

Section K Policies- School, Community and Home Relations

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SCHOOL & COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS

The Board believes that responsible management of the school district requires current laws, standards, attitudes, and philosophies of education be presented to the community on a continuing basis. The Board also recognizes that as elected representatives of the people it must consider the needs and desires of the community in establishing educational policy. In order to meet both of these aims, it is essential that effective two-way communication be maintained with the community.

The basis for an effective community relations program is to be found in the following statements of Board attitudes:

1. The community will be encouraged to participate and actively assist in the future planning of the cooperative.
2. All avenues of communication available will be used.
3. Special attention will be given to effective internal communication among the Board, administration, the staff, and member schools to assure the full understanding of existing programs and to elicit reports and recommendations on those in effect, as well as those which should be considered.

The Board is devoted to the development and maintenance of a comprehensive year-round community relations program to assure a full appreciation of the educational program and the problems of the district, and to provide for the broadest participation of all—Board, staff and member school communities—in seeking the solution to problems and in promoting the continuing improvement of the education available to the residents of the community.

Adopted Date: 7/19/2018

PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW

The Board 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 Board supports the right of the people to know about the programs and services of the cooperative 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 Board, its written policies and regulations, and its financial records will be open for inspection at the cooperative office 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 by the Director or other persons responsible for the custody of confidential files for inspection by the public or unauthorized persons. 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).

State Reference	Description
SDCL 13-8-43	Records of business manager open to the public
Policy Reference	Description
BDDG	MINUTES
GBL	PERSONNEL RECORDS
KBAA	PUBLIC RECORDS

Adopted Date: 7/19/2018

PUBLIC RECORDS

The Cooperative believes in operating in an open, transparent manner and will make district records available for public inspection, provided the release of the record(s) does not conflict with state or federal law.

The Board hereby designates the Director as the Cooperative's public records officer. The public records officer will be responsible for allowing inspection of records upon public request, and for maintaining confidentiality of those records not open to the public. The public records officer will also establish fees that may be charged for the retrieval and copying public records. No fee may be charged for the electronic transfer of any minutes of open meeting actions that were recorded in the last three years.

Failure to provide records may result in a civil or criminal penalty.

State Reference	Description
SDCL 1-27	Public records and files
SDCL 13-6-2	Legislative policy
Federal Reference	Description
USC Title 10 §503	Enlistments: Recruiting campaigns; compilation of directory information
USC Title 20 §7908	Armed Forces recruiter access to students information
Policy Reference	Description
GBL	PERSONNEL RECORDS
KBA	PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW

Adopted Date: 7/19/2018

NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS

The Director or designee will coordinate all activities relating to the publication of information concerning the cooperative or the appearance of news releases relating to cooperative personnel or activities.

In addition to the use of the official newspaper as required by state law for specific announcements, the cooperative will use all media available, both public and private to keep the public informed as fully as possible on cooperative matters.

The Board welcomes the active participation of newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and other mass communication media in promoting the cause of good education in our district and state.

Suggestions and advice from representatives of such media as to how best to facilitate the flow of information to them by the Board and personnel of the school district will be welcomed.

Newscasts, spot announcements, sports and media coverage of other cooperative activities and programs must be presented in the public interest. Identification of the cooperative with the promotion of any commercial or political enterprise will not be permitted.

Adopted Date: 7/19/2018

NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS

Core Educational Cooperative is a public institution. The Cooperative invites the participation of newspaper, radio and television personnel in providing information to the public. The Director will use public media to keep the goals, programs, achievements and needs of the Cooperative before the community.

The Director or designee(s) shall coordinate the release of information concerning the Cooperative and the actions of the Board. All media conferences regardless of the nature or topic, will be coordinated by the office of the Director.

Adopted Date: 7/19/2018

NEWS RELEASES

The Director or designee will be the press liaison for coordinating the release of information concerning the cooperative and the actions of the Board. The Board president will be the official spokesman for the Board, except as this duty is delegated to the Director or designee.

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 cooperative activities and personnel, which will create and maintain a dignified and professionally responsible image for the school system.

Adopted Date: 7/19/2018

COMMUNITY USE OF COOPERATIVE FACILITIES

Cooperative facilities and equipment are purchased, maintained, and operated by funds largely provided by local taxes. The board believes the facilities and equipment ultimately belong to the residents of the member districts and accepts the responsibility for making them available to responsible organizations and individuals of the community for appropriate activities. These activities may not infringe upon nor interfere with the conduct and best interests of the cooperative or its programs.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

The following activities will be prohibited on cooperative grounds:

1. Partisan political meetings;
2. Promulgating any theory or doctrine subversive to the laws of the United States or any political subdivision thereof advocating governmental change by violence;
3. Any activity that may violate the canons of good morals, manners or taste, or be injurious to the buildings, grounds or equipment;
4. Any purpose in conflict with school activities;
5. Commercial advertising;
6. Fund-raising campaigns except as permitted by Board policy or special action of the Board;
7. Activities which are discriminatory in the legal sense.

