

Bibb County Board of Education

Adopted Policies
GENERAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

DATE OF EFFECT

This is to advise that the policy statements contained in this manual were officially adopted on the date displayed on each respective statement. Further, the general public relations policy statements contained in this manual hereby supersede all other general public relations policies previously adopted by the Bibb County Board of Education.

K - GENERAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

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MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

The superintendant shall keep such records as directed by the Board, State law, the State Board of Education, or other legal and/ or regulatory agencies.

School system records are public and are available for inspection by any member of the public at reasonable times during working hours. Certain school documents and records and confidential and must be kept so, as required by state and federal law, rule and/ or regulation. Specifically, four types of public records or writings which need not be disclosed are:

Recorded information received by a public officer in confidence;

Sensitive personnel records;

Pending criminal investigations; and

Records the disclosure of which would be detrimental to the public's best interests.

Any member of the public who requests any portion of such public records to be reproduced shall complete the attached form and pay to the Superintendent or his designee the reasonable cost of providing and duplicating such records before receiving the same. Nothing herein shall allow official school records to be taken from the school system premises except for official school business.

SOURCE: Bibb County Board of Education
Adopted: May 4, 2010

REQUEST FORM FOR RECORDS
Bibb County Board of Education

Date of Request: _____

Requesting Person: _____

Records Request: _____

Reason for Request: _____

RETRIEVAL FEE: \$ 5.00*

COPY CHARGE: _____/page x _____ pages \$ _____

Mailing Cost: \$ _____

Total Charges: \$ _____

* This is a basic charge. If response requires more than 15 minutes of a Board employee's time then this fee will increase proportionally.

SOURCE: Bibb County Board of Education
Adopted: May 4, 2010

PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM

The Board shall make every attempt to represent the people according to the best interests of their children and in keeping with laws of the State and Federal government. Therefore, the Board shall attempt to

1. keep its members and public informed regarding the policies, administrative operations, objectives, and successes or challenges of the School System; and
2. provide the means for furnishing appropriate and accurate information concerning School System operations, together with interpretations and explanations of the plans and operations.

The Board encourages a policy of sound public relations with the press and other communication media in the community. The Superintendent shall develop and implement a plan (see procedure KB-R1) for the release of information to the press and other media which will provide information to the community concerning its schools and Board operations.

All local news media representatives shall be welcome to attend all regular, special, and annual meetings of the Board.

SOURCE: Bibb County Board of Education, Centreville, AL
ADOPTED: JANUARY 22, 2001
LEGAL REF.: The Code of Alabama, 16-3-11, 16-1-30.

PRESS RELEASES, INTERVIEWS, AND COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE MEDIA

The Board recognizes the need to provide accurate, relevant, and current information concerning the operation of the School System to parents, students, employees, and the public. Such information can, in many instances, best be disseminated in a timely manner through the media; therefore, School System personnel shall seek to work cooperatively with all mass media sources. To accommodate the media sources and the educational and operational goals of the School System, the following procedures shall be applicable in reference to the release of such information:

SCHOOL PERSONNEL AND STUDENTS

1. **Purpose** -- The basic purpose of press release coordination and communication is to ensure as much as possible that legally permissible, accurate, reliable, and current information is released to the public.

School System -- All press releases to and/or communications with the media relative to administrative and educational operations of the School System shall be coordinated through the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Local Schools -- All releases to and/or communication with the media other than general/routine information releases shall be coordinated through the local school principal or designee and Superintendent or his/her designee.

2. **Purpose** -- The basic purpose of interview/photograph/video tape coordination with/of employees and/or students is to limit disruption of the educational environment as much as possible and to protect the legal and educational interest of students.

School System -- All requests for interviews/photographs/videos with/of employees and/or students during school hours by media organizations concerning the administration and operation of the School System shall be coordinated through the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Local Schools/work sites -- All requests for interviews/photographs/videos with/of employees and/or students shall be coordinated through the local school principal or designee and Superintendent or his/her designee. In situations involving students, parental permission may be required prior to media interviews, photographs, and/or videos.

3. **Purpose** -- The basic purpose of the written information coordination effort is to ensure as much as possible that legally permissible, accurate, reliable, and current information is released and available for interested persons and to ensure the confidentiality of non-public records.

School System -- Requests for the release of written information related to the administrative and educational operation of the School System shall be coordinated through the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Local Schools/work Sites -- All requests for written information releases to the media relative to administrative and educational operations of the School System shall be coordinated through the local school principal or designee and Superintendent or his/her designee.

4. **General/Routine** information releases and interviews relative to local school administration and operation, curricular and extracurricular program activities, may be released through the local school principal or designee(s) (i.e., assistant principals, local school media coordinators, coaches, or other designees).

