

## **SECTION 8: SCHOOL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

- 8.010 Family and Community Engagement
- 8.011 Public Information Program
- 8.012 School/Community Relations Goals
- 8.013 Public's Right to Know
- 8.015 News Media Relations
- 8.018 Broadcast/Cablecast Coverage
- 8.019 Staff/Student Interviews and Photographs
- 8.021 Relations with Community Organizations
- 8.026 Advertising in the Schools
- 8.040 Public Sales on School Property
- 8.050 Visitors to the Schools
- 8.080 Public Donations and Gifts to the Schools
- 8.090 Parent Organizations, Booster Clubs and Foundations
- 8.092 Free Admissions for Senior Citizens
- 8.103 Relations with Other Educational Institutions
- 8.104 Relations with Educational Research Agencies
- 8.108 Relations with Governmental Authorities
- 8.512 Public Participation at Board Meetings

## FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

It is the policy of School District U-46 Board of Education to encourage and support family and community engagement in education, at home, in our schools and communities, and through school/parent groups. The Board respects families as important decision-makers for their children's education.

The Board believes that family engagement is critical to the success of each student. In the pursuit of this goal, the Board is committed to ensuring that U-46 schools develop and implement practices and procedures that are broadly inclusive and that provide opportunities for all parents/guardians and families to become involved in their student's education regardless of economic, social or cultural circumstances.

The Board expects the District to establish a culture of best practices for engaging family and community members in support of academic achievement for all students, when possible, practical and appropriate, by:

1. Involving parents/guardians in shared decision making.
2. Establishing effective two-way communication with all parents/guardians, respecting the diversity and differing needs of families.
3. Developing strategies and programmatic structures at schools to empower parents/guardians to participate actively in their children's education.
4. Providing support and coordination for school staff and parents/guardians to implement and sustain meaningful family engagement from pre-K through grade twelve.
5. Utilizing schools to connect students and families with community resources that provide educational enrichment and support.

This commitment will be evidenced by providing:

### Development of District-level Family Engagement Initiatives

The Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent/designee will facilitate the implementation of this policy by:

1. Developing, implementing, and reviewing a District family and community engagement plan. This engagement plan will incorporate the six components of Family and Community Engagement maintained by the School/Community Relations office.
2. Assessing of current practices on an ongoing basis.
3. Providing support for principals and the school communities in the development and implementation of school-level initiatives.

### Development of School-level Family Engagement Initiatives

In collaboration with the school community, each building principal will oversee the development of a school level Family Engagement Plan. The plan shall contain:

1. A process for continually involving parents/guardians in the development and implementation of the family engagement plan. This engagement plan will incorporate the six components of Family and Community Engagement maintained by the School/Community Relations office.
2. A statement of how parents/guardians, school staff and students share the responsibility for improved student achievement. The means by which the school and parents/guardians will build and develop a partnership to help children be prepared to succeed in college and careers.
3. A strategic communications plan.

2009/2013/2019

Amended: 3.11.2019

## PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM

The Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent/designee will maintain a public information program which includes planned and systematic two-way communications between District U-46 and its internal and external stakeholders.

District U-46 will strive to provide its public with clear and concise information about the School District. This information will serve to increase the public's knowledge and understanding and to cultivate a partnership between the home and the school.

Publications, audio-visual presentations and digital informational pieces will be produced periodically by the District to supply information about policies, long and short range goals and objectives, planning and management of District operations, and educational programs and activities.

The School/Community Relations Office will be responsible for coordinating District information activities. All schools/departments will maintain channels of communication with families and community members.

## SCHOOL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS

The success of District U-46's educational program depends on strong support from the residents of the communities we serve. Members of the Board of Education and District staff will maintain channels of communication with the community of School District U-46 through a systematic, two-way communications effort.

The goals of the school/community relations effort will be:

- a. To establish procedures that will increase articulation and understanding of District policies and initiatives among all personnel.
- b. To use multimedia integrated communications and strategies for our internal and external audiences.
- c. To encourage a climate that is open for positive change.
- d. To encourage District staff to become involved in community activities and collaborate with members of the community on special projects.
- e. To provide the community with multiple methods and channels of communication with the District.
- f. To establish methods which provide for school/community involvement in District priorities.
- g. To actively seek community participation in our schools.
- h. To solicit information valuable to the District.
- i. Support, develop and model successful family and community engagement throughout the District.

