

Section 9000 — Relations

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Public Relations

The success of the school system is dependent on the cooperation and participation of many people. The Board believes that the advancement of the school's efforts is fostered as the community and staff develops and maintains confidence in the school system. Such confidence can only be founded on an understanding and awareness of the Board's purposes, programs and facilities and Board knowledge of the public's attitude.

In support of this policy, publicity shall be given to the major changes or innovations which occur from time to time in curriculum, in teaching procedures, and in physical facilities. Publicity shall be balanced. All schools, all grades, all subject matter fields, and all types of activities shall be reported.

All publicity concerning a school and its program to be released through the news media must be cleared by the building principal. Individual photographs identifying a child may be released if they:

- a. in no way reflect on the child's lack of ability;
- b. are not derogatory in nature;
- c. do not identify the child as a special education pupil; or
- d. would not, in any way, cause a child embarrassment.

Copies of all news releases are to be forwarded to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools. The Office of the Superintendent will help interpret the school program to the public as accurately and effectively as possible.

District Publications and Public Information

The Board of Education encourages the use of the highest standards possible in the publication of all documents by and in the name of the district, since their content serves as a direct reflection on the schools and district.

The Board of Education believes that citizens must be adequately informed if they are to vote constructively in school elections. Therefore, the Superintendent of Schools and his/her staff shall utilize all available school-sponsored media or communication, such as publication radio and TV, to keep the goals, programs, achievements and needs of the schools before the public. The Superintendent may delegate authority to his/her central administrative staff and to the school principals, as he/she sees fit, but he/she retains ultimate responsibility for all district publications.

The Superintendent is responsible for all informational services to and from the public, except for those matters that the Board desires to deal with directly. The Board shall be responsible for disseminating information through the following channels:

A periodic newsletter to keep the public informed on:

- issues before the Board
- notices of school-based planning and shared decision making meetings
- student accomplishments and special activities
- developments in educational programs and curriculum
- new policies, laws, and requirements
- general school life

Use of any publications shall be restricted to school purposes as approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee. The content of all publications is subject to approval by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

No document or publication sponsored or approved by the Board may contain:

1. libelous, or slanderous material;
2. material derogatory to any race, creed, religion, national origin, or gender which advocates discrimination;
3. obscene or offensive language;
4. material advocating the cause of any individual, political or social action group including material which communicates a partisan viewpoint (pro or con) regarding a candidate for District Office, the budgets or a proposition.

Public Complaints and Grievances

Any person or group having a legitimate interest in the schools of this District shall have the right to present a request, suggestion, complaint, or grievance concerning District personnel, the program, or the operations of the District. At the same time, the Board has a duty to protect its staff from unnecessary harassment. It is the intent of this policy to provide the means for judging each public complaint and grievance in a fair and impartial manner and to seek a remedy where appropriate.

It is the desire of the Board to rectify any misunderstandings between the public and the School District by direct discussions of an informal type among the interested parties. Only when such informal meetings fail to resolve the differences shall more formal procedures be employed.

Any requests, suggestions, complaints, or grievances reaching the Board, Board members, or administrative staff members shall be referred to the Superintendent for consideration or his/her designees. No response should be expected unless the matter has been set forth in writing.

School Diversity

It is the policy of the Board of Education to provide appropriate educational opportunities to every child in the District in accordance with his/her needs and the diversity within the District. It is the goal of the Board of Education to achieve racial, ethnic and socio-economic balance in each school and each program within the Newburgh Enlarged City School District reflective of the racial, ethnic and socio-economic make-up of the school community without necessarily attempting to be proportionate of it. It is the further goal to continually monitor and eliminate racial isolation and discrimination wherever it may occur in accordance with the federal consent decree dated October 22, 1979 and the Decision of the Commissioner of Education No. 9149 dated December 3, 1975.

The following means and methods may be utilized to achieve these goals:

1. Attendance Zones
2. Magnet Schools
3. House and Academy Programs at the secondary schools
4. Strategically locating schools
5. Strategically locating programs

Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate a parent's/student's first or second choice of school of attendance within the strictures of space availability and the student's special needs that can only be accommodated in a particular school (e.g., English language learners, special education).

