

CHAPTER 9000 RELATIONS

NOTE: Bold Policy #### and Bold Title indicates those Administrative Guidelines (AGs) required by Board Policy.

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NOTE	Education Foundation – there is no current policy governing either the establishment of an SSSMC foundation or a joint venture with an existing foundation of a member school corporation

AG 9111 *Telephone Communications*

In regard to the telephone system at SSSMC, the Board has directed by its policy that incoming calls during regular school hours to the central office (789-1650) and to the RISE Learning Center (789-1600) be answered by a live human being and not by a computer-generated voice for the following reasons:

- A. Schools exist to enhance the human condition and response by machine voice is dehumanizing, and
- B. To ensure that each caller's concern is dealt with in an expeditious manner.

Telephone calls to extension numbers within SSSMC can be answered by voice mail provided the caller is given the alternative of dialing 0 and talking to a live person.

AG 9120 *Public Information Program*

The Office Manager, Melissa Cunniff, as the designee of the Executive Director, shall direct an information program designed to acquaint the citizens of the community and general public with the achievements and needs of SSSMC and the RLC. Toward this end, parents, guardians, and other residents of SSSMC through its member school corporations are to be provided opportunities, e.g. website, media, etc., for orientation and information regarding State regulations and local school procedures.

AG 9130 *Public Complaints and Concerns*

It is the intent of this Board policy to provide the means for judging each public complaint and concern in a fair and impartial manner and to seek a remedy when appropriate. At balance is the public's right to present a request, suggestion, complaint regarding SSSMC personnel, programs, and operations and the Board's duty to protect its staff from unnecessary harassment.

It is the desire of the Board to rectify any misunderstandings between the public and the SSSMC by direct discussions of an informal type among the interested parties. Should informal meetings fail to resolve the differences, the following formal procedures may be initiated:

A. Matters Regarding a Professional Staff Member

1. First Level – with the exception of child abuse, substance abuse, or any other serious allegation, the matter should be initially addressed by

the complainant and concerned staff member. As appropriate, the staff member shall report the matter and whatever action may have been taken to the immediate supervisor.

2. Second Level – lacking satisfactory resolution the matter shall be discussed by complainant and the supervisor of the staff member (in compliance with any applicable provisions of the collective bargaining agreement).

3. Third Level – lacking satisfactory resolution at the prior levels, a written request for a conference is to be submitted to the Executive Director. The request should include:

- a. the specific nature of the complaint and a brief statement of the facts giving rise to it;
- b. the respect in which it is alleged that the complainant (or child of the complainant) has been adversely affected; and
- c. the action which the complainant wishes taken and the reasons why it is felt that such action be taken.

Should the matter be resolved in conference with the Executive Director, the Board may be advised of the resolution.

4. Fourth Level – Should the matter not be resolved, or if it is one beyond the Executive Director’s authority and requires a Board decision or action, the complainant shall request, in writing, a review by the Board, which will review all materials related to the case and provide the complainant with its written final decision.

B. Matters Regarding the Executive Director - see Policy Language

C. Matters Regarding an Administrative Staff Member - first level contact with the person’s supervisor also see Section A above

D. Matters Regarding a Support Staff Member - first contact with the Associate Director and also see Section A above

E. Matters Regarding Educational Interpreters - first contact with the DHH Department Chairperson

F. Matters Regarding Therapists (OT, PT, COTA, PTA) – first contact with the Supervisor of Special Services

G. Matters Regarding the Educational Program (first level contact with the Associate Director and also see Section A above)

H. Matters Regarding Instructional Materials

The Executive Director is to ensure that students and their parents are *adequately informed each year* regarding their right to inspect instructional materials and the procedure for completing such an inspection. If a request, suggestion, complaint, or concern relates to instructional materials such as textbooks, library books, reference works, and other instructional aids used in the RLC/SSSMC, the procedure is as follows:

1. The criticism is to be addressed to the Associate Director or Supervisor of Special Services, in writing, and shall include:

- a. author;
- b. title;
- c. publisher;
- d. the complainant’s familiarity with the objectionable material;
- e. page and item of objectionable sections;

f. reasons for the objection.

2. The Executive Director shall review the case and advise the complainant, in writing, of its decision within thirty (30) business days.

No challenged material may be removed from the curriculum or from a collection of resource materials except by action of the Board, and no challenged material may be removed solely because it presents ideas that may be unpopular or offensive to some. Any Board action to remove material will be accompanied by the Board's statement of its reasons for the removal.

AG 9140 *Citizens Advisory Committee*

Article 3 of the Interlocal Agreement for SSSMC adopted 8/2/2010 provides for the Organization and Function of the Interlocal Advisory Committee (Section 3.05). Each school board of the member school corporations shall appoint one (1) of its members to serve on the Advisory Committee, which is to serve as a communication link between SSSMC and the governing bodies of its members. The Executive Director shall convene the Advisory Committee at least once annually for the purpose of providing information on budget and policy as well as other matters related to the operation of the SSSMC.

The Board may establish other citizen's advisory committees when there is a definite function to be performed with the following considerations:

- A. All appointments of citizens shall be by the Board.
- B. All appointments of staff members (less than half of the membership) shall be made by the Executive Director.
- C. The chairperson shall be chosen from among the lay members.
- D. Board members may be ex-officio members of the committee.

Every effort should be made to ensure that the makeup of an advisory committee is as truly representative of the community as possible.

The structure and organization of an advisory committee shall be determined by the Board as appropriate to the assignment:

- A. Upon completing its assignment, a committee either shall be given a new assignment or shall be dissolved promptly.
- B. No advisory committee shall be permitted to continue for prolonged periods without a definite assignment.
- C. Each committee shall be instructed as to the:
 - 1. length of time each member is asked to serve,
 - 2. resources the Board intends to provide,
 - 3. approximate dates on which the Board wishes it to submit reports, 4. approximate date on which the Board wishes it to dissolve, and
 - 5. relationship it has to the Board, to individual Board members, to the Executive Director, and to the remainder of the professional staff.

The Board has the sole power to dissolve any of its advisory committees and reserves the right to exercise this power at any time during the life of any committee.

Advisory committees shall be encouraged to draw upon:

- A. a wide variety of resources both inside and outside of SSSMC;

B. the talents of other local residents and to recommend to the Board the official appointment of any such additional member(s) as the committee may desire.

Expenditure of SSSMC funds by an advisory committee shall be made only upon the prior approval of the Executive Director. Supplies, equipment, and personnel from within SSSMC may be obtained through the appointed staff resource person.

Correspondence between the Board and its committees shall ordinarily be conducted by the Executive Director, who shall also transmit the contents of any communication from a committee to the Board. When a committee is ready to submit a report on its assigned topic, the Executive Director shall arrange a meeting with the Board for the purpose of receiving the report.

AG 9150 **School Visitors** [10/2/13 review by CCHA]

The Board, SSSMC administrators, and RLC staff members welcome and encourage visits to school by parents, community members, and fellow educators. For the educational program to continue undisturbed when visitors are present and to prevent the intrusion of disruptive persons into the school or central office, SSSMC has some reasonable visitor limitations in place as explained in this guideline.

The Executive Director has promulgated this administrative guideline as necessary for the protection of students and employees of SSSMC from disruption to the educational program or the efficient conduct of their assigned tasks. This administrative guideline does not apply to handlers of service animals and any external service providers pursuant to a student's IEP or Section 504 plan. All visitors must follow the rules of the building.

SSSMC/RLC consistently accommodates external professionals, such as private duty nurses or private therapists or mental health counselors, who request to visit or who accompany specific students. Notes in the student's IEP will document the visitation arrangements, two-way releases as applicable, and confirm that the visitation is neither a service of the IEP/504 plan nor a requirement for a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Visitors are not permitted in the classrooms or instructional areas unless the visitor is providing medical care for a student's physical impairment. Private Duty Nurses in the classrooms, for example, provide medical care for a student's physical impairment and do not provide educational instruction for a student. A visitor's interactions with a specific student that are not medical care for a student's physical impairment must occur outside the classroom in an area assigned by the principal or his/her designee.

All visitors must follow the procedures for facility entry and exit as set forth at the main entry #1 to the RLC and the main entry #4 to the SSSMC central offices. *Visitors are required to sign in at the main door or Door #1 and record the reason for their visit. Visitors will be provided a guest badge and directed or accompanied to the appropriate destination. Visitors are expected to sign out at the main office and return the guest badge when finished with their visit (added 8.12.14).*

The Executive Director or principal has the authority to prohibit the entry of any person to a school of Southside Special Services of Marion County (SSSMC) or to expel any person when there is reason to believe the presence of such person would be detrimental to the good order of the school. If such an individual refuses to leave the school grounds or creates a disturbance, the principal is authorized to request from the local law enforcement agency whatever assistance is required to remove the individual.

SSSMC administration may prohibit the entry of any visitor to the SSSMC/RLC facility or expel any visitor when it is reasonably foreseeable that the presence of the visitor would be a substantial disruption to the education of a student or the school operation. Rules regarding entry of persons other than students, staff, and faculty upon school grounds or premises shall be posted conspicuously at or near the entrance to such grounds or premises if there are no formal entrances, and at the main entrance to each school building. All persons are prohibited from intentionally displaying a firearm at a public school board meeting.

Individual Board members who are interested in visiting schools or classrooms on an unofficial basis shall make the appropriate arrangements with the principal. In keeping with Board bylaws, such Board member visits shall not be considered to be official unless designated as such by the Board. The Board member shall be visiting as an interested individual in a similar capacity of any parent or citizen of the community. These visits should not be considered to be inspections nor as supervisory in nature.

If, during a visit to a school or program, a Board member observes a situation or condition which causes concern, s/he should discuss the situation first with the Executive Director as soon as convenient or appropriate. Such a report of discussion shall not be considered an official one from the Board. If the Board member believes the situation or condition serious enough, s/he may wish to also inform the Executive Director.

AG 9160 *Public Attendance at School Events*

Although the Board, SSSMC administrators, and RLC staff members welcome parents, community members, and fellow educators to athletic, extracurricular, special programs, and other public events, the Board has a duty to maintain order and preserve of facilities of SSSMC during the conduct of such events.

All notices, signs, schedules, and other communications about school events are to contain the following language: *"The activity site is fully-accessible. Any person requiring further accommodations should contact the Executive Administrative Assistant (789-1662) at the SSSMC central office."*

Raffles and similar forms of fund-raising by SSSMC-related organizations may be permitted by the Executive Director. Prior permission from the Executive Director or Principal is required for any person or organization seeking to film, photograph, or audio/video record students or a school activity which is not a public event.

Audio and/or video recordings of school events may be made by parents or other members of the audience without restriction if the performance is not of copyrighted

material. If the performance is of copyrighted material and the necessary license has not been secured in advance by the SSSMC, the audience shall be advised before the performance begins that audio and/or video recordings are prohibited.

The Board directs that no alcoholic beverage or other controlled substance be possessed, consumed, or distributed nor any betting/gambling occur at any function sponsored by SSSMC or at any function occurring on SSSMC premises. If a student or adult is asked to leave or is removed from a school event, no admission fees will be refunded.

School administrators have the authority to call law enforcement officials if a person violates posted regulations or does not leave school property when requested. The administrators are also authorized to use detectors and other devices to better ensure the safety and well-being of participants and visitors.

AG 9210 *Parent Organizations* (revised 9/3/14)

The Board supports all organizations of parents whose objectives are to promote the education experiences of students at SSSMC/RLC. When using the name of SSSMC or its schools and in organizing a group whose identity derives from a school, the parent organization shares responsibility with the Board for the welfare of participating students.

Any new parent organization desiring to use the name or offices of the SSSMC must obtain the approval of the Executive Director as a prerequisite to organizing. Representatives and members of approved school related organizations shall in all circumstances be treated by SSSMC employees as interested friends of the schools and supporters of public education in SSSMC.

Staff members are encouraged to join such an organization in their related area(s) of specialization or interest. The Board will not tolerate any undue pressure, harassment, or intimidation designed to coerce parents or teachers into membership in one (1) organization as opposed to another.

The Board relies upon the approved organization(s) to operate in a manner consistent with public expectations for SSSMC/RLC and reserves the right to withdraw sponsorship from the organization(s) which violate the bounds of community taste.

AG 9250 *Relations with Parents* (revised 9/16/14)

Since the Board believes that the education of children is a shared responsibility with the parents of the school community, a strong program of communication must be maintained. Parents, however, have the ultimate responsibility and authority for their children's in-school behavior (including those who have reached the age of majority). During school hours the school administrators and staff act in place of the parents (in loco parentis).

For the benefit of children, the Board believes that parents have a responsibility to encourage their child's career in school by:

- A. supporting the school in requiring that the children observe all applicable SSSMC administrative guidelines and related RLC procedures;
- B. accepting their own responsibility for children's willful in-school behavior;
- C. sending children to school with proper attention to their health, personal cleanliness, and dress;
- D. maintaining an active interest in the student's daily work and making it possible for the student to complete assigned homework by providing a quiet place and suitable conditions for study;
- E. reading all communications from the school, signing, and returning the information promptly when requested; and
- F. cooperating with the school in attending conferences set up for the exchange of information of the child's progress in school.

The RLC staff may develop a written agreement that contains the expectations for the school, the student, the student's teachers, and the student's parents.

The following activities are to be implemented by the Board's direction to encourage parent-school cooperation:

- A. Parent-teacher conferences to permit two-way communication between home and school.
- B. Annual open house at the RLC to provide parents with the opportunity to see the school facility, meet the staff, and sample the program on a first hand basis.
- C. Meetings of parent and staff members to explain and discuss matters of general interest with regard to child-school, child-home, or child-school-home relationships.
- D. Meetings of staff members and groups of parents of those students having special abilities, disabilities, needs, or problems.
- E. Special events of a cultural, ethnic, or topical nature, which may be initiated by parent groups and may involve the cooperative effort of students, parents, and staff.

The purpose of the Family Friendly Schools Program sponsored by the Indiana Department of Education is to focus on addressing the academic, physical, emotional and social needs of students while providing the needed resources and fostering the active involvement of their families through schools and the community. It is a State recognition program for schools that excel in the involvement of families and communities in their children's education. See Best Practices for Parent Involvement in Schools at <http://www.doe.in.gov/outreach/familyfriendly-schools-program>

Parents expect their children's well-being to come first when children attend school. This includes the expectation of respect for students' privacy and adequate protection of the confidentiality of children's personal information. To that end, parents expect openness and transparency from schools and districts about their data practices, so that parents can evaluate whether a school's or district's protection of children's personal information meets those expectations.

Consequently, it is important that schools and districts communicate what student information they collect, why they collect it, how they use it, and to whom they disclose it. The U.S. Department of Education encourages schools and districts to take a

proactive approach in communicating with parents, as greater understanding of the schools' and districts' data privacy policies and practices will help alleviate confusion and misunderstandings about students' data use.

Beyond FERPA and PPRA notification requirements, the USDOE recommends a number of best practices for improving the transparency of schools' and districts' data practices. These recommendations can be divided into three main categories: (A) what information to communicate to parents; (B) how to convey that information; and (C) how to respond to parent inquiries about student data policies and practices.

Reference: The U.S. Department of Education has recently encouraged schools to take a proactive approach in communicating data privacy policies and practice to alleviate any confusion and misunderstandings about the use of student data.

See <http://ptac.ed.gov/document/Transparency-Guidance>.

AG 9700 *Relations with Special Interest Groups*

It is the policy of the Board that students, staff members, and SSSMC facilities not be used for advertising or promoting the interests of any non-school agency or organization (public or private) without the expressed approval of the Board or the Executive Director as its designee. Any such approval granted for whatever cause or group shall not be construed as an endorsement of said cause or group by either the Board or SSSMC administration.

A. Political/Commercial Interests – all materials or activities proposed by outside political or commercial sources for student or staff use or participation shall be reviewed by the Executive Director on the basis of:

1. their educational contribution to some aspect of the school program,
2. its benefit to students, and
3. good taste.

No such approval shall have the primary purpose of advancing the name, product, or special interest of the proposing group. Outside speakers representing commercial organizations will be welcome only when the commercial aspect is limited to:

1. naming the organization represented, and
2. subject matter that advances the educational aims of the SSSMC.

The content and manner of presentation of any commercial messages contained in educational materials, programs, and equipment requires prior approval of the Executive Director.

B. Contests and Exhibits – may benefit individual students or the SSSMC but participation in such special activities may not:

1. have the primary effect of advancing a special product, group, or company;
2. make unreasonable demands upon the time and energies of staff or students or upon the resources of SSSMC;
3. involve any direct cost to SSSMC;
4. interrupt the regular school program unless the student body as a whole derives benefit from such activities; and
5. cause the participants to leave the premises of SSSMC, unless an approved field trip or parents have granted their informed permission.

C. Distribution/Posting of Literature – Prior review and expressed permission from the Executive Director or designee is required before any outside organizations, staff member, or student representing an outside organization may distribute or post literature on behalf of that organization on SSSMC property either during or after school hours. The requesting organization or person shall delineate the time, place, and manner of distribution of all non-school-related materials.

D. Solicitation of Funds – Because SSSMC cannot accommodate every organization that desires to solicit funds for worthy purposes, the Board does not permit any organization NOT related to SSSMC to solicit funds on SSSMC property.

E. Prizes/Scholarships – in accepting an offer of scholarships or prizes, the Board directs that the following guidelines be observed:

1. Consistent with the Board's policy on student records prior parent permission (or that of the student of 18 years of age or older) is required before any information either academic or personal shall be released from the student's record for the purpose of selecting a scholarship or prize winner.
2. Prior approval by the Executive Director or designee of the type of scholarship or prize and any restrictions upon it is required.
3. If agreeable to the sponsoring organization, the selection of the recipient shall be left entirely to the Principal and his/her designated staff committee.

NOTE: **Education Foundation** – there is no current policy governing either the establishment of an SSSMC foundation or a joint venture with an existing foundation of a member school corporation.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- A. RLC Handbook
- B. OT/PT Handbook
- C. School Year Handbook for Classified Staff
- D. Full-Year Handbook for Professional Staff
- E. Forms (S-drive)
- F. Collective Bargaining Agreement
- G. SSSMC Website <sssmc.org>

