

CONWAY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board Policy Section 6

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Table of Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 6.1 – COMMUNICATION GOALS _____ | 1 |
| 6.2 – RELATIONS WITH SCHOOL SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS _____ | 3 |
| 6.3 – PUBLIC GIFTS AND DONATIONS TO THE SCHOOLS _____ | 4 |
| 6.3.1 – ENDOWMENT FUND _____ | 5 |
| 6.4 – VOLUNTEERS _____ | 6 |
| 6.5 – VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS _____ | 7 |
| 6.6 – FUND RAISING _____ | 8 |
| Secondary Schools _____ | 8 |
| Elementary/Intermediate Schools (K-6) _____ | 8 |
| 6.7 – COMPLAINTS _____ | 10 |
| 6.8 – DISTRIBUTION OF PRINTED MATERIALS _____ | 12 |
| 6.9 – MEDIA RELATIONS AND NEWS RELEASES _____ | 13 |
| 6.10 – MEGAN’S LAW _____ | 14 |
| 6.11 – PARENTAL/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT - DISTRICT _____ | 16 |
| 6.12 – PARENTAL/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT - SCHOOL _____ | 18 |
| 6.13 – PUBLIC’S RIGHT TO KNOW _____ | 20 |

6.1 – COMMUNICATION GOALS

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

Communication should be two-way between the District and the public. The communications program shall strive to:

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

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

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

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

Legal References: A.C.A. § 6-18-1003(2)
A.C.A. § 6-18-1005(a)(1)
A.C.A. § 6-15-1005(c), (f)(1)(2)
A.C.A. § 6-16-603 (a) (3)
*A.C.A. § 25-19-106

Arkansas State Board of Education: Standards for Accreditation: 7.02.3

Arkansas Department of Education: Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards: 4.0; 10.03

Date Adopted: April 17, 2007

Last Revised:

6.2 – RELATIONS WITH SCHOOL SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

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

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

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

Date Adopted: April 17, 2007

Last Revised:

6.3 – PUBLIC GIFTS AND DONATIONS TO THE SCHOOLS

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

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

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

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

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

Date Adopted: April 17, 2007

Last Revised:

6.3.1 – ENDOWMENT FUND

A non-profit fund designated "Endowment Foundation of Conway Public Schools" will be created from donations, gifts and bequests, the principal of which fund shall be held in trust in perpetuity. To optimize investment opportunities and minimize start-up costs and legal fees, the Endowment Fund of Conway Public Schools will affiliate with the Community Foundation of Faulkner County, which is an affiliate of Arkansas Community Foundation. As such, we will abide by the requirements of the Community Foundation of Faulkner County.

An Endowment Foundation Board of Directors shall be established to carry out the vision and mission of the Endowment Foundation. The demographics of the twelve-to-fifteen members of the Board of Directors will reflect Conway Public Schools' community. Foundation bylaws will set policies and procedures that will be adhered to by the Endowment Board of Directors, and the Board will operate independently from Conway Public Schools. The derived return from the invested principal will be used by the Board of Directors to augment or support proposed initiatives for the sole purpose of supporting the vision and mission of the Endowment Foundation. It is not the intent of the foundation to supplant district financial responsibilities.

Date Adopted: March 13, 2007

Last Revised:

6.4 – VOLUNTEERS

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

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

Date Adopted: April 17, 2007

Last Revised:

6.5 – VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

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

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

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

The District has the right to ask disruptive visitors to leave its school campuses. Principals are authorized to seek the assistance of law enforcement officers in removing any disruptive visitors who refuse to leave voluntarily.

Cross Reference: For non-adult visits see Policy 4.16—STUDENT VISITORS
For sex offenders see Policy 6.10—MEGAN'S LAW

Date Adopted: April 17, 2007
Last Revised: June 10, 2008

6.6 – FUND RAISING

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

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

Student participation in any fund raising activity shall:

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

Secondary Schools

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

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

Elementary/Intermediate Schools (K-6)

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

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

1. Student participation in fund raising programs is voluntary;

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

Legal Reference: A.C.A. § 6-18-1104

Date Adopted: April 17, 2007

Last Revised:

6.7 – COMPLAINTS

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

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

1. Teacher, coach, or other staff member against whom the complaint is directed
2. Principal
3. Appropriate Director
4. Superintendent
5. Board of Education*

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

Unless authorized by the Board as a whole for a specific purpose, no individual Board member has any authority when acting alone. District constituents are reminded that the Board serves as jury in matters regarding student suspensions initiated by the Superintendent, expulsions, and personnel discipline.

