



Book	Policy Manual
Section	200 Pupils
Title	Enrollment of Students
Code	200
Status	Review
Adopted	April 17, 2023
Last Reviewed	April 22, 2024

Authority

The Board shall enroll school age students eligible to attend District schools, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, Board policy and administrative regulations.[1][2][3][4][5][6]

Definitions

School age shall be defined as the period from the earliest admission age for the District's kindergarten program until graduation from high school or the end of the school term in which a student reaches the age of twenty-one (21) years, whichever occurs first.[1][7]

District of residence shall be defined as the School District in which a student's parents/guardians reside. When the parents/guardians reside in different school Districts due to separation, divorce or other reason, the student shall attend school in the District of residence of the parent/guardian with whom the student lives for a majority of the time, unless a court order or court approved custody agreement specifies otherwise. If the parents/guardians have joint custody and time is evenly divided, the parents/guardians may choose which of the two (2) school Districts the student will enroll for the school year. If the student is an emancipated minor, the resident School District is the one in which the student is then living.[2][3]

Guidelines

School age resident students and eligible nonresident students shall be entitled to attend District Schools.[1][2][3][6][8][9]

The District shall not enroll a student until the parent/guardian has submitted proof of the student's age, residence and immunizations and a completed Parental Registration Statement, as required by law and regulations, **except as follows**:[1][2][3][10][11][12][13]

1. *Students Experiencing Educational Instability -*

The District shall immediately enroll students experiencing homelessness, foster care and other forms of educational instability, even if the student or parent/guardian is unable to produce the required documents, in accordance with law, regulation and Board policy.[5][14]

2. **Children of Active Duty Military Families -**

The District shall facilitate the timely enrollment and permit advanced enrollment of children of active duty military families, in accordance with law and Board policy. To qualify for advanced enrollment, prior to establishing residency in the District, a copy of the official military orders shall be provided to the District along with proof of the parent's/guardian's intention to move into the District. The parent/guardian must provide proof of residence within forty-five (45) days after the arrival date stated in the military orders.[6][15][16]

The District shall administer a home language survey to all students enrolling in District Schools for the first time.[3][17]

The District shall normally enroll a school age, eligible student the next business day, but no later than five (5) business days after application.[3]

The District shall immediately enroll students experiencing homelessness, foster care and other forms of educational instability, even if the student or parent/guardian is unable to produce the required documents, in accordance with Board policy, law and regulation.[5][13]

The District shall not inquire about the immigration status of a student as part of the enrollment process.[3]

Enrollment requirements and administrative regulations shall apply to nonresident students approved to attend District schools, in accordance with Board policy.[14]

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall annually notify students, parents/guardians and staff about the District's enrollment policy by publishing such policy in the student handbook, parent newsletters, District website and other efficient methods.[4]

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and disseminate administrative regulations for the enrollment of eligible students in District schools.

Original Adoption – 1962 (as Policy #5118)
 Revised and Adopted – March 2, 1970
 Revised and Adopted – July 18, 1983
 Revised and Adopted – December 10, 2007
 Revised and Adopted – December 7, 2009
 Revised and Adopted – April 15, 2013
 Revised and Adopted - June 29, 2015
 Revised and Adopted - April 17, 2023

Legal

1. 24 P.S. 1301

2. 24 P.S. 1302

3. 22 PA Code 11.11

4. 22 PA Code 11.41

5. 24 P.S. 1331.1

6. 24 P.S. 1302.1

7. 22 PA Code 11.12

8. 22 PA Code 12.1

9. Pol. 202

10. 24 P.S. 1303a

11. 24 P.S. 1304-A

12. Pol. 203

13. Pol. 216.1

14. Pol. 251

15. 24 P.S. 7302

16. Pol. 254

17. Pol. 138

Pol. 201

Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (MIC3)



Book	Policy Manual
Section	200 Pupils
Title	Eligibility of Nonresident Students
Code	202
Status	Review
Adopted	April 17, 2023
Last Reviewed	April 22, 2024

Purpose

The Board shall operate District schools for the benefit of students residing in this District who are eligible for attendance.[1][2][3]

Definition

Nonresident students are defined as those whose parents/guardians reside outside the Peters Township School District. [7]

Authority

The Board may permit the admission of nonresident students in accordance with **law and Board policy**. [4][5][6][7][8][9]

The Board shall require that appropriate legal documentation showing dependency or guardianship or a sworn statement of full residential support be filed with the Board Secretary before an eligible nonresident student may be accepted as a student in District schools. The Board may require a resident to submit additional, reasonable information to substantiate a sworn statement, in accordance with guidelines issued by the PA Department of Education. [10][22][7][8]

The Board reserves the right to verify the information in the sworn statement and enrollment eligibility generally and to remove a student after notice of an opportunity to appeal the removal pursuant to the appropriate grievance policy of the District. [7]

The Board shall not be responsible for transportation to or from school for any nonresident student residing outside School District boundaries **except in accordance with law and Board policy**. [11]

Tuition rates shall be determined annually in accordance with law. Tuition shall be charged monthly, in advance of attendance. [5][9][12][3]

Guidelines

Residents of Their Own Volition Providing a Home for Children Not Their Own

In accordance with Section 1302 of the School Code, when a resident keeps in their home a child of school age, not their own, supporting the child gratis (without personal compensation or gain) as if their own, the child shall be entitled to all free school privileges and shall be subject to all requirements of resident children.[10][22][11]

Before such child may be enrolled, the resident shall file:

1. Appropriate legal documentation to show dependency or guardianship; or
2. A sworn and notarized statement that they are a resident of the District, that the resident is supporting the child gratis, that the resident will assume all personal obligations for the child relative to school requirements, and that the resident intends to so keep and fully support the child continuously and not merely through the school term. The Board can require any other reasonable information to substantiate the sworn statement in accordance with guidelines established by the Department of Education.[Z][8]

If information contained in the sworn statement is found to be false, the student shall be removed from school after notice is given of an opportunity to appeal the student's removal, in accordance with Board policy.[10][23][Z][12]

A person who knowingly provides false information for the purpose of enrolling a child in the District for which the child is not eligible can be liable for a summary offense and upon conviction can be sentenced to pay a fine of up to \$300 and/or perform up to 240 hours of community service.[Z]

In addition, the person shall pay court costs and shall be liable to the District for an amount equal to the cost of tuition calculated pursuant to the School Code. The person may also be responsible for investigative costs and/or legal fees.[Z][9]

Nonresident Children Placed in Resident's Home

Any child placed in the home of a District resident by a court or government agency shall be admitted to District schools and shall receive the same benefits and be subject to the same responsibilities as resident students.[6][14][10][11]

Residents of Institutions

A child who is living in or assigned to a facility or institution for the care or training of children that is located within this District is not a legal resident of the District by such placement, but the student shall be admitted to District schools, and a charge shall be made for tuition in accordance with law.[9][11][7][12][13][14][15][16][17][18][19][20]

Students Experiencing Educational Instability

The District shall immediately admit students experiencing homelessness, foster care and other forms of educational instability, even if the required documents are unavailable, in accordance with Board policy, law and regulation.[11][14][20]

Children of Active Duty Military Families

Children of active duty military families shall be eligible for enrollment in this District in accordance with the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, state law and Board policy. [5][8][10][21]

Future Residents

A student eligible for attendance whose parent/guardian has executed a contract to buy, build, or rent a residence in the District may be enrolled without payment of tuition for a period up to three (3) months. At the time of entrance of such student, parents/guardians must present appropriate

evidence of a selected residence including an actual street address and an anticipated move-in date. If the student does not become a resident of the District by the end of the period for which free attendance is given, tuition shall be required for the remainder of the time until residency is established. The District reserves the right to request ongoing verification of intended residency and to remove a student from school at any time if adequate verification is not provided.[9][5][21]

Former Residents

The children of families who are moving out of the District and will no longer be residents of the District, and are currently enrolled in the Peters Township Schools, may continue to attend the District Schools at the discretion of the Superintendent until the end of the current school year if requested by the parent/guardian. Parents/Guardians must notify the District prior to moving out of the District in order to be eligible for continued enrollment. Tuition will be waived for the period of attendance from April 1 of the current school year. If relocation occurs before April 1, tuition will be paid from the time of the relocation until April 1 for families who wish to continue to attend until the end of the school year. Continued attendance for former residents is for in-person instruction only.[9][5]

Students who have attended the high school for a minimum of two (2) semesters and move out of the District at the end of their junior year or during their senior year, but wish to continue and graduate will pay tuition for the remaining year of high school, or portion thereof with approval by the Superintendent or designee. Attendance must be continuous without enrollment in another school district. Continued attendance for former residents is for in-person instruction only.[9][5]

School Staff

The children of professional and nonprofessional employees may be enrolled on a tuition basis.[9][5]

Exchange or Other Foreign Students

Students temporarily housed in the homes of residents, who are in the District by reason of a foreign exchange program or are visiting in the United States, may be enrolled in District schools without payment of tuition during the period of temporary residency at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee.[22]

Other Nonresident Students

Other children of parents/guardians who are not residents of the Peters Township School District will not be accepted on a tuition basis. However, exceptions due to extraordinary circumstances may be granted at the sole discretion of the Board. A student who is not otherwise entitled to enroll but wants to request an exception due to extraordinary circumstances, shall make the request in writing to the Superintendent or designee. All such requests shall be submitted to the Board for consideration. Enrollment under an exception granted by the Board shall be subject to any conditions set forth in a Board-approved tuition agreement. Such enrollment may be terminated at the sole discretion of the Board, and parents/guardians of children so enrolling shall accept this stipulation as a condition of enrollment.[10][22][7][8]

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations for the enrollment of nonresident students who are entitled to enroll under this policy without Board action or agreement which:

1. Admit such students only on proper application and submission of required documentation by the parent/guardian.
2. Verify claims of residency in part by complying with Board policy.[21]

3. Do not exclude any eligible student on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, sex/gender (including identity, expression, and orientation), ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, or disability.[23][24]
4. Deny admission where educational facilities or program maintained for District students is inadequate to meet the needs of the applicant.
5. Make continued enrollment of any nonresidential student contingent upon maintaining established standards of attendance, discipline and academics.

