SCHOOL DISTRICT - COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Series 1000

Other Mount Vernon School policies which do not exist in the Iowa Association of School Boards policies series.

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ALLERGY POLICY

The Mount Vernon School District is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for students. The Mount Vernon Board of Education understands the prevalence of life threatening allergies among school populations and proactively endorses the concept of being allergy aware and allergy smart. Recognizing that the risk of accidental exposure to allergens can be reduced in the school setting, Mount Vernon School District is committed to working in cooperation with parents, students, and physicians, to minimize risks and provide a safe educational environment for all students.

Furthermore, it is understood that allergic reactions can be unpredictable and that school personnel must be proficient at recognizing and reacting to an incident. The focus of allergy management shall be on awareness, education, communication, prevention, and emergency response.

The goals for allergy management include:
1. To establish procedures for identifying, managing, and ensuring continuity of care for students with life-threatening allergies across all grade levels from Early Childhood through grade 12.
2. To maintain the health and protect the safety of children who have life-threatening allergies in ways that are developmentally appropriate, promote self-advocacy and competence in self-care, maintain confidentiality and provide appropriate educational opportunities.
3. To ensure that interventions and individual health care plans for students with life-threatening allergies are based on medically accurate information and evidence-based practices and are shared with staff trained in recognizing and responding to allergic reactions.

In accordance with applicable law, it is the policy of the district to provide all students, through necessary accommodations where required, the opportunity to participate in all school programs and activities, as can be reasonably expected. Accordingly, the superintendent shall direct district building administrators and staff, to act affirmatively and work closely with parents to assure that the needs of children with documented allergies are taken into consideration in planning for district programs. The district school nurses will review practices annually and make recommendations for updates based on current medical practices.

References:
• Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE): http://www.foodallergy.org/
• National Association of School Nurses (NASN): http://www.nasn.org/ToolsResources/FoodAllergyandAnaphylaxis

Approved 9/9/2013
Reviewed 7/13/2015
Revised 9/9/2013
LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION

Selection Policy Mount Vernon Community School District
Part 1: Selection of Learning Resources
I. Statement of Policy
A. The policy of the Board of Directors of Mount Vernon Community School District is to provide a wide range of learning resources at varying levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view to meet the needs of students and teachers.

II. Objectives of Selection
A. For the purposes of this statement of policy, the term "learning resources" will refer to any person(s) or any material (whether acquired or locally produced) with instructional content or function that is used for formal or informal teaching/learning/performance purposes. Learning resources include textbooks, other books, supplementary reading (print and non-print), music and informational materials, agencies and organizations, charts, community resource people, dioramas, DVDs, filmstrips, flash cards, games, globes, kits, maps, models, periodicals, pictures, realia, slides, sound recordings, transparencies, and videocassettes.
B. The primary objective of learning resources is to support, enrich, and help implement the educational program of the school through the interaction of professional personnel and other members of the school community. It is the duty of professional staff to provide students with a wide range of materials at varying levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal, and the presentation of different points of view.
C. To this end, the School Board of Mount Vernon Community Schools affirms that it is the responsibility of its professional staff:
1. To provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, learning styles, and maturity levels of the students served;
2. To provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and societal standards;
3. To provide materials on various sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may have an opportunity to develop under guidance the practice of critical analysis and to make informed judgments in their daily lives;
4. To provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups that contribute to our national heritage and the world community;
5. To place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate to the school community.
II. Responsibility for Selection of Learning Resources
A. The School Board, subject to its responsibility for the operation of the Mount Vernon Community School District, delegates the responsibility for the selection of learning resources to the professional staff employed by the school system.
B. While selection of learning resources involves many people (administrators, teachers, students, or community persons) the responsibility for coordinating the selection of school learning resources and making the recommendation for purchase rests with the principal and professional personnel.

III. Criteria for Selection of Learning Resources
A. The following criteria will be used as they apply:
1. Learning resources shall support and be consistent with the general educational goals of the state and the district and the aims and objectives of individual schools and specific courses.
2. Learning resources shall be chosen to enrich and support the curriculum and the personal needs of users.
3. Learning resources shall meet high standards of quality in: artistic quality and/or literary style, authenticity, educational significance, factual content, physical format, presentation, readability and technical quality
4. Learning resources shall be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles, and social development of the students for whom the materials are selected.
5. Learning resources shall be selected to provide a background of information that will motivate students and staff to examine their own attitudes and behavior; to comprehend their duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges as participating citizens in our society; and to make informed judgments in their daily lives.
6. Learning resources shall provide information on various of controversial issues so that users may develop under guidance the practice of critical analysis.

