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## **SCHOOL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS**

The School Committee believes that the District is an integral part of the community and that community support is necessary for the District's operation and achievement of excellence. The School Committee and District staff members recognize that community support is based on a mutual exchange, a dynamic process in which the District contributes to the community's success and, in turn, benefits from the community's resources.

In order to maintain productive relationships with the community, the District is committed to sustaining:

- Effective, accurate, and meaningful communications that facilitate dialogue, encourage involvement in District programs, and create community advocacy for its public schools.
- Volunteer programs that provide mutually enriching experiences for our students, staff, and community volunteers.
- Recognition programs that publicly honor the contributions of our students, employees, and community partners and express pride in our individual and collective accomplishments.
- Community service efforts which enable the District's staff and students to express their commitment to the community.

## **SCHOOL/PARENT RELATIONS GOALS**

It is the general goal of the District to foster relationships with parents, which encourage cooperation between the home and school in establishing and achieving common educational goals for students.

While parents are individually responsible for their children, the District provides direct services of education and indirect services of childcare for students during the time when they are within the supervision of school personnel. Consistent with these shared responsibilities and as appropriate to the maturity of the student, members of the school staff will consult with parents regarding student progress and achievement, methods to enhance student development, and matters of correction.

Additionally, parental involvement in the schools is encouraged through regular communication with the school Principal and staff, the parent/teacher organizations, the school volunteer program, and other opportunities for participation in school activities and District programs.

**NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS' RIGHTS**  
(General Laws Chapter 71, Section 34H)

As required by G.L. Ch. 71, Sec. 34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with law and Department of Education Regulations. The School District will follow the law and the attachments recommended by the Massachusetts Department of Education to standardize the process by which public schools provide student records to parents who do not have physical custody of their children ("non-custodial parents"). The implementation of this policy will hopefully encourage parents to be involved in and informed about the education of their children, while protecting the rights and safety of all parties.

Suggested Checklist for Schools Implementing General Laws Chapter 71, Section 34H  
(Distribution of Student Records to Eligible Non-Custodial Parents)

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Custodial Parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Requesting Parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Staff Member Verifying Information: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ The requesting parent submitted a written request for the records to the school principal within the past twelve months. Date of request: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ The initial request included a certified copy of a court order, which met the requirements of Section 34H (b).

\_\_\_\_\_ The initial request included an affidavit from the requesting parent, which met the requirements of Section 34H(b).

\_\_\_\_\_ Each school year since the initial request the requesting parent has submitted a request indicating that the parent continues to be:

- a) Entitled to unsupervised visitation with the child; and
- b) Eligible to receive student record information pursuant to Section 34H. Date(s) of annual request(s):

When the school received the records request from the non-custodial parent:

- The school immediately notified the custodial parent of the request by certified mail and by first class mail, in both the primary language of the custodial parent and in English. The notice informed the custodial parent that information requested pursuant to Section 34H is to be provided to the requesting parent after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation of an applicable court order. Date of notice: \_\_\_\_\_
- The school is aware that it may seek reimbursement for the cost of postage from the requesting parent.
- The eligible parent has the right of access to the entire student record.

Or

- The otherwise eligible parent's right of access to the entire student record has been specifically limited by court order.

Note limitations, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

LEGAL REF.:           M.G.L. 71:34H  
                              603 CMR 23.07 (5) Access Procedures for Non-Custodial Parents

## **RELATIONS WITH PARENT ORGANIZATIONS**

To foster relationships with parents that encourage the home and school to work together to establish and achieve common educational goals for students, the Superintendent and the professional staff will:

1. Consult with and encourage parents to share in school planning and in setting objectives and evaluating programs.
2. Help parents understand the educational process and their role in promoting it.
3. Provide for parent understanding of school operations.
4. Provide opportunities for parents to be informed of their child's development and the criteria for its measurement.

