

BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

SERIES 1000

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COMMUNITY RELATIONS

SERIES 1000

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Community Relations

Concept, Goals and Roles in Community Relations

The Board of Education recognizes that the community, defined broadly as the state and specifically as the area served by the school system, determines the quality of local education. It is imperative that members of the community and the school personnel cooperate in planning, developing policy, implementing programs and evaluating results.

School-community relations are not merely reporting and interpreting. Rather, they are part of a public enterprise in which community members and school personnel play their respective roles in the best interests of the school district.

The Board of Education establishes the following goals for the community relations program:

1. Engage the community as equal partners of the school system.
2. To increase public understanding of the school system.
3. To increase community confidence, interest and participation in the school system.
4. To promote effective dissemination of information concerning school activities.
5. To solicit community opinions about the school system.
6. To encourage the sharing of resources among civic and community organizations for the benefit of the school system

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

- 1-225 Meetings of the government agents to be public
- 1-232 Conduct of the meeting
- 10-220 Duties of boards of education
- 10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rule(s), policies, and procedures
- 10-238 Petition for hearing by board of education.
- 10-239 Use of school facilities for other purposes.
- 53a-185 Loitering in or about school grounds: Class C misdemeanor.

Community Relations

Communications with the Public

General. The Board of Education believes it is important to inform the public about school curriculum, programs, and activities so citizens can participate in these programs. Concurrently, the school staff, administration, and Board of Education should be aware of the community's goals and concerns for its children so they may be given consideration in curriculum, program, and activity revisions.

To this end, the Board supports and encourages various means such as publications, press releases, open houses, public forums, and other public events to disseminate school district information and to hear from the community.

The Community Relations Program. The community relations program shall be a concurrent responsibility of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent of Schools shall work with members of the Board of Education to conduct an active and comprehensive informational program throughout the school district.

Staff members shall be kept informed of community relations efforts, and their support and participation in such efforts shall be sought.

News of Board of Education Meetings and Activities. The Board of Education believes in the widest possible dissemination of news concerning the school and shall cooperate fully with the press, radio, and television to assure that news coverage is complete, balanced, and accurate.

It should be made clear to anyone wishing to review the minutes that they are unofficial until approved by the Board of Education. Minutes will be made available on-line following the Board's approval or in our Business Office.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
 1-13-1-21k Public records and meetings.
 10-220 Duties of boards of education.

Community Relations

News Media Relationships

Because schools are public institutions serving the educational needs of the community, it is important that information be disseminated concerning programs, activities, and significant school events. To ensure that this publicity be given wide coverage and coordinated with a common effort and purpose, the following procedures shall be followed with news media:

1. The Board of Education Chairperson shall be the official spokesperson for the Board. The Superintendent of Schools may report on actions of the Board.
2. News releases of a system-wide nature, or which pertain to established school system policy, are the responsibility of the Superintendent and will be issued through his/her office.
3. News releases which are of concern to only one school, or to an organization of one school, are the responsibility of principals. Principals should coordinate with central office.

Board meetings to which the public has access may be photographed, broadcast, or recorded for broadcast by any newspaper, radio broadcasting company, or television broadcasting company, subject to the following guidelines:

1. News media personnel who intend to photograph, broadcast, or record for broadcast the proceedings of any public meeting of the Board of Education shall provide appropriate identification to the Superintendent of Schools, if requested by the Superintendent, prior to said meeting of the Board.
2. Any photographer, broadcaster, or news journalist authorized as an employer or student news medium to photograph, broadcast, or record for broadcast, proceedings at a public meeting of the Board of Education, and any personnel associated with said photographer, broadcaster, or news journalist, shall photograph, broadcast, or record for broadcast proceedings of said meeting as inconspicuously as possible and in such a manner which doesn't disturb proceedings.

Community Relations

News Media Relationships (continued)

3. If, in the judgment of the Chairperson of the Board of Education, the presence at a Board meeting of any photographer, broadcaster, or news journalist causes such disruption that orderly conduct of the public business at such meeting becomes unfeasible, access by these individuals may be limited to the extent necessary to remove disruption.
4. Information released to the media shall be that which is public information as covered by statute. It is recognized that there is information of a confidential nature which shall not be released.
5. The principal has the right to restrict interaction of media personnel with students on school property if he/she deems it interferes or disrupts the educational process.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
1-21a Recording, broadcasting, or photographing meetings.



John J. Ramos, Sr., Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Robert Henry
Associate Superintendent

Office of the Associate Superintendent

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ADMINISTRATIVE CIRCULAR 2011-2012

NUMBER 1

TO: ADMINISTRATORS, SUPERVISORS AND PRINCIPALS

FROM: Robert Henry, Associate Superintendent

DATE: AUGUST 19, 2011

SUBJECT: MEDIA PROTOCOL/PROCEDURES

In order to broaden and enhance understanding of our mission, vision, and objectives, the Bridgeport Public Schools welcome interest and coverage by the media.

Contact Guidelines

- All contact initiated with the media on behalf of the schools must be coordinated with the Office of the Superintendent.
- All information disseminated to the media must be in accordance with applicable education records, laws, and district policies.
- Whenever a media inquiry is received at a school or Central Office it should be referred immediately to the appropriate principal or supervisor who, in turn, must immediately notify the Office of the Superintendent.
- Principals should not respond to media inquires until after they have notified the Office of the Associate Superintendent. If the media inquiry is obtained after working hours, please contact the Associate Superintendent via cellular phone.