1986/1987/1989/1997/2001/2009/2013/2019

Amended: 3.11.2019

## PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW

Access to District's Public Records

The District's "public records" are those documents, tapes, photographs, letters, and any other recorded information or material, regardless of physical form or characteristic, that were prepared, used, received, or possessed by, or under the control of, the District, a school, a school official, or an employee. Public records shall be preserved and cataloged, including e-mail messages, if they: (1) are evidence of the District's organization, function, policies, procedures, or activities, or (2) contain informational data appropriate for preservation. Public records that are required to be preserved and cataloged may be destroyed when authorized by the Local Records Commission.

The Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent/designee shall respond to requests made under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act from anyone desiring access to and/or copying of a District's public record. The Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent/designee shall approve the request, unless:

1. The requested material is:
  - a. Not a "public record" as defined in this policy;
  - b. Exempt from inspection and copying by the Freedom of Information Act or any other state or federal law; or
  - c. Not required to be preserved or cataloged; or
2. Complying with the request would be unduly burdensome.

Within five business days after receipt of a request for access to a public record, the Freedom of Information Officer shall comply with or deny the request, unless the time for response is extended as specified in Section 3 or FOIA. The FOIA officer may extend the time for a response for up to 5 business days from the original due date. If an extension is needed, the FOIA officer shall: (1) notify the person making the request of the reason for the delay, and (2) either inform the person of the date on which a response will be made or agree with the person in writing on a compliance period.

When responding to a request for a record containing both exempt and non-exempt material, the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent/designee shall delete exempt information from the record before complying with the request. The Board president or Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent shall report to the Board at each regular meeting any Freedom of Information Act requests as well as the status of the response.

The Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent shall implement this policy with administrative procedures. The Board sets copy fees periodically.

LEGAL REF.: 5 ILCS 140/1 et seq.; 105 ILCS 5/10-16

CROSS REF.: 2.222 – Minutes; 5.151 - Personnel Records; 7.340 - Student Records

1986/1987/1989/1997/2004/2010/2019

Amended: 3.11.2019

## NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS

The District will maintain professional, impartial relationships with news media representatives. Coverage by news media of District events is encouraged, but such coverage must be coordinated in a manner that will not interfere with the educational process. The Board of Education welcomes coverage of all its public meetings and will make all appropriate and accurate information and materials available to support media coverage of Board deliberations and actions. The Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent/designee will authorize the release of information through the Department of School and Community Relations.

## BROADCAST/CABLECAST COVERAGE

It is the policy of School District U-46 to cooperate (space permitting) with requests to broadcast/cablecast District and/or school events. Requests for broadcasting/cablecasting should be directed to the Director of School and Community Relations at least five working days prior to the event for which permission is being sought. Priority consideration will be given to requests from local media.

All broadcast/cablecast coverage:

- must be pre-approved by the Office of School and Community Relations
- must not interfere with the educational process
- may not violate copyright restrictions

This policy does not restrict journalistic coverage of the District and its schools.



STAFF/STUDENT INTERVIEWS  
AND PHOTOGRAPHS/IMAGES/WORK

The Board of Education recognizes the right of staff members, as individuals, to speak to media representatives. However, employees speaking on behalf of District U-46 will be so authorized by the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent/designee while employees speaking on behalf of a particular school will be so authorized by the Principal.

Students may be interviewed regarding the educational programs in which they participate. All requests for student interviews must be approved by the principal. In all instances however, the District will comply with the requirements of the Illinois School Student Records Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Students may not be photographed or filmed for commercial purposes unless authorized by the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent/designee. In such cases, written releases will be obtained from the parent/guardian. The need for written release does not apply to news photographs or District publications/productions in print, on video or on the Web as well as student art work. The Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent/designee shall create procedures consistent with this policy.

