

# METHACTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: COMMUNITY

TITLE: COMMERCIALISM IN  
SCHOOLS

ADOPTED: May 22, 2007

REVISED: February 22, 2011

913.1. COMMERCIALISM IN SCHOOLS	
1. Purpose	<p>Commercialism in schools is increasing in many forms and complexity ranging from advertising to selling specific products for fundraisers and business/education partnerships. The policy of the Board shall be to permit selected commercial advertisements, activities or sponsorships when there is specific benefit to the students or the educational program. The Board also recognizes that in certain instances and with certain limitations, it may be in the best interest of the district to enter into relationships with corporations, businesses or community-based organizations for provisions of goods, services and/or equipment, and that, since school personnel, property and time are publicly funded, selling or providing access to advertising on school property outside the classroom involves ethical and legal issues that must be addressed.</p>
2. Authority SC 510	<p>All sponsorships and partnerships will require Board approval.</p> <p>The Board of School Directors encourages district staff to seek sponsorships and partnerships to help support the district programs and services, but no agreement shall require the district's programs and services to be delivered in a specific manner. A sponsor or partner may be acknowledged in district publications or displays. The acknowledgement must be tasteful and may not minimize or take away from the district's role or responsibility for the activity or service.</p>
3. Delegation of Responsibility	<p>The goal of this policy is to encourage appropriate public-private sponsorships and partnerships in order to provide resources for the school district. To meet the goal of the policy, the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee shall review all proposed contracts to ensure compliance with this policy. As part of the review process, additional competitive vendors may be contacted to determine if they wish to participate in a sponsorship or partnership contract.</p>
4. Definitions	<p><b>Sponsorship</b> - sponsorship is an agreement between the district and corporation, business or community-based organization in which the sponsor provides financial or resource support in exchange for recognition.</p>

<p>5. Guidelines</p>	<p><b>Partnership</b> - a partnership is an agreement between the school district and a private entity, wherein the basis and the terms of the relationship are set forth in an agreement between the private entity and the school district.</p> <p>The Board seeks and encourages participation arrangements with area businesses, especially those that are mutually beneficial. Partnerships can take many forms, including outright sponsorship of specific programs or purchase, personnel exchange, volunteering, speakers, advisory committees, etc. The Superintendent shall assure that the goals of each specific partnership be mutually developed and agreeable. If a particular business wishes to formally sponsor the financial part or all of a specific activity, school officials shall maintain control and management of the activity.</p> <p>The schools may cooperate with nonprofit organizations or government agencies in promoting activities in the general public interest, which are nonpartisan and nonsectarian and which promote the educational program of the schools and the best interest of the students.</p> <p><b>Sponsored materials</b> - sponsored materials, sponsored educational materials, are educational materials and programs developed and/or funded by commercial enterprises, trade organizations or nonprofit organizations with significant corporate backing. These materials are intended for use or distribution at school, and can be intended for use as either primary or supplemental curriculum.</p> <p>Recognizing that each contract presented to the district to consider will be unique, the following represents guiding principles to use to determine if the district should enter into the contract:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Sponsorship/Partnership involvement must not conflict with the goals and objectives of the schools. Curriculum and instruction are within the purview of educators, with the involvement of the community.</li><li>2. Sponsorship/Partnership involvement must be structured so as not to conflict with identified educational needs, and shall be in the judgment of the Superintendent and the School Board, in the best interest of students.</li><li>3. Proposed sponsorship/partnership involvement must be reviewed by the Board or a committee of the Board for approval. If the economic benefit to the district from any partnership exceeds \$10,000.00, the agreement must be set forth in a written agreement approved by the School Board at a public meeting.</li></ol>
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4. All sponsorship/partnership agreements entered into by the school district must be consistent with all labor contracts, competitive bid requirements and all applicable federal, state and district laws, rules and regulations.
5. No sponsorship/partnership shall provide direct financial gain to district employees, students, parents/guardians or School Board members.
6. A sponsorship or underwriting message must identify the program sponsor; however, cannot promote the underwriter, its products or services.
7. The school district must hold sponsored and donated materials to the same standards used for the selection and purchase of curriculum materials. Where the sponsorship or partnership involves signage, the organization that erects the sign(s) bears full responsibility for all costs and expenses associated with the procurement and erection of the sign(s).
8. The school district is under no obligation to enter into any sponsorship/partnership agreements.

List Of Student Names

A list of students' names and/or their addresses and telephone numbers may not be released (for commercial purposes). Similarly, participation in any venture that provides a vendor with the information necessary to generate a list is prohibited. Principals and teachers shall screen and enforce this item.

Fundraising

Pol. 229

Solicitations of money by students and school-related groups shall be in accordance with district Policy 229. The Board discourages the involvement of students in any door-to-door solicitation.

Advertising

The Board recognizes that businesses and cultural organizations make available for public use much information, which is of great value in advancing education that is not available through other sources. Accordingly, advertising in yearbooks, sports programs, theatrical promotions, refreshment, special programs, etc., are permissible. Also included as permissible are promotions such as soup label collection. However, the Board is aware that district schools are public institutions which are supported by tax dollars and that it is the Board's duty to protect students

from exploitation by private interests and distraction of the educational mission. The Board authorizes the administration to screen and deny any advertising that does not meet the intent of this policy and formulated administrative procedures for such purposes.

School publications may accept and publish paid advertising as approved by the building principal so long as that advertising is not deemed to be in conflict with the value structure of the community.

Commercial advertisements viewed by students are permitted during television programs, print media or as part of Internet access. The Board also recognizes that commercial advertisements are an integral part of Internet sites and cannot be regulated by the school district.

Advertising may be posted to acknowledge donated services, equipment, or facilities in a fashion approved by the policies and past practices of the Board.

#### Contests

Many requests are received each year for students to participate in poster and/or essay contests. The district cannot participate in all of them. Therefore, participation will be at the discretion of the building principal. Students may be informed about contests, leaving their participation a voluntary decision.

#### Request For Distribution Of Information

Materials to be distributed or posted must be approved in advance by the Superintendent or his/her designee at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to the requested posting or distribution date. The Superintendent will develop guidelines for the distribution of information. All material to be distributed shall be approved by the Superintendent.

#### Prohibited Commercial Activities

Advertising opportunities in the Methacton School District will be subject to certain restrictions in keeping with contemporary standards of good taste and will seek to model and promote positive values for our students. Prohibited forms of advertising include but are not limited to those which:

1. Promote hostility, disorder or violence.
2. Disparage ethnic, racial and religious groups.

3. Are libelous.
4. Violate the rights of others.
5. Inhibit the functioning of the school.
6. Override the school's identity.
7. Promote the use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco or firearms.
8. Promote any religion/religious organizations.

All materials or activities proposed by outside sources for student or staff use or participation shall be reviewed by the Superintendent or his/her designee on the basis of:

1. Educational value to the total school program.
2. Benefit to students.
3. Equity among the schools in the district.
4. Benefit to the residents.
5. Past practices.
6. Appropriateness for the entire community.

References:

School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 510

Board Policy – 229