Requests to Post Literature/Flyers from Non-Bridgeport Public School Entities

- Any request from an individual and/or organization to post materials of any kind on school property including advertisements, solicitations and announcements, **MUST** be submitted to the Office of the Associate Superintendent for prior approval. The literature/flyer can be delivered or faxed to (203)337-0150, attention Robert Henry, for approval. No item fitting the categories described above may be posted or distributed without said approval.

Who May Act As Spokesperson

- The Principal may act as the spokesperson for their school if all of the following conditions are met:
 - The Office of the Superintendent has been notified
 - The media inquiry is routine and confined to an individual school issue (not of a system-wide nature)
 - Responding to the media inquiry will not disrupt the education of the students
 - Responding to the media inquiry does not compromise the privacy of the students
- In all other situations, the Superintendent or his designee is the **only** authorized spokesperson for the Bridgeport Public Schools and all additional public comment must come through the Office of the Associate Superintendent.

Media Coverage Guidelines

- Media (photographers, television camera operators, reporters and writers) may be allowed to interact with students and teachers on school property if all of the following conditions are met:
 - The Office of the Superintendent has been notified and approval granted.
 - Responding to the media inquiry will not disrupt the education of students
 - Responding to the media inquiry does not compromise the privacy rights of the students.

Parental Notification

- Parents will be advised by principals of the district's media access policy at the beginning of each school year. Parents who do not want media access to their children will be asked to inform the school principal in writing by completing the attached form and submitting it to the school principal. Principals shall keep a record of these students/forms on file for use when media visits the school.

Exemptions from this Policy

- These policies do not apply to:
 - School events open to the general public such as sporting events
 - Employees who are interacting with the media as individuals and not in their official capacity within the school system.

Procedures for Clarification

- If you have any concerns or questions regarding these policies or how they relate to a specific circumstance, please contact the Office of the Superintendent or Associate Superintendent immediately for clarification.

OUTSIDE NEWS MEDIA RELEASE FORM: STUDENT INTERVIEWS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND VIDEOTAPES

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Periodically outside news media representatives desire to do a feature or news story on an educational or safety topic concerning our schools. It is not unusual for photographs and/or videotapes of our students to accompany these articles for print or broadcast purposes.

Please complete and return the bottom of this form to your child's teacher as soon as possible if you **DO NOT** grant permission for your child to be made available for such media events.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Principal

- I **DO NOT** give permission for my child, _____, to be interviewed, photographed and/or videotaped by outside news media representatives for press or media print or broadcast purposes as indicated above.

CHILD'S NAME _____

TEACHER _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

Community Relations

Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings

The regular and special meetings of the Board of Education are open to the public and representatives of the press except that a part of any meeting may be designated an executive session as provided by law. (cf. 9322 Public and Executive Sessions)

The Board of Education welcomes participation of interested organizations and individuals. Advance announcement of all regular and special meetings of the Board of Education is made through posting the agenda, through the BoE website, through notices to newspapers, and directly to citizens and community and professional organizations who specifically request such notification. A reasonable charge may be made for those persons or organizations requesting advance announcements of meetings and agenda backup materials.

Board meetings are meetings held in public but are not open hearings.

Any citizen may appear before the Board to express his/her opinion concerning the educational program of the district. The Board agenda for regular meetings, provides opportunities for comments from persons attending the meeting during the "public portion." Persons wishing to address the Board must sign-up prior to the meeting coming to order. The Board allots half an hour for public comment, and speakers are asked to limit their comments to two (2) minutes.

The Chairperson may, at his/her discretion extend, curtail or suspend the "public portion" at any time.

(cf. 1312 Public Complaints)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
1-21 Meetings of government agents to be public. Recording of votes. Schedule and agenda of meetings to be filed. Notice of special meetings. Executive sessions.
1-21a Broadcasting or photographing meetings.
1-21b Smoking in public meetings in rooms of public building prohibited.
1-21c Mailing of notice of meetings to persons filing written request.
Fees.

- 1-21f Regular meetings to be held pursuant to regulation, ordinance or resolution.
- 1-21h Conduct of meeting.
- 1-21j Denial of access to public records or meetings.
- 10-238 Petition for hearing by board of education.

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Community Relations

Recognition of Students, Citizens, Staff Members, and Members of the Board of Education

The Board of Education is committed to recognizing and honoring citizens, students, staff, and groups whose distinguished or exceptional achievements benefit the school system. The Board may act through recognition at Board of Education meetings, letters of recognition, or other appropriate methods.

Community Relations

Community Involvement In Decision-making

The Board offers community members the opportunity to share in determining the purposes and policies of the education provided for the children of Bridgeport. Education, more than any other single force, will mold the citizens of the future. The school community is a vital and integral partner in this important task.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

Parent and Community Engagement

The Board of Education believes that a child's education is a responsibility that is shared by family, school and community with parents being full partners in making decisions that affect their children.

The district Parent Engagement Policy is governed by the following statutory definition, and expects all schools to carry out programs, activities and procedures in accordance with the following definition:

Parental Engagement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring that parents:

- 1. Play an integral role in assisting in their child's learning*
- 2. Are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school*
- 3. Are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child;*

The school district will put into operation programs, activities and procedures for the involvement of parents in all of its schools. These programs, activities and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children.

To the extent practical, the school district and its schools will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents of children with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required in an understandable and uniform format and, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practical, in a language parents understand.

The school district will ensure that parents of children served in Title I, Part A schools are involved in decisions about how funds reserved for parental engagement are spent, and will ensure that not less than 95% of the one percent reserved goes directly to the schools.