CROSS REF.: Board Policy #7.360

1986/1987/1989/1997/2001/2005/2009/2013/2019  
Amended: 3.11.2019

## RELATIONS WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

The Board of Education believes that the District schools have the primary responsibility for the formal education of the children and youth of the community. However, the Board recognizes that many community organizations also have an interest in the education of students. Therefore, it will be the desire of the Board of Education to establish positive working relationships with all other public and private organizations which contribute to the educational process and to the general welfare of the community members of the District.

## ADVERTISING IN THE SCHOOLS

Community, education, charitable, recreational or similar groups may, with the approval of the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent/designee, advertise events pertinent to students' interests or involvement. All materials must be student-oriented and have the sponsoring organization's name permanently displayed.

No materials or literature shall be posted or distributed that would: (1) disrupt the educational process, (2) violate the rights or invade the privacy of others, (3) infringe on a trademark or copyright, or (4) be defamatory, obscene, vulgar or indecent.

Requests for commercial advertising or the obtaining of sponsors for school publications in the respective schools will be considered by the appropriate committee with the approval of the principal. Such advertising will be of good taste and be supportive to the overall best interest of students. Receipts from such advertising will be applied toward the cost of publication.

### Commercial Companies and Political Candidates or Parties

Commercial companies may purchase space for their advertisements in or on school facilities, including but not limited to: (1) athletic field fences; (2) athletic, theater, or music programs; (3) scoreboards; or (4) other appropriate location. The advertisements must be consistent with this policy and its implementing procedures and must be approved by the School Board.

No Board approval is needed for commercial material related to graduation, class pictures, class rings, or non-permanent advertisements unless it is intended to generate more than \$5000 in revenue or other remunerations for the District or school. The Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent/designee shall develop procedures for review and approval of commercial material and/or advertisements less than \$5,000. These procedures will include a definition of "non-permanent advertisements."

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

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

PUBLIC SALES ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

Public sales will not be permitted nor conducted on school property unless they are in conjunction with a school-sponsored event which will directly or indirectly benefit students and/or their schools.

## VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

The Board of Education welcomes and encourages visitors who share a common interest and concern in District U-46 programs and operations. Primary considerations for District personnel when receiving visitors will be the welfare and safety of students and staff as well as the continuity of the educational program.

Any staff member may request identification from any person on school grounds or in any school building. The building principal or designee shall seek the immediate removal of any person who: (1) refuses to provide requested identification or (2) interferes with, disrupts, or threatens to disrupt any school activity or learning environment. Any person who engages in conduct prohibited by this policy may be ejected from school property. The person is also subject to being denied admission to school events or meetings for up to one calendar year.

Before any person may be denied admission to school events or meetings for an extended period of time, as provided in this policy, the person has a right to a hearing before the Board. The hearing shall be conducted by a Board appointed hearing officer, and a report shall be prepared for the Board, who shall review the report and make a decision as to whether to deny admission and the length of the denial. The Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent may refuse the person admission pending such hearing. The Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent/designee must provide the person with a hearing notice, delivered or sent by certified mail with return receipt requested, at least 10 days before the Board hearing date. The hearing notice must contain:

1. The date, time and place for the Board hearing;
2. A description of the prohibited conduct;
3. The proposed time period that admission to school events will be denied; and
4. Instructions on how to waive a hearing.

Persons on school property without permission will be directed to leave and may be subject to criminal prosecution. School Property is defined as school buildings and grounds, all District buildings and grounds, vehicles used for school purposes, and any location used for a School Board meeting, school athletic event, or other school-sponsored event.

The School District expects mutual respect, civility, and orderly conduct among all people on school property or at a school event. No person on school property or at a school event (including visitors, students and employees) shall interfere with, disrupt or threaten to disrupt any school activity or learning environment or violate any Board policy.

### Convicted Child Sex Offender

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

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

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

LEGAL REF.: Illinois School Code: 105 ILCS 5/10-20.6; 105 ILCS 5/24-25

## PUBLIC DONATIONS AND GIFTS TO THE SCHOOLS

Donations and gifts that are compatible with District programs, facilities and equipment are encouraged. Such donations and gifts will receive prior review by the appropriate District official, and upon acceptance become the sole property of District U-46. All donations and/or gifts to the District must adhere to each of the following:

1. All donations and/or gifts must be consistent with the District's mandate to provide equal educational and extracurricular opportunities to all students in the District as provided in Board Policy. State and federal laws require the District to provide equal treatment for members of both sexes to educational programing, extracurricular activities, and athletics. This includes the distribution of athletic benefits and opportunities.
2. All donations and/or gifts must permit the District to maintain resource equity among its learning centers.
3. All donations and/or gifts must be viewpoint neutral. The Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent/designee shall manage a process for the review and approval of donations involving the incorporation of messages into or placing messages upon school property.
4. All donations and/or gifts must comply with all laws applicable to the District including, without limitation, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Prevailing Wage Act, the Health/Life Safety Code for Public Schools, and all applicable procurement and bidding requirements.

While the Board encourages unrestricted gifts, donations to fund specific projects or schools are acceptable if the project is approved by the Board. The Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent/designee shall develop procedures for review and approval of donations that either involve incorporating and/or placing messages upon school property, or that are less than \$5000. These procedures shall ensure each gift and/or donation is reviewed on a case by case basis pursuant to this policy.

Parents and Booster Organizations should reference Board Policy #8.090 with respect to fundraising efforts and project approval.

LEGAL REF.: Illinois School Code: 105 ILCS 5/16-1

CROSS REF.: Board Policies: 8.026 – Advertising in the Schools; 8.090 – Parent Organizations, Booster Clubs and Foundations; 7.010 – Equal Education Opportunities; 2.250 – Equity Policy

1986/1987/1989/1997/2001/2011/2013/2015/2019

Amended: 3.11.2019

## PARENT ORGANIZATIONS, BOOSTER CLUBS AND FOUNDATIONS

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

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

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

Permission to use one of the above-mentioned names or logos may be rescinded at any time and does not constitute permission to act as the District's representative. At no time does the District accept responsibility for the actions of any parent organization, booster club, or foundation, regardless of whether it was recognized and/or permitted to use any of the above-mentioned names or logos. The Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent shall designate an administrative staff member to serve as the liaison to parent organizations, booster clubs, or foundations. The liaison will serve as a resource person and provide information about school programs, resources, policies, guidelines, and emerging issues. The activities of such organizations will be coordinated with the appropriate administrator, and projects impacting the overall District will be pre-



approved by the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent/designee. Parent organizations that intend to raise funds for the neighborhood school must comply with any applicable State or federal laws, including the Illinois Not for Profit Corporate Act. Building staff will be encouraged to participate in the organization.

1986/1987/1989/1997/2001/2006/2011/2013/2019  
Amended: 3.11.2019

### FREE ADMISSIONS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

Persons sixty-two years of age or older and who are residents of School District U-46 who present a driver's license or state identification card showing date of birth shall receive free admission for all school activities, including athletic events that occur within U-46 facilities.

This privilege represents a small token of appreciation from the Board of Education for contributions made by District senior citizens.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The Board of Education will cooperate whenever possible with institutions of higher education, other school districts and with other local, state, and regional educational agencies and organizations in matters of common concern.

## RELATIONS WITH EDUCATION RESEARCH AGENCIES

The Board of Education recognizes the potential contribution of appropriate educational research to learning, teaching and school administration. To the extent possible, School District U-46 will cooperate with colleges, universities, and other recognized agencies in legitimate research projects.

The appropriateness of all such requests will be determined by the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent/designee.

CROSS REF.: Board Policies 5.151 - Personnel Records; 7.340 - Student Records; 8.013 - Public's Right to Know

Code: 8.108

## RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES

Cooperation between the school district and local governmental agencies, including law enforcement officials, is both necessary and appropriate.

1986/1987/1989/1997

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS

The Board of Education welcomes public participation at Board meetings where such participation does not disrupt the orderly business of the Board.

The president of the Board will rule on questions of public participation. The Board of Education reserves the privilege of limiting public comment. Community Members of the public who wish to speak during the Public Comment portion of Board Meetings will complete a “Request to Speak” card for the record and will be allowed to speak before the Board of Education pursuant to the Board’s Guidelines on Public Participation.

Cross Ref: Board Policy 2.110 – Board Officers

1986/1987/1989/1994/1997/2001/2013/2019

Amended: 3.11.2019