School Visitors

The Board of Education welcomes and encourages interest on the part of parents and community members in school programs and student activities. The Board also welcomes visits to school buildings by parents and community members provided that such visits are consistent with the safety and welfare of students and staff, and are not disruptive of the student learning process or employee work environment. Therefore, visits to schools by parents, members of the community and others not directly engaged in the educational and support programs (“visitors”) are subject to certain rules and regulations. The Building Principal or other administrator in charge of a building or his/her designee is responsible for all persons in their building and on its grounds.

Visitors may be permitted access to the schools to attend activities in which students are engaged during the school day with the advance permission of the Building Principal. If a prior appointment has not been arranged, approval of the Building Principal is required. Visits to school buildings and premises for after-school student programs and events shall be subject to the rules for Public Conduct on School Property contained within the District’s Code of Conduct.

Immediately upon entering the school building, all visitors shall report to the reception desk, show photo identification and sign the visitor’s register. All visitors shall sign-out at the reception area prior to leaving the building. Visitors attending school functions that are open to the public (such as PTA/PTO meetings or public gatherings) are not required to register. Signs shall be posted where visitors enter the building, in both English and Spanish, notifying of these requirements and that anyone violating this policy and its implementing regulations shall be subject to prosecution pursuant to New York State law.

The Superintendent of Schools, central office administrators, building principals, school security personnel, school custodian and any member of the Board of Education is individually authorized to prohibit the entry of any person to a school building in this District or to expel any person when there is reason to believe the presence of such person would be inimical to the good order of the building. If an individual refuses to leave the building or grounds or creates a disturbance, the administrator or other person in charge of the building is authorized to request assistance from the local law enforcement agency.

Any person who interferes with the learning process or causes disruption in the buildings or on school premises shall be subject to removal at the request of the Building Principal, administrator in charge, security personnel or other person in charge of the facility at the time of the interference or disruptive act. Any such person shall also be subject to the consequences set forth in the Code of Conduct for Public Conduct on School Property.

Employees and volunteers are not authorized to bring their child(ren) to the school buildings during the school day.

The Superintendent shall promulgate regulations for the protection of the students and staff of the District from disruption to the educational program and interference with the work environment.

Volunteers in the Schools

The Board of Education recognizes that the use of volunteers strengthens school/community relations through positive participation, builds an understanding of school programs among interested citizens and can assist District employees in providing more individualized and enriched opportunities to students. The Board encourages volunteers from all backgrounds and age groups who are willing to share their time, training, experience or personal characteristics to benefit the students of the District.

Volunteers may be involved in many facets of school operations, from assisting in the classroom to reading to students to performing clerical tasks, at the discretion of the Building principal.

- 1) Volunteers shall not be used to provide one-on-one tutoring or other instruction to students, to correct student work or to provide transportation for school sponsored activities.
- 2) No volunteer shall have unsupervised direct contact with students except in emergency circumstances.
- 3) Use of volunteers shall not conflict with or replace any duly appointed and/or authorized District personnel or the duties/job responsibilities of such personnel.
- 4) Volunteers may not be assigned the responsibility for disciplining students but may assist the teacher in maintaining proper behavior of students and report behavioral problems to the teacher.
- 5) Volunteers may not supervise a class in the absence of the teacher.
- 6) Volunteers may not contact parents regarding the performance of students.
- 7) Volunteers must maintain the confidentiality of all information learned about students and the school.
- 8) Volunteers must sign in and sign out of the building in which they volunteer at all times.

School personnel who are responsible for tasks or projects that involve the use of volunteers shall identify appropriate tasks and time schedules for such volunteer activities as well as make provisions for adequate and appropriate supervision and evaluation.

Persons wishing to volunteer must contact the Building Principal or other individual designated by the Superintendent or Building Principal, and must complete a volunteer application form. The application form shall require the volunteer applicant to disclose any criminal convictions and to identify two non-family member personal references. The Building Principal shall be responsible for contacting the personal references to verify that the individual is of good moral character before the volunteer application is forwarded to the Superintendent or designee for review and approval. One form of photo identification shall be required of each volunteer applicant. A criminal background check may be required of volunteer applicants. Any volunteer applicant with a previous criminal conviction must also be reviewed and approved by the Board of Education.

