

# Policies to be revised in Section 6-School, Home and Community Relations

## 6.1—COMMUNICATION GOALS

The single most significant factor in student achievement is the teacher. The teacher's effectiveness is greatly enhanced when supported by the school community as a whole, the student's home, and the community at large. The Arkansas General Assembly and the Department of Education have demonstrated their understanding of the importance of involving such groups by repeatedly mandating their inclusion in the educational system and process. Communication with staff, parents, grandparents, legal guardians, business, and community members is fundamental to increasing their concern for, and involvement in, raising student achievement.

Communication should be two-way between the District and the public. The communications program shall strive to:

1. Increase mutual understanding, trust, and support between the District and parents, business, and the community as a whole;
2. Keep District staff regularly informed of upcoming District programs and events as well as noteworthy staff and student accomplishments to enable all the staff to help promote positive public relations;
3. Create and disseminate brochures, flyers, and fact sheets that will help parents and community members better understand school policies and procedures and acquaint them with areas where their volunteer services are most needed;
4. Inform legislators of the accomplishments of the District's students and staff, as well as how proposed legislation could affect the district;
5. Maintain good relations with the news media and provide the media with pertinent news releases; and
6. Increase the participation of parents, grandparents, legal guardians, business, and community members in school activities and programs.

The Board will appoint committees, when appropriate, to help the District examine issues facing it. Such committees may include members of the public, students, parents, and school employees, as well as members of the Board. Members may serve until the committee makes its non-binding recommendations to the Board.

Any committee, which includes among its members a member of the School Board, shall operate according to the requirements of the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act.\*

~~The Board shall hold a public meeting, at least annually, to report on the District's progress toward attaining its goals and to review its long-range plan. Those individuals attending shall have an opportunity to ask questions.~~

The District's Board of Directors shall hold a meeting by October 15 of each year to provide a report that systematically explains the District's policies, programs, and goals to the community. The District's report shall detail the progress of the District and the District's schools toward accomplishing program goals, accreditation standards, and proposals to correct any deficiencies. The report shall be made

available to the public, including by posting a copy on the District’s website under State-Required Information no later than ten (10) days following the meeting. The meeting shall provide parents and other members of the community the opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions concerning the District’s program.

Legal References: [A.C.A. § 6-15-1005\(c\), \(f\)\(1\)\(2\)](#)

[A.C.A. § 6-16-603 \(a\) \(3\)](#)

A.C.A. § 6-18-1003(2)

A.C.A. § 6-18-1005(a)(1)

~~A.C.A. § 6-15-1005(c), (f)(1)(2)~~

~~A.C.A. § 6-16-603 (a) (3)~~

\*A.C.A. § 25-19-106

~~Arkansas State Board of Education: Standards for Accreditation: 7-02.3~~ [3-B.1, 3-B.2, 3-B.2.1, 5-A.1](#)

Arkansas Department of Education: [Regulations Governing](#) Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards: 4.0; 10.03

## **6.4—VOLUNTEERS**

Enlisting the support of volunteers is a way the District can expand the scope of resources and knowledge available to enrich the students’ educational experiences, while strengthening the relationship between the school and the community. Volunteers can also perform non-instructional tasks that allow licensed personnel more time to devote to instruction.

The Superintendent shall be responsible for establishing and maintaining a program to coordinate the services volunteers are willing and able to contribute with the needs of District personnel. The program shall establish guidelines to ensure volunteers are aware of pertinent District policies and rules. Volunteers who violate school policies or rules, or knowingly allow students to violate school rules, may be asked to leave the school campus. The guidelines should also include provision for evaluation of the volunteer program and a method for soliciting suggestions from both the volunteers and staff for its improvement.

All volunteers who intend to act as head coaches or assistant coaches must:

1. Be at least twenty-two (22) years of age; and
2. Meet the requirements adopted by the Arkansas Activities Association (AAA) to volunteer for any athletics program for grades seven (7) through – twelve (12).

A member of the board of directors of the District or the spouse of a member of the board of directors of the District may not be a registered volunteer for the District unless a majority of the disinterested members of the Board of Directors approves a resolution for the board member or board member’s spouse to be a registered volunteer. The resolution approving the board member or board member’s spouse to be a registered volunteer shall be effective for only one (1) school year.

