

K - PUBLIC RELATIONS

KA	Goals and Objectives	*
KB	Public Information Program	*
KC	Board-Community Relations (CF: KM)	*
KD	Staff-Community Relations (Also GAH)	*
KE	Student-Community Relations (Also JO)	*
KEA	Interviews with Students	*
KF	Community Instructional Resources (Also IFC; Cf. MB)	*
KG	Use of School Facilities (Cf. DFG, DJF, EBH)	*
KH	Public Gifts	*
KI	Advertising in the Schools	*
KJ	Public Sales on School Property	*
KK	Public Use of School Records	*
KL	Visitors to the Schools (Cf. ML)	*
KM	Complaints	*

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Marengo County Board of Education in an effort to ensure and enhance the possibilities for excellence in the education of our children in a free society presents and endorses this statement of policy on school and community relations because of its conviction that (a) the public schools belong in every sense to the people of Marengo County and State of Alabama; and (b) the support of the people must be based upon their knowledge of, their understanding about, and their participation in the aims and efforts of the public schools.

The Board therefore reaffirms and declares its design and intent:

1. To keep the citizens of the county regularly and thoroughly informed through all the channels of communication on all the policies, programs, and planning of the School System and to carry out this policy through its own efforts and the offices of the Superintendent of Education and other appropriate personnel.
2. To welcome the advise and counsel of the people of the School System at appropriate times.
3. As needs arise, to solicit the sound thinking and studied counsel of the people through a method deemed most appropriate by the Board.

PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM

The Marengo County Board of Education shall make every attempt to represent the people according to the best interests of their children and in keeping with laws of the State and Federal government. Therefore, the Board shall attempt to:

- A. Keep its members and the public informed regarding the policies, administrative operation, objectives, and successes or failures of the School System.
- B. Provide the means for furnishing full and accurate information, favorable and unfavorable, together with interpretations and explanations of the School System plans and operations.

The Board encourages a policy of sound relations with the press and other communication media in the County. The Superintendent shall plan for releases to the press and other communication media which will provide information to the community concerning its schools and various phases of the Board's program.

All local news media representatives shall be welcome to attend all regular, special, and annual meetings of the Board.

FILE: KC
CF: KM

BOARD - COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Citizens of Marengo County will be encouraged not only to express their ideas and judgments, but also to visit under the appropriate conditions the schools and see them in operation, provided these visitors do not disturb the educational program.

FILE: KD
ALSO: GAH

STAFF - COMMUNITY RELATIONS

While the Marengo County Board of Education realizes that the primary responsibility of a teacher is to educate young people, teachers, and other staff members should be constantly aware of the role good public relations plays in the implementation of an effective education program.

Good communication with parents and other citizens of the System is essential for a smoothly-functioning organization, and the Board expects each employee to maintain adequate and positive communication with parents and citizens.

FILE: KEA

INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS

Requests for interviews with minor students will be denied unless written consent of the parent is given, or the parent is present for the interview.

FILE: KF
ALSO: IFC
CF: MB

COMMUNITY INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

The Marengo County Board of Education believes that the School System provides unlimited opportunities for offering educational experiences to children. While vicarious experiences in the classroom can be made meaningful by a skillful teacher, in many instances there can be no substitute for observations of the "real thing" in the community itself.

There are varieties of ways in which students can benefit from community resources. The Board encourages the use of community resources, under regulations established for all schools.

USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

The Marengo County Board of Education believes the functions of school buildings and grounds should be to accommodate approved school programs for students and to assist in meeting the educational, cultural, civic, social, and recreational needs of communities.

Use of school buildings by the community shall be considered a secondary function and shall be scheduled at times which do not interfere with regular school activities (see Guidelines.)

The use of school facilities by individuals or groups shall be governed by a signed use agreement between the individual or group and the Board. The use agreement shall contain, but is not limited to, the following:

1. A "hold harmless" statement having the effect of holding the Board free from any liability arising from the negligence of the party using the facilities.
2. A statement requiring, with limited exception, any person or group leasing the school facilities to purchase liability insurance identifying the Board and its members as additional insureds. A certificate verifying the purchase of such insurance should be presented to the Board at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to use of the facilities.
3. A statement that the individual or group lessee shall assume all responsibility for damages and/or maintenance expenses invested in the building, directly or indirectly resulting from lessee's use.

4. The Board shall direct the Superintendent to develop administrative rules and regulations governing the use of school facilities.

No Board owned or controlled facility will be used in any manner not covered under liability insurance purchased by the Board.

The following guidelines shall govern the use of school facilities and/or grounds by non-school individuals or groups:

1. Use of kitchens is prohibited.
2. Family reunions are prohibited.
3. Class reunions are permitted. A \$50.00 per day fee is the minimum charge.
4. Non-profit organizations are permitted as follows:
 - A. Rescue squads - \$50.00 minimum.
 - B. Fire departments - \$50.00 minimum.
 - C. Churches (gym and dining room only) - 50/50 split of all receipts or \$50.00 minimum. A fifty dollar minimum is to be charged if the event is not a charge event.
5. Educational organizations (ex. colleges) - no fee.
6. Non-school athletic organizations:
 - A. Use of outdoor facilities - restricted to times when Athletic Director can supervise.
 - B. Outdoor sport - \$100.00 registration fee for a season sport plus \$20.00 per event; \$50.00 per tournament (involving more than two teams).
 - C. Indoor sport - \$100.00 registration fee; \$50.00 per event; \$10.00 per hour per practice; \$100.00 per tournament.