To accomplish the above and to enhance communications between parents and school officials, the Committee encourages the maintenance of formal parent organizations at each school building. For this purpose the Committee will officially recognize a parent organization for the District. These procedures will be observed:

1. Organizations will be officially recognized upon request by the building Principal who will file a copy of the organizational papers with the Superintendent.
2. A vote, open to all parents of children enrolled, will designate the organization to be recognized if more than one organization makes the request.

## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING**

The School Committee endorses the concept that community participation in the affairs of the schools is essential if the school system and the community are to maintain mutual confidence and respect and work together to improve the quality of education for students. It therefore intends to exert every effort to identify the desires of the community and to be responsive, through its actions, to those desires.

All citizens will be encouraged to express ideas, concerns, and/or questions about the schools to the school administration, to any appointed advisory bodies, and to the Committee.

Residents who are specially qualified because of interest, training, experience, or personal characteristics, will be encouraged to assume an active role in school affairs. From time to time, these people may be invited by the Committee to act as advisors, either individually or in groups.

The Committee and the staff will give substantial weight to the advice they receive from individuals and community groups interested in the schools, particularly from those individuals and groups they have invited to advise them regarding specific problems, but will use their best judgment in arriving at decisions.

CROSS REF.:           BDF, Advisory Committees to the School Committee

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

School Committee deliberations on the tentative and final budget shall normally be considered in open session.

The Chairperson may request comments and opinions from the audience for consideration by the School Committee.

The School Committee will receive and consider input on the budget from the School Councils.



## **PUBLIC GIFTS TO THE SCHOOLS**

The Superintendent will recommend to the Committee whether to accept gifts and offers of equipment for the schools when the gift is of educational value. In the case of gifts from industry, business, or special interest groups, no extensive advertising or promotion may be involved in any donation to the schools.

Gifts that would involve changes in school plants or sites will be subject to School Committee approval.

Gifts will automatically become the property of the school system. Any gift of money, whether or not intended by the donor for a specific purpose, will be deposited into one of the established revolving account and expended at the discretion of the Committee, as provided by law.

The Committee directs the Superintendent to assure that an appropriate expression of thanks is given all donors.

Donations involving services will be provided through the School Committee. The funds should be forwarded to the School Committee for approval and procurement.

LEGAL REF.:           M.G.L. 71:37A

## **PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW**

The School Committee is a public servant, and its meetings and records will be a matter of public information except as such meetings and records pertain to individual personnel and other classified matters.

The School Committee supports the right of the people to know about the programs and services of their schools and will make every effort to disseminate information. All requests for information will be acted on fairly, completely and expeditiously.

The official minutes of the Committee, its written policies and regulations, and its financial records will be open for inspection at the office of the Superintendent by any citizen desiring to examine them during hours when the office is open. No records pertaining to individual students or staff members will be released for inspection by the public or any unauthorized persons by the Superintendent or other persons responsible for the custody of confidential files. The exception to this will be information about an individual employee (or student) that has been authorized in writing for release by the employee (or student, or student's parent).

Each building administrator is authorized to use all means available to keep parents and others in the particular school's community informed about the school's program and activities.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 4:7; 66:10; 39:23B

CROSS REFS.: BEDG, Minutes  
GBJ, Personnel Records  
JRA, Student Records

## **NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS/NEWS RELEASES**

Every effort will be made to assist the press and other communications media to obtain complete and adequate coverage of the programs, problems, planning, and activities of the school system.

All representatives of the media will be given equal access to information about the schools. General releases of interest to the entire community will be made available to all the local media simultaneously. There will be no exclusive releases except as media representatives request information on particular programs, plans or problems.

In order that school system publicity is given wide coverage and is coordinated into a common effort and purpose, the following procedures will be followed in giving official information to the news media:

1. The School Committee Chairperson will be the official spokesman for the Committee, except as this duty is delegated to the Superintendent.
2. News releases that are of a system-wide or a sensitive nature or pertain to established Committee policy are the responsibility of the Superintendent.
3. News releases that are of concern to only one school, or to an organization of one school, are the responsibility of the Principal of that particular school. All statements made to the press by other staff members of the particular school must be cleared with the Principal.

