District.

8.7.1. DISTRIBUTION AND/OR POSTING OF MATERIALS

The school district from time to time permits the distribution of information about appropriate noncommercial activities sponsored by nonprofit organizations. The fact that this information is distributed through the school system does not mean or imply sponsorship of, or support for the activity by the school district. Any problems related to the activity or its operation will be strictly between the participant and the sponsoring organization. Requests for further information should be directed to the organization sponsoring the activity.

Fund raising activities which are requested by agencies not associated with the school district, which request the participation of students through the school, will require permission of

the Superintendent's Office. The District is a member of and encourages its employees to make annual contributions to United Way to support community causes.

- The Board does not advocate the use of employees or students as channels for advertising or distributing materials.
- Activities which require employees or students to assist in promoting campaigns (financial, charitable, educational or otherwise) and demands the time of employees or students will not be permitted without authorization from the Superintendent.
- The Board authorizes the Superintendent to approve advertising by non-school non-profit groups limited to the placement of literature in school offices and/or the display of posters and announcements. Principals, at their discretion, may include the information in newsletters sent home with students.
- The Board authorizes the Superintendent to approve the distribution of materials by non-school non-profit groups to the students when, in the Superintendent's opinion, they are of an educational nature, they are designed to benefit the students, or when they contain information which promotes the best interest of the school district and the community.
- When a principal is approached by a non-school group and requested to participate in the distribution of materials, he should refer the group to the Office of the Superintendent.
- The Superintendent will determine the value of the material and decide the extent and limitations of the distribution.
- No distribution for outside groups will be made which require employees and students to handle funds.
- The district will not directly participate in "thons" (walk-a-thon, etc.) sponsored by outside organizations unless approved by the Superintendent.
- The parent/teacher organizations at each school building may distribute their materials through the students with the approval of the building principal. Materials distributed should be informational in nature. Controversial material must be approved by the Superintendent.
- Materials approved by posting/distribution are to be prepared by the outside organization and delivered to the Superintendent's Office for distribution.

8.8. PUBLIC SALES, ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIPS

8.8.1. PUBLIC SALES

School property will not be used for public sales, unless such sales are sponsored by the school system or the Superintendent has granted permission for the sale on a specific project basis.

8.8.2. SCHOOL ADVERTISING

The school system may sell advertising to the merchants for projects approved by the Superintendent. Such projects should be under the direction of the school principal.

8.8.3. SPONSORS OF BROADCASTS

Radio and television broadcasts of school activities will be sponsored by firms whose products or services are compatible with the interests of the school system.

8.9. PUBLIC USE OF SCHOOL RECORDS

Certain school system records are open for public inspection. These records include, but are not limited to:

- a. Regular or special Board minutes;
- b. Board financial records; and
- c. Board fiscal and business records. Use of such records must be approved by the Superintendent or designated representative.

Requests for inspection or copies of public records, pursuant to the Inspection of Public Records Act, Sections 14-2-1 *et seq.* NMSA 1978, must be made through the Superintendent's Office. The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall be the Custodian of Records. The Custodian of Records will respond to requests for inspection or copies of public records in accordance with the provisions of the Inspection of Public Records Act.

8.10. VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

School patrons and parents on legitimate business are encouraged to visit the school system.

All visitors shall request permission for such visits through the principal of each school unit.

Unauthorized visitors may be charged with trespassing.

8.11. COMPLAINTS

Board Members shall refer persons making complaints about the schools or any phase of the total school operation to the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent may refer the complaint to a school principal or an appropriate central office administrator.

8.12. SCHOOL COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

The school system will cooperate with the community in joint sponsorship of programs where dual effort is to the advantage of both agencies and citizens of the community. Such programs will include:

- a. Recreation;
- b. Athletics;
- c. Adult education;
- d. Special observations; and
- e. Business partnerships.

8.12.1. PARTNERS IN EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Board authorizes the administration to implement a Partners in Education Program that involves the school district and the community in a collaborative effort to create a spirit of involvement in the public schools. The program is based on the premise that the business community and the schools realize the importance of a quality education and will work together to achieve that goal.

The Partners in Education Program will establish a relationship between the schools and the businesses. Participation will be voluntary at all levels.

8.13. SCHOOL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

The Board as an independent body has no statutory relationship to other governmental bodies other than that dictated by ethics, customs, and legal rules and regulations. The Board operates by statute and is held accountable at the local level. It may, however, cooperate with other governing agencies, both educational and civic, to achieve the goal of all governmental bodies, namely, to serve the best interests of the youth and citizens of New Mexico.