Approved volunteers must sign a Confidentiality Agreement certifying that they will respect the privacy rights of students by not disclosing to any individual and not discussing with any other individual, including family members, information regarding a specific student or students.

The District shall retain a complete record of all information obtained through the application process for the same period of time it retains information regarding District employees.

All volunteers are required to follow District policies, regulations and procedures, as well as any school rules. Any staff member who supervises a volunteer(s) who becomes aware that a volunteer has violated District policies, regulation, procedures or school rules shall promptly report any violations to the Building Principal and/or the Superintendent of Schools, who shall determine whether to withdraw approval for the individual to provide volunteer services to the District.

Any volunteer against whom an allegation of child abuse has been made shall not, pending resolution of the allegations, be permitted to render volunteer services to the District.

Each Building Principal shall be responsible for maintaining a current and complete list of all active, approved volunteers in the schools and their assignments.

This Policy shall not apply to student teachers and other students who perform services for the District under the auspices of a college or university program in coordination with the District.

The Superintendent will develop regulations to implement this Policy.

Parent Involvement

The Board of Education believes that positive parent involvement is essential to student achievement and, thus, encourages such involvement in school educational planning and operations. The Board, in accordance with the parent involvement goals of Title I, Part A of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), specifically encourages the participation of parents of students eligible for Title 1 services in all aspects of their child's education.

District Level Parent Involvement Policy

In furtherance of these beliefs and goals, and with the ultimate goal of providing all families within the District with involvement in their child's education, the Board of Education will:

- Develop and implement programs, activities and procedures that encourage and support the participation of parents of students eligible for Title I services in all aspects of their child's education.
- Ensure that all of its schools including those receiving Title I, Part A funds develop and implement school level parent involvement policies.
- Develop and implement programs, activities and procedures that encourage and support the participation of parents of students who are not eligible for Title I services in all aspects of their child's education.
- Ensure that school-level parent involvement programs, activities and procedures provide opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities and parents of migratory children.

The term "parent" refers to a natural parent, legal guardian or other person standing in loco parentis (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the child's welfare).

As required by the NCLB, parents of students eligible for Title I services will be provided an opportunity to participate in the development of the district's Title I plan, and to submit comments regarding any aspect of the plan that is not satisfactory to them. Their comments will be forwarded with the plan to the State Education Department.

Parents will participate in the process for developing a school improvement plan when the school their child attends fails to make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years and is identified as a school in need of improvement.

Six Types of Parent Involvement

The Board encourages parent involvement both in the classroom and/or during extracurricular activities as well as at home (e.g., planned home reading time, informal learning activities, and/or homework contracts between parents and children). In an effort to encourage parent involvement, the Board directs the Superintendent of Schools to develop a program that includes the six types of parent involvement outlined by the National Network of Partnership Schools and endorsed by the National PTA:

1. **Parenting:** Help families establish home environments to support children as students.
2. **Communicating:** Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress.

3. **Volunteering:** Recruit and organize parent help and support.
4. **Learning at Home:** Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions and planning.
5. **Decision-Making:** Include parents in school decisions, develop parent leaders and representatives.
6. **Collaborating with Community:** Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices and student learning and development.

Communication to Parents

The Superintendent is authorized and encouraged to develop parent-friendly materials to communicate this policy to District parents and members of the community in an effort to promote and sustain parent involvement.

The goal of these and all communications to parents is to ensure that information related to school and parent-related programs, meetings and other activities is sent to the parents of students, including those participating in Title I programs, in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats, upon request, and to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.

The Newburgh Enlarged City School District's District-Wide Parent Involvement Policy will be made available to all families in written form in each school's main office as well as on the District website and printed in the Community Calendar sent to homes at the beginning of the school.

