

SECTION – K
COMMUNITY RELATIONS

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KA - SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS

The Freetown-Lakeville Regional School Committee (FLRSC) 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 FLRSC and Freetown-Lakeville Regional School District (FLRSD) staff members recognize that community support is based on a mutual exchange, a dynamic process in which the FLRSD 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 FLRSD 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.

SOURCE: MASC

KBA - SCHOOL/FAMILIES RELATIONS GOALS

It is the general goal of the Freetown-Lakeville Regional School District (FLRSD) to foster relationships with families that encourage cooperation between the home and school in establishing and achieving common educational goals for students.

While Families are individually responsible for their children, the FLRSD provides direct services of education and indirect services of child care 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, family 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 FLRSD programs.

The FLRSD staff recognize that the involvement of families is essential. We strongly encourage all families to:

Become aware of what their child is learning

Ask questions about their child's education

Support their child's learning.

KBBA - NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS' RIGHTS

As required by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 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 regulations developed 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").

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with the following provisions.

- (a) A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless the school or district has been given documentation that:
 - 1. The parent has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
 - 2. The parent has been denied visitation, or
 - 3. The parent's access to the student has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or
- 4. There is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.
- (b) The school shall place in the student's record documents indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student's record is limited or restricted pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a).
- (c) In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal.
- (d) Upon receipt of the request the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07 (5)(a).
- (e) The school must delete all electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either work or home locations of the custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.
- (f) Upon receipt of a court order which prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to G.L. c. 71, §34H, the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:34D; 71:34H
603 CMR 23.07 (5) Access Procedures for Non-Custodial Parents
20 U.S.C. §1232g Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

KBE - RELATIONS WITH PARENT/BOOSTER ORGANIZATIONS

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

To accomplish the above and to enhance communications between parents/guardians and school officials, the Freetown-Lakeville Regional School Committee (FLRSC) encourages the maintenance of formal parent organizations, including booster organizations, at each school building. For this purpose, the FLRSC will officially recognize parent organizations. 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/guardians of children enrolled, will designate the organization to be recognized if more than one organization with the same purpose makes the request.
3. All parent organizations shall obtain 501C3 status and file appropriate paperwork with state authorities and make proof of such status available to school district administration.
4. All parent organizations need to recognize that spending on student activities must comply with federal law relating to equity among student genders.

LEGAL REFS: Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972

CROSS REFS: [ACA](#) - Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

KCD - PUBLIC GIFTS TO THE SCHOOLS

The Superintendent will have authority to accept gifts and offers of equipment for the schools in the name of the Freetown-Lakeville Regional School Committee (FLRSC) 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 FLRSC approval.

Gifts will automatically become the property of the school system. Any gift of cash, whether or not intended by the donor for a specific purpose, will be handled as a separate account and expended at the discretion of the FLRSC, as provided by law.

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

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:37A

KDB - PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW

The Freetown-Lakeville School Committee (FLRSC) 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 FLRSC 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 FLRSC, 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 family).

Each building administrator is authorized to use all means available to keep families 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

KDD - 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, planning, and activities of the school district.

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 media simultaneously. There will be no exclusive releases except as media representatives request information on particular programs, plans or problems.

In order that school district 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 Freetown-Lakeville Regional School Committee (FLRSC) chair will be the official spokesman for the FLRSC, 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 FLRSC 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 district.

KE - PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

Although no member of the community will be denied the right to bring their complaints to the Freetown-Lakeville Regional School Committee (FLRSC), they will be referred through the proper administrative channels for solution before investigation or action by the FLRSC. Exceptions will be made when the complaints concern FLRSC actions or FLRSC operations only.

The FLRSC believes that complaints are best handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible, and that the professional staff should be given every opportunity to consider the issues and attempt to resolve the problem prior to involvement by the FLRSC. Therefore, the proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline or learning materials will be as follows:

1. Teacher
2. School building administrator
3. Superintendent
4. School Committee

If a complaint, which was presented to the FLRSC and referred back through the proper channels, is adjusted before it comes back to the FLRSC, a report of the disposition of the matter will be made to the FLRSC and then placed in the official files.

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 FLRSC as a whole or to a Committee member as an individual, it will be referred to the school administration for study and possible solution.

Matters referred to the Superintendent and/or FLRSC must be in writing and should be specific in terms of the action desired.