Original Adoption – 1962 (as Policy #5118)

Revised and Adopted – March 2, 1970

Revised and Adopted – July 18, 1983

Revised and Adopted – December 10, 2007

Revised and Adopted – December 7, 2009

Revised and Adopted – April 15, 2013

Revised and Adopted - June 29, 2015

Revised and Adopted - June 26, 2017

Revised and Adopted - August 16, 2021

Revised and Adopted - April 17, 2023

Legal

1. 24 P.S. 501

2. 24 P.S. 502

3. 24 P.S. 503

4. 24 P.S. 1301

5. Pol. 200

6. 24 P.S. 1305

7. 24 P.S. 1306

8. 24 P.S. 1316

10. 24 P.S. 1302

11. Pol. 251

12. 24 P.S. 2561

13. Pol. 607

14. 24 P.S. 1331.1

15. 24 P.S. 1307

16. 24 P.S. 1308

17. 24 P.S. 1309

18. 24 P.S. 1310

19. 24 P.S. 2562

20. 22 PA Code 11.18

21. Pol. 254

22. 22 PA Code 11.19

23. Pol. 906

22 PA Code 11.41

24 P.S. 1306.2

24 P.S. 2503

24 P.S. 7302

23. Pol. 103

24. Pol. 103.1

Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (MIC3)

[202_AR-1.pdf \(84 KB\)](#)

[202_AR-2.pdf \(85 KB\)](#)



Book	Policy Manual
Section	200 Pupils
Title	Graduation Requirements
Code	217
Status	Review
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Purpose

The Board shall establish graduation requirements and acknowledge each student's successful completion of the instructional program by awarding diplomas and certificates at graduation ceremonies.

Authority

The Board shall adopt the graduation requirements students must achieve in accordance with state regulations.[1][2][3][4].

The Board requires graduation requirements to be published and distributed to students and parents/guardians and to be made available in each school building and posted on the District's publicly accessible website. All changes to graduation requirements shall be published and distributed to students and parents/guardians and made available in each school building and posted on the District's publicly accessible website immediately following approval by the Board.[2][5].

Diplomas

The Board shall award a high school diploma to every student enrolled in this District who meets the requirements of graduation established by this Board.[2][6][7][8][9][10]

A student who has completed the requirements for graduation shall not be denied a diploma as a disciplinary measure but the student may be denied participation in the graduation ceremony when personal conduct so warrants. Such exclusion shall be regarded as a school suspension.[11]

Students with Disabilities -

The Board shall permit a student with a disability, whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) prescribes continued educational services, to participate in commencement ceremonies with his/her graduating class and receive a certificate of attendance, provided that the student has attended four (4) years of high school; or the student may participate in the graduation ceremonies that are held during the year in which they are deemed eligible to graduate, at which time they will receive a regular diploma. Students may only participate in the graduation ceremonies on one (1)

occasion. The Board shall issue a high school diploma to each student with a disability who completes the graduation requirements established by the Board or the goals established in the student's IEP, as determined by the student's IEP team.[1][2][12][13][14][15][16][17][18][19]

Full-Time Post Secondary Students -

The fourth year of high school shall not be required for graduation if a student has completed all requirements for graduation and attends a postsecondary institution as a full-time student.[18][19][21][22]

Part Time Students -

A student may qualify for graduation by attending a District school part-time when lawfully employed part-time or when officially enrolled part-time in a postsecondary institution.[18][20]

Children of Active Duty Military Families

The District shall provide supports to facilitate the on-time graduation of children of active duty military families in accordance with the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, state law and Board policy. [23]

Eligible Veterans -

In order to honor and recognize honorably discharged eligible veterans who left high school prior to graduation to serve in World War II, the Korean War or the Vietnam War, the Board shall grant a diploma to a veteran who meets the applicable requirements of law and completes the required application.[6]

Upon proper application, the Board may award a diploma posthumously to a veteran who meets the stated requirements.

The Superintendent shall submit to the Board for its approval the names of veterans of World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War who are eligible for a high school diploma.

Students Experiencing Educational Instability -

The District shall provide supports to ensure that students experiencing educational instability graduate in a timely manner, in accordance with law and Board policy. A graduation plan shall be developed to facilitate this process for students in grades nine (9) through twelve (12) who are experiencing educational instability.[13][21][22]

Guidelines

The Board requires that each candidate for graduation shall have earned twenty-six (26) credits as follows:

Graduation Requirements	Credits
Planned Courses	
English	4.00
Social Studies	4.00

Science	4.00
Mathematics	4.00
Arts/Humanities	1.00
Physical Education	0.50
Health	0.50
Technology Course	0.50
Electives	7.50
TOTAL	26.00

All high school students must meet standards as required by the state.

Arts and Humanities Planned Instruction includes all practical and fine arts courses as well as all world language courses and nonrequired English courses.

Health Planned Instruction includes ninth grade personal wellness.

When selecting social studies courses, students must earn four (4) credits including American and world history.

Technology Planned Instruction includes a specific computer-related course(s) designated by the administration and recommended for the ninth grade.

As required by Act 86 of 2016, students who complete identified computer science or information technology courses (see Administrative Regulation (AR) 1 attached to this policy), may apply for up to one (1) credit for completion of such course to satisfy the student's mathematics or science credit requirement for graduation.

Students must take a minimum of six (6.0) credits each year in order to maintain status as a full-time student at Peters Township High School.

Optional educational opportunities at the high school level, for which the content indicates a strong, direct correlation to the District's approved curriculum, may be taken for credit with the approval of the school counselor and the high school principal. Such opportunities include college coursework, dual enrollment, college in the high school courses, summer school, transfer credits from another high school, and testing-out options. Independent studies, which include online courses, require the above approvals and the approval of the Superintendent or designee.

Optional educational opportunities for which no credit is received, but release time is provided include: internships and mentorships (if not an approved course), class auditing, job shadowing and work release. These activities require the approval of the school counselor and the high school principal.

Reciprocity of credits will exist with partnered career technology education schools such as Western Area Career and Technology Center, and approved alternative schools, while credit for home schooling will be governed by District policy.[23]

Courses taken at the high school by elementary or middle school students will be graded in accordance with the high school grading procedures and will count toward the fulfillment of graduation requirements.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for ensuring the following:

1. Publication and distribution of graduation requirements to students and parents/guardians.[2][5]
2. Counseling of students regarding expectations of graduation requirements.[2][3][4][8][9][10][16][14]
3. Assessment of individual student attainment of academic standards to ensure the student's progress toward achievement of graduation requirements.[2][3][4][8][9][10][16][14]
4. Accurate recording and reporting of each student's progress and accumulation of graduation requirements.[10][25][24]
5. Provision of assistance to those students having difficulty attaining the academic standards.[1][2]
6. Development of a list of individuals who qualify for the award of a diploma.
7. Planning and executing graduation ceremonies that appropriately recognize this important achievement.

The Superintendent or designee shall annually no later than Dec 1, report to the PA Department of Education graduation information and data as required by law.[1]

Original Adoption – March 16, 1987 (as Policy #5127)

Revised and Adopted – September 18, 1995

Revised and Adopted – July 29, 1996

Revised and Adopted – May 25, 1999

Revised and Adopted – May 15, 2006

Revised and Adopted – April 23, 2007

Revised and Adopted – June 23, 2008

Revised and Adopted – May 21, 2012

Revised and Adopted – February 18, 2014

Revised and Adopted - June 29, 2015

Revised and Adopted - May 16, 2016

Revised and Adopted - March 20, 2017

Revised and Adopted - April 17, 2023

Original Adoption – June 24, 2002 (as Policy #5127.1)

Legal

1. 24 P.S. 121

2. 22 PA Code 4.24

3. 22 PA Code 4.51

4. 22 PA Code 4.52

5. 24 P.S. 510.2

- 6. 24 P.S. 1611
- 7. 24 P.S. 1613
- 8. Pol. 102
- 9. Pol. 127
- 10. Pol. 212
- 11. Pol. 233
- 12. 24 P.S. 1331.1
- 13. Pol. 251
- 14. 24 P.S. 1614
- 15. 22 PA Code 11.27
- 16. 22 PA Code 4.12
- 17. 34 CFR 300.102
- 18. 34 CFR 300.305
- 19. Pol. 113
- 20. 22 PA Code 11.5
- 21. 22 PA Code 11.8
- 22. 22 PA Code 11.4
- 23. 24 P.S. 7302
- 24. Pol. 254
- 25. Pol. 216
- CFR Part 300

217_AR-1.pdf (292 KB)

217_AR-2.pdf (134 KB)

217_AR-3.pdf (92 KB)



Book	Policy Manual
Section	200 Pupils
Title	Bullying/Cyberbullying
Code	249
Status	Review
Adopted	November 15, 2021
Last Reviewed	April 22, 2024

Purpose

The Board is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for District students. The Board recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, the Board prohibits bullying by District students.

Definitions

Bullying means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting and/or outside a school setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:[1]

1. Substantially interfering with a student's education.
2. Creating a threatening environment that a reasonable person in the reporting party's situation would find threatening.
3. Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying.

School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.[1]

For the purpose of this policy, **District student** includes an individual that is enrolled in a District school, attends class in a District school building, participates in school activities, or rides school District-provided transportation.

Responding party is defined as the person identified by the report.

Authority

The Board prohibits all forms of bullying by District students in all school settings.

The Board also prohibits all forms of bullying by District students in non-school settings, and will enforce consequences provided under this policy to acts of bullying occurring in a non-school setting to the fullest extent permitted by law.[1]

The Board encourages students who believe they or others have been bullied to report promptly such incidents to the building principal or designee or a school counselor, teacher or other adult District employee, who shall then promptly report such incident to the building principal or designee.

Students are encouraged to use the District's report form, available from the building principal and online on the District's website, or to put the complaint in writing; however, oral complaints shall be accepted and documented. The person accepting the complaint shall handle the report objectively, neutrally and professionally, setting aside personal biases that might favor or disfavor the student filing the complaint or those accused of a violation of this policy.