Permission may be granted to allow local colleges and universities, which may charge tuition, or cooperative personnel to use cooperative facilities for staff improvement or in-service training. Private teaching, either by individuals employed by the cooperative district or by outside agencies or persons, for which tuition is charged will require board approval before facilities may be used.

The director will develop regulations to be reviewed by the board for the use of cooperative facilities and equipment.

GRANTING OF APPROVAL

The Director is authorized to approve and arrange for scheduling the use of cooperative facilities by qualified applicants who satisfy the above purposes and limitations. Right is reserved by the Board to revoke any such permit, without liability, should such action be deemed necessary or desirable.

State Reference	Description
SDCL 13-24-20	Use of school facilities or buses for other purpose

Adopted: 7/19/2018

COMPLAINT AGAINST COOPERATIVE EMPLOYEE

It is the belief of the Cooperative Board that complaints may arise as the result of a misunderstanding which could be resolved through the mutual efforts of the person having the complaint and the employee involved. For that reason, efforts should be made by all parties involved to resolve the complaint at the lowest procedural level. It is only in those situations when the complaint cannot be resolved that the Board should be involved.

The purpose of this policy is to outline a procedure for addressing parent/student/public complaints about an employee's conduct, performance, or an employee's administration of a curricular, co-curricular or extra-curricular program. *Complaints related to sexual harassment, bullying, and instructional and library materials are addressed through other Cooperative District policies and not through this policy.*

When a complaint against a cooperative employee is brought directly to an individual board member or the entire Board, the board member or entire Board may listen to the person's complaint but shall take no action unless there has been compliance with this Policy. The person bringing the complaint will be directed to the procedure as set forth below. The following procedure is designed to ensure the proper balance in protecting the rights of the person(s) bringing the complaint and the rights of the person against whom the complaint is made. It is only when the person having the complaint and the employee involved cannot resolve the problem, and the complaint cannot be resolved at the administrative level, will the Board and board members become involved.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

STEP 1: Initial Complaint

- A.** The person having a complaint ("Complainant") must initiate the complaint procedure within thirty (30) calendar days from the date the Complainant knew or should have known of the conduct of the Employee giving rise to the complaint. The person having the complaint related to a school employee must initiate the complaint procedure in one of the following ways:
- meet and discuss the concern with the Employee involved; OR
 - meet and discuss the concern with the Employee's Supervisor.
1. If the Complainant met with the Employee and the complaint was not resolved, the Complainant must meet and discuss the complaint with the Employee's Supervisor within ten (10) calendar days of the meeting with the Employee. The Supervisor shall complete a Complaint Form, Exhibit KL-E(1). The Complainant shall sign and date the Complaint Form verifying the accuracy of its content.
 2. If the Complainant initiates the complaint by meeting the Supervisor, the Supervisor shall complete a Complaint Form, Exhibit KL-E(1). The Complainant shall sign and date the Complaint Form verifying the accuracy of its contents.
- B.** Upon the Complaint Form being signed and dated by the Complainant, the Supervisor shall give a copy of the complaint to the Employee and schedule an informal meeting with only the Complainant, Employee and Supervisor present. At the meeting, the Supervisor shall attempt to facilitate discussion between the Complainant and Employee by seeking clarification of the issue(s) and seeking a resolution to the complaint. Should a resolution be obtained, the resolution shall be noted on the Complaint Form. Should a resolution not be obtained, the Complainant and/or the Employee may request a decision by the Supervisor on the merits of the complaint by making the request on the Complaint Form.
- C.** If the Supervisor is asked to make a decision on the merits of the complaint, the Supervisor has the authority to investigate the complaint beyond the information received from the Complainant and Employee during the meeting with the Complainant, Employee and Supervisor. The Supervisor shall render a decision in writing within fourteen (14) calendar days of the request for a decision on the merits of the complaint. The time frame for rendering

a decision by the Supervisor may be extended by the Supervisor for good cause and upon written notification to the Complainant and Employee, which notification shall identify the reason for the extension and the date on or before which the decision shall be rendered. The Complainant and the Employee shall receive written notification of the Supervisor's determination/resolution.