The FLRSC expects the professional staff to receive complaints courteously and to make a proper reply to the complainant.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:09 and 26.00
MGL: 76:5

KEC - PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CURRICULUM OR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The Freetown-Lakeville School Committee (FLRSC), though it is ultimately responsible for all curriculum and instructional materials (including library books), recognize the need and right of students to free access to many different types of books and materials. They also recognize 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 FLRSC has adopted.
2. The FLRSC 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/her 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 FLRSC.

In summary, the FLRSC 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 REF: 603 CMR 26.09 and 26.10

CROSS REFS: IJ, Instructional Materials

IJJ, Selection and Adoption of Textbooks

IJL, Library Materials Selection Policy

KF - COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

It is the Freetown-Lakeville School Committee's (FLRSC) desire that maximum use of school property be enjoyed by the townspeople. It is the FLRSC 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 FLRSC.

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 towns.
8. The activities of other organizations when approved 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.

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

KHB - ADVERTISING IN THE SCHOOLS

No advertising of commercial products or services will be permitted in school buildings or on school grounds or properties unless approved by the building Principal. Publications of the school system will not contain any advertising. However, this will not prevent advertising in student publications that are published by student organizations, subject to administration controls, or the use of commercially-sponsored, free teaching aids if the content is approved by the administration.

Solicitation of sales or use of the name of the school system to promote any product will not be permitted by the FLRSC.

CROSS REF.: JP, Student Gifts and Solicitations

KI - VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

The Freetown-Lakeville School Committee encourages families to visit classrooms to observe and learn about the instructional programs taking place in our schools. Such visits can prove most beneficial in promotion of greater school-home cooperation and community understanding of how we carry out the school system's mission and goals.

The following guidelines to classroom and school visits should be followed:

1. Parental requests for classroom visitations will be welcomed as long as the educational process is not disrupted. To this end we request that such requests be made at least forty-eight hours in advance to allow for proper arrangements to be made.
2. The building Principal has the authority to determine the number, times, and dates of observations by visitors. This will be done in consultation with staff members so as to give adequate notice to the staff members of the impending visits.
3. For security purposes it is requested that all visitors report to the Principal's office upon entering and leaving the building and sign a guest log showing arrival and departure times. Teachers are encouraged to ask visitors if they have registered in the Principal's office.
4. Under ordinary circumstances classroom observations will be strongly discouraged during the first three weeks of school in September and during the month of June.
5. Any student who wishes to have a guest in school **MUST** ask permission of one of the administrative staff **24 HOURS** in advance of the proposed visit. If permission is granted, the guest is expected to follow the standards of behavior expected of all students. Upon arrival the guest must register in the office. Any guest who fails to comply with student regulations will be asked to leave the school building and grounds immediately.

CROSS REF: IHBA- Observations of Special Education Programs

KLG - RELATIONS WITH POLICE AUTHORITIES

Cooperation with law enforcement agencies is essential for the protection of students, for maintaining a safe environment in the Freetown-Lakeville Regional School District (FLRSD), and for safeguarding all school property.

Relationships between the schools and officials of law enforcement agencies in investigative matters concerning pupils will take into consideration the respective roles of the schools and law enforcement agencies in assisting and protecting the interests of the community, and ensuring the rights of all concerned.

The Freetown-Lakeville Regional School Committee (FLRSC) also recognizes the potential enrichment that law enforcement agencies can make in the educational program.

Efforts should be made to develop and maintain a healthy attitude toward law enforcement agencies and personnel to promote better understanding and communication.

KLJ - RELATIONS WITH PLANNING AUTHORITIES

The Freetown-Lakeville School Committee (FLRSC) will participate in local and state planning functions that could directly affect District schools and their immediate environment.

The Superintendent or designee will keep the FLRSC informed of planning matters bearing directly on the operation of FLRSD or school-sponsored programs, and will undertake action on behalf of the FLRSC to influence matters in the best interests of the students, the schools and the FLRSD.

KLK - RELATIONS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES

The Freetown-Lakeville School Committee (FLRSC) and its administrative officers welcome all who seek to serve the residents of the community and will participate with them in the planning and execution of such projects as will be mutually beneficial for students.

It is FLRSC policy that administration inform elected and appointed officials of the local and county government of the desire to work cooperatively for improved services.