The Board directs that verbal and written complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly, and appropriate corrective or preventative action be taken when allegations are substantiated. The Board directs that any complaint of bullying brought pursuant to this policy shall also be reviewed for conduct which may not be proven to be bullying under this policy but merits review and possible action under other Board policies.

When a student's behavior indicates a threat to the safety of the student, other students, school employees, school facilities, the community or others, District staff shall report the student to the threat assessment team, in accordance with applicable law and Board policy.[2][3]

Title IX Sexual Harassment and Other Discrimination

Every report of alleged bullying that can be interpreted at the outset to fall within the provisions of policies addressing potential violations of laws against discrimination shall be handled as a joint, concurrent investigation into all allegations and coordinated with the full participation of the Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator. If, in the course of a bullying investigation, potential issues of discrimination are identified, the Title IX Coordinator shall be promptly notified, and the investigation shall be conducted jointly and concurrently to address the issues of alleged discrimination as well as the incidents of alleged bullying.[4][5]

Confidentiality

Confidentiality of all parties, witnesses, the allegations, the filing of a complaint and the investigation shall be handled in accordance with applicable law, regulations, this policy and the District's legal and investigative obligations.

Retaliation

Reprisal or retaliation relating to reports of bullying or participation in an investigation of allegations of bullying is prohibited and shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Delegation of Responsibility

Each student shall be responsible to respect the rights of others and to ensure an atmosphere free from bullying.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations to implement this policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that this policy and administrative regulations are reviewed annually with students.[1]

The Superintendent or designee, in cooperation with other appropriate administrators, shall review this policy every three (3) years and recommend necessary revisions to the Board.[1]

District administration shall annually provide the following information with the Safe School Report: [1]

1. Board's Bullying Policy.

2. Report of bullying incidents.

3. Information on the development and implementation of any bullying prevention, intervention or education programs.

Guidelines

The Code of Student Conduct, which shall contain this policy, shall be disseminated annually to students.[1][6][Z]

This policy shall be accessible in every classroom. The policy shall be posted in a prominent location within each school building and on the District website.[1]

Incidents of bullying by District students, as defined in this policy, that occur outside the school setting and result in an arrest, citation or conviction that is reported to school authorities by law enforcement or official authorities shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

The filing of knowingly false bullying reports will be punishable under the Student Code of Conduct.

Education

The District may develop, implement and evaluate bullying prevention and intervention programs and activities. Programs and activities shall provide District staff and students with appropriate training for effectively responding to, intervening in and reporting incidents of bullying.[1][8][9][10]

Consequences for Violations

A student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct, which may include:[1][6][11]

1. Counseling within the school.
2. Parental conference.
3. Loss of school privileges.
4. Exclusion from school-sponsored activities.
5. Detention.
6. Suspension.
7. Suspension from School District-provided transportation.
8. Expulsion.
9. Counseling/Therapy outside of school.
10. Referral to law enforcement officials.
11. Transfer to another classroom or school bus.

Original Adoption – December 8, 2008 (as Policy #5249)

Revised and Adopted – March 18, 2013

Revised and Adopted - June 29, 2015

Revised and Adopted - June 11, 2018

Revised and Adopted - April 22, 2019

Revised and Adopted - November 16, 2020

Revised and Adopted - November 15, 2021

Legal

1. 24 P.S. 1303.1-A

2. 24 P.S. 1302-E

3. Pol. 236.1

4. Pol. 103

5. Pol. 103.1

6. Pol. 218

7. 22 PA Code 12.3

8. 20 U.S.C. 7118

9. 24 P.S. 1302-A

10. Pol. 236

11. Pol. 233

Pol. 113.1

249 AR-2.pdf (295 KB)

249_AR-1.pdf (107 KB)



Book	Policy Manual
Section	200 Pupils
Title	Educational Opportunity for Military Children
Code	254
Status	Review

Purpose

The Board recognizes the challenges encountered by children of military families due to the frequent moves and deployment of their parents/guardians. The Board is committed to eliminating barriers to student attendance, education and graduation; and to providing additional supports to children of military families in compliance with federal and state laws, regulations and Board policy.

Definitions

Active duty – means full-time duty status in the active uniformed services of the United States, including members of the National Guard and reserve on active duty orders.[1][2]

Children of military families - means a school-aged child, enrolled in kindergarten through twelfth grade, normally residing in the household of an active duty member. Specifically, this includes children of:[3]

1. Active duty members of the uniformed services.
2. Members or veterans of the uniformed services who are severely injured and medically discharged or retired for a period of one (1) year after medical discharge or retirement.
3. Members of the uniformed services who die on active duty or as a result of injuries sustained on active duty for a period of one (1) year after death.

This does not include the children of:[3]

1. Inactive members of the National Guard and military reserves.
2. Members of the uniformed services now retired, except as otherwise stated in this policy.
3. Veterans of the uniformed services, except as otherwise stated in this policy.
4. Other United States Department of Defense personnel and other federal agency civilian and contract employees not defined as active duty members of the uniformed services.

State Council – an entity to coordinate the state's participation and compliance among its government agencies, school entities and military installations.

Uniformed services – means the U.S. armed forces, Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service.[4]

U.S. armed forces – means the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Space Force.[4]

Authority

The Board directs the District to comply with the provisions of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (Compact) and this Board policy by:[3][5]

1. Facilitating the timely enrollment of children of military families and ensuring that they are not placed at a disadvantage due to difficulty in the transfer of education records from previous school districts or variations in entrance/age requirements.[6][7][8][9]
2. Facilitating the student placement process through which children of military families are disadvantaged by variations in attendance requirements, scheduling, sequencing, grading, course content or assessment.[10][11][12][13][14]
3. Facilitating the qualification and eligibility for enrollment, educational programs and participation in extracurricular, academic, athletic and social activities.[15][16][17]
4. Facilitating the on-time graduation of children of military families.[18]
5. Providing for the promulgation and enforcement of administrative rules implementing the provisions of the Compact.
6. Providing for the uniform collection and sharing of information between and among states, schools and military families under the Compact.
7. Promoting coordination between the Compact and other compacts affecting military children.
8. Promoting flexibility and cooperation between the educational system, parents/guardians and the student in order to achieve educational success for the student.

Advance Enrollment

In addition to the provisions of the Compact, the District shall enroll children of a parent/guardian who is an active duty member of the U.S. armed forces, including a reserve component, that has received official military orders to transfer into or within Pennsylvania, prior to establishing residency in this District.[6][8][19]

The parent/guardian shall provide the following:[6][19][20]

1. A copy of the official military order.
2. Proof of intent to move into this District, which may include:[19]
 - a. A signed contract to buy a home.
 - b. A signed lease agreement.
 - c. A statement from the parent/guardian stating their intent to move into the District.

Within forty-five (45) days after the arrival date specified in the military orders, the parent/guardian shall provide the District with proof of residence in this District.[19]

The Board shall ensure that children of military families have equal access to the same educational programs, activities and services provided to other District students.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent shall be authorized to waive specific requirements in Board policies, procedures and administrative regulations to the extent that they create barriers for the enrollment, placement and attendance of children of military families.[6][7][8][11][15][16][18][21]

The Superintendent or designee shall collaborate with the military family education liaison designated by the State Council, school staff, sending schools, local agencies and other entities in supporting the needs of children of military families.

Guidelines

Children of military families enrolled in this District shall be provided support and services, as appropriate to each individual student's needs, in accordance with the Compact and Board policy. [22][23][24][25][26]

Legal

1. 10 U.S.C. 12301 et seq

2. 10 U.S.C. 12401 et seq

3. 24 P.S. 7302

4. 10 U.S.C. 101

5. 24 P.S. 7301

6. Pol. 200

7. Pol. 201

8. Pol. 202

9. Pol. 216

10. Pol. 127

11. Pol. 204

12. Pol. 206

13. Pol. 212

14. Pol. 215

15. Pol. 122

16. Pol. 123

17. Pol. 231

18. Pol. 217

19. 24 P.S. 1302.1

20. 24 P.S. 1302

21. Pol. 203

22. Pol. 103.1

23. Pol. 113

24. Pol. 114

25. Pol. 138

26. Pol. 918

Pol. 113.4

Pol. 115

Pol. 146

Pol. 209

Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (MIC3)



Book	Policy Manual
Section	800 Operations
Title	Transportation
Code	810
Status	Review
Adopted	June 25, 2018
Last Reviewed	April 22, 2024

Purpose

Transportation for students shall be provided in accordance with law and Board policy.

Definitions

School bus means a motor vehicle that is designed to carry eleven (11) passengers or more, including the driver, and is used for the transportation of preprimary, primary or secondary school students to or from public, private or parochial schools or events related to such schools or school-related activities.[1]

Within the limits prescribed in the statutes and subject to present or future conditions of safety, whether permanent or temporary, the Board and/or its designated employees shall establish regular bus routes; determine the location of stops; define maximum distances for walkers to school or bus stop; set standards for bus operation, maintenance, and inspection of District-owned or contracted equipment; prescribe standards for driver proficiency, conduct and appearance; and exercise control over student conduct.

School vehicle means a motor vehicle, except a motorcycle, designed for carrying no more than ten (10) passengers, including the driver, and used for the transportation of preprimary, primary or secondary school students while registered by or under contract to the school district. The term includes vehicles having chartered, group and party rights under the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission and used for the transportation of school children.[1]

Authority

The Board shall provide transportation for resident students in grades kindergarten through 12 to the district's public schools and charter, regional charter and nonpublic schools located in the district or within the district's transportation boundary or other placements as required by law or agreements. The district's transportation boundary is a distance not exceeding ten (10) miles by the nearest public highway outside the school district's border.[2][3][4]

The Board shall purchase, lease, equip and maintain school buses/vehicles and/or contract for school bus/vehicle services for transportation of students to and from school at regularly scheduled hours and for field trips and extracurricular activities.[2][3][5][6][7][8][9][10][11]

The Board shall provide transportation for students living within the prescribed limits when walking conditions to the school are found to be hazardous by the Department of Transportation.[3][12]

The Board shall provide transportation for students with disabilities, without regard to distance or hazardous walking conditions, when required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 Service Agreement.[13][14][15][16][17]

The Board shall provide transportation for eligible resident students who are enrolled in nonpublic schools or charter schools as required by law.[2][4][18]

The Board shall provide transportation for children in foster care in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations, and the local transportation plan.[19][20]

The Board shall provide transportation for homeless children and youths in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.[20][21]

Walkways will be utilized where feasible, at the discretion of the Board, to permit walking to school by as many students as possible.