IV. Procedures for Selection of Learning Resources
A. In selecting learning resources, professional personnel will evaluate available resources and curriculum needs and will consult reputable, professionally prepared aids to selection and other appropriate sources. Among sources to be consulted are:
1. Bibliographies (latest edition available, including supplements):
   American Historical Fiction
   American Association of Choral Directors
   Basic Book Collection for Elementary Grades
   The Best in Children's Books
   Children and Books
   Children's Catalog
   Elementary School Library Collection
Junior High School Catalog
Reference Books for School Libraries
Subject Guide to Children's Books in Print
2. Current reviewing media:
  Booklist
  Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books
  Horn Book
  Kirkus Reviews
  Mailbox Bookbag
  School Library Journal
  School Library Media Activities Monthly
  TeacherLibrarian
  Other sources will be consulted as appropriate. Whenever possible, the actual resource will be examined.
B. Recommendations for purchase involve administrators, teachers, students, district personnel and/or community persons, as appropriate.
C. Gift materials shall be judged by the criteria outlined and shall be accepted or rejected by those criteria.
D. Selection is an ongoing process that should include the removal of materials no longer appropriate and the replacement of lost and worn materials still of educational value

Part 2: Procedures for Dealing with Challenged Materials
I. Statement of Policy
Any resident or employee of the school district may formally challenge learning resources used in the district's educational program on the basis of appropriateness. This procedure is for the purpose of considering the opinions of those persons in the schools and the community who are not directly involved in the selection process.
II. Request for Informal Reconsideration
A. The school receiving a complaint regarding a learning resource shall try to resolve the issue informally.
  1. The principal or other appropriate staff shall explain to the questioner the school's selection procedure, criteria, and qualifications of those persons selecting the resource.
  2. The principal or other appropriate staff shall explain the particular place the questioned resource occupies in the education program, its intended educational usefulness, and additional information regarding its use, or refer the party to someone who can identify and explain the use of the resource.
  3. If the questioner wishes to file a formal challenge, a copy of the district Selection of Learning Resources policy and a Request for Reconsideration Form shall be handed or mailed to the party registering the complaint by the principal.
III. Request for Formal Reconsideration
A. Preliminary Procedures
1. Each school will keep on hand and make available Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources forms. All formal objections to learning resources must be made on these forms.
2. The Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources form shall be signed by the questioner and filed with the principal or someone so designated by the principal.
3. The superintendent shall be informed of the formal complaint received.
4. The request for reconsideration shall be referred to a reconsideration committee at the school level for reevaluation of the resource.
5. Requests for reconsideration of materials in district collections shall be referred to the school resource center consultative committee for reevaluation of the resource. This committee may involve additional personnel as appropriate.

B. The Reconsideration Committee
1. Upon receipt of a request for formal reconsideration of a learning resource, the principal shall:
   a. Appoint a reconsideration committee including the following membership, as appropriate: One member of the school teaching staff chosen by the building principal; One member of the school teaching staff chosen by the building staff; Two parents chosen by school administration; Two students (when appropriate)
   b. Name a convener of the reconsideration committee.
   c. Arrange for a reconsideration committee meeting within ten (10) working days after the complaint is received.
2. The reconsideration committee may choose to consult district support staff and/or community persons with related professional knowledge.
3. The reconsideration committee shall review the challenged resource and judge whether it conforms to the principles of selection outlined in the district's Selection Policy.

C. Resolution
1. The reconsideration committee shall: a. Examine the challenged resource; b. Determine professional acceptance by reading critical reviews of the resource; c. Weigh values and faults and form opinions based on the material as a whole rather than on passages or sections taken out of context; d. Discuss the challenged resource in the context of the educational program; e. Discuss the challenged item with the individual questioner when appropriate; f. Prepare a written report.
2. The written report shall be discussed with the individual questioner if requested.
3. A copy of the written report shall be retained by the school principal, with copies forwarded to the superintendent. A minority report also may be filed.
4. The decision of the reconsideration committee is binding for the individual school.
5. Notwithstanding any procedure outlined in this policy, the questioner shall have the right to appeal any decision of the reconsideration committee to the School Board as the final review panel.

