



Best Practices: School Policy for Community Use

DECEMBER 2015





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December 2015

This publication was prepared by the Public Health Law Center at William Mitchell College of Law, St. Paul, Minnesota, with financial support provided by the Missouri Convergence Partnership.

Acknowledgements

The Public Health Law Center thanks the Missouri partners who engaged them in this project and provided outreach and input critical to its success. These partners include: KC Healthy Kids, Prevention Research Center at Washington University, Missouri Association of Local Public Health Agencies, Missouri Foundation for Health, Missouri State Alliance of YMCAs Pioneering Healthy Communities, Missouri School Boards' Association and others.

This document is adapted in part from best practices identified in the Public Health Law Center document "Wisconsin School District Recreational use Checklist," created in partnership with the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, Transform Wisconsin, and HealthFirst Wisconsin, and in part from the Public Health Law Center's own model.

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In large institutions such as schools and school districts, written policies and procedures serve as a necessary guide for implementing innovative programs. This holds especially true for community use of school property. A 2015 [Missouri survey](#) of individuals and groups using school property (referred to as “end users”) and school administrators showed that school districts follow policies and procedures when implementing community use of school property. As a result, these policies directly impact the school and the health of its community members. This resource identifies best practices to develop effective written policies and procedures for implementing community use of school property.

To see these identified best practices compared to the two most commonly used Missouri school board policy templates, check out [Appendix A](#) (Missouri School Boards’ Association) and [Appendix B](#) (Missouri Consultants for Education).



Best Practices

Effective policy provides clear definitions of programming and takes into account all of the components necessary to make a shared use program run smoothly. These well-outlined policies and guidelines are necessary to avoid confusion and streamline community use of school property.

The following are essential elements and topics for writing an effective school board policy on the community use of school property:

- Statement of Purpose
- Policy Consistency
- Security
- Authority
- Staffing
- Facilities
- Communication
- Liability
- General Rules

Below is a guide for what should be included in each of these topics.

Statement of Purpose

- A general statement identifying the school district's support for community use of school property.
- A statement that explicitly permits recreational use of school property. Recreational use is identified in policy as one type of allowable community use. However, it also states that district sponsored and school related programs, events, and activities have first priority.

Policy Consistency

- Cross-references existing district-wide policies. Lists policies, rules, regulations and forms that intersect for easy updating and cross-referencing.

Authority

- Identifies person(s) within the school or school district that have the authority to approve facility use permits and to sign any facility use agreement forms on behalf of the district. Lists contact information.
- Provides facility use permits and agreement forms that include a signature line for a district representative and a signature line for the representative of the end user on each relevant form.

Scheduling

- States who does scheduling. This includes the name of the specific person(s) authorized to complete scheduling and contact information.
- Outlines a process to modify the schedule in the case of changes or cancellations.
- States the priority of end users and types of use. Lists who has priority use after all school-related functions. Considerations include: (1) non-commercial status or organizational purpose (e.g., non-profit); (2) if user groups are located in the district; (3) if residents of the district are primary participants of programming or use; or (4) if school-age children within the district are primary participants.
- Sets time and place of each approved activity with specific information. This includes: time, site, and the specific area of the school or grounds that can be used for each approved activity.

Security

- Gives security requirements for events. Security requirements may vary based on the type of activity and number of participants/attendees.
- Outlines plans for specific activities. This includes who will provide security.

Staffing

- States when school district staff are required for events and other scheduled community use times. This includes staffing during on-site activities, such as custodial or food service staff.
- Provides an activity-specific custodial services plan that outlines the roles and responsibilities for both custodial staff and the end users of school facilities.
- Provides an activity-specific food service staffing plan that states when food service staff is needed and what roles and responsibilities they have during events. If applicable, explains why food service staff need to be present to comply with state and federal law and the limits on use of kitchen equipment.
- Specifies which school district employees, if any, may be involved in security and who should be contacted in event of a security or safety concern.

Facilities

- Lists what equipment and facilities are open to use. Lists specific parts of the school, both inside and outside, that are available for general use without scheduling (such as playgrounds and open green space) and what are open for scheduled use. Best practice is to include hallways, classrooms, and all outdoor facilities for scheduling.

- If particular facilities are commonly requested, lists these in a “checklist” on an application/ permit/agreement; leaves an option for “other” if the list is not exhaustive.
- Gives a general description of recreational activities and specific descriptions of the types of recreational activity planned for the facility.
- States times for community use. Lists either generally or specifically the dates and times that community use is either normally available or normally restricted.
- Discusses the roles and responsibilities of the school district and users for upkeep and inspection. Including a process for users to report problems to the school or school district.
- States which ancillary facilities can be accessed such as: locker rooms, restrooms, and parking. Identifies any restrictions for that use (e.g., use of such ancillary facilities is non-exclusive).
- Outlines the school district’s roles and responsibilities for materials and equipment.
- Outlines user roles and responsibility for notification of repairs needed, as well as responsibility and payment for damage caused during use.
- Includes provisions addressing termination of agreements and/or cancellation of specific events. Addresses conditions and procedures for termination/ cancellation by the district and by the user.