Crossing guards, deemed necessary in the interest of safety, will be provided at school facilities in cooperation with the municipal government.

In designating routes, establishing stops, and determining distances to be walked to bus stop or school, consideration will be given to topography, traffic conditions, ages of students, time of pick-up and discharge, routing demands on vehicles and such other factors as the Board may include.

Excepting as otherwise determined by the Board for reasons of safety of students and vehicles, expediting of routes, or convenience to the District, school buses will be routed through plans of homes only when continuous forward progress can be maintained. School buses will not be routed into cul-de-sacs excepting for special situations that involve special need students. Buses will not travel into developments when construction equipment, materials or vehicles may block or hinder safe access. A bus stop will be assigned at the entrance of the plan, until such time as construction is complete and/or the roadway is clear from hazards and obstructions.

A school bus driver shall not be employed until s/he has complied with the mandatory background check requirements for criminal history and child abuse and the contractor has evaluated the results of that screening process.

The Board prohibits any diesel-powered motor vehicle weighing 10,001 pounds or more to idle for more than five (5) minutes in any continuous sixty-minute period while parked, loading or unloading, except as allowed by law.[22]

The Board shall ensure that permanent signs, notifying drivers of the idling restrictions, are maintained on district property at locations where diesel-powered motor vehicles weighing 10,001 pounds or more load or unload. Signs shall also be posted at locations that provide fifteen (15) or more parking spaces for such diesel-powered motor vehicles.[23][24]

Delegation of Responsibility

The school bus/vehicle driver shall be responsible to maintain order while students are being transported.

The school bus/vehicle driver shall report all incidents, including, but not limited to, discipline problems, medical problems, bullying/harassment, safety issues, accidents or injuries, and violations of Pennsylvania's School Bus Stopping Law to the Superintendent or designee as soon as practicable.

The building principal may suspend a student from bus transportation for disciplinary reasons, and the parents/guardians shall be responsible for the student's transportation.[7]

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible to:

1. Maintain records and make required reports regarding school transportation.[5][Z]
2. Distribute rules governing student conduct during transport; such rules shall be binding on all students transported by the district.[Z]
3. Provide each school bus/school vehicle driver with:
 - a. The Pennsylvania School Bus Driver's Manual;
 - b. The written rules for student conduct on buses/vehicles;
 - c. The procedures for evacuation drills; and
 - d. Any additional laws and applicable Board policies and administrative regulations which apply to school bus/vehicle drivers.
4. Establish administrative regulations that specify the number of chaperones to accompany students in connection with school-related activities and field trips.[Z][25]
5. Prepare a district map or schedule indicating each bus stop and bus route.[Z]

Guidelines

Student Health Information

When necessary for student safety, or when required by a student's IEP or Section 504 Service Agreement, a school bus/vehicle driver shall be provided with relevant student health and medical information.[16][17][26][27][28][29]

School bus/vehicle drivers shall maintain the confidentiality of student health/medical information in accordance with district policies and procedures and applicable law.[30][31]

Evacuation Drills

Bus evacuation drills shall be conducted twice a year and reported to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, in accordance with law and Board policy.[32][33][34]

Original Adoption – November 16, 1964 (as Policy #3541.31)

Revised and Adopted – March 2, 1970

Revised and Adopted – December 1, 1986

Revised and Adopted – April 28, 1998

Revised and Adopted – November 21, 2005

Revised and Adopted - June 29, 2015

Revised and Adopted - June 25, 2018

- Legal
1. 75 Pa. C.S.A. 102
 2. 24 P.S. 1361
 3. 24 P.S. 1362
 4. 24 P.S. 1726-A

5. 22 PA Code 23.1
6. 22 PA Code 23.2
7. 22 PA Code 23.4
8. Pol. 610
9. Pol. 611
10. Pol. 818
11. 75 Pa. C.S.A. 3345.1
12. 67 PA Code 447.1 et seq
13. 22 PA Code 23.3
14. 24 P.S. 1374
15. Pol. 103
16. Pol. 103.1
17. Pol. 113
18. Pol. 140
19. 20 U.S.C. 6312
20. Pol. 251
21. 42 U.S.C. 11432
22. 35 P.S. 4601 et seq
23. 35 P.S. 4608
24. 67 PA Code 212.101
25. Pol. 121
26. Pol. 209.1
27. Pol. 209.2
28. Pol. 210
29. Pol. 210.1
30. Pol. 113.4
31. Pol. 216
32. 24 P.S. 1517
33. 75 Pa. C.S.A. 4552
34. Pol. 805
- 24 P.S. 1331
- 24 P.S. 1365
- 24 P.S. 1366
- 24 P.S. 2541
- 24 P.S. 2542
- 22 PA Code 15.1 et seq
- 22 PA Code 23.6
- 75 Pa. C.S.A. 4551-4553
- 20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq
- 42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq
- 49 CFR Part 37

49 CFR Part 38

Pol. 810.1



Book	Policy Manual
Section	800 Operations
Title	Acceptable Use of Technology Resources
Code	815
Status	Review
Adopted	August 3, 2020
Last Reviewed	April 22, 2024

Purpose

The Peters Township School District provides its employees, students, and other authorized users access to District Technology Resources. The Board supports use of these resources in the District's instructional and operational programs in order to facilitate teaching and learning, to provide access to information, to aid in collaboration, and to carry out the District-related business and daily operation of the District.

The purpose of this policy is to set forth guidelines so that students, staff and other authorized individuals may use the District Technology Resources in ways that are responsible and respectful of privacy. These standards of acceptable behavior also extend beyond the campus community. Just as it is unacceptable to violate others' rights to privacy, property and resources within Peters Township School District, it is also unacceptable to violate those rights on systems that are not within Peters Township School District but are accessible through the District Technology Resources.

For instructional purposes, the use of network facilities shall be consistent with the curriculum adopted by the district as well as the varied instructional needs, learning styles, abilities and developmental levels of students.

Definitions

District Technology Resources means all technology owned, operated and/or licensed by the District, including wired or wireless communication systems, networked devices, peripherals, computers, projectors, televisions, video and sound systems, mobile devices, calculators, scanners, printers, copiers, cameras, portable hard drives, hardware, software, accounts, email accounts, routers, electronic resources, and networks, including the Internet.

User means anyone who utilizes or attempts to utilize District Technology Resources while on or off District property. The term includes, but is not limited to, students, staff, parents/guardians, and any visitors to the District that may use District Technology Resources.

The term child pornography is defined under both federal and state law.

Child pornography - under federal law, is any visual depiction, including any photograph, film, video, picture, or computer or computer-generated image or picture, whether made or produced by electronic, mechanical, or other means, of sexually explicit conduct, where: [1].

1. The production of such visual depiction involves the use of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct;
2. Such visual depiction is a digital image, computer image, or computer-generated image that is, or is indistinguishable from, that of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct; or
3. Such visual depiction has been created, adapted, or modified to appear that an identifiable minor is engaging in sexually explicit conduct.

Child pornography - under state law, is any book, magazine, pamphlet, slide, photograph, film, videotape, computer depiction or other material depicting a child under the age of eighteen (18) years engaging in a prohibited sexual act or in the simulation of such act.[2]

Computer - for purposes of this policy, District computers include any electronic device owned or leased by the District that has the capability to create, play or edit text, audio and video data; transmit or receive messages, text, data or images; operate software or online applications; or provide a wired or wireless connection to the internet.

The term harmful to minors is defined under both federal and state law.

Harmful to minors - under federal law, is any picture, image, graphic image file or other visual depiction that:[3][4]

1. Taken as a whole, with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex or excretion;
2. Depicts, describes or represents in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
3. Taken as a whole lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value as to minors.

Harmful to minors - under state law, is any depiction or representation in whatever form, of nudity, sexual conduct, sexual excitement, or sadomasochistic abuse, when it:[5]

1. Predominantly appeals to the prurient, shameful, or morbid interest of minors;
2. Is patently offensive to prevailing standards in the adult community as a whole with respect to what is suitable for minors; and
3. Taken as a whole lacks serious literary, artistic, political, educational or scientific value for minors.

Obscene - any material or performance, if:[5]

1. The average person applying contemporary community standards would find that the subject matter taken as a whole appeals to the prurient interest;
2. The subject matter depicts or describes in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct described in the law to be obscene; and
3. The subject matter, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, educational or scientific value.

Technology Protection Measure - a specific technology that blocks or filters Internet access to visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography or harmful to minors.[4]

Authority

The level of access that students have to District Technology Resources is based upon specific student class and coursework requirements and needs. The District shall make every effort to ensure that students use these educational resources responsibly. The Peters Township School District strives to provide error-free, dependable access to the Internet and other District Technology Resources.

The availability of access to electronic information does not imply endorsement by the District of the content, nor does the District guarantee the accuracy of information received. The District shall not be responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged or unavailable when using the network or for any information that is retrieved via the Internet.

The District shall not be responsible for any unauthorized charges or fees resulting from access to the Internet or other District Technology Resources.

The Board declares that the use of District Technology Resources is a privilege, not a right. While District Technology Resources may be assigned or allocated to an individual User, the District Technology Resources remain the property of the District and the use may be revoked, suspended, or inspected at any time to ensure compliance with this and other District policies.[6][7][8]

The District reserves the right to purge data stored by all Users and to delete an account when students are no longer enrolled in or in the service of the District.