D. Guiding Principles
1. Any resident or employee of the school district may raise objection to learning resources used in a school's educational program, despite the fact that the individuals selecting such resources were duly qualified to make the selection, followed the proper procedure, and observed the criteria for selecting learning resources.
2. The principal should review the selection and objection rules with the teaching staff at least annually. The staff should be reminded that the right to object to learning resources is one granted by policies enacted by the School Board.
3. No parent has the right to determine reading, viewing, or listening matter for students other than his or her own children.
4. Mount Vernon Community School District supports the Library Bill of Rights, adopted by the American Library Association. When learning resources are challenged, the principles of the freedom to read/listen/view must be defended as well.
5. Access to challenged material shall not be restricted during the reconsideration process.
6. The major criterion for the final decision is the appropriateness of the material for its intended educational use.
7. A decision to sustain a challenge shall not necessarily be interpreted as a judgment of irresponsibility by the professionals involved in the original selection and/or use of the material.

670 Iowa Admin. Code 3.5(20), .5(21).
281 Iowa Admin. Code 12.5(22) (new standards).

Approved 9/19/1988
Reviewed 7/13/2015
Revised 5/11/2009
EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

The Superintendent of Schools shall have the authority to close schools or modify school schedules because of extreme weather or other emergency conditions for the length of time the emergency exists, and shall make provisions to publicly announce such closings via available mass communication media as soon as possible after the decision to close.

Approved 2/9/1970
Reviewed 7/13/2015
Revised 2/9/1970
FISCAL MANAGEMENT

The District is committed to the following fiscal management goals.

1. Solvency Ratio. Maintaining an undesignated, unreserved general fund balance that is at least 10% of that year’s annual revenue. The current year’s projected balance will be provided by the School Board Treasurer before establishing the succeeding year’s cash reserve levy and before staffing and other spending decisions are finalized.

A solvency ratio of at least 10% enables the district to achieve higher credit ratings from rating agencies for long-term debt issues, avoids the need to pay interest expense for short-term borrowings in the general fund, and allows the district to better manage significant funding fluctuations such as State of Iowa funding reductions.

2. Unspent Authority. Maintaining unspent authority (balance) of not less than 10% of that year’s annual expenditures. Unspent authority is the amount of the total spending authority (authorized budget) not expended during the fiscal year which includes the unexpended total spending authority carried forward from previous years. The current year’s projected balance will be provided by the School Board Treasurer before staffing and other spending decisions are finalized for the succeeding year.

3. Facilities and Grounds Financial Funds. The School Board has a goal of maintaining a facilities and grounds financial funds reserve of $200,000 or more, reviewed periodically to account for inflation. These reserves should be maintained independently of an annual budget for facilities and grounds maintenance. Funding for facilities and grounds construction and maintenance typically comes from three revenue sources: property taxes in the form of the physical plant and equipment levy (PPEL), the statewide sales tax, and voter-approved general obligation bonds.

Maintaining adequate facilities and grounds financial reserves minimizes the possibility that emergency or high priority projects will draw money from the General Fund. While it is preferable to hold the facilities and grounds reserves in cash in order to insure availability, the reserves may also be comprised of reliable future funding streams, such as tax revenue expected in the near future and/or borrowing potential against expected future revenues. The current
year's projected balance will be provided by the School Board Treasurer before spending decisions are finalized for the succeeding year.

The district will measure attainment of these goals as of June 30, but only after completion of the Certified Annual Report.

Approved 11/8/2010
Reviewed 7/13/2015
Revised 4/11/2011
MATERNITY

Leaves of absence for pregnancy may be granted upon request to the Board of Education for a maximum of two years. Such leaves of absence shall be without pay.

Employees will be entitled to comparable positions if they become vacant during their two year leave of absence.

Approved 6/11/1984
Reviewed 7/13/2015
Revised 6/11/1984
PROFESSIONAL LEAVES
The School Board may grant leaves without pay for periods up to one year. The purpose of such leaves would be advanced study, travel, or other pursuits of benefit to the school district as well as the teachers. Teachers granted leaves would not advance on the salary schedule during their leave, but would be assured of a return to their position. Written requests for leaves should be submitted to the Superintendent.

Approved  6/25/1973
Reviewed  7/13/2015
Revised  6/25/1973
FAMILY ILLNESS

Non-certified and certified personnel may be granted leave of absence with full pay for immediate family illness (spouse, children, mother and father) at three days per year.

An additional seven days may be granted in the event of a severe illness or disability of a spouse, child, or parent.

Approved  2/9/1970
Reviewed  7/13/2015
Revised  7/14/2008
SOCIAL EVENTS

All social events shall be under the control and supervision of professional school personnel. Approval for an event shall be secured from the principal of the building involved before any public announcement is made. Hours, behavior, and activities related to social events shall be reasonable and proper as determined by the administration. Students who have been guilty of misconduct may be denied permission to attend social functions.

Approved 2/9/2015
Reviewed 7/13/2015
Revised 2/9/1970