Parent and Community Engagement (Cont'd)

Parent Engagement Policy (Regulations)

The district will implement the required district wide parental engagement policy components as follow:

1. The Bridgeport Public Schools will take the following actions to involve parents in the joint development of its district wide parental engagement plan:
 - A draft of the policy will be presented to the PAC / PTSO Presidents' Council for review
 - Each PAC / PTSO President will gather feedback from their schools
 - Adjustments will be made based on feedback
 - Final policy will be presented to PAC / PTSO Presidents' Council for approval

2. The Bridgeport Public Schools will provide the necessary coordination, technical assistance, and other support to assist schools in planning and implementing effective parental engagement activities to improve student academic and school performance by:
 - Ensuring parent representation on School Governance Councils and other standing teams and committees
 - Flexibly scheduling parent/teacher conferences to ensure attendance
 - Scheduling parent orientation meetings
 - Scheduling parent meetings for review of CMT, CAPT and/or other assessment results as appropriate as well as for the development of action plans to address deficiencies.

3. Each Bridgeport Public School, with the participation of parents, will conduct an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent engagement policy. The evaluation will include identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in parental engagement activities (with particular attention to parents of students who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background). The school district will use the findings of the evaluation about its parental engagement policy and activities to design strategies for more effective parental engagement, and to revise, if necessary (and with the involvement of parents) its parental engagement policy.

This evaluation will consist of regular parent surveys conducted by the Parent Center Office in conjunction with the district and school improvement planning timeline. Data gathered will be disseminated to parents and appropriate changes and or modifications will be made to the parent engagement policy implementation process.

4. The Bridgeport Public Schools will build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parental engagement, to improve student and academic achievement, through the following activities described below:

Parent and Community Engagement (Cont'd)

- a. The school district will provide assistance to parents of children served by the school district in understanding topics such as the following:
- the state's academic content standards
 - the state's student academic achievement standards
 - the state and local academic assessments including alternate assessments
 - how to monitor a child's academic progress
 - how to collaborate with teachers and other school staff members

Activities will include but not be limited to Open Houses, Parent Teacher Conferences, Budget Review Meetings, School Improvement Team Meetings, Parent Forums, etc.; and will ensure that all information is delivered in various formats and, whenever practical, in a language parents understand.

- b. The school district will, with the assistance of its schools, provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement, such as literacy training, and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parental engagement. These activities will include but are not limited to the following:
- Institutes that include job readiness and technology training for parents
 - School-based literacy and math nights
 - School-based family literacy activities
 - Parent as Partners Program
- c. The school district will, with the assistance of its schools and parents, educate its teachers, pupil services personnel, principals and other staff, in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and schools by training staff in the areas of Cultural Sensitivity, School Improvement training with a focus on parent engagement, and programs on developing Effective Parent Communications Techniques.
- d. The school district to the extent feasible and appropriate, will coordinate and integrate parental engagement programs, strategies and activities to encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children by centralizing and coordinating all parent activities with the Coordinator/Facilitator of Parent Centers who will develop internal protocols for planning parent engagement activities throughout the district.

The school district will take the following actions to ensure that information related to the school and parent programs, meetings and other activities, is sent to the parents of participating children in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative

Community Relations

R-1205

Parent and Community Engagement (Cont'd)

- e. formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.
 - All communications (which may include but are not limited to newsletters, posters, flyers, correspondence, television and radio spots, Cable Access Channel, website) will be done in English, Spanish and other languages as practical.

Legal Reference: CT Statute 10-11

Community Relations**School Community Associations****Parent Organizations**

The Bridgeport Board of Education recognizes that parent engagement in the educational process is a necessary ingredient of success. As a means of encouraging parent engagement at the school level, every school should have an official parent group.

The Board recognizes school-community groups such as Parents/Teachers/Students Organizations (PTSO) and Parent Advisory Councils (PAC) as integral parts of the school community which can promote better educational programs.

Community Relations

School-Community Associations

Parent Organizations

The definition of an official parent group is a group which represents the parents of students in a particular school. Parents shall include grandparents, guardians, and designated care providers of children.

It shall be the responsibility of the school principal to ensure that the school has an official functioning parent group. The principal shall:

1. Encourage parents to establish and participate in an official parent group.
2. Work with parents to organize such a group if one does not exist.
3. Serve in an advisory capacity to that group.
4. Permit the use of school facilities for parent group meetings.
5. Submit a listing of parent group officers, including their addresses and telephone numbers, to the Parent Center who will in turn submit to the superintendent by October 15 of each year.

The following regulations apply to a school's official parent group.

1. The parent group should conduct meetings on a regular basis throughout the school year. The parent group shall function as a partner with the School Governance Council in regard to funds, meeting dates, meeting agenda, etc. The role of the principal is an advisory one only.
2. Officers of the parent group shall be chosen by the group's members. It is suggested that the selection of officers take place in the spring so that the new slate of officers is ready to start the school year in September.
3. To ensure that parent groups function independently from the school administration, to increase parent participation, and to avoid any possible conflict of interest, the president of a school's parent group should not be an employee of that particular school.
4. The president of the parent group shall serve as the representative to the monthly meetings (during the school year) between the superintendent and parent group presidents from throughout the city. If the president is unable to attend these meetings, he/she should designate another parent to serve as an alternate representative.

Community Relations

School Volunteers

The Board of Education recognizes that volunteers can make many valuable contributions to our schools. The Board endorses a volunteer program in schools subject to suitable regulations and safeguards. Appropriate recognition of volunteer services shall be made by the Board and school district administration.

Annually, principals shall submit a list of all regular volunteers in the district (chaperones on field trips, aides, library and classroom volunteer assistance, parents, grandparents, assistance at athletic events, field days, etc.) to the Superintendent of Schools.