The Board establishes the following list of subject areas as inappropriate matter, in addition to those stated in law and defined in this policy, which shall not be accessed by minors:[4]

1. Lewd, vulgar, or profane.
2. Threatening.[11][14]{12}
3. Harassing or discriminatory.[9][11]{10}[16]{13}
4. Bullying.[17]{14}
5. Terroristic.[20]{16}
6. Hate speech [9][11]{10}
7. Consisting of/relating to weapons [19]{15}

The District reserves the right to restrict access to any Internet sites or network functions it deems inappropriate through established Board policy, or the use of software and/or online server blocking/filtering. Specifically, the District operates and enforces a Technology Protection Measure(s) that blocks or filters access to inappropriate matter by minors on its Computers and network resources used an accessible to adults and students. The Technology Protection Measure shall be enforced during use of Computers and network resources with Internet access. [3][4][29]{17}

Delegation of Responsibility

The District shall inform staff, students, parents/guardians and other Users about this policy through employee and student handbooks, posting on the District website, and by other appropriate methods. A copy of this policy shall be provided to parents/guardians, upon written request.[29]{17}

The District shall make every effort to ensure that District Technology Resources are used responsibly by students, staff and other authorized users.

A fundamental premise of this policy is that anyone sharing District Technology Resources with other individuals should behave as a reasonable, mature and ethical person. The User must recognize that District Technology Resources do not exist in a special rule-free environment. Use of

computers is a form of communication, and every component of a computing environment and every piece of information it contains belong to the building, the school community as a whole, or some individual or group within that community.

The Board requires all users to fully comply with this policy. Any User who suspects a violation of the District Technology Resources policies, or who has knowledge of potential vulnerabilities or security loopholes in a system or network at Peters Township School District, should immediately notify a building administrator or the Director of Technology.

Administrators, teachers and staff have a professional responsibility to work together to help students develop the intellectual skills necessary to discern among information sources, to identify information appropriate to their age and developmental levels and to evaluate and use the information to meet their educational goals.

Users of District Technology Resources shall, prior to being access or being issued equipment, sign user agreements acknowledging awareness of the provisions of this policy and awareness that the District uses monitoring systems to monitor and detect inappropriate use.

Student user agreements shall also be signed by a parent/guardian.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop procedures, in cooperation with the District technology staff, for the acceptable use of all District Technology Resources.

Building principals shall make initial determinations of whether inappropriate use has occurred and may consult with the Superintendent or designee and the school solicitor when necessary.

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for recommending technology and developing procedures used to determine whether the District's Technology Resources are being used for purposes prohibited by law or for accessing sexually explicit materials. The procedures shall include but not be limited to: [3][4][19].

1. Using a Technology Protection Measure that blocks or filters Internet access for minors and adults to certain visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, harmful to minors with respect to use by minors, or determined inappropriate for use by minors by the Board.
2. Maintaining and securing a usage log.
3. Monitoring online activities of minors on District Technology Resources.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement administrative regulations that ensure students are educated on network etiquette and other appropriate online behavior, including: [4].

1. Interaction with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms.
2. Cyberbullying awareness and response [17][14][26][20]
3. Disclosure of personal information.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement administrative regulations governing the distribution and collection of District Technology Resources, including any 1:1 devices, to Users in such a manner as to protect the value of the District's investment in the Technology Resources, maximize the educational benefit of the devices to the Users and restrict the use of the devices to comply with District policy.

Guidelines

Unauthorized Use Prohibited

By logging onto a District device using AD (active directory)/credentials, or by accepting terms to our WiFi agreement, Users agree to abide by the terms of this policy, granting them access to District Technology Resources. Unauthorized use, using another User's District account, or exceeding one's authorization to use District Technology Resources is prohibited. Sharing passwords between Users is strictly prohibited. District computers and network accounts shall be used only by the authorized user of the computer or account for its approved purpose. Network users shall respect the privacy of others on the system.

Nothing in this policy, however, shall prevent a parent/guardian from assisting his or her child with the use of District Technology Resources, or from monitoring a student's use of District Technology Resources in the student's home.

Use of Personal Electronic Devices

The use of personal electronic devices on the District network is permitted only on designated networks. When a User connects a personal electronic device to a District network or District Technology Resource, this policy and its guidelines apply. Users are subject to the same levels of monitoring and access as if a District-owned device were being used. Users who connect a personal electronic device to a District network explicitly waive any expectation of privacy in the content exchanged over the District Technology Resource.

Privacy and Monitoring

Users have no expectation of privacy while using District Technology Resources whether on or off District property. Users shall have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, access, delete, receive or display on or over District Technology Resources including personal files.

The District reserves the right to monitor, track, and log network access to and use of District Technology Resources; inspect, copy, and review any and all usage of District Technology Resources including information transmitted and received via the Internet in order to ensure compliance with this and other District policies, and state and federal law; monitor file-server space and file storage utilization by Users; decrypt and inspect encrypted internet traffic and communications; establish network storage limitations; or deny access in order to prevent unauthorized, inappropriate or illegal activity.

All emails and messages, as well as any files stored on District Technology Resources may be inspected at any time for any reason.

The District shall cooperate to the extent legally required with the Internet Service Provider (ISP), local, state and federal officials in any investigation concerning or related to the misuse of District Technology Resources.

District Technology Resources shall be periodically monitored to ensure compliance with this and other District policies including monitoring of Users' online activities. The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that regular monitoring is completed pursuant to this section. However, the Superintendent or designee shall also implement procedures to ensure that District Technology Resources are not used to track the whereabouts or movements of individuals, and that remotely activated cameras and/or audio are not used except where necessary to recover lost or stolen District Technology Resources.

Security

System security is protected through the use of passwords **and/or encryption and District security procedures**. Failure to adequately protect or update passwords could result in unauthorized access to personal or District files. To protect the integrity of the system, these guidelines shall be followed:**[23][27][28]**

1. Employees, students **and other authorized users** shall not reveal their passwords to another individual.
2. Users are not to use a computer that has been logged in under another **user**.
3. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computers **or network** systems may be denied access to the **District's computers and network resources**.

Copyright

The illegal use of copyrighted materials is prohibited. Any data uploaded to or downloaded from the network **or Internet** shall be subject to fair use guidelines and applicable laws and regulations. **[25][29]**

Users are responsible for respecting copyright agreements and intellectual property ownership. Any material that is the work of another, whether explicitly copyrighted or not, should not be distributed by a user without appropriate acknowledgement or permission of the creator unless permission has been granted by the owner of copyright protected materials. While the school has been granted permission by software vendors to distribute certain software packages via the network, it is not generally permissible for individual users to distribute that same software to others via the school network or computer systems. While there may be cases in which property rights to particular programs, data, etc., are ambiguous or in dispute, the user must assume that any information not created by him/herself belongs to someone else and must respect that person's privacy and property rights to that information. **[29][17][25][18]**

Internet Filtering and CIPA Compliance

In accordance with state and federal law, the District will use content and message filters to prevent Users from accessing material through District Technology Resources that has been determined to be obscene, offensive, pornographic, harmful to minors, or otherwise inconsistent with the District's educational mission. The Technology Protection Measures will attempt to block or filter access to inappropriate matter by minors and limit use only to those areas that are age-appropriate and of educational value. The District shall not be held responsible when a student knowingly or willingly accesses inappropriate material or communicates or shares such materials with others. **[3][4][17][14]**

Upon request by students or staff, building administrators may authorize the temporary disabling of Internet blocking/filtering software in order to enable access for bona fide research or for other lawful purposes. Written permission from the parent/guardian is required prior to disabling Internet blocking/filtering software for a student's use. If a request for temporary disabling of Internet blocking/filtering software is denied, the requesting student or staff member may appeal the denial to the Superintendent or designee for expedited review. **[3][19]**

Upon request by students or staff, the Superintendent or designee shall expedite a review and may authorize the disabling of Internet blocking/filtering software to enable access to material that is blocked through technology protection measures but is not prohibited by this policy. **[17][14]**

The Superintendent or designee shall establish a procedure for Users to request that a legitimate website or educational resource not be blocked by the District's filters for a bona fide educational purpose. Such requests must be either granted or rejected within in a reasonable amount of time

pursuant to the established procedure.

Safety

It is the District's goal to protect Users of District Technology Resources from harassment and unwanted or unsolicited electronic communications. Any User who receives threatening or unwelcome electronic communications or inadvertently visits or accesses an inappropriate site shall report such immediately to a teacher or administrator. Users shall not reveal personal information to other Users on the network, including chat rooms, email, social networking websites, etc.

Internet safety measures shall effectively address the following:[4][19][15]

1. Control of access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and World Wide Web.
2. Safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications.
3. Prevention of unauthorized online access by minors, including "hacking" and other unlawful activities.
4. Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors.
5. Restriction of minors' access to materials harmful to them.

Improper/Illegal Communication

Any communications that would be improper or illegal on any other medium are equally so on the computer.

Responsible Sharing of Resources

Where a resource such as memory, CPU time or access to network resources belongs to the whole community collectively, it must be shared.

It is unacceptable to make excessive use of system or network resources so that other Users cannot obtain access. Examples include excessive use of disk space on a system that does not limit such utilization, the use of an excessive amount of network bandwidth in an environment of networked computers, and any activity that makes a system unusable or significantly degrades performance for others. A novice User might be unaware that a particular action constitutes excessive use but, once a system administrator makes him/her aware of the fact that such an action is unreasonable, that User will be held responsible for any further such infractions.

Risk of Data Loss and Data Persistence

Although the District will make efforts to secure the network and District-controlled servers from abuse and damage, it cannot guarantee against data loss by staff or student either on a school-operated or an individually owned computer.

Users should know that even those files that they have deleted using the appropriate procedures in the application or operating system may indeed be recoverable if they exist in a system backup file or other persistent form. If the District is asked to recover such data by subpoena, it must cooperate, and data that the User believes to have been destroyed may be recovered in the process.