Coordination of Parental Involvement Strategies

1. Community Agencies and Programs

The District will coordinate and integrate strategies adopted to comply with the NCLB Title I, Part A parent involvement requirements with parent involvement strategies adopted in connection with existing community partners such as the Center for Youth Development Liberty Partnerships Program, Head Start of Eastern Orange County, 21st Century programs, Boys and Girls Clubs of Newburgh, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Orange County, Literacy Orange of New York, Best Resource Center, Inc., etc. The District shall demonstrate its compliance with this project by participating both in resource and information sharing as well as in joint initiatives.

2. District Staff Resources

The Board recognizes the need to dedicate staff resources to the coordination of the District's parent involvement efforts including providing for the creation of and funding for a liaison to parents.

Parent Representation

1. Building Planning Teams

Every school in the District is required to have a Building Planning Team. A minimum of two (2) parent representatives shall serve on the Building Planning Team for each school. Parent representatives shall be responsible for communicating with their constituencies and for representing parent opinion on the teams.

2. Parent Teacher Organizations

Schools will support parent-teacher organizations. Principals will work collaboratively with the parent-teacher organizations of their school to develop and sustain parent involvement in their school.

This policy in no way eliminates or diminishes an individual parent's right to make his or her feelings known at any level in the District on any topic of concern, nor does it prevent the District from involving individual parents in other appropriate situations.

Annual Evaluation

The Board, along with its Superintendent of Schools and other appropriate staff will conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent involvement policy. This annual evaluation will include the identification of barriers to greater participation by parents and the revision of parent involvement policies necessary for more effective involvement.

School-Level Parent Involvement Policies

The Superintendent of Schools will ensure that all District schools are provided with technical assistance and support to assist them in planning and implementing effective parent involvement policies identifying programs and activities that improve student achievement and school performance.

Evaluation

All school-level policies will be evaluated at least every three years and, if warranted, revised. Building administrators will include all necessary constituents of the school community (e.g., administrators, Title I parents, teachers, CSEA) in the evaluation and revision of the school-level parent involvement policy.

Building Capacity for Parent Involvement

The District will endeavor to build parent capacity for strong parent involvement to improve their child's academic achievement, the district and its schools through:

1. The provision of activities at the District-level, such as workshops, classes, and materials whose goal is to assist parents in understanding such topics as the state's academic content and student achievement standards, state and local academic assessments, Title I requirements, how to monitor their child's progress and how to work with educators to improve the achievement of their child.
2. The provision of materials and training at the Building level to help parents understand how children learn and how to work with their children to strengthen their academic achievement.
3. The development of opportunities for staff in understanding the value and utility of a parent's contributions and how to:
 - Reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners
 - Implement and coordinate parent programs and activities; and
 - Build ties between parents and the schools.

The Board directs the Superintendent of Schools to develop strategies, programs and communications tools to encourage parent involvement at the Building and District level.

Parent-Teacher Groups

Inasmuch as Parent Organizations or Parent Teacher Associations have as their purpose to work with the school for the educational welfare of children, to act as a source of information regarding the school's efforts and to reinforce those efforts at home, the Board adopts as its policy the approval of such purposes and instructs the Superintendent and through him/her the principals to participate in, cooperate with, and give guidance to the activities of such organizations whenever requested.

Booster Clubs

Booster clubs or other related organizations may be created to promote community support and to raise funds for specific school activities or programs. These groups, while independent of the District, must be recognized by Board approval prior to engaging in fundraising in our schools, at school events or using our students and staff. These groups may not discriminate on the basis of sex, color, national origin, ethnic background, disability, religion, sexual orientation or any other discriminatory classification.

Rules and regulations will be established to govern activities of booster clubs and other related organizations while using school property and at school events. The Board further requires that:

- a. Financial records be maintained and made available, upon request, for Board and/or public inspection;
- b. Fundraising activities must be approved in advance by the Superintendent of Schools or designee;
- c. Approved fundraising activities must be coordinated with the building principals and/or Athletic Director;
- d. Periodic reports shall be made to the Board of Education, including but not limited to the fundraisers held, the amounts collected and how they were used;
- e. Groups wishing to make a contribution to the District must adhere to the District's policy regarding the acceptance of gifts and donations.