A volunteer may act as a head coach in all varsity junior and senior high sports administered by the AAA except in the following sports:

- Football;
- Basketball; and
- Track and field.

### **Background Checks for Volunteers**

For the purposes of this policy, “clear background check” means that:

- A background check was performed on the potential school volunteer in accordance with A.C.A. §§ 12-12-1601 et seq.;
- The potential school volunteer has not committed any of the crimes or offenses contained in A.C.A. §§ 6-17-410, 6-17-411 or 6-17-414 according to both the National and Arkansas background checks; and
- The potential school volunteer’s name was not found on the Child Abuse Central Registry; and
- The Arkansas Educator Licensure System does not indicate the potential volunteer to:
  - Have a currently suspended or revoked educator’s license; or
  - Be the recipient of a current Level 3 or Level 4 public notification of ethics violation.

A person wishing to volunteer in a capacity that requires a background check may not perform volunteer services requiring a background check until a clear background check is received by the District. Once received, a clear background check is good for one year; a background check renewal must be applied for and a clear background check received prior to the time of renewal or an interruption of permitted volunteer service could occur. A clear background check will be accepted of any individual wishing to volunteer provided it was conducted within the timeframe provided for in this policy.

The Application for an initial background check may be made through the District administrative office. The District will incur the fee charged by the State of Arkansas for performing the initial check and any renewal checks.

A person who failed a previous background check may petition the Board for a waiver from this policy's requirement. The petition shall be accompanied by a signed authorization for disclosure of his or her entire criminal and child abuse registry history. In deciding whether to grant a waiver, the board may take into consideration the circumstance or circumstances surrounding the act or omission that led to the conviction or Child Abuse Registry true finding, or the receipt of the Level 3 or Level 4 Public Notification of Ethics Violation; the age of the person at the time of the act or omission, the length of time that has passed without reoffending, and other relevant circumstances. If the Superintendent recommends a waiver be granted, the Board may adopt a resolution by majority vote providing an exception to this policy's requirement for a time period not to exceed five (5) years. The board must consider this matter in open session, and may not confer or deliberate in closed or executive session.

The board shall not have the authority to waive the application of this policy to any potential volunteer who is a Registered Sex Offender or whose educator license has been revoked or is currently suspended.

Clear background checks for school volunteers are required prior to any volunteer service to the school district, school, teacher, or classroom, and all clear check volunteers will be issued special volunteer identification to wear prominently when performing their volunteer duties; no person may serve as a volunteer without wearing the provided identification.

No information relating to the application for or receipt of a criminal background check, including that a background check has or has not been applied for, shall be subject to disclosure under the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act, as provided by A.C.A. §§ 12-12-1601 et seq. Requests for background checks and reports on background checks obtained under this policy shall be retained by the district for a minimum of three (3) years.

The District shall maintain the following information on volunteers:

- a. The total number, location, and duties of all volunteers;
- b. The total number of annual hours of service provided by volunteers; and
- c. Any reimbursements made to volunteers for expenses, transportation, or other costs incurred in connection with volunteer services.

Volunteers will be made aware that the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) considers volunteers for school districts to be mandated reporters of child maltreatment and will receive training on the responsibilities of a mandated reporter.

Legal References: A.C.A. §§ [6-17-301](#) ~~6-17-410, 411, 414~~

[A.C.A. § 6-17-410](#)

[A.C.A. § 6-17-411](#)

[A.C.A. 6-17-414](#)

[A.C.A. § 6-17-428](#)

A.C.A. § 6-22-101 et seq.

A.C.A. §§ 12-12-1601 et seq.

A.C.A. § 12-18-402

A.C.A. § 12-18-909(g)(21)

A.C.A. § 21-13-101 et seq.

[Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Background Checks](#)

[Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing the Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators](#)

## 6.7—COMPLAINTS

It is a goal of the Board and the District to be responsive to the community it serves and to continuously improve the educational program offered in its schools. The Board or the District welcomes constructive criticism when it is offered with the intent of improving the quality of the system's educational program or the delivery of the District's services.