Users are expected to act in a responsible, ethical and legal manner in accordance with **Board** policy, accepted rules of network etiquette and federal and state law **and regulations**. Specifically, the following are prohibited uses **of District computers and/or network resources**:

1. Facilitating illegal activity.
2. Commercial or for-profit purposes.
3. Nonwork or nonschool related work.
4. Product advertisement.
5. Bullying/Cyberbullying.[14][20]
6. Hate mail, discriminatory remarks, **harassment** and offensive or inflammatory communication.[9][10][14][24]
7. Unauthorized or illegal installation, distribution, reproduction or use of copyrighted materials. [25]
8. Accessing, sending, receiving, transferring, viewing, sharing or downloading obscene, pornographic, lewd or otherwise illegal materials, images or photographs.[26]
9. Access by students and minors to material that is harmful to minors or is determined inappropriate for minors in accordance with Board policy.
10. **Vulgar** language or profanity.
11. Transmission of material **that a reasonable person would know** to be offensive or objectionable to recipients.
12. Intentional obtaining or modifying of files, passwords and data belonging to other users.
13. Impersonation of another user, anonymity and pseudonyms.
14. Fraudulent copying, communications or modification of materials in violation of copyright laws.[25]
15. Loading or **accessing** unauthorized games, programs, files or other electronic media.
16. Disruption of the work of other users.
17. Destruction, modification, abuse or unauthorized access to network hardware, software, **systems** and files.
18. Accessing the Internet, district computers or other network resources without authorization.
19. Disabling, **adjusting** or bypassing the Internet blocking/filtering **technology protection measure(s)** without authorization.
20. Accessing, sending, receiving, transferring, viewing, sharing, **deleting** or downloading confidential information without authorization.

This list should not be considered to be complete or exhaustive.

District Website

The District shall establish and maintain a website and shall develop and modify its web pages to present information about the District under the direction of the Superintendent or designee. All **authorized** users publishing content on the district website shall **receive appropriate training and** comply with this and other applicable District policies.

Users shall not copy or download information from the District website and disseminate such information on unauthorized web pages without authorization from the building principal.

Accessibility –

District staff who maintain District websites and web pages shall post content which is accessible to individuals with disabilities, to the same extent that it is available to other users, based on the needs of the individuals and limitations of the platform. This shall include, but is not limited to:[9][10][13][30][31][32]

1. **Including alternate text descriptions or captions for images.**
2. **Including captions for video content.**
3. **Avoiding text that is posted as an image or conveyed using only color cues.**
4. **Creating links and attachments in formats that are accessible to screen readers and other assistive technology, and may be accessed through keyboard or speech navigation.**
5. **Formatting text so that it is accessible to screen readers and other assistive technology, and may be accessed through keyboard or speech navigation.**

All District websites shall contain clear contact information that may be used by members of the public to request accommodations or assistance.

Consequences for Inappropriate Use

Users of District computers and network resources shall be responsible for damages to the equipment, systems, **platforms** and software resulting from deliberate or willful acts.[17]

Illegal use of the **District computers and network resources**; intentional deletion or damage to files or data belonging to others; copyright violations; and theft of services shall be reported to the appropriate legal authorities for possible prosecution.

General rules **and Board policies** for behavior and communications apply when using the **District computers, network resources and** Internet, in addition to the stipulations of this policy.

Vandalism shall result in loss of access privileges, disciplinary action and/or **referral** to legal **authorities**. **Vandalism** is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, **the District, the** Internet or other networks; this includes but is not limited to uploading or creating computer viruses.

Failure to comply with this policy or inappropriate use of the Internet, district network or computers shall result in usage restrictions, loss of access privileges, disciplinary action and/or **referral** to legal **authorities**.[6][7][8]

The District makes no warranties of any kind, whether express or implied, for the service it is providing through its various Technology Resources. The District is not responsible, and will not be responsible, for any damages, including loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, missed deliveries, or services interruption. Use of any information obtained through the District's Technology Resources is at the User's own risk.

Original Adoption – October 28, 1997 (as Policy #5114.7)

Revised and Adopted – June 25, 2012

Revised and Adopted - June 29, 2015

Revised and Adopted - August 3, 2020

Original Adoption – June 23, 2008 (as Policy #4505)

- 2. 18 Pa. C.S.A. 6312
- 3. 20 U.S.C. 7131
- 4. 47 U.S.C. 254
- 5. 18 Pa. C.S.A. 5903
- 6. Pol. 218
- 7. Pol. 233
- 8. Pol. 317
- 9. Pol. 103
- 10. Pol. 104
- 11. 24 P.S. 1302-E
- 12. Pol 236.1
- 13. Pol. 103.1
- 14. Pol. 249
- 15 Pol 218.1
- 16. Pol. 218.2
- 17. 24 P.S. 4604
- 18. 24 P.S. 4610
- 19. 47 CFR 54.520
- 20. 24 P.S. 1303.1-A
- 21. Pol 113.4
- 22. Pol. 216
- 23. Pol. 830
- 24. Pol. 247
- 25. Pol. 814
- 26. Pol. 237
- 27. Pol 800
- 28. Pol 830.1
- 29. 17 U.S.C. 101 et seq
- 30. 42 USC awxrion 12101 et. seq
- 31. 29 U.S.C. 794
- 32. 28 CFR 35.160
- 18 Pa. C.S.A. 2709
- 24 P.S. 4601 et seq
- Pol. 220
- Pol. 113.1
- Pol 816
- Pol 824

815_AR-1.pdf (188 KB)

815_AR-2.pdf (297 KB)

815_AR-3.pdf (280 KB)



Book	Policy Manual
Section	800 Operations
Title	Suicide Awareness, Prevention and Response
Code	819
Status	Review
Adopted	January 16, 2018
Last Reviewed	April 22, 2024

Purpose

The Board is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its students and the school community; **promoting healthy development; and safeguarding against the threat or attempt of suicide.** This policy supports the provision of a comprehensive District program of **education, training and resources** designed to promote **school connectedness and** behavioral health, and prevent suicide.[1][2][3][4][5][6]

Authority

The Board directs the District to provide education on youth suicide awareness and prevention; methods of prevention, intervention and response to suicide attempt or suicide; **and reporting procedures.**[1][2][3][4][5][6]

The District is committed to providing access to age and developmentally-appropriate youth suicide awareness and prevention supports and resources to all District students, without bias or discrimination.[2][3]

The District shall notify employees, students and parents/guardians of this policy and shall post the policy on the District's website.[1]

Definitions

Behavioral health - the emotion, behaviors and biology related to a person's mental well-being, their ability to function in everyday life and their concept of self.

Behavioral service providers – include, but are not limited to, state, county or local behavioral health service providers, crisis intervention center or psychiatric hospital. The term includes a private service provider which contracts with a state, county or local government to act as a behavioral health agency.[4][7]

Bias – the attitudes or beliefs we have about a person or group that affect our understanding, actions and decisions in a conscious or subconscious manner.[4]

Individualized Management Plan – a plan developed for a student who is referred to the threat assessment team that documents the concerns that brought a student to the team's attention, as well as the resources and supports a student might need based on

the information gathered during the assessment. The Individualized Management Plan is developed primarily for documentation and communication purposes.[4]

Postvention – a multi-component crisis response to provide support, promote healing after a tragic loss and to minimize risk of contagion after a suicide.

Prevention - refers to efforts that seek to reduce the factors that increase the risk for suicidal thoughts and behaviors and increase the factors that help strengthen, support and protect the behavioral health and wellness of individuals.

Protective factors - refer to characteristics associated with a lower likelihood of negative outcomes or that reduce a risk factor's impact. Protective factors may be seen as positive countering events.

Resilience - the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress, or "bouncing back" from difficult experiences.

Risk factors - refer to characteristics at the biological, psychological, family, community or cultural level that precede and are associated with a higher likelihood of negative outcomes, including suicide.

Safety Plan – an agreement developed between the student, parent/guardian, appropriate team members and behavioral health professionals, following a suicide screening or assessment, that documents communications, conveys an understanding of the seriousness of the student's distress and provides a set of skills and resources the student can use in a crisis.

School connectedness - the belief by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals.

School personnel - include, but may not be limited to, administrators, teachers, school-based behavioral health professionals (e.g., school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker), paraprofessionals, support staff, coaches, bus drivers, custodians and cafeteria workers.

Self-harm – behavior that is self-directed and deliberately results in injury or the potential for injury to oneself. Self-harm behaviors can be either suicidal or nonsuicidal.

Suicide - death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with intent to die as a result of the behavior.

Suicide attempt - a potentially self-injurious behavior for which there is evidence that the person had at least some intent to kill themselves.

Suicide threat - a verbal or nonverbal communication that an individual intends to harm themselves with the intention to die but has not acted on the behavior.

Threat assessment – a fact-based process for the assessment of and intervention with students whose behaviors may indicate a threat to the safety of the student, other students, school employees, school facilities, the community or others.[4]

Warning signs - evidence-based indicators, often observable, that someone may be in danger of suicide, either immediately or in the very near future.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee, in collaboration with designated school personnel, shall develop administrative regulations regarding the District's protocols for response to suicide threats, suicide attempts and suicide.

Guidelines**SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION EDUCATION[1]****Suicide Awareness and Prevention Education for Students**

Students shall receive age **and developmentally**-appropriate, **student-centered lessons** on the importance of safe and healthy choices, coping strategies **focused on resiliency**, how to recognize risk factors and warning signs, as well as help-seeking strategies for self or others, including how to engage school resources.

These lessons shall be integrated into the curriculum of health classes and other classes as appropriate. The lessons may be taught by health and physical education teachers, classroom teachers, student services staff or community service providers.

Programming related to suicide prevention should be delivered in small group or classroom settings; not in a large group or auditorium setting.

District staff shall provide resources and access to counseling staff for students participating in programming, who may struggle with the topic of suicide prevention.