8.13.1. ELECTIONS – ALLOWABLE POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

The District Board of Education supports the important democratic process of elections. The Board, therefore, will place at the disposal of the county and city election officials those facilities and activities necessary to conduct public elections. The Superintendent of Schools shall be the official for the school district, who will set the necessary arrangements with the various election officials.

Election officials shall be allowed access to the area of election activities as shall the general public for the purpose of voting. Political materials such as buttons, banners, decals, etc., shall not be worn or attached to school property. Electioneering activities, including but not limited to, exit polling, petitioning, advertisements, placing fliers on vehicles parked on school property, and pamphlet distribution shall not be allowed upon the properties of the District.

Political literature shall not be distributed through the schools to staff members, students or sent home to parents.

Candidates will not be permitted to campaign during school hours on school property. A person serving in a high elective office, such as senator, representative, governor, etc., will be permitted to speak at assemblies in recognition of the office held.

Impartial instructional activities that promote the study of the political/election process are permitted and may include displays of buttons, banners, decals, posters, etc.

8.13.2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

While the Board will maintain complete autonomy at all times, it will in cases, deemed to be in the best interest of the youth and taxpayers of the district, work cooperatively with local governmental agencies.

8.13.2.1. Fiscal Authorities

In fiscal matters at the local level, the Board, through the Superintendent, will maintain liaison with the county treasurer and tax assessor particularly as it pertains to:

- a. County valuation;
- b. School district valuation;
- c. School tax collection; and
- d. School bonds.

8.13.2.2. Taxation Authorities

In taxation matters at the local level, the Board, through the Superintendent, will maintain liaison with the county tax assessor and the city commission particularly as it pertains to:

- a. Property assessment;
- b. Tax rates; and
- c. School district taxes including method of collection and distribution.

8.13.2.3. Election Authorities

The Board, through the Superintendent, will maintain liaison with the county election officials particularly in the areas of:

- a. School bond elections;
- b. School Board elections; and
- c. Other elections which will utilize District-owned facilities.

8.13.2.4. Public Health Authorities

The Board, through the Superintendent, will maintain liaison with city and county health authorities particularly as it pertains to:

- a. Sanitation programs;
- b. Sanitation inspections;
- c. Inoculations;
- d. Cafeteria operations;
- e. Health education programs; and
- f. Drug abuse programs.

8.13.2.5. Public Welfare Authorities

The Board, through the Superintendent, will maintain liaison with public welfare authorities particularly as it pertains to:

- a. Aid for dependent children;
- b. School attendance; and
- c. Student welfare.

8.13.2.6. Parks and Recreation Department

The Board, through the Superintendent, will maintain liaison with the City Parks and Recreation Department pertaining, but not limited to:

- a. Summer recreation programs;
- b. Baseball fields; and
- c. School facilities.

8.13.2.7. Police Department

The Board, through the Superintendent, will maintain liaison with police authorities pertaining, but not limited to:

- a. Student and crowd control;
- b. School zones (traffic and parking);
- c. Safety education programs;
- d. Drug abuse education programs;
- e. Driver education programs; and
- f. Protection of school property.

8.13.2.8. Fire Department

The Board, through the Superintendent, will maintain liaison with the City Fire Department pertaining, but not limited to:

- a. Fire drills;

- b. Fire hazard inspections;
- c. Fire prevention programs; and
- d. Fire safety programs.

8.13.2.9. Civil Defense Agency

The Board, through the Superintendent, will maintain liaison with civil defense agencies in determining the use of school facilities and school personnel.

8.13.2.10. Industrial Development Authorities

The Board, through the Superintendent, will maintain liaison with industrial development authorities pertaining, but not limited to:

- a. School sites;
- b. Industrial zones;
- c. School district population;
- d. Educational opportunities; and
- e. School district tax rate.

8.13.2.11. Public Libraries

The Board recognizes the desirability of and strongly supports the development of a comprehensive public library system for the City. This recognition is related to the Board's continuing support for the development and maintenance of an effective school library system.

8.13.3. STATE GOVERNMENT

The Board derives its powers from the State Constitution, the State Legislature, and finally, the Public Education Department. It is imperative that clear channels of communication be maintained through the Superintendent with state level agencies which have an influence on the educational program. Among the agencies at the state level not directly concerned with education, but having a great impact on education are:

- a. The Legislative Council;
- b. The Legislative Education Study Committee;
- c. The Legislative Finance Committee;
- d. The House and Senate Education Committees;
- e. The Department of Finance and Administration;
- f. The State Auditor;
- g. The State Treasurer; and
- h. The State Land Commissioner.