While it is impossible to know how news releases will be treated by the press, every possible effort should be made to obtain coverage of school activities that will create and maintain a dignified and professionally responsible image for the school system.

CROSS REF.: BBAA, School Committee Member Authority and Duties

## **PARENT GUIDE TO ADDRESS CONCERNS IN THE HANOVER SCHOOLS**

When a parent determines that there is a school-related concern that needs to be addressed with school officials, the sequential steps outlined below should be followed. Hanover Schools seeks to work collaboratively with parents to find the fastest resolution to any problem.

1. The parent should address the concern with the staff member most directly involved, (i.e., a question regarding the content of instructional materials or homework assignments should be shared with the classroom teacher).
2. If the matter is not resolved at this level, the parent may bring the concern to the attention of the Principal.
3. If the matter continues to remain unresolved, the parent may bring the concern to the attention of the Superintendent.
4. If the matter still remains unresolved, the parent may bring the concern to the attention of the school committee by directly contacting the School Committee Chairperson and requesting appropriate action.

The following are examples of issues that should be addressed at the level indicated. If a parent has a concern that is not listed here, the parent may call his/her child's Principal for direction to the most appropriate person.

1. **Teachers and Specialists (Art, Music, Computers and Technology, Library, Health, and PE)**
  - Student homework, assignments, quizzes, test, and grading
  - Course instructional materials, practices, academic progress, and extra help
  - Issues related to classroom discipline, interactions with other pupils and teachers
2. **Athletic Instructors and Coaches**
  - Concerns regarding athletic activities
  - At the High School concerns may also be directed to the Athletic Director
3. **Guidance and Adjustment Counselors**
  - Concerns between school and home, teacher and pupil, pupil and other pupils
  - Personal matters relating to student development, behavior, or interaction with others
  - Course selection and student schedules
  - Scheduling of grade/team level meetings at the Middle School

- Course placement or career information
  - Middle and High School academic records
  - Accommodations Plans
  - Student placement issues (in a class, program or instructional level)
4. **Principals and/or Assistant Principals**
- Co-curricular program issues (athletics, music, drama, etc.)
  - Matters related to the physical plant
  - Concerns regarding school personnel
  - Student records, school-wide student expectations, discipline issues, or bus conduct
  - Requests that specific courses and programs be included in the program of studies
  - Policy, procedure, and protocol concerns
5. **Superintendent**
- Questions regarding school committee policies and administrative procedures
  - School Committee meetings and agenda items
  - Budgetary matters to also include any issue or item of the Hanover Schools budget that was not processed or appropriated correctly
  - Concerns regarding school personnel or services which have not been resolved at the Principal's level
  - Suggestions or requests for changes in the curriculum
  - Transportation matters
6. **School Committee**
- Matters pertaining to district-wide policy, protocol, and procedures
  - Concerns regarding the Superintendent
  - Issues relating to school committee minutes and agenda items (directed to the Chairperson)
  - Long-range planning
  - District-wide budget issues
  - Any item that should be included in future planning by the Hanover Schools
7. **Special Needs**
- The parent should first try to address a concern with the appropriate Contact Person regarding provision of services and IEP
  - If the concern is not resolved at this level, the parent may then contact the SPED Chair at his/her child's school
  - If the concern remains unresolved, the parent may bring the matter to the attention of the Principal
  - If the concern continues to remain unresolved, the parent may bring the matter to the attention of the Director of Pupil Personnel Services