- D. The Supervisor's decision may be appealed by the Complainant or Employee to the Director within (10) ten calendar days of receipt of the Principal's written decision pursuant to Step 2. If the Supervisor does not render a written decision within the required time frame (14 days unless extended) the Complainant or Employee may appeal to the Director pursuant to Step 2.

Should the complaint be against a Supervisor or the Director is the employees director supervisor, the Director shall address the complaint through the procedure set forth in Step 1. An appeal by the Complainant pursuant to Step 1D may be filed with the School Board pursuant to Step 3. Should the complaint be against the Director (or the Supervisor who also is the Director) the Complaint Form, Exhibit KL-E(1), shall be given to the Business Manager. The Business Manager shall give the Complaint Form to the Cooperative Board President or Chairperson. At the next Cooperative Board meeting, the Cooperative Board will designate a person who is not an Employee of the Cooperative to address the complaint through the procedure set forth in Step 1. An appeal by the Complainant pursuant to Step 1D may be filed with the Cooperative Board pursuant to Step 3.

STEP 2: Appeal to the Director

The following procedure shall be used to address an appeal of the Supervisor's decision made in Step 1, or if the Supervisor failed to render a decision in the required time frame:

- A. The appeal shall be in writing using Exhibit KL-E(2). The appealing party must attach the Complaint and the Supervisor's written decision, if a decision was rendered.
- B. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Director will provide a copy of the appeal to the other party. Within five (5) calendar days, the other party may submit a written response to the appeal. The Director shall provide a copy of the response to the appealing party.
- C. In the Director's sole discretion, the Director may (a) meet and discuss the matter with the Complainant and Employee, (b) meet and discuss the matter with the Complainant, Employee and Supervisor, or (c) meet and discuss the matter with the Supervisor.
- D. Within fourteen (14) calendar days from the date the appeal was filed with the Director, the Director shall render a decision in writing. The time frame for rendering a decision by the Director may be extended by the Director for good cause and upon written notification to the Complainant and Employee; the notification shall identify the reason for the extension and the date on or before which the decision shall be rendered. The Complainant, Employee and Supervisor shall receive copies of the decision. The Director may uphold, reverse or modify the Supervisor's decision. The Director may also refer the matter back to the Supervisor for further investigation. The Supervisor may uphold, modify or reverse his or her initial decision. After a matter has been referred back to the Supervisor, and the Supervisor rendered a second decision, that decision may also be appealed to the Director.
- E. The Director's decision may be appealed by the Complainant to the Cooperative Board within (10) ten calendar days of receipt of the Director's written decision pursuant to Step 3. If the Director does not render a written decision within the required time frame (14 calendar days unless extended) the Complainant may appeal to the Cooperative Board pursuant to Step 3.
- F. If the Employee believes the Director's decision constitutes a violation, misinterpretation or inequitable application of Cooperative Board policy or collective bargaining agreement applicable to the Employee, the Employee may file a grievance pursuant to the applicable

grievance policy. A grievance filed pursuant to this provision shall be initiated at the Director level.

STEP 3: Complainant's Appeal to the Cooperative Board

The following procedure shall be used to address an appeal of the Director's decision made in Step 2, or if the Director failed to render a decision in the required time frame:

- A. An appeal to the Cooperative Board shall be in writing using Exhibit KL-E(3). The Complainant must attach the complaint, the Supervisor's written decision if a decision was rendered, the appeal to the Director, the response to the appeal if any, and the Director's decision if one was rendered.
- B. The appeal must be filed with the President/Chairperson of the Cooperative Board or Business Manager within ten (10) calendar days of Complainant's receipt of the Director's written decision, or within ten (10) days of the deadline for the Director's written decision, whichever comes first.
- C. Upon receipt by the Board President/Chairperson of an appeal by the Complainant, a copy of the appeal shall be given to the employee involved.
- D. Upon receipt of an appeal to the Cooperative Board, the Cooperative Board shall at its next meeting schedule a date, time and location for the appeal hearing.
- E. The following procedure shall be applicable at the appeal hearing before the Cooperative Board:
 1. The Cooperative Board shall appoint a cooperative board member or a person who is not an employee of the school district as the hearing officer.
 2. Within thirty (30) calendar days of an appeal being filed with the Cooperative Board, the Cooperative Board shall conduct a hearing in executive session.
 3. The Complainant, Employee and Director each have the right to be represented at the hearing.
 4. The Cooperative Board shall make a verbatim record of the hearing by means of an electronic device or a court reporter. This record and any exhibits must be sealed and must remain with the hearing officer until the appeal process has been completed.
 5. The issue on appeal is whether the Director's decision should be upheld, reversed or modified by the Cooperative Board; in the absence of a decision by the Director, the Cooperative Board will make a decision on the merits of the Complaint.
 6. All parties shall be given the opportunity to make an opening statement, with the Complainant being given the first opportunity, followed by the Employee and then the Director.
 7. The Complainant shall present his or her case first, and the Employee shall then present his or her case. Both parties shall have the opportunity to ask questions of the other's witnesses. The hearing officer and cooperative board members may ask questions of any witness.
 8. After the Complainant and the Employee have presented their respective cases, the Director shall then present the basis of his/her decision which led to the appeal, if a decision was rendered. The Complainant and Employee shall have the opportunity to ask the Director questions. The hearing officer and board members may also ask questions of the Director.
 9. Unless a witness is a party to the appeal, witnesses may be present only when testifying unless the Hearing Officer rules otherwise. All witnesses must take an oath or affirmation administered by the Cooperative Board President/ Chairperson, Hearing Officer or other person authorized by law to take oaths and affirmations.