Lessons shall **contain information on comprehensive health and wellness, including emotional, behavioral and social skills development by:**

1. **Informing** students about broader behavioral health issues such as depression and substance **use**, as well as specific risk factors, protective factors and warning signs for suicide.
2. **Encouraging** students to seek help for themselves or their peers, including when concerns arise via social media or other online forum, and to avoid making promises of confidence when they are concerned about the safety of a peer **or other individual**.
3. **Adhering** to safe and effective messaging guidelines, **avoiding** graphic testimonials and **including research-based** suicide prevention resources.
4. **Promoting** a healthy school climate where students feel connected to and can identify trusted adults in the building.
5. **Providing local, state and/or national resources for seeking help.**

Suicide Awareness and Prevention Education for School Personnel

All **school personnel** shall receive **written** information about the **District's protocols for suicide awareness and prevention, including** risk factors, warning signs, response **and communication** procedures, referrals and resources.

As part of the District's professional development plan, professional educators in school buildings serving students in grades six (6) through twelve (12) shall participate in a minimum of four (4) hours of youth suicide awareness and prevention training every five (5) years.[1][8][9]

The District may also require training of professional staff in grades K-5, as well as ancillary school-wide staff, and may increase the training requirement.

School safety and security training for employees may include suicide awareness.[9]

Additional professional development in suicide risk screening and/or assessment and crisis intervention shall be provided to specialized staff and school behavioral health professionals such as school crisis response/intervention team members, **threat assessment team members**, designated administrators, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers and school nurses.

Resources for Parents/Guardians

The District should provide parents/guardians with resources including, but not limited to, health promotion and suicide risk, including characteristics and warning signs, and information about local, **state and national** behavioral health resources.

METHODS OF PREVENTION[1]

The District shall utilize a multifaceted approach to suicide prevention which integrates school and community-based supports.

The methods of prevention utilized by the District include, but are not limited to, **education, training and awareness**; early identification and support for students at risk; and delegation of responsibility for planning and coordination of suicide prevention efforts.

Information received in confidence from a student may be revealed to the student's parents/guardians, the building principal, **the threat assessment team and/or crisis response/intervention** team or other appropriate authority when the health, welfare or safety of the student or any other person is clearly in jeopardy, **in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.**[4][10][11][12][13][14][15]

Suicide Prevention Coordinators

District-Wide -

A District-**level** suicide prevention coordinator shall be designated by the Superintendent **or designee**. This may be an existing District employee. The District suicide prevention coordinator shall be responsible for planning and coordinating implementation of this policy.

Building-Level -

Each building principal shall designate a school suicide prevention coordinator to act as a point of contact in each school for issues relating to suicide prevention and policy implementation. This may be an existing District employee, **who may also be a member of the threat assessment team.** [4]

Early Identification Procedures

Early identification of individuals with warning signs or suicide risk factors **that appear to adversely impact the student** is crucial to the District's suicide prevention efforts. To promote awareness, **school personnel**, students and parents/guardians should be educated about suicide risk factors and warning signs.

Referral Procedures

Any **school personnel** who observes a student exhibiting a warning sign for suicide, or **who** has another indication that a student may be contemplating suicide, shall **immediately** refer the student for suicide risk screening and/or assessment and intervention in accordance with **Board policy and** District procedures.[4][15][16]

In the absence of a warning sign for suicide, students demonstrating suicide risk factors that appear to be adversely impacting the student, **or other indications of self-harm**, should be referred to **an appropriate team or staff member (e.g., principal, school counselor, Student Assistance Program team)** for support and follow-up.

When a student's behavior indicates a threat to the safety of the student, school personnel shall report the student to the threat assessment team, an appropriate member of the team or the suicide prevention coordinator. The threat assessment team, crisis response/intervention team and designated staff responsible for conducting or

arranging suicide risk screening and assessment shall coordinate to provide assessment and intervention in accordance with Board policy and District procedures.[4][15][16][17]

School personnel shall arrange for or provide continuous adult supervision to ensure the student's safety.

Safe2Say Something

When the District receives a report through the Safe2Say Something program, members of the Safe2Say Something team shall coordinate with the appropriate emergency dispatch center(s), local law enforcement and/or District team, in accordance with District procedures.[9]

Documentation

The District shall document the referral, including specific **reasons** identified as indications that the student may be at risk.[4]

METHODS OF ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION[1]

The methods of **assessment and** intervention utilized by the District include, but are not limited to, responding to threats **of suicide or self-harm**, suicide attempts in school, suicide attempts outside of school and suicide.

The District shall maintain a trained school crisis response/intervention team. Team members may include, but not be limited to, designated administrators, school counselors, school nurse, school psychologist, social worker, school security personnel, members of the Student Assistance Program team and others as designated by the District such as community behavioral health agency resources.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish administrative regulations for coordination of appropriate teams and staff in suicide assessment and intervention.

Suicide intervention procedures shall involve collaboration and coordination with the student, the parent/guardian, suicide prevention coordinator, the threat assessment team and/or the crisis response/intervention team and additional support services as needed.

Student Assessment and Intervention

When a student has been referred for assessment, designated members of the threat assessment team and/or crisis response/intervention team shall coordinate with appropriate behavioral health staff to assess and respond to the student's behavior, which may include development or update of an Individualized Management Plan and/or Safety Plan, where appropriate, in accordance with Board policy and administrative regulations.[4]

A District-approved suicide risk screening or assessment tool may be used by trained behavioral health staff such as **school** counselors, psychologists **or** social workers.

Parents/Guardians of a student identified as being at risk of suicide shall be notified by the **building principal or designee** and informed of crisis and community resources. If the school suspects that the student's risk status is the result of abuse or neglect, school staff shall immediately notify Children and Youth Services, **in accordance with applicable law and Board policy.[4][6]**

The District shall identify **and develop agreements with** behavioral service providers to whom students **may** be referred for further suicide risk screening and/or assessment and **intervention.**

If the student **has been** identified as being at increased risk of suicide, the District shall **develop** a new, or update a previous, Safety Plan to support the student and the student's family. The Plan should be developed collaboratively with input from the student, **the student's parents/guardians, appropriate team members and behavioral health professionals.**

Students With Disabilities

For students with disabilities who are identified as being at risk for suicide or who attempt suicide, the **team receiving the referral or other District staff shall notify the appropriate Individualized Education Program (IEP) team or Section 504 team to** address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.[3][4][18][19][20][21]

If a student is identified as being at risk for suicide or attempts suicide and the student may require special education services or accommodations, the Director of Pupil Services shall be notified and shall take action to address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.[3][18][19][20][21]

Documentation

The District shall document observations, recommendations and actions conducted throughout the course of intervention, suicide risk screening and/or assessment and follow-up, including verbal and written communications with students, parents/guardians, **appropriate team members** and behavioral service providers.[4]

METHODS OF RESPONSE TO SUICIDE ATTEMPT OR SUICIDE[1]

The District's crisis response/intervention team shall coordinate with first responders, District behavioral health staff and/or community behavioral health resources in response to a suicide attempt or suicide.

Response to Suicide Attempt

Methods of response to a suicide attempt utilized by the District include, but are not limited to:

1. **Acting in accordance with professional development and crisis response training including, but not limited to:**
 - a. **The rendering of first aid until professional medical services and/or transportation can be received.**
 - b. **Supervision of the student and movement of all other students out of the immediate area.**
2. **Coordinating with the threat assessment team to document or follow up on the threat assessment process, in accordance with Board policy, where applicable.[4]**
3. Notifying students, employees and parents/guardians.
4. Working with families.
5. Responding appropriately to the media.
6. Collaborating with community providers.

Re-entry Procedures

A student's excusal from school attendance after a behavioral health crisis and the student's return to school shall be consistent with state and federal laws and regulations, **and in accordance with Board policy.**[3][18][19][20][22][23]

Prior to a student returning to school after a behavioral health crisis, a District-employed behavioral health professional, **member(s) of the threat assessment team**, the building principal **or designee** shall meet with the parents/guardians of the student and, if appropriate, meet with the student to **discuss** the **student's return** to school and to create an individual re-entry plan.[4]

When authorized by the student's parent/guardian, the designated District employee shall coordinate with the appropriate outside behavioral **service** providers, request **releases of information** and written documentation from the treating facility and encourage their involvement in the re-entry **process**.

A school behavioral health professional shall periodically check in with the student **and** monitor the student's **re-entry plan, which may include strategies and supports to facilitate the student's progress and** transition back into the school community, **including referrals to other school-based teams or programs (e.g. Student Assistance Program).**

Re-entry of a student with a disability requires coordination with the appropriate team to address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.[3][18][19][20][21]

Response to Suicide (Postvention).

Upon confirmation of a suicide, the District shall immediately implement established postvention procedures which shall include methods for informing the school community; identifying and monitoring at-risk youth; and providing resources and supports for students, staff and families.

DOCUMENTATION PROCEDURES[1]

Effective documentation assists in preserving the safety of the student and ensuring communication among school staff, parents/guardians and behavioral service providers.

When **school personnel** take notes on any conversations or situations involving or relating to an at-risk student, the notes should contain only factual or directly observed information, not opinions or hearsay.

As stated in this policy, **school personnel** shall be responsible for effective documentation of incidents involving suicide prevention, intervention and response, **in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and Board policy.**[4]

Reports and information shall be maintained confidentially and made available to appropriate District staff in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and Board policy.[4][11][12][13][14][24][25]

The District employee who conducts the risk assessment or his/her immediate supervisor shall notify the Superintendent regarding the at risk student. Information and reports shall be provided, as appropriate, to guidance counselors, District behavioral health professionals and school nurses.