School Volunteers

The Board of Education and the staff of the Bridgeport Public Schools welcome and encourage parents, guardians, members of the community and other interested persons to visit and volunteer in the schools. To preserve the security of the schools, all visitors must check in at the main office, sign the Visitor's Sign-in Book and wear the Visitor Badge that will be given to them.

This regulation defines Bridgeport Public School Volunteers as adults who are 18 years of age or older and are not current students of the Bridgeport School District, and who perform services for one or more hour per week without remuneration of any kind.*

Level 1 volunteers work under the supervision/direction of teachers or other school administrators. These volunteers will be checked against the sex offender registry to determine their eligibility to work with our students.

Level 2 volunteers work outside of the supervision/direction of teachers or other school administrators. They will complete a volunteer application and acknowledge their approval for the system to conduct a criminal background screening. Additionally, they will be checked against the sex offender registry. Prospective volunteers who refuse to submit to the background screening or falsify information on the applications will not be accepted.

The school Principal may request any volunteer to provide information for a criminal background investigation in any situation where a check would be prudent, i.e. extensive school involvement, chaperoning overnight field trips or suspicion of criminal activity.

If a background report shows any offense that suggests a potential danger to school children, the volunteer will not be accepted.

A school principal or his/her designee shall have complete authority to exclude from the school premises any persons whom s/he has reason to believe are disrupting the educational programs in the classrooms or in the school, are disturbing the teachers, students or staff on premises, or whom the principal believes are on the premises for the purposes of committing illegal acts.

A Volunteer Appeal Committee shall be established by the Superintendent to review cases where volunteers who have criminal records but are otherwise deemed to be of significant value in working with our students may be reviewed for approval.

Staff members should be alert to the presence of unauthorized visitors and report their presence to the principal promptly. Staff should also assure that ongoing volunteers adhere to registration/screening regulation. Administrators shall review this regulation with their staff on a yearly basis.

*The Bridgeport BOE is fortunate to benefit from the services of large numbers of college students who work through programs as work study and service learning, which provide grades, credits or payment. As such, they do not fall under the definition of volunteers; however, principals should assure that they are appropriately supervised by the college and/or public school staff.

BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Name _____ Home Phone () _____
Last First M.I.

Home Address _____
Street Apartment /Floor

City State Zip Code
Cell Phone () _____ Email _____

Social Security # _____ Date of Birth _____

Company/Organization _____ Work Phone () _____

Occupation/Title _____

Business Address _____
Street City State Zip code

Emergency Contact & Phone _____

Education: High School completed? Yes No (Please circle one)

College Degree Major

Professional Training/Graduate Studies

Previous Work or Volunteer experience:

Please check area(s) of interest below.

____ Reading Tutor _____ Reading Enrichment (weekly, monthly)
____ Math Tutor _____ Book Buddy (child reads to you)
____ ESOL Tutor _____ Mentor

Grade level preference: _____ Primary _____ Intermediate _____ Upper Grades
(K-3) (4-6) (7-8)

Schedule preference: Day(s) _____ Time _____
How often? _____ Start Date _____

School Preference: _____

Please complete, sign and date reverse side.

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VOLUNTEER APPLICATION – PAGE 2

Please list any foreign languages that you speak. _____

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? Yes _____ No _____

Are there any criminal charges pending against you? Yes _____ No _____

If "yes" to either question, please describe fully. _____

References: Please give 3 professional or personal references. (Not family members)

Name & Affiliation _____

Address _____

Company (if applicable) _____ Phone _____

Name & Affiliation _____

Address _____

Company (if applicable) _____ Phone _____

Name & Affiliation _____

Address _____

Company (if applicable) _____ Phone _____

Agreement and Signature:

I affirm that all statements on this application are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have read the Bridgeport School Volunteer Code of Conduct and agree to follow it if placed as a volunteer. I authorize the Bridgeport Board of Education and persons acting on its behalf to conduct any investigation respecting my application, character or general reputation, and authorize examination of any criminal or police record of mine that exists. I also agree/disagree (please circle one) that my name, photograph or statements may be used in the media to promote school volunteer efforts.

Signature

Date

For additional information, call 275-1120. Please return this form to the School Volunteer Office, Sheridan School (#28), 280 Tesiny Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06606 (Fax 372-7214).

Placement (To be completed by the School Volunteer Office)

Volunteer Assignment: _____

School: _____

Date Started: _____

Teacher: _____

Grade and Room _____

Schedule: _____

Community Relations**Educational Foundations**

The Board of Education is committed to maintaining excellence in education and pursuing resources to enhance educational opportunities for all students.

The Board recognizes that members of the community are often willing to make voluntary contributions that will provide needed additional funds and resources for the District and opportunities for District students.

The Board supports foundation allocations that serve the students of the District and all District schools equitably and enhance their educational opportunities.

Community Relations

Visits to the Schools

The Board of Education and staff of the school district welcome and strongly encourage members of the community and other interested persons to visit the schools.

The Superintendent shall establish regulations which:

1. Encourage school visitations.
2. Provide a welcoming environment for visitors.
3. Channel expressions of approval and constructive criticism to the appropriate administrator, then to the Superintendent of Schools who will share the information with the Board.
4. Ensure that public visits will not hinder the educational program.
5. Require all visitors to register in the principal's office upon arrival at the school.

Although Board of Education members are encouraged to visit schools independently, they have authority only in regularly called meetings of the Board of Education, or when delegated specific tasks by specific Board of Education action.

Community Relations

Visits to the Schools

In accordance with Board policy, the public is encouraged to visit the schools and to participate in community related school activities.

There shall be a sign posted at a designated entrance instructing all visitors to report to the main office.

Visitors shall be signed in and out of the building at the designated door or the school office.

The principal makes the final decision on the circumstances and conditions of visits with staff and/or students. However, any reasonable request shall not be denied.