**PUBLIC COMPLAINTS  
EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY**

Complaint Procedure

- (1) A parent, guardian, or other person or group who believes that M.G.L. c. 76, s. 5 or 603 CMR 26.00 has been or is being violated, may request a written statement of the reasons therefore from the responsible School Committee through the Superintendent and may submit a copy of such request to the Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity of the Department of Education. If such request is made, a copy of such request shall be sent by the School Committee to the Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity.
- (2) The School Committee shall respond promptly, but no later than 30 days, in writing to the complaining party. The School Committee shall also send a copy of its response to the Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity.
- (3) The Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity shall act as the representative of the Board of Education for the purpose of receiving complaints pursuant to 603 CMR 26.00.
- (4) The Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity shall, pursuant to a complaint received under 603 CMR 26.09 (1) or on its own initiative, conduct reviews to insure compliance with M.G.L. c. 76 s. 5 and 603 CMR 26.00. The School Committee and the specific school(s) involved shall cooperate to the fullest extent with such review.
- (5) In the event of non-compliance with M.G.L. c. 76 s. 5 or 603 CMR 26.00 the Board of Education may take such action as it sees fit, including, but not limited to, withholding of funds or referral of the matter to the Office of the Attorney General for appropriate legal action.

Private Right of Enforcement

Nothing in 603 CMR 26.00 shall abridge or in any way limit the right of a parent, guardian, or person affected to seek enforcement of St. 1971, c.622 in any court or administrative agency of competent jurisdiction.

LEGAL REFS.:       M.G.L. 76:5

## **PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

Complaints about school personnel will be investigated fully and fairly. However, before any such complaint is investigated, the complainant must submit his complaint in writing. Anonymous complaints will be disregarded.

Whenever a complaint is made directly to the School Committee as a whole or to a Committee member as an individual, it will be referred to the school administration for study and possible solution.

The Superintendent will develop, for approval by the Committee, procedures that assure prompt and fair attention to complaints against school personnel. The procedures will require that an employee who is the object of a complaint be informed promptly and be afforded the opportunity to present the facts as he/she sees them.

If it appears necessary, the administration, the person who made the complaint, or the employee involved may request an executive session of the Committee for a formal hearing and decision. Statutory restrictions on executive sessions will be observed.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 76:5

CROSS REF.: BEC, Executive Sessions

## **PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CURRICULUM OR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

The School Committee, though it is ultimately responsible for all curriculum and instructional materials (including library books), recognizes the need and right of students to free access to many different types of books and materials. It also recognizes the right of the professional staff to select books and other materials supportive of the school system's educational philosophy and goals.

Criticism of a book or other materials used in the schools may be expected from time to time. In such instances:

1. If a parent requests that his/her own child not read a given book, the teacher and/or school administrator should resolve the situation, perhaps by arranging for use of alternative material meeting essentially the same instructional purpose. This does not apply, however, to basic program texts and materials that the Committee has adopted.
2. The Committee will not permit any individual or group to exercise censorship over instructional materials and library collections, but recognizes that at times a reevaluation of certain material may be desirable. Should an individual or group ask to have any book or other material withdrawn from school use:
  - a. The person who objects to the book or other material will be asked to sign a complaint on a standard form on which he/she will document his criticism.
  - b. Following receipt of the formal complaint, the Superintendent will provide for a reevaluation of the material in question, he/she will arrange for the appointment of a review committee from among the faculty to consider the complaint.
  - c. The Superintendent will review the complaint and the committee's reevaluation and will render a decision in the matter. Should the decision be unsatisfactory to the complainant, he/she may appeal it to the Committee.

In summary, the Committee assumes final responsibility for all books and instructional materials it makes available to students; it holds its professional staff accountable for their proper selection. It recognizes rights of individual parents with respect to controversial materials used by their own children; it will provide for the reevaluation of materials in library collections upon formal request. On the other hand, students' right to learn and the freedom of teachers to teach will be respected.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 76:5

CROSS REFS.: IJ, Instructional Materials  
IJJ, Selection and Adoption of Textbooks  
IJL, Selection and Adoption of Library Materials



## COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

It is the School Committee's desire that maximum use of school property be enjoyed by the townspeople. It is the Committee's intent that such use will maintain safe conditions and preserve the property for school program use.