*The Board will consider hearing citizen complaints when they cannot be resolved by the administration. Matters referred to the Board must be in writing and should be specific in terms of the action desired. The Board will not consider or act on complaints that have not been explored at the appropriate administrative level.

Complaints that are related to district use or administration of federal funds generated through specific programs identified by the Arkansas Department of Education and authorized in the 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary and

Secondary Education Act may be taken directly from a patron or by referral from the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE). If taken directly from a patron, the complaint may be submitted by a signed statement or by a certified, recorded deposition or statement in which the complainant is identified. The complaints shall be addressed in the following manner:

1. The complaint shall be referred to the Director of Student Services/Equity, who shall assemble a team of at least two people to investigate the complaint.
2. Throughout the investigation, sufficient notes and records will be taken and maintained to substantiate the position of the findings of the investigation.
3. The team will interview the complainant and others as necessary to enable the team to make a determination of the validity of the complaint. The team may consult with individuals with knowledge or expertise in the matter which is the subject of the complaint, including legal counsel.
4. The investigation of complaints referred by the ADE shall be completed within thirty (30) work days of receipt of the complaint, unless a longer time has been approved by the ADE.
5. The investigation of complaints made directly to the district shall be completed within forty (40) work days unless there are extenuating circumstances; in such cases, a preliminary report shall be made within forty (40) work days of receipt of the complaint, which shall include an explanation of the unusual circumstances requiring additional time to complete the investigation.
6. The report of the conclusions of the investigation shall be given to the complainant. It shall contain a summary of the allegations of the complaint; a summary of the investigative actions taken by the team; a summary of the finding concerning each alleged violation or implied violation; a statement of corrective actions needed to resolve the issues involved in each allegation and finding of complaint.

Date Adopted: April 17, 2007
Last Revised: June 10, 2008

6.8 – DISTRIBUTION OF PRINTED MATERIALS

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

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

Date Adopted: April 17, 2007

Last Revised:

6.9 – MEDIA RELATIONS AND NEWS RELEASES

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

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

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

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

Date Adopted: April 17, 2007

Last Revised:

6.10 – MEGAN’S LAW

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. The offender is a student attending school in the district.
2. To attend a graduation or baccalaureate ceremony, or a school sponsored event for which an admission fee is charged or tickets are sold or distributed.

3. It is a non-student contact day according to the school calendar or no school-sponsored event is taking place on campus.
4. The offender is a parent or guardian of a student enrolled in the district and goes directly to the school office to have school personnel deliver medicine, food, or personal items for the student.
5. The offender is a parent or guardian of a student and enters the school campus where the student is enrolled to attend a scheduled parent-teacher conference and the offender is escorted to and from the conference by a designated school official or employee.

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

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

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

Date Adopted: April 17, 2007
Last Revised: June 10, 2008

6.11 – PARENTAL/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT - DISTRICT

The Conway School District understands the importance of involving parents and the community as a whole in promoting higher student achievement and general good will between the district and those it serves. Therefore, the district shall strive to develop and maintain the capacity for meaningful and productive parental and community involvement that will result in partnerships that are mutually beneficial to the school, students, parents, and the community. To achieve such ends, the district shall work to

1. Involve parents and the community in the development of the long range planning of the district;
2. Give the schools in the district the support necessary to enable them to plan and implement effective parental involvement activities;
3. Have a coordinated involvement program where the involvement activities of the district enhance the involvement strategies of other programs such as Head Start, HIPPY, Parents as Partners, ABC, ABC for School Success, area Pre-K programs, and Even Start;
4. Explain to parents and the community the State's content and achievement standards, State and local student assessments and how the district's curriculum is aligned with the assessments and how parents can work with the district to improve their child's academic achievement;
5. Provide parents with the materials and training they need to be better able to help their child achieve. The district may use parent resource centers or other community based organizations to foster parental involvement and provide literacy and technology training to parents;
6. Educate district staff, with the assistance of parents, in ways to work and communicate with parents and to know how to implement parent involvement programs that will promote positive partnerships between the school and parents;
7. Keep parents informed about parental involvement programs, meetings, and other activities they could be involved in. Such communication shall be, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand;
8. Provide reasonable support for other parental involvement activities as parents may reasonably request.

To ensure the continued improvement of the district's parental/community involvement program, the district will conduct an annual review of its parental

involvement policies to examine their affect on promoting higher student achievement. The review shall be done by a committee consisting of parents and other community members, certified and classified staff, and member(s) of the administration.

This policy shall be part of the school's Title I plan and shall be distributed to parents of the district's students and provided, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.