Community Relations

Loitering or Causing Disturbance

All visitors must register in the office of the school principal. Staff members should be alert to the possibility of unauthorized visitors and promptly report any concerns to the principal or designee. Any person shall be considered loitering on school grounds when he/she loiters or remains in or about a school building or grounds, without any reason or relationship involving custody of or responsibility for a student or any other license or privilege to be there.

Trespassing

Trespassers shall be defined as (a) persons who have not been authorized by the school principal or designee to be in the school building or on school grounds and (b) students on external suspension who reenter school property without authorization.

All school doors and school entrance ways, including driveways, are to be posted with an official warning against trespassing and announcing the intention to prosecute any and all trespassers.

The police shall be called when individuals ignore the posted warnings.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
 53a-185 Loitering in or about school grounds;
 Class C misdemeanor.

Community Relations

Entrance and Exit Doors

All doors to school buildings are to be locked from the outside and only one door will be designated as the official door for entrance and exit from school buildings. All visitors desiring to enter school buildings shall enter through the designated door. After the student late-bell has sounded, tardy students must enter through the designated door. Students authorized to leave the school building prior to dismissal must sign out and exit through the designated door. If it is necessary to have more than one door open, such door(s) shall be monitored.

Designated entrance doors shall be locked from the outside and provided with a bell which shall ring in the office or other appropriate place. The security guard or other designated personnel shall answer the bell and inquire as to the nature of the visitor's business. Visitors shall be signed in and out of the building at the designated door or the school office.

It shall be considered a serious disciplinary offense for a student to open a door from the inside to an unauthorized visitor. Such policy shall be incorporated into the system's disciplinary code. Principals shall take the appropriate steps to inform the students and parents through assemblies and other appropriate means of the need to strictly enforce this rule for their own safety.

(cf. 1250-Visits to the School)

Community Relations

Staff Participation in Community Activities

The Board of Education encourages staff members to become active participants in the activities of the community in which they live so long as these activities do not interfere with their responsibilities as school district employees. This involvement provides a community with better understanding of educational programs and gains support of better education for every student. Such activity, however, is not required for initial or continued employment or advancement.

Community Relations

Political Activities of School Employees

School district employees are encouraged to assume the obligations of full political citizenship. Political activities must be confined to the hours away from school and employees may not be released from their regular duties and hours for political activity. In the classroom, teachers must put aside their personal and partisan political beliefs and activities and constantly strive to give a balanced presentation of issues. Further, employees shall engage in no political activities on school premises during school hours.

Subject to the above limitations, school district employees may take part in the management, affairs, or campaign of any political party.

A school district employee may run for elective municipal or state office and continue in the employment of the Board.

Employees who hold elective public office in other communities may be granted released time for the performance of official duties related thereto provided such released time:

1. Does not affect the ability of the employee to meet job requirements, and
2. There is no cost factor to the Bridgeport Public Schools for granting such released time.

The granting of released time for this purpose shall be determined by the Superintendent or designee. This decision shall be final and not eligible for appeal.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
7-421 Political activities of classified municipal employees.
7-421b Limitation on restriction of political rights of municipal.
10-156e Employees of boards of education permitted to serve as elected officials; exception.

Community Relations

Public Complaints

Board members shall refer persons making complaints about the schools to the most immediate level at which the problems can be resolved and, as may be necessary, through lines of organization to the Superintendent of Schools. Parents should be made aware of the proper channels of communication and appeal.

Challenged Material

A procedure for processing and responding to criticism of approved materials shall be established and followed. This procedure shall include a formal, signed complaint of standard format and an appointed committee to re-evaluate the material in question.

In all cases, the decision to retain or reject shall be made on the basis of whether the material represents life in its true proportions, whether circumstances are realistically dealt with, and whether the material has literary or social value. Factual material shall be included in all instructional material collections.

(cf. 5161 – First Amendment Rights)

(cf. 6150 - Equipment, Books, Materials: Provision/Selection)

Legal Reference: *Keyishian v. Board of Regents* 385 U.S. 589, 603 (1967)
 President's Council, District 25 v. Community School Board No. 25
 457 F.2d 289 (1972), cert. denied 409 U.S. 998 (1976)
 Minarcini v. Strongsville City School District, 541 F. 2d 577 (6th Cir.
 1976).
 Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26
 v. Pico, 457 U.S. 853 (1982).
 Academic Freedom Policy (adopted by Connecticut State Board of
 Education, 9/9/8 1).
 Connecticut General Statutes
 10-238 Petition for hearing by board of education.

Community Relations

Complaint Procedures

The following guidelines are established so that parents may bring their concerns to the attention of the most appropriate staff member:

1. If a concern emanates from a classroom situation, parents should first discuss it with the appropriate teacher.
2. If the parents feel that the discussion has not led to a satisfactory conclusion, they may proceed to discuss the concern with the building Principal.
3. Concerns about administrative actions or school related problems may be addressed directly to the building Principal.
4. Where past practice indicates involvement of the Assistant Principal, he or she should be seen, and their decisions may be appealed to the Principal.
5. Where concerns are about district policy or practice, the matter can be brought directly to the Assistant Superintendent or the appropriate Director. Also, matters not satisfactorily resolved at the school level may be appealed to the appropriate Assistant Superintendent or Director.
6. The Assistant Superintendent or Director shall attempt to resolve the concern as quickly as possible.
7. If the decision rendered by the Assistant Superintendent or Director is not deemed satisfactory by the parties involved, they may request a review by the Superintendent of Schools. The request for the review shall be submitted in writing.
8. If the decision rendered by the Superintendent is not deemed satisfactory by the parties involved they may request a review by the Board of Education or the appropriate Board of Education Committee. The request for the review shall be submitted in writing.

Community Relations

Gifts to School Personnel

The Board shall not prohibit the giving of gifts to teachers at Christmas or other times of the year. However, students shall be discouraged from giving presents to teachers. If a student does present a personal gift to a teacher, there should be no group display of it. If the teacher's attention is called to a desire of students to exchange gifts among themselves, a modest limit shall be set.

All employees of the Bridgeport public schools are subject to the City of Bridgeport's Code of Ethics, as it may be amended from time to time.

Gifts between Students and Teachers

Gifts between students and teachers shall be discouraged.

(cf. 3230-Gifts, Grants and Bequests)
(cf. 9270-Conflict of Interest)

Legal Reference: Municipal Code, Chapter 2, Section 2-206
 Connecticut General Statutes
 7-479 Conflicts of interest.

Community Relations

Gifts to School Personnel

Information on the Board of Education's policy regarding gifts between students and teachers shall be stated in student handbooks on each level.

The explanation of the Board of Education policy should indicate the following:

1. Due to financial implications, the student could be placed in an embarrassing position with his/hers peers resulting either in isolation from others, or to avoid this, purchasing a gift which he/she cannot afford.
2. Teachers do not expect gifts. Rather, they feel rewarded when students work up to their potential.

Community Relations

Public Conduct at School Activities

Any individual who behaves in an unsportsmanlike manner during an athletic or co-curricular event may be ejected from the event. The person may be prohibited from attending and/or denied admission to school events for up to a year, after a Board hearing. Examples of unsportsmanlike conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Using vulgar or obscene language or gestures;
- Possessing or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or illegal substance;
- Possessing a weapon;
- Fighting or otherwise striking or threatening another person;
- Failing to obey the instructions of a security officer, law enforcement officer or school district employee; and
- Engaging in any activity, which is illegal or disruptive.

The Superintendent may seek to deny future admission to any person by delivering or mailing a notice, sent by certified mail with return receipt requested, containing:

- The date, time and place of a Board hearing;
- A description of the unsportsmanlike conduct; and
- The proposed time period that admission to school events will be denied.

(cf. 1250 – Visits to the Schools)

(cf. 1251 - Loitering or Causing Disturbances)

(cf. 1316 – Conduct on School Property)

(cf. 1320 – Relations between the Public and School Personnel)

(cf. 1330 – Use of School Facilities)

(cf. 1331 – Smoke Free Environment)

(cf. 1700 – Otherwise Lawful Possession of Firearms on School Property)

(cf. 3517.2 – Vandalism)

(cf. 5131.5 – Vandalism)

(cf. 6145.22 – Sportsmanship)

(cf. 6145.71 – Use of Alcohol by Adults)

Community Relations

Public Performances by Students

The Board of Education recognizes the educational value from student participation in civic and community affairs. Teachers are encouraged to prepare students for public performances which contribute to student education when they don't interfere unduly with other educational activities or programs.

School groups may, as authorized by Superintendent's regulations, participate in local public events.

Community Relations

Student Contests

Contests and competitions for the students may be considered for approval by the superintendent on recommendation of the building administration. The following criteria are to be considered in determining whether or not approval may be given:

1. The contest is educationally sound and worthy.
2. The contest is stimulating to the student and school and desirable for both.
3. The contest must not place an undue burden on the students, families, teachers, and the school.
4. The contest is not commercial or sectarian.
5. The contest will not take students from school unnecessarily.
6. Participation from state and national principal groups are considered.
7. For secondary school contests, from the list of approved contests published by the Connecticut Association of Schools.

Community Relations

Advertising and Promotion

Students must be protected from possible exploitation in advertising or promoting interests of any non-school agency or organization. Within that context:

1. Schools may cooperate in furthering the work of any non-profit community wide social service agency provided that such cooperation does not restrict or impair the educational program of the schools.
2. The schools may use films or other media materials which include commercial messages providing such materials can be justified on the basis of their educational values.
3. The Superintendent may, at his/her discretion, announce or authorize to be announced, any lecture, play, film, or other community activity with educational value.
4. The schools may, upon approval of the Superintendent, cooperate with any agency in promoting activities in the general public interest, and which promote the education and the best interests of students.
5. No advertising material may be posted or distributed to students which, in the opinion of school authorities, would contribute to the personal gain of an individual, business, or company except as follows:
 - a. Educational material used by staff for educational purposes.
 - b. Samples, calendars, supply catalogs, etc., distributed to staff for examination, testing or review or routine classroom use.

Community Relations

Use of School Facilities

It is the policy of the Board of Education to make school facilities available for activities of an educational, cultural, civic, social, recreational or governmental nature.

Consistent with this policy the Superintendent or designee shall schedule the use of school facilities by an individual or group based on guidelines for community use of the schools, and present to the Board for approval.

A nominal fee may be charged to cover utilities and services such as custodial. Refer to policy 3513 Property Rental Guidelines.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
10-239 Use of school facilities for other purposes.

Community Relations

Smoking in School Facilities

It shall be the policy of the Board of Education that no one shall smoke or chew tobacco inside any school system facility. In addition, students are not to smoke or chew tobacco while on the school bus or while attending any school system activity whether or not on school system grounds.

(cf. 1120-Board of Education Meetings)
(cf. 5131-Suspension/Expulsion; Due Process)
(cf. 5136-Smoking)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
 21a-242 Schedules of controlled substances
 1-21b Smoking prohibited in certain places

Community Relations

Senior Citizen Benefits

The Board of Education recognizes the contribution senior citizens have made to the support of education and wishes to encourage their continued support and participation in school sponsored events.

To this end, the Board of Education establishes the following policy on fees and admissions.

Admission to School Events

Any senior citizen sixty years of age or older will be allowed to attend any school sponsored athletic or arts activity open to the public free of charge.

In order to facilitate the implementation of this policy, the school administrators are to take steps to make senior citizens aware of school events in a timely manner.

(cf. 3240 -Tuition)

Community Relations

Inter-Organizational Relations Goals And Objectives

The Board realizes schools have the primary responsibility for the formal education of the youth of the district, and recognizes that governmental agencies and community organizations play a definite role in education.

The Board desires to establish positive working relationships with all other public and private organizations which contribute to the education process and to the general welfare of the citizens of the community.

Community Relations

Law Enforcement Officials

Schools are responsible for students during school hours, which includes protecting each student's constitutional rights, assuring due process in questioning and arrest, and protecting students from any form of illegal coercion.

When police seek to arrest students on school grounds or during school activities, school administrators and staff will make every effort to insure that police do not enter hallways, classrooms or other student areas to make such arrests. Instead, except in the case of exigent circumstances threatening the safety of students or staff, administrators or staff members will themselves bring students to be arrested to a confidential and inconspicuous place and insist that police arrest students in such confidential and inconspicuous place so that disruption of the school environment is minimized to the extent possible.

When police are investigating possible criminal acts which occurred, or may have occurred, on school property, or while under the jurisdiction of the school district or that involve students as potential perpetrators, victims or witnesses, they may question students at school when the following procedures are observed:

1. Students will be questioned as confidentially and inconspicuously as possible.
2. An attempt will be made to notify the students' parents or guardians so that they may be present during the questioning except where to do so would unreasonably delay or interfere with the integrity of the investigation. The school principal, or his/her designee, will be present. Parents or guardians who are not notified in advance will be notified as soon as possible after questioning has taken place.
3. Preferably, the officer doing the questioning will wear civilian clothes.

Because of the many support services which local law enforcement agencies provide to the schools, staff, and students, the Board of Education supports the best possible relationship with those agencies consistent with district responsibilities to protect legal rights of staff and students.

The Superintendent of Schools is directed to establish lines of communication with local law enforcement agencies to effect necessary cooperation toward ensuring the security of the school facilities, the safety of students and staff, and for better student education about law enforcement agencies.

(cf. 5166 Search/Seizure)

Community Relations

Relations With Law Enforcement Agencies

Notification of a Student's Arrest

Pursuant to the requirements of PA 94-221, whenever the superintendent receives oral or written notification from the local police department or state police that a student was arrested, for a Class A misdemeanor or a felony he/she shall maintain the written report in a secure location and the information in the report shall be maintained as confidential in accordance with section 46b-124. The superintendent may disclose such information only to the principal of the school in which the student is enrolled or the supervisory agent of any other school in which the student is enrolled.

The principal or supervisory agent may disclose such information only to special service staff or a consultant, such as a psychiatrist psychologist or social worker, for the purposes of assessing the risk of danger posed by the person, other student school employees or property and effectuating an appropriate modification of such person's educational plan or placement for disciplinary purposes. Such information with respect to a child under sixteen years of age shall be confidential in accordance with 46b-124 and shall only be disclosed as provided in this section and shall not be further disclosed.

Questioning Students at School

Under normal circumstances, parents or guardians should be notified in advance that a student will be questioned by a police officer at school and given an opportunity to attend the questioning. Principals or their designees should also attend. All questioning should take place as confidentially and as inconspicuously as possible.

Under some circumstances, however, notification to parents or guardians that police will question a student may unreasonably delay a police investigation and thereby diminish the likelihood that a perpetrator may be apprehended or a crime may be prevented. In such cases where time is of the essence, principals should make students available for questioning at the earliest possible time, and notify parents or guardians after the fact.

In other circumstances, notification to parents or guardians that a student will be questioned may interfere with the integrity of the investigation itself, such as where the student is potentially the victim of, or witness to, a crime that involving a family member or family friend. In such cases, parents and guardians should not be given advance notice that the student will be questioned, and should not be given the opportunity to attend the questioning. Principals should notify parents and guardians after the questioning has taken place.

Community Relations

Relations With Law Enforcement Agencies (continued)

School Police Cooperation

This regulation is intended to balance the needs of school and police officials. The reduction of ambiguity and confusion in how these officials interact will provide an optimal environment for education while ensuring that the public safety needs of the school and community are adequately met.

Generally, police should be notified immediately of any crime. Police will make every attempt to minimize distractions or disruption of school routines during the performance of their duties. There may be instances where the transgression is so slight that the school administrator can resolve the issue himself/herself. Examples of crimes that fall into this category are theft of pocket change, minor vandalism, or minor physical altercations in which there is no injury or pain inflicted upon either participant.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules.
10-233g(b) Boards to report school violence.
17a-101 Protection of children from abuse.
17a-102 Report of danger of abuse.
53a-185 Loitering in or about school grounds: Class C
Misdemeanor.
Reports of principals to police authority.
New Jersey v T.L.O., 53 U.S.L.W. 4083 (1988), 469 U.S. 325; 105
S.Ct 733.
PA 94-221 An Act Concerning School Discipline and Security.

Community Relations

Fire Department

Members of the fire department and the city fire marshal play a vital role in the school safety program. The Superintendent of Schools and the administrative staff shall have the responsibilities:

1. Establish and maintain relationships with the local fire department and fire departments.
2. Work with the faculty in determining the nature and timing of the department's participation in the school program.
3. Coordinate and supervise the planned activities.

As necessary or appropriate administrators shall seek the advice and cooperation of the fire marshal and fire department in:

1. Planning and conduct of fire drills.
2. Fire prevention education.
3. First aid, especially in fire related incidents.
4. Steps needed to conform to all state and local fire codes.

(cf. 6162-Fire Emergency)

Community Relations

Fiscal Authority

The Board of Education shall work with appropriate fiscal authorities including the City's Mayor and City Council throughout the budgeting process to develop a clearer understanding of school and student needs to improve education in the community.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
10-153d Meeting between board of education and fiscal authority
required. Duty to negotiate.

Community Relations

State/Federal Government

Legislation

The Board of Education, both directly and through its State Association, shall carry on an aggressive program to secure approval of laws and regulations which the Board feels to be in the best interest of the school system through the state legislature. This policy shall include the pursuit of adequate and equitable sources of revenue to support the local free public schools.

State and Federal Aid

In order to bring the full benefit of state and federal aid programs to bear upon the needs of the school system, it is the policy of the Board to maintain close liaison with the State Department of Education and appropriate federal agencies, and to cooperate with them fully in providing improved educational services.

The Superintendent should pursue all available grant sources to enhance the educational programs of the school system. The Superintendent shall inform the Board of grant proposals submitted. .

Community Relations

Relations Between Area, State, Regional & National Associations and the Schools

Membership in recognized associations dedicated to school related matters will be maintained by the school system for several reasons, including:

1. Benefits to staff and Board of Education from professional meetings, conferences, clinics and conventions.
2. Access to newsletters, periodicals and advisory services of such associations.
3. Representation in legislative and other actions affecting education generally and our school district in particular.

The Superintendent of Schools shall budget funds for memberships approved by the Board and for the costs of appropriate participation by Board members, administration and staff in the activities of such associations.

Community Relations

Relations with School Districts and Education Agencies

The Board shall cooperate to the fullest possible extent with other school districts as well as with other local, state, and regional agencies and organizations in the solution of educational problems of common concern.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
 10-158a Cooperative arrangements among towns.
 10-66L Board of education may join center within or outside area.

Community Relations

Released Time for Religious Activities

It shall be the policy of the Board of Education that school authorities shall cooperate with reasonable student requests for release time to participate in religious activities.

Legal Reference: Zorach v. Clauson, 343 U.S. 306 (1952).

Community Relations

Colleges and Universities Relations

The interviewing of high school students by representatives of local colleges and universities shall be limited to the non-instructional time in the student's schedule, or before or after school as schedules permit, or when designated by the school principal.

The District will cooperate with private schools, colleges and universities concerning student records and references in accordance with the law. Except as authorized by law, the written consent of the parent of the eligible student is required before confidential student information may be disclosed. The written consent must specify permission for disclosure, the purpose of the disclosure and the person to whom the records are to be disclosed.

(cf. 5123 – Student Records)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

 10-15b Access of parent or guardian to student's records

 10-76d-18 Regulations concerning children requiring special education

 19a-581 through 585 46b-56(e)

 20 U.S.C Section 1232g Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

Community Relations**Inter-District Relations**

The Board fully supports the concept of city-suburban cooperation in the education of Region youth. It encourages such relationship on a reciprocal and two-way basis in the conviction that both sets of neighbors have something of value to offer to each other. Consequently, the Board encourages the Superintendent to develop programs that reflect cooperative ventures between the Bridgeport Public Schools and its suburban neighbors.

The Board authorizes the Superintendent to develop such programs through an appropriate mix of general budget funds and other funds that are appropriate within budget capabilities.

Community Relations

Cooperative Arrangements with Business and Industry

The Board of Education will, whenever possible, cooperate with employers in offering high school courses, or with the approval of the State Board of Education, offer vocational training courses to such employer's employees. Such courses will be given on the premises of the employers for the benefit of any employee who (1) wishes to obtain a high school diploma or (2) wishes to improve his/her employment status.

No expense for such service may accrue to the Board of Education or to the State Board of Education.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
 10-21 vocational guidance.
 10-21a Accredited courses offered by employers.
 10-21b Programs offered jointly by boards of education and
 business firms; neighborhood assistance.

Community Relations

Otherwise Lawful Possession of Firearms on School Property

No person shall be permitted to possess a firearm or firearm facsimile on school property or at any school-sponsored activity for any reason. The only exception to this policy would be city and state law enforcement representatives.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
 PA 96-244 An Act Concerning Revisions in the Education Statutes.

Community Relations

Sexual Offender Registration Notification Policy

Pursuant to Public Act 09-199 which became effective on September 1, 2009, the Department of Public Safety is required to provide email notification to the Superintendent that a registered sexual offender resides in the school district or plans to reside in the school district. For purposes of this policy, a sexual offender is defined in Connecticut General Statutes § 54-250 through § 54-261 and is required per the statutes to register on the state's sex offender registry.

In order to minimize the possibility that a released and registered sexual offender may come into contact with students in the district, upon receipt of notification from the Department of Public Safety, the Superintendent's office will maintain a list of registered sexual offenders within the school district and the list will be available for review at the parents/guardians' request. At the beginning of each school year, the Superintendent's office will provide written notice to the parents/guardians of all students registered in the school district regarding the means to access the public information list of registered sexual offenders in the school district through the online registry www.ct.gov/dps or at the local police station during normal business hours. The written notice will also remind parents/guardians that the Superintendent's office maintains a log of all notices that it receives from the Department of Public Safety pursuant to Public Act 09-199 and that parents/guardians are welcome to review the log during normal business hours.

The Board of Education believes that the safety and welfare of its students is of the highest priority. Accordingly, it encourages parents/guardians to use these valuable resources to educate themselves as to registered sexual offenders residing in the school district.