THE BOARD

In situations where the Board, as an official body, releases information/statements through media sources or where media sources request information/statements from the Board, the release of such information/statements shall be coordinated through the President of the Board or designee.

SOURCE: Bibb County Board of Education, Centreville, AL
ADOPTED: JANUARY 22, 2001
LEGAL REF.: The Code of Alabama, 16-1-30.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS

All meetings of the Board shall be open to the public. Notice of all regular meetings will be posted on the door of the Board of Education Office, 157 SW Davidson Drive, Centreville, Alabama. A notice of all regular meetings may be published in a County newspaper; and when practical, such notice shall be published for special meetings called by the Board.

Regular Board meetings are held the third Monday each month at 5:00 p.m. and are held in the Board Room of the Central Office unless another place shall be designated in the call of the meeting.

All votes of the Board shall be taken in open meetings and the deliberations leading to Board action shall likewise be conducted in open meetings.

The Board reserves the right to meet in an executive session as allowed by law. No official votes shall be taken by the Board while it is in executive session. All official votes on matters discussed in executive session shall be taken in an open meeting of the Board. (See policy BCBK).

SOURCE: Bibb County Board of Education, Centreville, AL
ADOPTED: JANUARY 22, 2001
LEGAL REF.: Rep. Atty. Gen., 12-9-74; Board minutes, 2-10-75; Review of Board Minutes, 1973-77.

STAFF-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

While the primary responsibility of employees is the education of our students, teachers and other staff members should be constantly aware of the part good public relations plays in the implementation of an effective educational program.

Good communication with parents and other citizens living within the area served by the School System is essential to a smooth functioning organization.

Staff members are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to inform the public about the goals, objectives and activities of the School System and its schools. Personal contacts, PTA meetings, participation in civic organizations, etc. are some of the ways through which such public relations can be accomplished.

SOURCE: Bibb County Board of Education, Centreville, AL
ADOPTED: JANUARY 22, 2001

PUBLIC USE OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

The school buildings and grounds of the School System shall be used for educational, civic, cultural, and recreational programs. The Board approves and encourages maximum use of school facilities. The facilities, when not used for public school purposes, are to be made available to approved organizations and groups. The operation of the school program shall have priority over all other use of school facilities.

General Conditions and Procedures

- A. Types of organizations and meetings authorized to use school buildings and grounds.
1. Groups authorized to use buildings and grounds without charge.
 - a. School-sponsored activities that are a part of the regular school program.
 - b. Regular meetings of PTA's and PTA councils.
 - c. Meetings of the local, state, or national professional education organizations.
 - d. Board meetings and activities.
 - e. State Department of Education sponsored area or regional meetings.
 2. Groups authorized to use buildings and grounds for a fee as well as custodial fee when it is necessary to have custodial services.
 - a. Recognized charitable or welfare groups.
 - b. Civic clubs or organizations.
 - c. Recreational organizations sponsored by and/or through the Parks and Recreation Department. (Shall apply to use of buildings and/or grounds.)
 3. Other groups.
 - a. In the event organizations not listed in the above categories apply for the use of facilities, the principal shall contact the office of the Superintendent. Board action may be required as determined by the Superintendent.

SOURCE: Bibb County Board of Education, Bibb County, AL
ADOPTED: JANUARY 22, 2001

GIFTS AND BEQUESTS TO THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND/OR SCHOOLS

The Board may accept any donation that may be made for educational or literary purposes. Administration of a gift or donation of property must be under conditions that are acceptable to the donor and the Board. The Board shall review carefully all gifts and bequests offered to the School System prior to their acceptance. Such review shall be conducted to determine the following:

1. The educational value to the School System,
2. The financial value to and/or financial obligation to the School System,
3. The donor's conditions under which the gift or bequest is being offered, and
4. The School System's financial liability associated with acceptance of the gift or bequests.
5. The School System's legal liability associated with acceptance of the gift or bequests.

Upon completing the review, the Board may accept or reject the property and/or donations. In such instance where the property or donations are accepted, the manner in which the property shall be administered and the object to which it or any part thereof, or the revenues from the same, shall be applied shall have been agreed to in advance of acceptance by the Board. Under no circumstances shall the Board agree to accept gifts or bequests when the administration of such would be in violation of any known laws.

The Board, as donee, shall administer the property so entrusted in conformity with the directions contained in the act of donations and, for such purposes, the Board is vested with all the necessary powers of administration as approved by the State Board of Education.

