

## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

### District-Community Relations

Public schools belong to and derive their strength from the citizens of the community served by the local school district. The quality of the school district's educational program depends, in large part, upon public understanding of and support for that program. For a community to understand and be supportive of its schools, the people must be knowledgeable of the aims and efforts of the District. The type of education received by the community's students depends on three things:

1. The extent to which the public is willing and able to finance local education.
2. The community's expectations for its schools.
3. The effectiveness of the school district's utilization of available resources.

A full understanding of the educational program is important in the development and maintenance of a good school system. In order to achieve such understanding the District believes:

1. Communications regarding the District should be multi-faceted and include a variety of media methods in order to efficiently and effectively inform the District's public.
2. District communications must be internal as well as external and stress the dissemination of factual, objective, and realistic information about the District.
3. District communications must provide for a comprehensive plan designed to provide accurate information, encourage public involvement, and gather community feedback.
4. District communications must be dynamic in scope, adapting to and growing with the needs of the School District, the needs of the local community, and changes determined through evaluation.

### District-Community Relations Objectives

The objectives of the Board of Education are to:

1. Keep the public informed about the policies, administrative operation, objectives, and educational programs of the schools.
2. Provide the means for furnishing full and accurate information, favorable and unfavorable, together with interpretation and explanation of the school plans and programs.
3. Adhere to a policy of openness and honesty in communicating with citizens, staff, the news media, and other organizations.
4. Seek ways to involve citizens in the work of the schools to foster community understanding and a sharing of responsibility for the quality of education.
5. Conduct all of its business in public sessions and make available the background material that is sent to the Board except for issues that, by law, may be considered confidential and conducted in closed session.

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6. Establish and support appropriate and effective communication between the administration and other District employees.
7. Have publications prepared as needed to keep citizens informed about educational services, achievements, needs, costs, revenues, and expenditures.

Public Relations Program

The Superintendent is the District's chief spokesperson and shall establish an Office of Community Relations whose functions will be to:

- Develop public understanding of school operations.
- Gather public attitudes and expectations for the District.
- Help citizens feel a more direct responsibility for the quality of education provided by their schools.
- Earn the public's good will, respect, and confidence.
- Promote a genuine spirit of cooperation between the school and the community.
- Provide the news media with accurate information.

The public relations program should include:

- Regular news releases concerning District programs, policies, and activities;
- News conferences and interviews as requested or needed. Individuals shall not speak for the District without prior approval from the Building Principal with regard to a building issue or from the Superintendent with regard to the District;
- Publications having a high quality of editorial content and an effective format. All publications shall identify the originating District school, department, or classroom and shall include the name of the Superintendent, the Building Principal, and/or the author and the publication date; and
- Other communications which highlight the District's programs and activities.

LEGAL REF.: 23 Ill. Admin. Code § 1.210.

Adopted: May 12, 1983  
Revised: March 8, 2001