Failure to follow this policy may result in such organization not being recognized by the District or by having such recognition suspended or revoked.

The Board of Education does not assume any financial responsibility for a booster club or related organizations and, further, does not assume any liability such club or organization may incur.

Parental Responsibilities

For the benefit of children, the Board of Education believes that parents have a responsibility to encourage their child's career in school by:

1. supporting the schools in requiring that the children observe all school rules and regulations, and accepting their own responsibility for children's willful in-school behavior;
2. sending children to school with proper attention to their health, personal cleanliness, and dress;
3. maintaining an active interest in the student's daily work and making it possible for the student to complete assigned homework through providing a quiet place and suitable conditions for study;
4. reading all communications from the school and signing and returning them promptly when required; and
5. cooperating with the school in attending conferences set up for the exchange of information on the child's progress in school.

Relations with Municipalities

It shall be the policy of the Board of Education to establish and maintain a strong working relationship with the governing body of the municipalities comprising the School District.

The Board shall cooperate with municipal, county and state agencies whose work affects the welfare of the children of this District, among them the Board of Health, the Police, the Fire Department and the Civil Defense Committee. The Board will cooperate, wherever it is necessary, and whenever it is in the best interests of the pupil, with the police and other law enforcement agencies in the municipalities.

The Schools and the Police

The Board of Education accepts the responsibility for compulsory education which gives the school the custody of pupils for the purpose of providing for their education. Therefore, the Board is committed to protect pupils from individuals not associated with the school system.

When the police request permission to question a pupil at school, the principal shall determine why such questioning could not occur at the pupil's home and obtain the permission of the pupil's parents. Whenever the Superintendent has determined that the police have a legitimate purpose in questioning a pupil within the confines of a school building, the principal shall be present throughout the proceedings.

When the police request permission to arrest a pupil at school, the principal shall determine why such arrest could not be made at the pupil's home, inform the Superintendent, request that the officer produce a warrant or a felony information form and call the parents of the pupil to inform them.

When a crime is committed or when a serious incident occurs on school property, the police shall immediately be called and the parents of any pupil involved shall be informed. The responsible administrator shall prepare a full report of the matter for the Superintendent.

No pupil shall be released to police authorities without proper warrant or felony information form or written parental permission except in the event of emergency or for the protection of life or property as determined by the principal.

Paroled Sex Offenders Who Reside within the Boundaries of the School District

The New York State Division of Parole has promulgated guidelines which provide for notification to school districts when a predatory sex offender who targets children is paroled and resides or works within or about a school district. Such notification includes a photograph of such individual, the conditions of parole and who to contact to report the presence of such individual in or around the schools of the District. Because the safety and protection of the students in the Newburgh Enlarged City School District is of primary importance, it is the policy of the School District to cooperate with and assist the New York State Division of Parole with respect to monitoring the whereabouts of paroled predatory sex offenders who target children, where such individuals reside or work within close proximity of the School District.

The Superintendent of Schools shall establish and implement procedures to assist the Division of Parole authorities when the School District is notified that a paroled predatory sex offender who targets children is located in or about the School District. However, in no event will the School District release any information about such paroled predatory sex offenders to the public.

Procedures - Paroled Sex Offenders

Upon receiving notification from the New York State Division of Parole that a predatory sex offender who targets children resides or works within close proximity of the School District, the Superintendent of Schools shall:

1. Advise all building administrators, secretaries, the head custodian, bus drivers and monitors, as well as arrival, dismissal and playground supervisors and teachers of the fact that a predatory sex offender who targets children resides or works in or around the School District, as well as any special conditions imposed upon such individual (e.g., stay away from young children and/or stay away from school facilities).
2. Distribute a photograph of the paroled predatory sex offender who targets children to the individuals identified in paragraph "1", as well as information about how to contact the parole officer and/or police. A copy of such photograph will also be posted in the staff lounges.
3. Advise groups that regularly use school facilities with children in attendance and parents of students that the New York State Division of Parole has notified the School District of the presence of a paroled predatory sex offender who targets children, but do not release any personal information.
4. Contact the Division of Parole to request that they send the pertinent information (notification package) to the groups that regularly use school facilities with children in attendance.
5. Discuss and implement a plan for "being on the look-out" for such paroled sex offenders as a cooperative effort (e.g., in buildings, on school grounds, adjacent public streets, at bus pick-up and drop-off points, etc.), including providing training for administrators and staff members.
6. Train students about contacts with strangers.