Nominal Value Gift Acceptance

The Board authorizes the acceptance of gifts of nominal value from parents and citizens interested in the schools by school principals under the following conditions:

1. Equipment contributed to the schools becomes the property of the Board, is placed on the fixed-assets inventory and is subject to the same controls and regulations that govern the use of other school-owned property.
2. Contributions of equipment or services that may involve major costs for installation or maintenance or initial or continuing financial commitments from school funds shall be presented by the Superintendent to the Board for consideration and approval.

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(Continued)

3. Individuals or organizations desiring to contribute supplies or equipment will consult with school officials regarding the acceptability of such contributions in advance of the contribution.
4. All administrators in a position to receive gifts in the name of a school or the School System shall apply a test of "reasonableness" to the gift. Reasonableness may be defined as anything that might not be construed to influence the decision makers in the purchase of school-related goods and services.

Acknowledgment of Gifts and Bequests

The Board will provide a written acknowledgment to each donor of any gift or bequest with a value in excess of the amount (currently \$250.00) specified in federal law. The written acknowledgment will include the following minimal information:

1. The amount of any cash and a description of any property given to the School System.
2. A statement of whether or not the School System will provide any goods and/or services in consideration for any part of the gift or bequest, to include an estimate by the School System of the value of the goods and/or services to be provided the donor. NOTE: Any appraisals of estimated values provided by the School System will be based on information from knowledgeable persons/professionals.
3. Such written statement will be promptly provided to the donor.

SOURCE: Bibb County Board of Education, Centreville, AL
ADOPTED: JANUARY 22, 2001
LEGAL REF.: The Code of Alabama, 16-3-39 to 30, 16-10-6, 16-11-9; Federal Tax Regulations, 1.170A-13(f).

PUBLIC USE OF SCHOOL RECORDS

The Board delegates to the Superintendent or his/her 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/she shall direct it to be released for reproduction on the premises. The party requesting the information shall be charged the cost of reproduction at current postal service copy rates 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/she 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.

SOURCE: Bibb County Board of Education, Centreville, AL
ADOPTED: JANUARY 22, 2001
LEGAL REF.: 20 U.S.C. 1232 (g-i).

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

The Board has confidence in its employees and desires to support their actions in order that they be free from unnecessary, spiteful, or negative criticism and complaint. However, constructive criticism of the schools is welcomed by the Board whenever it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program or to equip the schools to accomplish their tasks more effectively. The Board advises the public that the proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline, or learning materials is as follows:

1. Teacher, if applicable
2. Principal, if applicable
3. Central Office Personnel, if applicable
4. Superintendent, if applicable
5. Board of Education, if applicable

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 (assistance in preparing written statement may be provided). The Board will not consider or act on complaints that have not been explored at the appropriate administrative level. The Board directs that all citizen complaints brought to it while the Board is in official session, and which challenge or question the "good name" or "character" of an individual, shall be heard in executive session. Therefore, whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board as a whole or to a Board member as an individual, it will first be referred to the administration for study and possible solution. (See policy IFBE for additional information relative to registering complaints related to textbooks, audiovisuals, and instructional materials.)

Basic Complaint Procedure

When a parent/guardian/interested citizen wishes to address an issue related to School System administrative or educational matters, he/she should utilize the following basic procedures:

1. Contact the person directly associated with the matter for an appointment, i.e. the principal if it is a school administrative matter, selected Central Office personnel if it is a matter related to the School System in general, etc.
2. If a decision relative to the issue cannot be made, or if an unfavorable decision is made, contact the person's immediate supervisor for an appointment to discuss the matter at that level, i.e. if an unfavorable decision is rendered by a school principal, contact the appropriate Central Office personnel for an appointment to discuss the matter further.
3. The same procedure should be followed in securing appointments with the Superintendent and Board, but only after meeting with any appropriate teacher(s) and/or school administrator(s).

SOURCE: Bibb County Board of Education, Centreville, AL

ADOPTED: JANUARY 22, 2001

LEGAL REF.: The Code of Alabama, 16-1-30.

SCHOOL VISITORS

General

In order to maintain a safe and organized learning environment within the schools of the School System, all visitors are required to report immediately to the principal's office upon arrival at a school campus. The principal shall be required to post a notice to this effect at each school entrance. Such notices shall inform all visitors to report to the principal's office prior to entering other parts of the schools. Students are encouraged to notify their parents of this policy.

Student Visitors

Students enrolled in the schools of the School System are not permitted to bring student visitors to school during regular school hours without prior approval by the principal.

Students Being Checked Out of School

All parents/guardians or other authorized persons coming to school to check a student out of school must do so through the principal's office via the school's approved check- out plan.

Trespassing

Refusal to register through the principal's office or to identify one's self to school authorities may constitute trespassing and constitute grounds for prosecution.