The Board formulates and adopts policies to achieve the District's vision and elects a Superintendent to implement its policies. The administrative functions of the District are delegated to the Superintendent, who is responsible for the effective administration and supervision of the District. Individuals with complaints concerning personnel, curriculum, discipline (including specific discipline policies), coaching, or the day to day management of the schools need to address those complaints according to the following sequence:

1. Teacher, coach, or other staff member against whom the complaint is directed
2. Principal
3. Associate Superintendent and/Deputy Superintendent
4. Superintendent

Other than in the few instances where statutorily allowed or required, student discipline and personnel matters may not be discussed in Board meetings. Individuals with complaints regarding such matters need to follow the sequence outlined above.

Unless authorized by the Board as a whole for a specific purpose, no individual Board member has any authority when acting alone. District constituents are reminded that the Board serves as a finder of fact, not unlike a jury, in matters such as student suspensions initiated by the Superintendent, expulsions, and personnel discipline. For this reason, the board may not be involved or informed prior to a board hearing on particular disciplinary matters.

Complaints that are related to district use or administration of federal funds generated through specific programs identified by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) and authorized in the ~~2002~~ reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act<sup>1</sup> may be taken directly from a patron or by referral from ~~the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE)~~. If taken directly from a patron, the complaint may be submitted by either a signed statement or by a certified, recorded deposition or statement in which the complainant is identified. The complaints shall be addressed in the following manner:

1. The complaint shall be referred to the federal programs director,<sup>2</sup> who shall assemble a team of at least two (2) people to investigate the complaint.

2. Throughout the investigation, sufficient notes and records will be taken and maintained to substantiate the position of the findings of the investigation.
3. The team will interview the complainant and others as necessary to enable the team to make a determination of the validity of the complaint. The team may consult with individuals with knowledge or expertise in the matter which is the subject of the complaint, including legal counsel.
4. The investigation of complaints referred by the ADE shall be completed within thirty (30) work calendar days of receipt of the complaint, unless a longer time period has been approved by the ADE.<sup>3</sup>
5. The investigation of complaints made directly to the district shall be completed within forty (40) work calendar days unless there are extenuating circumstances; in such a case, a preliminary report shall be made within forty (40) work calendar days of receipt of the complaint, which shall include an explanation of the unusual circumstances requiring additional time to complete the investigation.<sup>4</sup>
6. The report of the conclusions of the investigation shall be given to the complainant. It shall contain: ~~a summary of the allegations of the complaint; a summary of the investigative actions taken by the team; a summary of the findings concerning each alleged violation or implied violation; a statement of corrective actions needed to resolve the issues involved in each allegation and finding of complaint.~~
  - a. A summary of the allegations of the complaint;
  - b. A summary of the investigative actions taken by the team;
  - c. A summary of the findings concerning each alleged violation or implied violation; and
  - d. A statement of corrective actions needed to resolve the issues involved in each allegation and finding of the complaint.

Legal Reference: ADE Rules Governing Federal Program Complaint Resolution

## **6.11—PARENTAL, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ENGAGEMENT - DISTRICT**

The Little Rock School District understands the importance of involving parents, families, and the community as a whole in promoting higher student achievement and general good will between the district and those it serves. Therefore, the district shall strive to develop and maintain the capacity for meaningful and productive parental, family, and community ~~involvement~~ engagement that will result in partnerships that are mutually beneficial to the school, students, parents, families, and the community. To achieve such ends, the district shall work to:

1. Involve parents, families, and the community in the development of the long range planning of the district;
2. Give the schools in the district the support necessary to enable them to plan and implement effective parental, family, and community engagement ~~involvement~~ activities;
3. Have a coordinated ~~involvement~~ engagement program where the ~~involvement~~ engagement activities of the district enhance the involvement strategies of other programs such as Head Start, HIPPY, Parents as Partners, Parents as Teachers, ABC, ABC for School Success, area Pre-K programs, and Even Start;

4. Explain to parents, families, and the community the State's ~~content~~ academic and achievement standards, State and local student assessments and how the district's curriculum is aligned with the state's academic standards and assessments and how parents, families, and the community can work with the district to improve ~~their child's~~ students' academic achievement;
5. Provide parents and families with the materials and training they need to be better able to help their child achieve. The district may use parent resource centers or other community based organizations to foster parental involvement and provide literacy and technology training to parents.
6. Educate district staff, with the assistance of parents, in ways to work and communicate with parents and to know how to implement parent, family, and community engagement involvement programs that will promote positive partnerships between the school and parents, families, and the community;
7. Keep parents, families, and the community informed about parental, family, and community engagement involvement programs, meetings, and other activities they could be involved in. Such communication shall be, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents and families can understand;
8. Find ways to eliminate barriers that work to keep parents and families from being involved in their child's education. This may include providing transportation and child care to enable parents to participate, arranging meetings at a variety of times, and being creative with parent/teacher conferences;
9. Find and modify other successful parent, family, and community ~~involvement~~ engagement programs to suit the needs of our district;
10. Train parents, families, and the community to enhance and promote the involvement of other parents, families, and members of the community;
11. Provide reasonable support for other parental, family, and community engagement involvement activities as parents, families, and the community may reasonably request.