8.13.3.1. Legislative Representatives

The Board will maintain a close working relationship with the Senate and House Representatives from Torrance County. The Board will seek support of all desirable legislation, but particularly legislation which favorably affects the educational program.

School personnel will make every effort to keep the Torrance County legislators adequately informed concerning education.

8.13.4. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The Board is increasingly involved in federal projects which deal with education. The Board desires a relationship with the federal government which centers on mutual respect for the tasks each must accomplish.

8.13.4.1. Congressional Representatives

The Board will maintain a harmonious relationship with elected federal representatives from New Mexico. The Board will seek support of all desirable legislation, but particularly legislation which favorably affects education.

8.14. SCHOOL-ORGANIZATION RELATIONS

The Board desires the relationship between the schools, churches, and community organizations to be one of mutual confidence and respect with each working toward the betterment of the community and perpetuation of the democratic society in which we live with

each organization adhering to their time honored responsibilities. The scope of each organization is well defined and at no time will one interfere with the other.

8.15. EDUCATION AGENCY RELATIONS

8.15.1. PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The Board will cooperate with parochial and private schools in matters of mutual benefit where not expressly prohibited by law.

The Superintendent is encouraged to explore areas of mutual benefit with the administrative officers of such schools and recommend desirable courses of action.

8.15.1.1. Shared School Services

Services which can legally and practically be shared with private schools may be considered by the Board. The Board reserves the right to decline participation in such shared projects even though regulatory agencies may give approval.

8.15.2. COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The Board believes the well-being of the public schools is directly related to the relationship which exists between higher education and the public schools. The professional staff will exert maximum effort in maintaining a harmonious and profitable relationship with area colleges and universities.

8.15.2.1. Shared Services

Services which can legally and practically be shared with colleges and universities may be considered by the Board. The Superintendent will evaluate proposals for such sharing and make recommendations to the Board.

8.15.2.2. Practice Teaching

The Board welcomes the opportunity for the school system to participate in practice teacher programs. However, the immediate responsibility of the school system is to the children of the District. In order to ensure optimum learning experiences for these children, definite guidelines will be established by the professional staff for the practice teaching program.

8.15.3. STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES

The Board derives much of its authority from state education agencies. The Board views such agencies as beneficial to the overall educational program. The Board will retain its identity as a local Board and will function in a relationship of mutual trust and confidence with these agencies. The most frequent contacts will be with:

- a. The Public Education Department; and
- b. The Public School Finance Division.

8.15.4. UNITED STATES OFFICE OF EDUCATION

The Board respects the task which the Office of Education must accomplish. The Board has agreed to comply with all laws pertaining to the relationship between the Office of Education and the District. Over and above this, the Board will resist federal regulations which erode the position of a local Board of Education. The Board will cooperate fully in programs which are of benefit to the children of the district.

8.15.5. REGIONAL LABORATORIES

The Board supports the philosophy underlying the concept of regional educational laboratories. These centers can be of great value to school systems and the professional staff should seek assistance from them. The regional laboratories are federally funded and as such should contribute to all school systems.

8.16. RESEARCH STUDIES

The Board desires to cooperate as far as possible with colleges, universities, and other agencies in promoting potentially profitable research. Because of the large number of requests to make questionnaire and interview studies in our schools, the Superintendent shall be responsible for determining the studies that will be acceptable for participation.

8.17. CLEAN AIR POLICY

Pursuant to the Clean Air Act of 1985, the following policy will be in effect:

School buildings, grounds, and school-owned vehicles occupied by employees and students or utilized by the public for various functions and activities shall be designated non-smoking areas. Smoking and use of tobacco products shall be prohibited on school property. This shall include property owned or leased by the district including school buildings, grounds, and school-owned vehicles. This ban extends to all employees, students, and patrons attending

school-sponsored events and meetings during or after the regular school day including school-sponsored activities outside the school district. Smoking is prohibited during outdoor events.

“No Smoking” signs will be posted in all areas of public school buildings and facilities including school-owned vehicles and at all public entrances in a position where each sign is clearly visible upon entry.

A violation of this policy by any employee of the district will be considered insubordination and will subject the employee to disciplinary action, pursuant to existing policies of the district.

A violation of this policy by any student will result in immediate disciplinary action as specified in the DISTRICT Elementary and Secondary Disciplinary policies.

Citizens who are observed smoking or using tobacco products on school district property in prohibited areas shall be asked to refrain from smoking on school property. Repeated violations may result in prohibiting the individual from entering school district property for a specified period of time.

Administrators of the school district will be responsible for compliance in school district public places and at public meetings.