10. The Hearing Officer shall admit all relevant evidence. The Hearing Officer may limit unproductive or repetitious evidence. The strict rules of evidence do not apply. *Moran v. Rapid City Area School Dist., 281 N.W.2d 595. 602 (S.D. 1979) ("This [school board hearing related to teacher contract nonrenewal] does not mandate nor necessitate the use of strict evidentiary rules.")*.
11. Both parties shall be given the opportunity to make a closing statement, with the Complainant having the first opportunity, followed by the Employee, and then the Director. The Complainant shall be given the opportunity for a brief rebuttal.
12. After the evidentiary hearing, the Cooperative Board shall continue to meet in executive session for deliberations. No one other than the Hearing Officer may meet with the Board during deliberations. During deliberations, the Board may seek advice from an attorney who did not represent any of the parties in the hearing. Consultation with any other person during deliberation may occur only if a representative of the Complainant, Employee and Director are present. The Board may, in its sole discretion, continue the proceedings and make a final decision on the appeal at a later date.
13. Within twenty (20) calendar days of the hearing, the Cooperative Board shall render its decision and issue its written Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Decision. The time frame for rendering a decision may be extended by the Board President for good cause and upon written notification to the Complainant, Employee and Director. The notification shall identify the reason for the extension and the date on or before which the decision shall be rendered.
14. The decision of the Cooperative Board must be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing and must be formalized by a motion made in open meeting. The Board will reconvene in open session. The Board may uphold, reverse, or modify the Director's decision, or render a decision on the merits of the Complaint in the absence of a Director's decision. Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Decision, consistent with the Board motion, shall be in writing and approved by the Board. The Complainant, Employee, Supervisor and Director will receive copies after the Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Decision are approved by the Cooperative Board.
15. If the Complainant is dissatisfied with the Cooperative Board's decision, the Complainant may appeal the decision by filing an appeal to the circuit court pursuant to SDCL Ch. 13-46.

State Reference	Description
ARSD 24:08	Professional Teachers Ethics
ARSD 24:11	Professional Administrators Ethics
SDCL 13-10-2	General power of school boards to employ personnel
SDCL 13-32-6	Disturbance of school as a misdemeanor
SDCL 13-46	Appeals in school matters
SDCL 13-8-39	Management of schools by board – general powers

Adopted: 7/19/2018

COMPLAINT AGAINST SCHOOL EMPLOYEE REPORT FORM

Date Form Completed: _____

Form Completed by: _____

Person Filing the Complaint (Complainant): _____

ADDRESS/Phone # of Complainant:

Employee Involved: _____

Nature of Complaint: The person making the complaint shall with specificity identify when and where the employee conduct occurred, the conduct of the employee which is the basis of the complaint, witnesses and any other pertinent information. (Use additional sheets as necessary).

Was a meeting held between the person having the complaint and the employee? Yes No

If yes, when was it held, what happened at the meeting and what was the outcome of the meeting. If no, why wasn't a meeting held?:

Resolution requested/sought by complainant:

Date Complainant

Date Cooperative Official Completing the Report Form

Step 1 mutually agreeable resolution was reached: Yes No

If resolution, manner in which the complaint was resolved:

Complainant (initial/date) _____ Employee (initial/date) _____

If no mutually agreed upon resolution was reached, I request a decision by the Supervisor on the merits of the complaint:
 Yes No Complainant (initial _____) Date _____

Yes No Employee (initial _____) Date _____

COMPLAINT AGAINST SCHOOL EMPLOYEE APPEAL TO THE COOPERATIVE BOARD

I/We Appeal the Director's Step 1 decision for the following reason(s): [With specificity, Complainant should state how or why the Complainant believes the Director's decision is wrong]:

Date

Complainant

Date Received

Board President/Chairperson – Business Manager