To ensure the continued improvement of the district's parental, family, and community ~~involvement~~ engagement program, the district will conduct an annual review of its parental involvement policies to examine their affect on promoting higher student achievement. The review shall be done by a committee consisting of parents and other community members, certified and classified staff, and member(s) of the administration.

This policy shall be part of the school's Title I plan and shall be distributed to parents of the district's students and provided, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.

Legal References:       20 U.S.C. § 6318  
                                   A.C.A. § 6-15-1702  
                                   A.C.A. § 6-15-1703  
                                   A.C.A. § 6-15-1704

## **6.12—PARENTAL, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ENGAGEMENT - SCHOOL**

The Little Rock School District understands the importance of involving parents, families, and the community as a whole in promoting higher student achievement and general good will between the school and those it serves. Therefore, the Little Rock School District shall strive to develop and maintain the capacity for meaningful and productive parental, family, and community involvement engagement that will result in partnerships that are mutually beneficial to the school, students, parents, families, and the community. To achieve such ends, the school shall work to:

1. Involve parents, families, and the community in the development and improvement of Title I programs for the school;
2. Have a coordinated involvement engagement program where the involvement engagement activities of the school enhance the involvement strategies of other programs such as Head Start, HIPPIY, Parents as Partners, Parents as Teachers, ABC, ABC for School Success, area Pre-K programs, and Even Start;
3. Explain to parents, families, and the community the State's ~~content~~ academic and achievement standards, State and local student assessments and how the school's curriculum is aligned with the state's academic standards and assessments and how parents, families, and the community can work with the school to improve ~~their child's~~ students' academic achievement;
4. Provide parents and families with the materials and training they need to be better able to help their child achieve. The school may use parent resource centers or other community based organizations to foster parental involvement and provide literacy and technology training to parents.
5. Educate school staff, with the assistance of parents, in ways to work and communicate with parents and to know how to implement parent, family, and community engagement involvement programs that will promote positive partnerships between the school and parents, families, and the community;
6. Keep parents, families, and the community informed about parental, family, and community engagement involvement programs, meetings, and other activities they could be involved in. Such communication shall be, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents and families can understand;
7. Find ways to eliminate barriers that work to keep parents and families from being involved in their child's education. This may include providing transportation and child care to enable parents to participate, arranging meetings at a variety of times, and being creative with parent/teacher conferences;
8. Find and modify other successful parent, family, and community involvement engagement programs to suit the needs of our school;
9. Train parents, families, and the community to enhance and promote the involvement of other parents, families, and members of the community;
10. Provide reasonable support for other parental, family, and community involvement engagement activities as parents, families, and the community may reasonably request.



To help promote an understanding of each party's role in improving student learning, the Little Rock School District shall develop a compact that outlines the responsibilities of parents, students, and the school staff in raising student academic achievement and in building the partnerships that will enable students to meet the State's academic standards.

The Little Rock School District shall convene an annual meeting, or several meetings at varying times if necessary to adequately reach parents and families of participating students, to inform parents and families of the school's participation in Title I, its requirements regarding parental, family, and community engagement involvement, and the parents right to be involved in the education of their child.

The Little Rock School District shall, at least annually, involve parents, families, and the community in reviewing the school's Title I program and parental, family, and community engagement involvement policy in order to help ensure their continued improvement.

This policy shall be part of the school's Title I plan and shall be distributed to parents of the district's students and provided, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.

Legal References:        20 U.S.C. § 6318  
                                  A.C.A. § 6-15-1702  
                                  A.C.A. § 6-15-1703  
                                  A.C.A. § 6-15-1704

[Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Parental Involvement Plans and Family and Community Engagement](#)