Use of school buildings and other facilities by organizations will be permitted only when a worthy educational, civic, or charitable purpose will be served; or a substantial group of citizens from the community will be benefited.

School facilities will be used according to the regulations and rental fee schedules recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the School Committee.

Permission for the use of facilities must be obtained through the office of the Superintendent of Schools, where applications are available for this purpose.

### Eligibility

School facilities will be available for the following:

1. Public school activities
2. Parent-teacher activities
3. Official town public hearings and political activities
4. Meetings and activities sponsored by the School Committee and school personnel
5. Parks and playgrounds activities
6. Local nonprofit and noncommercial organization activities
7. Metropolitan civic, educational, social, and religious organization activities if a substantial portion of the members are residents of the town
8. The activities of other organizations when approved by the School Committee

All other groups will pay rental fees and custodial fees according to the schedule established by the School Committee.

### School and Town Preference

The priority given requests for use of school facilities will be as follows:

1. School activities
2. Town meetings and elections over other community activities
3. Parks and playgrounds

The Superintendent may conduct such educational and recreational activities in or upon school property under department control for the purpose of promoting the usefulness of public school property. It is understood that such use is in conformity with other policies and does not interfere with the use of the premises for school business.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:71; 71:71B; 272:40A

## **USE OF SCHOOL KITCHENS**

School kitchens may be used by community groups provided proper approval has been granted in advance by the Principal. Special approval is required for use of this area because of the need to maintain high sanitation standards. A cafeteria staff person must be present.

## **PUBLIC SOLICITATIONS IN THE SCHOOLS**

The School Committee will place limits on commercial activities and fund-raising activities in the schools for the following reasons:

1. The school system should provide students, parents, and employees some measure of protection from exploitation by commercial and charitable fund-raising organizations.
2. The school system should not give the public the impression of generally endorsing or sanctioning commercial and fund-raising activities.
3. Commercial and fund-raising activities may disrupt school routine and cause loss of instructional time.

Following these guiding statements, the Superintendent and Principals may permit occasional commercial or fund-raising activities related to the objectives of the schools with the following exceptions:

1. No direct solicitation of students or employees by outside agencies may take place without School Committee permission.
2. No general or class distribution of commercial or fund-raising literature by outside parties may take place without School Committee permission.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 44:53A

CROSS REFS.: GBEBC, Staff Gifts and Solicitations  
JJE, Student Fund-Raising Activities  
JP, Student Gifts and Solicitations  
KHB, Advertising in the Schools

## **COMMERCIAL AND PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Distribution of commercial and promotional materials not directly related to school fund-raising activities shall be at the discretion of the Superintendent. In making the decision, the Superintendent shall weigh educational value and consistency with the mission and objectives of the Hanover Schools.

## **VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS**

### Visitors

All visitors should sign in at the office when they arrive in the building and sign out when leaving the building. All visitors are required to wear a badge while in the building. Badges can be picked up and dropped off next to the sign-in notebook in the office. Volunteers should help us meet our goals by assisting us with flexible groups and learning experiences that demand more hands to accomplish; offering reduced adult to student ratios at times when another adult is needed to facilitate learning; supporting our efforts to offer more opportunities to individual students to practice skills, develop concepts, or extend the learning.

### Volunteers

All volunteers will sign in when they arrive in the building. All volunteers are required to wear a badge while in the school. It is the policy of the School Committee to encourage volunteer efforts in the schools. Parents/guardians, business representatives, senior citizens, and other community volunteers are recognized as important sources of support and expertise to enhance the instructional program and vital communication links with the community. The volunteer program will be coordinated in cooperation with building administrators.

All volunteers must comply with CORI requirements.

CROSS REF.: ADDA, CORI Requirements