NOTE: All requests must be in writing signed by officers or officials of organization (ex. deacons or pastor for churches). Reply will be in writing and all fees paid in advance.

Ref: Ala. Code 16-8-12, 16-10-11, 16-8-8, 16-8-9.

PUBLIC GIFTS

The Marengo County Board of Education may receive gifts which may serve to enhance and extend the work of the schools.

1. Equipment contributed to the schools becomes the property of the Marengo County Board of Education and is subject to the same controls and regulations that govern the use of other school-owned property.
2. Contributions of equipment or services that may involve major cost for installation or maintenance, or initial or continuing financial commitments from school funds shall be presented by the Superintendent to the Board for consideration and approval.
3. Individuals or organizations desiring to contribute supplies or equipment will consult with school officials regarding the acceptability of such contributions in advance of the contribution.
4. A list of supplies and equipment contributed primarily for school use shall be reported to the Board by the Superintendent.
5. All administrators in a position to receive gifts in the name of a school or the school system shall apply a test of "reasonableness" to the gift. Reasonableness may be defined as anything that might not be construed to influence the decision-makers in the purchase of school-related goods and services.

FILE: KI

ADVERTISING IN THE SCHOOLS

No commercial advertising shall be permitted by the Marengo County Board of Education in the buildings of the School System or on school grounds or properties unless approved by the Board. Publications of the School System shall not contain commercial advertising.

Nothing herein shall be construed to prevent advertising in student publications which are published by student organizations and/or advertising in programs or publications sponsored by PTA, booster clubs, or other parent groups.

Ref: Code 16-10-6, 16-8-8, 16-8-9, 36-25-1(9), 36-25-2(a), (b), (d), 36-25-5(a), 36-25-6, 36-25-7, 16-46-6.

FILE: KJ

PUBLIC SALES ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

No commercial advertising shall be permitted in the Marengo County school buildings or on school ground or properties. Publications of the School System shall not contain commercial advertising. This prohibition shall not apply to school sponsored advertisements (e.g., band and football programs). Nor shall it apply to advertising sponsored by parent groups (e.g., booster clubs).

Nothing herein shall be construed to prevent advertising in student publications which are published by student organization including, but not limited to, school newspapers and annuals.

Solicitation of advertising or use of the School System to promote the merit of any product by brand name or trademark shall not be permitted by the Marengo County Board of Education.

Public sales shall not be held on school property unless prior approval is given by the Superintendent.

PUBLIC USE OF SCHOOL RECORDS

The Marengo County Board of Education delegates to the Superintendent or his designee the responsibility of being the custodian of all records, documents, writings, letters, memoranda, or other written, typed, copied, or developed materials possessed, assembled, or maintained by the schools. These procedures shall be followed for the release of such records:

1. All requests for public information are to be forwarded to the Superintendent immediately upon receipt. The Superintendent shall thereupon make a determination whether or not the information requested is public in nature.
2. If the Superintendent finds the information to be public in nature, he shall direct that it be released for reproduction on the premises. The party requesting the information shall be charged the cost of reproduction and any other expenses entailed in locating and retrieving the information. If the information is in active use or otherwise unavailable, the party requesting the information shall be notified immediately upon its becoming available.
3. If the Superintendent is unable to ascertain whether or not the information requested is public in nature, he shall request, on behalf of the Board, an opinion from the Board's Attorney concerning the nature of the information. The Superintendent shall notify the person requesting such information that an opinion is to be requested of the Board's Attorney and shall notify such person immediately upon receipt of an answer.

FILE: KL
CF: ML

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

It is the policy of the Marengo County Board of Education to have all school visitors report to the principal's office upon entering a school building. All visitors to any school shall certify with respective school principals who they are and their purpose for being in said school. School officials, parents of school children, and other officials shall be welcomed in a cordial manner.

Conduct by any visitor which creates interference with maintaining a proper atmosphere for learning shall not be permitted. Principals shall be authorized to take necessary actions to eliminate the interference.

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

Constructive criticism of the Marengo County schools is welcomed by the Marengo County Board of Education whenever it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the education program or to equip the schools to do their tasks more effectively. The Board has, however, confidence in its professional staff and desires to support their actions in order that they be free from unnecessary, spiteful, or negative criticism and complaint. Therefore, whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board as a whole or to a Board member as an individual, it will be referred to the school administration for study and possible solution.

The Board advises the public that the proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline, or learning materials is as follows:

1. Teacher.
2. Principal.
3. Superintendent.
4. Board of Education.

The Board will consider hearing citizen complaints when they cannot be resolved by the administration. Matters referred to the Board must be in writing and should be specific in terms of the action desired. The Board will not consider or act on complaints that have not been explored at the appropriate administrative level. The Board directs that all citizen complaints brought to it while the Board is in official session, and which challenge or question the "good name" or "character" of an individual, shall be heard in executive session.