SUICIDE AWARENESS, PREVENTION AND CRISIS RESOURCES[1]

Crisis Resources:

- National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988 or visit <http://988lifeline.org>
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** or visit <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
- Crisis Text Line: **TEXT 741741** or visit <http://www.crisistextline.org/>

National:

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Risk and Protective Factors**
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center – Risk and Protective Factors**

- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\) Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools](#)
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center - **[Safe and Effective Messaging for Suicide Prevention](#)**
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center - **[After a Suicide Toolkit](#)**
- **[Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide](#)**

Pennsylvania:

- **[Suicide Prevention Task Forces](#)** - groups of dedicated individuals that are committed to reducing the number of suicides and offering support to those who have been touched by suicide within their communities/counties in Pennsylvania.
- [Suicide Prevention Guide](#)
- [List of Crisis Intervention contact information by county](#)
- [List of County CASSP and Children’s Behavioral Health Contact Persons](#)
- **[Prevent Suicide PA’s Act 71 Information](#)**
- **[STAR Center’s Postvention Manual](#)**

National and State Organizations

National:

- [American Association of Suicidology \(AAS\)](#)
- [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention \(AFSP\)](#)
- [Suicide Prevention Resource Center \(SPRC\)](#)

Pennsylvania:

- [Prevent Suicide PA](#)
- [Jana Marie Foundation](#)
- [Aevidum](#)
- [Services for Teens at Risk \(STAR-Center\)](#)
- [Pennsylvania Department of Education](#)
- **[Pennsylvania Network for Student Assistance Services \(PNSAS\)](#)**

Original Adoption – August 17, 2015

Revised and Adopted – January 16, 2018

- Legal
1. [24 P.S. 1526](#)
 2. Pol. 103
 3. Pol. 103.1
 4. Pol. 236.1
 5. Pol. 249
 6. Pol. 806
 7. [24 P.S. 1301-E](#)
 8. Pol. 333
 9. Pol. 805
 10. [22 PA Code 12.12](#)
 11. [20 U.S.C. 1232g](#)
 12. [34 CFR Part 99](#)
 13. Pol. 207

- 14. Pol. 216
- 15. Pol. 236
- 16. Pol. 146
- 17. 24 P.S. 1302-E
- 18. Pol. 113
- 19. Pol. 113.2
- 20. Pol. 113.3
- 21. Pol. 114
- 22. Pol. 117
- 23. Pol. 204
- 24. Pol. 113.4
- 25. Pol. 209
- Pol. 146.1
- Pol. 816
- Pol. 911



Book	Policy Manual
Section	900 Community
Title	Public Comment in Board Meetings
Code	903
Status	Review
Adopted	November 15, 2021
Last Reviewed	April 22, 2024

Purpose

The Board recognizes the value of public **input** and the importance of **designating time for public comment during open** Board meetings. **The Board also recognizes the importance of diverse viewpoints and commentary.**

This policy addresses the right for the public to comment at open Board meetings and the responsibility of the Board to conduct its business in an orderly and efficient manner. An authorized individual's public comment will be free from interruption, except when the individual's conduct is in violation of law or Board policy.[1]

Authority

An opportunity for district residents and taxpayers to provide comment on matters of concern, official action or deliberation which are or may be before the Board, shall be provided as designated on the Board meeting agenda and in compliance with law, Board policy and district procedures.[1][2][3][4][5]. District employees may also participate, provided their remarks do not contravene the provisions of any negotiated agreement or are not in violation of normal employer-employee relations or Board policy.

The presiding officer may expand the opportunity to provide public comment to others when deemed necessary to inform the Board.

Copies of the agenda, which includes a listing of each matter of business that will be or may be the subject of deliberation or official action at the meeting, shall be made available to individuals in attendance at the meeting.[3]

Board meetings will include the following opportunities for public comment:

1. Near the beginning of the meeting, before the Board begins to vote on agenda items, public comment will be accepted on **any topic** including agenda items.
2. Near the end of the meeting, after the Board concludes voting on **agenda items**, public comment will be accepted. Each individual who wishes to speak will be granted two (2)

minutes to speak.

During committee meetings, public comment shall be permitted as set forth in the agenda, except that, at a minimum, public comment will be permitted at the end of the committee meeting, on agenda items only. Each individual who wishes to speak will be granted two (2) minutes to speak.

If the Board determines there is not sufficient time at a meeting for public comments, the comment period may be deferred to the next regular meeting or to a special meeting occurring before the next regular meeting.[4]

When items are added to the agenda after the public comment period has ended, the Board shall offer a further public comment opportunity limited to the added items.[4][6]. In the event that this occurs, each individual who wishes to speak will be granted three (3) minutes to speak.

An individual's public comment may be interrupted or terminated only under limited circumstances, such as when the individual's commentary is in clear violation of law or Board policy, including but not limited to the following:

1. **Sexual harassment, racial, ethnic, religious or nationality intimidation towards an individual or individuals in the school community.[7][8][9]**
2. **Disclosure of confidential personal information regarding students or staff.**
3. **Speech that traditionally has not been protected under the First Amendment, such as obscenity, defamation and speech integral to criminal conduct.**
4. **Speech that is profane.**
5. **Speech that constitutes true threats such as inciting imminent lawless action or subjecting individuals to fear of violence.**
6. **Speech that does not concern matters that may come before the Board for deliberation or official action, for example, sales of commercial products or services.**

Guidelines

Sign-in and Request to Comment

The Board encourages all members of the public planning to address the Board or to bring matters before it at a regular or special meeting to arrange with the office of the Superintendent to be placed on the agenda by the Thursday preceding the meeting. The participant will be allotted five (5) minutes. At the time that contact with the office of the Superintendent is made, the participant will be required to state whether the person is a resident, taxpayer, employee or student of the District, the topic to be addressed and the group affiliation, if applicable. If the individual has not followed procedures to be placed on the agenda, the individual will be allotted two (2) minutes to speak. The opportunities provided to speak in during the Questions and Comments from the Floor section of the meeting are limited to either five (5) minutes or (2) minutes and the same individual cannot aggregate their authority to speak for (7) minutes.

Statement of Presiding Officer

Prior to public comment during the meeting, the presiding officer shall make a statement providing direction and establishing expectations for the period of public comment.

Public Comment

Individuals shall wait to be recognized by the presiding officer before commenting and must direct all comments to the Board.

Orderly conduct of meetings does not permit spontaneous discussion from the audience.

Individuals must preface their comments by an announcement of their name, whether they are a resident, taxpayer, students or employee of the District, and group affiliation, if applicable.

All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question school directors individually.

The presiding officer and **the district solicitor have the authority to:**

1. Interrupt **an individual to warn the commenter that the statement is too lengthy or conduct is otherwise in violation of this policy.**
2. **After warning, terminate the individual's opportunity to comment when the conduct continues and is in violation of this policy.**
3. **Call a recess or adjourn to another time when an individual's conduct is otherwise in violation of this policy.**
4. Request an individual to leave the meeting when that person's **conduct is disrupting the operation of the meeting.**[10][11]
5. **If the individual refuses to leave the meeting, request the assistance of school security personnel or law enforcement to remove the disorderly person to enable the Board to proceed with the orderly operation of the meeting.**[12][13]
6. **Waive the Board's rules regarding public comment with the approval of a majority of those present and voting.**

The public comment time limitations set forth in this policy will be monitored by the presiding officer and may be modified by the presiding officer to the extent circumstances require. Where his/her ruling is disputed, it may be overruled by a majority of those Board members present and voting. In addition, a majority of the Board members present may also modify the public comment time limitations set forth in this policy to the extent permitted by law and circumstances require.

The right to bring placards and banners into the meeting may be restricted **under certain circumstances upon advice of the solicitor.**

Response to Public Comment

The purpose of public comment at Board meetings is to allow the Board to learn the thoughts of the public prior to Board deliberation and official action.

Although the public comment period of the meeting is not a question and answer session between the public and the Board, the Board may direct staff to follow up and address public inquiries in a reasonably prompt manner.

When a question cannot be answered by the presiding officer, another Board member, the Superintendent or other staff member present at the meeting, the question shall be referred to the administration for later response.

Whenever public comments are subject to the Board policy regarding personnel or public complaints, the individual shall be directed to follow the process outlined in the policy for resolution of the issue.[14]

Recording and Release of Public Comment

District recordings shall not be the official record of an open Board meeting. Recordings of Board meetings, including the public comment portions of the meeting, shall be retained and disposed of in accordance with the district's records retention schedule.[5][15][16][17][18]

Public Comment Recorded in Board Minutes

The following information regarding public comment is required to appear in the official minutes of each open Board meeting:[5][19]

- 1. The names of all citizens who appeared before the Board.**
- 2. The subject of their testimony.**

Recording Devices and Cameras

Recording devices may be used by persons attending open meetings of the Board in accordance with rules and regulations adopted by the Board. In order to limit the interference that audio recording devices may create during said proceedings, special seating will be provided for persons electing to use an audio recording device. All video recordings must be conducted in available room lighting in a location designated by the Board. No recording device may be used in any manner, or placed in any location, that shall unreasonably interfere with the conducting of the meeting or be disruptive to the audience.[1][21]

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Revised and Adopted – March 2, 1970

Revised and Adopted – June 23, 1975

Revised and Adopted – August 16, 1976

Revised and Adopted – September 18, 1978

Revised and Adopted – February 18, 1980

Revised and Adopted – February 16, 1987

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Revised and Adopted – February 21, 2000

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Revised and Adopted – July 20, 1992

Revised and Adopted – April 22, 1997

Revised and Adopted – March 23, 1999

Revised and Adopted – July 16, 2007

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Revised and Adopted - November 15, 2021

Legal

1. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710

2. 24 P.S. 407

3. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 709

4. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710.1

5. Pol. 006

6. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 712.1

7. Pol. 103

8. Pol. 103.1

9. Pol. 104

10. 18 Pa. C.S.A. 5101

11. 18 Pa. C.S.A. 5508

12. 18 Pa. C.S.A. 3503

13. Pol. 805.2

14. Pol. 906

15. Pol. 113.4

16. Pol. 216

17. Pol. 800

18. Pol. 801

19. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 706

20. Alekseev v. City Council of Philadelphia, 8 A.3d 311 (Pa. 2010)

21. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 711

U.S. Const. Amend. I

PA Const. Art. I

65 Pa. C.S.A. 701 et seq

18 Pa. C.S.A. 1 et seq

18 Pa. C.S.A. 5903

Counterman v. Colorado, 600 U.S. 66, 143 S. Ct. 2106, 216 L. Ed. 2d 775 (2023)

Hatchard v. Westinghouse Broadcasting, 516 Pa. 184, 532 A.2d 346 (1987)