The School District will not release any information about such paroled sex offenders to the public. All Freedom of Information Law inquiries regarding such individuals shall be directed to the New York State Division of Parole.

Distribution of Materials through Students, Instructional or Administrative Staff

Other than regularly approved educational materials required in classroom instruction and notices to parents/guardians relative to attendance, courses, grades, discipline of students and other school-related purposes and activities, no items can be distributed by the instructional or administrative staff without the prior approval of the Superintendent of Schools or designee.

No brochures and/or commercial advertisements, except those directly related to school sponsored activities and functions, will be given direct distribution through students. All such materials shall require the prior approval of the Superintendent of Schools or designee.

In those cases where there are informational bulletins or publications which involve non-profit functions primarily for the benefit of children, including activities that encourage community service, the principal in consultation with the Superintendent of Schools or designee, may make the materials available to the students from the school office. The Superintendent of Schools or designee shall make the final judgment in all such matters.

For reasons of safety, no information or materials may be distributed to students on school buses.

Relations with Private Schools

The Board of Education recognizes the need and worth of cooperative relationships with private schools, and encourages members of the school staff to work with their counterparts in private schools on educational matters within the framework established by the State Department of Education.

Selecting Student Teachers

The Board encourages cooperation with the State Colleges and Universities in the training of cadet teachers, because the public school offers an essential ingredient - direct experience with pupils and teachers at work in the classroom. Therefore, the schools of this District will accept pupils from accredited institutions of higher learning as Junior or Senior Practice Teachers.

The Board delegates the authority to select student teachers to the Superintendent. Recommendation for said selection shall be made by an administrative committee with the agreement of the cooperating teacher.

Student teachers while serving in the schools of this District shall be responsible for their conduct and performance to the cooperating teacher and principal.

The Superintendent shall insure the distribution of student teachers throughout the District and the assurance that no single group of pupils will be subject to excessive student teacher classroom hours.

Pupils or other affiliates of educational institutions shall also be offered the opportunity to visit and observe in our schools in pursuit of teacher training and educational research projects. However, such pupils must be treated as any other visitor and shall be under the direct supervision of the principal.

Exhibits and Displays in School Buildings

The School District may display works of art, and other items of cultural, historical, artistic and educational value in appropriate locations in the school buildings. The Building Principal shall preview all items to be placed in a display or exhibit in a school building to ensure that they are of artistic and educational value and are appropriate for display in the school building based upon the age and maturity of the students in the building and visitors to the building. The Building Principal's determination may be appealed to the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent's determination may be appealed to the Board of Education whose decision shall be final. No item will be displayed which, in the opinion of the Board of Education, is obscene, vulgar, lewd, is inappropriate for viewing by minors or violates community standards of decency for spaces which demand sensitivity to the involuntary exposure of young people.

Commercial Sponsorship of School Programs

It is the policy of the Board of Education to consider the acceptance of commercial sponsorship of School District programs so long as it does not involve the commercial promotion of a particular product or service, for the support of:

1. The Yearbook(s)
2. Literary and other Publications
3. Commercial sponsorship of the educational programs of the District (e.g., music, theater, athletic programs, solar car, etc.). Any such commercial sponsorship must be with the prior approval of the Board of Education or Superintendent of Schools, upon the recommendation of the Building Principal.

This policy will not be deemed to restrict the Board or the school administration in the advertising and distribution of programs and information in the public interest. Programs of an educational nature which are in the public interest may be advertised in any manner consistent with good taste and good administrative practice.

Contests for Pupils

Contests and competitive activities which are sponsored by outside organizations shall not be recommended to students unless they supplement and do not interfere with the regular school program. All requests for student participation in contests and competitive activities shall be referred to the Superintendent.