Legal References: 20 U.S.C. § 6318 (a)(2),(A),(B),(D),(E) (NCBL Act of 2001, Section 1118)
20 U.S.C. § 6318 (e)(1),(2),(3),(4),(5),(6),(8),(9),(10),(11),(13),(14) (NCBL Act of 2001, Section 1118)

Date Adopted: April 17, 2007
Last Revised: June 10, 2008

6.12 – PARENTAL/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT - SCHOOL

Conway District Schools that accept and use Title I funds understand the importance of involving parents and the community as a whole in promoting higher student achievement and general good will between the school and those it serves. Therefore, Conway Public Schools shall strive to develop and maintain the capacity for meaningful and productive parental and community involvement that will result in partnerships that are mutually beneficial to the school, students, parents, and the community. To achieve such ends, the school shall work to

1. Involve parents and the community in the development and improvement of Title I programs for the school;
2. Have a coordinated involvement program where the involvement activities of the school enhance the involvement strategies of other programs such as Head Start, HIPPY, Parents as Partners, ABC, ABC for School Success, area Pre-K programs, and Even Start;
3. Explain to parents and the community the State's content and achievement standards, State and local student assessments and how the school's curriculum is aligned with the assessments and how parents can work with the school to improve their child's academic achievement;
4. Provide parents with the materials and training they need to be better able to help their child achieve. The school may use parent resource centers or other community based organizations to foster parental involvement and provide literacy and technology training to parents;
5. Educate school staff, with the assistance of parents, in ways to work and communicate with parents and to know how to implement parent involvement programs that will promote positive partnerships between the school and parents;
6. Keep parents informed about parental involvement programs, meetings, and other activities they could be involved in. Such communication shall be, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand;
7. Find ways to eliminate barriers that work to keep parents from being involved in their child's education. This may include providing transportation and child care to enable parents to participate, arranging meetings at a variety of times, and being creative with parent/teacher conferences;
8. Find and modify other successful parent and community involvement programs to suit the needs of our school;

9. Train parents to enhance and promote the involvement of other parents;
10. Provide reasonable support for other parental involvement activities as parents may reasonably request.

To help promote an understanding of each party's role in improving student learning, Conway Public Schools that accept and use Title I funds shall develop a compact that outlines the responsibilities of parents, students, and the school staff in raising student academic achievement and in building the partnerships that will enable students to meet the State's academic standards.

Conway Public Schools that accept and use Title I funds shall convene an annual meeting, or several meetings at varying times if necessary to adequately reach parents of participating students, to inform parents of the school's participation in Title I, its requirements regarding parental involvement, and the parents right to be involved in the education of their child.

Conway Public Schools that accept and use Title I funds shall, at least annually, involve parents in reviewing the school's Title I program and parental involvement policy in order to help ensure their continued improvement.

This policy shall be part of every school improvement plan for Conway Public Schools that accept and use Title I funds and shall be distributed to parents of students to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.

Legal References: 20 U.S.C. § 6318 (b)(1) (NCBL Act of 2001, Section 1118)
20 U.S.C. § 6318 (c)(1),(2),(3),(4) (NCBL Act of 2001, Section 1118)
20 U.S.C. § 6318 (d) (NCBL Act of 2001, Section 1118)
20 U.S.C. § 6318 (e)(1),(2),(3),(4),(5),(6),(8),(9),(10),(11),(13),(14) (NCBL Act of 2001, Section 1118)

Date Adopted: April 17, 2007
Last Revised: June 10, 2008

6.13 – PUBLIC’S RIGHT TO KNOW

The Board of Education delegates to the Superintendent or his designee the responsibility of being the custodian of all records, documents, writings, letters, memoranda, or other written, typed, copied, or developed materials possessed, assembled, or maintained by the schools. These procedures shall be followed for the release of such records:

1. All requests for public information are to be forwarded to the Superintendent immediately upon receipt. The Superintendent shall thereupon make a determination whether or not the information requested is public in nature.
2. If the Superintendent finds the information to be public in nature, he shall direct that it be released for reproduction on the premises. The party requesting the information shall be charged the cost of reproduction and any other expenses entailed in locating and retrieving the information. If the information is in active use or otherwise unavailable, the party requesting the information shall be notified immediately upon it becoming available.
3. If the Superintendent is unable to ascertain whether or not the information requested is public in nature, he shall request, on behalf of the Board, an opinion from the Board’s Attorney concerning the nature of the information. The Superintendent shall notify the person requesting such information that an opinion is to be requested of the Board’s Attorney and shall notify such person immediately upon receipt of an answer.

Date Adopted: April 17, 2007

Last Revised: