

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS

The Somerville School Committee believes that the public schools belong to the people who created them by consent and support them by taxation, and the support of the people must be based on their understanding of and their participation in the aims and efforts of the schools. Therefore, the Somerville School Committee declares its intent:

1. To keep local citizens regularly and thoroughly informed through all available channels of communication on the policies, programs, problems, and planning of the school system, and to carry out this policy through its own efforts, those of the Superintendent, and such information officers as may be appointed.
2. To solicit the studied counsel of the people through advisory committees selected from the community and appointed to consider problems that vitally affect the future of our children.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: January 2010

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS

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

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

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

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: January 2010

SOMERVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DISTRICT PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY

The Somerville Public Schools strive to maintain excellence and innovation enhanced by active involvement of all members of the Somerville community. To achieve this goal we will involve families and other members of the Somerville community in our schools and improve and expand opportunities for parents/guardians to engage in school-based activities that support their students' learning and development.

All parents and guardians of Somerville students are encouraged to participate in the learning process at home and may find helpful resources in the parent/guardian sections of *The Guide for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment in the Somerville Public Schools*, reviewing the *Living and Thriving in Somerville Family Resource Guide*, by attending workshops and events sponsored by the Somerville Family Learning Collaborative, and by visiting www.somerville.k12.ma.us/families. The Somerville Public Schools are always open for parents and residents to visit. There are specific dates set aside for school visits and Open House weeks are announced yearly. At any other time, parents and residents may call the school principal to arrange a visit.

The Somerville Public Schools encourage the recruitment of parents to participate in partnerships with the schools on a voluntary basis in activities such as the following:

School-based Opportunities:

- Membership in School Councils
- Membership in the PTA
- Unidos Parent Organization
- Volunteering in schools in implementing curricula, programs and projects

City-wide Opportunities:

- Somerville Family Learning Collaborative
- Early Childhood Advisory Council
- Special Education Advisory Council
- Other parent advisory groups as may be established

Student progress in achieving the goals of the curriculum will be reported to parents on a quarterly basis via report cards. Each individual school shall also schedule at least three parent-teacher meetings for individual conferences. Translation of report cards and interpretation at the parent-teacher meetings will be provided in the high frequency languages of the school.

With the participation of parents, guardians, teachers and community members, each individual School Improvement Council shall develop a Parent / Community Involvement Plan to be incorporated into the School Improvement Plan. The school-based Parent / Community Involvement Plans shall be reviewed annually and disseminated to the school community in the high frequency languages of the school.

The District Parent Involvement Policy shall be distributed to parents annually in English and high frequency languages in the community as part of the *Somerville Public Schools Parent/Guardian Guide*. This policy shall be available for distribution at all schools and the Parent Information Center. The Superintendent /designee will monitor the implementation of this

policy and provide technical assistance, available resources, and support to individual schools in the development of school-based Parent / Community Involvement Plans.

This policy will be reviewed annually to determine its effectiveness in increasing participation of all parents in the community, including those of diverse cultural, ethnic, linguistic or economic groups.

Adoption Date: June 12, 1995

Revised: May 15, 2006

Date Approved by School Committee: May 21, 2007

Amended: March 2011

SCHOOL/PARENT RELATIONS GOALS

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

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

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

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: January 2010

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS RIGHTS

As required by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with law and Department of Education Regulations. The school district will follow the law and the regulations developed by the Massachusetts Department of Education to standardize the process by which public schools provide student records to parents who do not have physical custody of their children ("non-custodial parents").

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

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

SOURCE: MASC
Updated: May 2006
LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:34D; 71:34F; 71:34H
603 CMR 23.07 (5) Access Procedures for Non-Custodial Parents

Approved: May 7, 2007

Reviewed: January 2010

RELATIONS WITH PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

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

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

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

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

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: January 2010

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

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

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

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

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

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: January 2010

PUBLIC GIFTS TO THE SCHOOLS

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

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

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

The Somerville School Committee is responsible for accepting all donations/gifts with an estimated value of \$100 or more or as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent of Schools is responsible for developing and monitoring a process of donation/gift acceptance and appropriate expression of appreciation on behalf of the School Committee.

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

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: January 2010

Amended: December 2014

PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW

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

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

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

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

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

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: January 2010

NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS/NEWS RELEASES

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

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

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

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

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

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: January 2010

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

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

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

School facilities will be used according to the regulations of the Superintendent of Schools/designee and rental fees established in conjunction with the Department of Public Works.

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

Eligibility

School facilities will be available for the following:

1. Public school activities
2. Parent-teacher activities
3. Official city public hearings and political activities
4. Meetings and activities sponsored by the School Committee and school personnel
5. Recreation Department activities
6. Local nonprofit and noncommercial organization activities
7. The activities of other organizations that serve a worthy educational, civic, or charitable purpose or benefit a substantial group of residents from the community, in accordance with File KF-R, when approved by the Superintendent of Schools/designee

School and City Preference

Priority is given to requests for use of school facilities will be as follows:

1. School activities
2. Municipal meetings and elections over other community activities
3. Recreation Department

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:71](#); [71:71B](#); [272:40A](#)

Adopted by School Committee: May 4, 2015

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

The use of school buildings, grounds, equipment, and facilities will be authorized by the Superintendent/designee in conformity with the following regulations, which have been approved by the School Committee.

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

Building Use

1. Official Application

The official form, *Application for Use of School Facilities*, should be obtained from the Business Office or from the school department website. When completed, it should be returned to the School Business Office.

2. Priorities

- a) Public Schools – No use shall interfere with or take precedence over a regular day or evening program of the public schools.
- b) Somerville School Committee Meetings
- c) School Related Functions – i.e. Art and Music, Athletic Program, P.T.A. Functions, Evening School, and Community Schools
- d) Recreation Programs – when requested by Recreation Commission.
- e) Official Government Meetings – Board of Aldermen Meeting, Mayor’s Meetings, voting or Hearings i.e. Community Development Hearing.
- f) Community Education Programs – these will encompass neighborhood groups – only in designated areas.
- g) Neighborhood groups that meet with and/or sponsored by elected city officials or Mayor’s designee to discuss neighborhood problems, Block Groups or Resident Groups. The city official’s name must appear on the application.
- h) Other Groups.

3. Availability

- a) Requests for use of school facilities by organizations or groups must be made at least three weeks prior to the date of the proposed use.
- b) Buildings are not available for use beyond 10:00 p.m. or before 7:00 a.m.
- c) When school is cancelled, all after school programs will be automatically canceled.
- d) Any Permit may be revoked without previous notice where conflicting dates have resulted or where need of the property for the public school purposes has developed. For other cause, permits may be revoked at any other time upon reasonable notice.
- e) Spaces available in schools are restricted to use by the Somerville Public Schools, the City of Somerville and organizations located in the City of Somerville or when the Superintendent/designee determines that the event will serve a worthy educational, civic, or charitable purpose; or a substantial group of residents from the community will be benefited.

Somerville High School Auditorium, Cafeteria, Culinary Arts, Dance Room, Library, Atrium, Conference Room, Music Room, Gym, Cafeteria. High School Field House*

*Please see Field House Use Policy

Other Buildings

- *Argenziano at Lincoln Park School* Gym, Cafeteria, Playroom, Library*
- *Brown School* Library*
- *Capuano School* Gym, Cafeteria
- *Cummings School* Gym[#]
- *East Somerville Community School* Gym, Auditorium, Cafeteria, Library*
- *Edgerly Education Center* Gym
- *Healey School* Gym, Cafeteria, Library*
- *Kennedy School* Gym, Cafeteria, Library*
- *West Somerville Neighborhood School* Gym, Cafeteria, Library*
- *Winter Hill Community School* Gym, Cafeteria, Library*

* selected adult groups only

restricted to Somerville Public Schools and City of Somerville use only

4. Restrictions –

The Somerville Public Schools reserves the right to cancel or suspend any use at the sole discretion of the Superintendent of Schools/designee.

- a) Use shall be limited to meetings open to the public. Meetings may not be a secret, closed or exclusive. If a fee is charged, anyone who pays the fee must be admitted.
- b) Informational meetings of a political nature, if sponsored or arranged by a responsible nonpartisan agency which can guarantee equal representation for all points of view, may be held in public school buildings at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools/designee.
- c) School buildings and grounds are not available for the promotion of partisan politics or individual candidates for political office, for promotion of commercial enterprises, including commercial concerts or dances. (However, exception will be made for ward caucuses held once per year for any political party so requesting. There will be no fee requested for such caucuses.)
- d) The user shall not permit the use of any combustible materials i.e. candles, other than electricity available for such use.
- e) No classrooms in elementary schools are to be used.
- f) Seating Capacity – Tickets to any activity shall not be sold or disposed of in excess of the seating capacity of the facility being used.
- g) The programs offered in or during the use of any school premises shall at no time contain any matter which might tend to cause breach of the peace, or which constitutes subversive doctrine of seditious utterances or which agitates for changes in our form of government or social order by violence or unlawful methods.
- h) There shall be no intoxicants, smoking or narcotics used in or about school buildings and premises, nor shall profane language, quarreling, fighting, or gambling be permitted. Violation of this rule by any organization during occupancy shall be sufficient cause for denying further use of school premises to the organization.
- i) Gym
 1. No playing on gym floor in street shoes
 2. No unsupervised use of gym

3. Non-school groups shall furnish their own equipment – such as balls, rackets, and other supplies. No metal or floor scratching materials may be used, i.e., goal posts.
4. No eating or drinking of any beverage shall be allowed.

j) Kitchen

1. Kitchen facilities may not be used without an employee of the cafeteria being present in a supervisory capacity. The kitchen facilities shall not be used to completely prepare and serve meals.
2. In no case shall children be allowed in the kitchen.
3. In no case shall Somerville Public Schools' cafeteria supplies be used in the preparation of meals or refreshments.
4. Whenever the kitchen facilities are not properly cleaned after use, the school custodian will clean the facilities and bill the group and organization.

k) Auditorium

1. Use of school auditorium equipment such as microphones, will be done by school personnel only. Groups using the school equipment will pay for employee's wages.
2. No eating or drinking of any beverages are permitted.
3. All scenery and fixtures must conform strictly with fire laws and city ordinances.

5. Protection of Property

- a) School property must be protected from damage and mistreatment and ordinary precautions for cleanliness maintained. Groups shall be responsible for the condition in which they leave the school building. In cases where school property has been damaged or abused beyond normal wear, the same shall be paid for by the organization involved.
- b) The Somerville Public Schools shall not assume responsibility for any property placed in facilities by the user.
- c) The Somerville Public Schools shall be relieved and discharged from any liability for any loss, injury, or damages to persons or property that may be sustained by reason of the use of approved facilities.
- d) The following guidelines shall be applicable regarding defacement:
 1. The user shall not damage, deface or allow any alterations to be made to the facilities.
 2. Damage to facilities during the time of use shall be charged to the user, whether by act, whether by default, or whether by negligence.
 3. Payment to the Somerville Public Schools for damage to facilities shall be made by the user to restore damaged facilities.
 4. The user shall assume full responsibility for the character, acts, and conduct of all persons admitted to the facility within the permit request.
 5. All permits will be issued for specific rooms and for specific hours. It shall be the responsibility of the organization to see that the authorized portions of the building are not vandalized and the premises are vacated as scheduled.

- e) Insurance
 1. The Somerville Public Schools may require the user to furnish a certificate of liability insurance in the amounts specified by the Somerville School Committee.
 - f) Supervision
 1. All juvenile activities must have adult supervision in the ration of one (1) adult to ten (10) juveniles.
 2. Authorized personnel of the Somerville Public Schools shall be permitted to enter facilities during use at any time or on any occasion to observe and enforce rules of the Somerville School Committee.
 - g) Concessions
 1. The use of concession facilities shall be granted at the discretion of the Somerville School Committee.
 - h) Cancellation
 2. Organizations are responsible to notify the School Department in the event an activity is to be canceled. Cancellations shall be given at least 24 hours in advance or the regular fee will be leveled.
 - i) Custodial Services
 1. Custodial personnel have been instructed to offer assistance to each group, but are NOT available to run errands, carry material, or perform duties outside their regular assignment.
 2. The school custodian shall open the building only upon presentation of a properly approved copy of the application.
6. Room/Rate Rental
- a) The rate schedule is established for the use of the Somerville Public School facilities in conjunction with the Department of Public Works (DPW). The rate schedule for outside users may be waived by action of the Commissioner of Public Works.
 - b) Rates and Fees
 1. Custodial Rate - The cost of provision of custodian service will be in accordance with the negotiated contract.
 2. Table and Chairs - All organizations will make their own arrangements for tables and chairs. The custodian shall be notified as to delivery of such items.
 - c) The fee and requirement of additional custodians will be waived for events held by the Somerville Public Schools and City of Somerville unless, due to the nature of the activity, it is determined that additional custodians are required.
 - d) In addition to a room rental rate, the cost of a custodial detail is required for all building use except for use by the Somerville Public Schools and City of Somerville use.

M.G.L 43: 33 and M.G.L. 71:71

Adoption Date:

Revised: March 20, 2000

Revised: April 2010

Amended: May 4, 2015

FIELD HOUSE USER POLICY

1. General Purpose

The Somerville High School Field House is an educational facility constructed to support the needs of the students enrolled in academic and athletic programs at the school. All other uses, regardless of sponsor, are secondary to these educational needs.

The Field House is to be used for any community purpose only after all other Community School facilities are fully utilized. The intent is to schedule events into the smaller neighborhood facilities before any event is scheduled into the Field House.

2. Application Form

Applications for use of the Field House shall be submitted to the Finance Director, or his/her designee, on a Building Use Form approved by the Somerville School Committee.

All user fees, damage deposits, and liability insurance forms and waivers must be filed with the application.

3. Permitted Uses

The only activities to be scheduled in the Field House are:

1. Programs presented by, or in support of, the Somerville Public School System and its educational and athletic programs.
2. Public recreation programs sponsored by the Somerville Recreation Commission.
3. Special programs in service to the community approved by special permit of the Somerville School Committee. These may include programs sponsored by non-profit community organizations providing programs open to all residents of the city. These events will be scheduled into available hours not permanently assigned to the programs of the Somerville School Committee or the Somerville Recreation Commission.
4. Programs provided by a 'for-profit' organization are specifically excluded from use of the Field House, as are programs sponsored by non-profit organizations that are intended to raise money to support any program of the sponsoring organization.

5. Fee

A damage deposit of \$500.00 shall be submitted with each application to use the Field House. Said deposit shall be used to defray the cost of repairing damage to the facility incurred while the facility is under care and custody of the leasee. Filing of the deposit is required of all users including the Somerville Recreation Commission. The deposit shall be returned to the leasee within one week of the event, unless informed immediately that the deposit is being withheld pending an assessment of damages.

6. Liability

All users shall provide liability insurance holding the Somerville School Committee harmless from any claim for damage arising out of the scheduled event. No exception will be made to this requirement.

7. Food and Beverages

All food and beverages are prohibited from the Field House floor unless protective covers are in place. Food and beverages are allowed in the Atrium if anticipated in the application for use of the Field House. Smoking is prohibited everywhere in the Field House.

Use of the Culinary Art Department's equipment and facilities is prohibited unless previous permission has been granted and it is under the supervision of the Culinary Arts Program.

8. Supervision

1. No facility in the Field House is to be utilized at any time without supervision by authorized and qualified personnel.
2. The locker room, weight room, ladies' and men's rooms, and adjacent areas including the atrium are deemed to be part of the Field House. Therefore, these areas are to be supervised at all times by authorized and qualified personnel. Supervision of all facilities is to be maintained until all users have left the area.

Adopted: December 21, 1992

Revised: April, 2010

Reviewed: April 2015

PUBLIC SOLICITATIONS IN THE SCHOOLS

No agent or other person be permitted to enter any school building for the purpose of securing subscriptions, presenting articles for sale, photographing pupils, copying names from school registers, securing information concerning attendance, scholastic records, or addresses of pupils, or transacting any other private business without permission for the Superintendent or his/her designee in writing.

For the purposes of this policy, local Parent Teacher Association (PTA) groups and groups representing school system employees will be considered “school groups” and will be governed by the Somerville School Committee’s policy on staff solicitations.

Adopted: February 1, 2010

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

ADVERTISING IN THE SCHOOLS

No advertising of commercial products or services will be permitted in school buildings or on school grounds or properties. Publications of the school system will not contain any advertising. However, this will not prevent advertising in publications related to student organizations and activities, such as, but not limited to, yearbooks and program books. All such advertising is subject to administrative approval

Revised: January 18, 1996

Revised: February 2010

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

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

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

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

SOURCE: MASC

Adopted: February 2010

OBSERVATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSROOMS

Parents or their parent designated independent evaluators and independent consultants (also referred to as observers) are welcome to observe in the Somerville Public Schools in accordance with the Massachusetts state special education law, G.L. c. 71B, section 3. The purpose of this classroom observation policy is to ensure that parents can participate fully and effectively in determining their child's appropriate education program. In consideration of the Somerville Public Schools' goal of maximizing outcomes of the student learning process and providing a safe environment for our students, the following guidelines have been developed to ensure the least disruption to the classroom and maintain safety for our students.

Parent/guardian requests to observe their child(ren), current program, or a proposed placement must be made at least five days in advance with the Special Education Director/designee and/or Principal.

To maintain an efficient and effective observation process, parents/guardians who request an observation of their child at school, should call or write to the Special Education Director/designee or school principal with their request. They should discuss the goals of their visit and arrive at a decision about the best way to proceed to achieve their goals. The Special Education Director/designee or the building Principal/ designee will respond to the request within 5 days of receipt of the parent/guardian request.

If the parent is appointing a person other than himself/herself to observe, and the observer is requesting to review records, a record release form must be signed by the parent/guardian in accordance with section 23.07(4) of the Students Records Regulations.

To fulfill the obligation to provide "timely access", the observation will be scheduled within one week. In most circumstances, the observation goals can be achieved in one hour. In instances where more time is necessary, additional observation time on another day may be scheduled. The amount of observation time will be determined on a case by case basis between the observer and the school principal/designee.

In lieu of a CORI (criminal offender record check), all observers will be accompanied to the classroom by a designated school staff member. In the event that the observation will require testing of the student or individual time alone, a CORI must be completed before the observation can take place.

The teachers of the classes in which the observation will take place will be informed of the visit before it takes place. The observer will not play a role in teacher evaluation and no evaluative information about school staff should be included in the written or oral report.

A maximum of two observers shall be allowed to visit the same classroom during instructional time unless special permission is granted by the school principal /designee. The principal/designee has the right to limit the number of observers visiting the classroom at any given time. Observations may take place in any given classroom only once per day.

Observers will be allowed to visit only the classrooms in which their children are enrolled, or a proposed classroom, regardless if their children are present at the time of the observation. The observer will be informed that he/she is not to interfere with the educational environment of the

classroom. If his/her presence presents a problem, he/she will be asked to leave. This notice is particularly important, since the presence of parents can influence both the performance of their child(ren) and those of others.

The observer will be asked to submit his/her report of the observation in advance of any follow-up TEAM meeting if the parent/guardian wants the information to be considered during the TEAM meeting.

Observers are required to sign in at the school office and wear the temporary identification badge assigned to them by the office at all times while on school grounds. They should meet the principal/designee in the office. The observer will not engage in the learning process or speak to students during the observation. Observers must turn off all electronic devices when they are in the school building to avoid disrupting the learning process.

It is requested that observers in the Somerville Public Schools respect the confidentiality of all students and confine their oral or written reports to a report of only the student they were present to observe. The observer will be instructed regarding the disclosure of confidential or personally identifiable information relating to other children. Staff must be mindful of removing materials which may be part of students' records from plain view. In the event that removal is not possible, the observer may be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement.

If a situation, such as a medical emergency, arises during the observation in the classroom, the observer may be requested to leave the setting and the observation will be rescheduled. In the event that the classroom teacher is absent on the date of the observation, the observer will be given the choice of following through with the observation or rescheduling it at a later date with the teacher present.

A school administrator or designee also may observe at the same time and take notes as to what is observed, paying particular attention to note anything that is non-typical concerning the period. This observation summary will be placed in the student's file and provided to the parent/guardian to any follow-up TEAM meeting.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. Ch. 71B, Sec. 3

Approved by Somerville School Committee: November 16, 2009

RELATIONS WITH BOOSTER ORGANIZATIONS

The Somerville School Committee recognizes that the endeavors and objectives of booster organizations and similar groups can be a valuable means of stimulating interest in and endorsement of the aims and achievements of our public school system.

Generally, actions initiated by boosters provide the atmosphere and climate to foster and encourage community-school relationships.

Booster-proposed plans, projects, or activities must be evaluated and promoted in light of their stated contribution to the academic as well as the athletic and fine arts programs of the schools. Care must be taken to avoid compromising or diluting the responsibilities and authorities of the Somerville School Committee.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: January 2010