Cost

- States the cost of food service staff, specifically the hourly rate of food service staff (if food service is available). Considers an allowance for sharing cost with other groups when multiple groups have overlapping use.
- States the cost of custodial staff, specifically the hourly rate of custodial staff. Considers an allowance for sharing cost with other groups when multiple groups have overlapping use.
- Provides a fee schedule by type of facility and class of organization. Provides a list of the fee schedule and what different end users would pay. The school policy may establish a free or reduced fee for nonprofits providing recreational opportunities for school district community members while having full-price fees for for-profit users. Note: it is important to ensure that classifications are lawful and nondiscriminatory.
- States fees for use of district equipment. These fees may vary by the type or class of user.
- Provides a fee waiver or reduction request process for granting a fee waiver or reduction in fees when appropriate. States who is in charge of granting requests as well as the process for requesting a fee waiver. Ensure that fee waiver criteria are lawful and non-discriminatory. Highlight when users can request waiver of fees.
- Specifies an hourly rate for security staff (if provided by the school district) and other security costs.

Liability

- Outlines risk management strategies that the school district requires to limit damages and injuries, created in consultation with district legal counsel and district insurers.
- Outlines the requirements for users to provide and carry proof of liability and/or property insurance. This includes the dollar amount of insurance and situations where insurance requirements can be waived. Ensure that insurance waiver criteria are lawful, nondiscriminatory, and consistent with the district's risk management goals.
- Provides a process for requesting a waiver of insurance requirements.
- Cites federal, state, city, or district requirements for waivers and notices.

Additional

- Provides a list of all general rules and conditions relating to use of facilities. This list would address areas such as: prohibitions against alcohol, drugs and weapons, limitations on signs, etc.
- Includes a statement on prohibiting advertising or a statement regarding specific limits on advertising during community use of school property.
- States limits for commercial gain during community use of school property.

Available Templates for School Board Policy on Community Use

- In Missouri, there are two templates commonly used to draft community use policies, one published by the Missouri School Boards' Association and another by Missouri Consultants for Education. A review of the most recent version of both templates compared to current best practice guidelines shows that both templates incorporate some but not all of the best practices. To see the details of these comparisons, see Appendix A and Appendix B.

Conclusion

Fostering a positive and professional relationship between the school and community is key in school policy development. This goal can be attained by incorporating best practices guidelines into the community use policy that schools adopt. Including language with specific guidelines for authority, staffing, general rules, and security will help in implementing an effective policy that makes the responsibilities of both parties clear. With creative planning and clear policy, schools and communities can work together to make school property a shared asset for the common good.

Appendix A

This document looks at the 2012 [Missouri School Board Association](#) (MSBA) school board policy on the shared, community use of school property and compares that language to the [best practices for shared use of school property policies](#).

Missouri School Board Association (MSBA) Standard Template Language — Policy

As a service to the community and in accordance with law, the Board of Education may allow community groups as defined in this policy to use district facilities for educational, recreational, social, civic, philanthropic and other similar purposes when the facilities are not being used by the district or district-sponsored groups. The superintendent or designee is directed to create and enforce procedures addressing facility use and may approve or deny facility use requests in accordance with this policy.

Granting a request to use district facilities does not constitute district endorsement of the activity, organization, organization's mission or any opinion expressed by the groups or members of the groups.

DEFINITIONS

Community Groups Governmental entities and nonprofit organizations operating in or located in the district.

District Equipment Any property owned by the district that is not permanently affixed to the building including, but not limited to athletic gear, kitchen appliances and utensils, electronic equipment, desks and chairs. District equipment includes property donated to the district or purchased with donated funds.

District Facility Buildings, rooms, gymnasiums, auditoriums, athletic fields, courtyards or other spaces on district property an individual or group seeks to use.

District-Sponsored Activity Any activity organized by the district as part of the district's education program or co-sponsored by the district with other organizations. District-sponsored activities may include, but are not limited to: clubs, athletic events and practices, tutoring, dances, musical performances and carnivals. District-sponsored activities include activities sponsored by student initiated groups at the secondary level organized in accordance with policy and law.

ELIGIBLE USERS

Use of district facilities is a privilege, not a right. No community group will receive access without first obtaining the approval of the superintendent or designee. In some cases Board approval may also be required. The district intends to maintain district facilities as nonpublic forums and reserves the right to exclude individuals or groups from its facilities or cancel or modify any permission granted, to the extent allowed by law.

Community groups may request to use district facilities. The district discourages use by individuals, for-profit entities or other groups not addressed in this policy, and these persons or entities may only use district facilities if approved by the Board. Priority will be given to groups or activities that directly benefit district students. Use of district facilities will not be granted if the use conflicts or interferes with a district-sponsored activity, and all uses granted are contingent upon the district's needs. The Board will make the final decision if a dispute over usage occurs.

In accordance with law, when the district allows youth or community groups not affiliated with the district to use district facilities outside of school hours, the district will provide equal access and related services and benefits to groups officially affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the United States of America, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, or other groups or organizations listed in Title 36 of the U.S. Code that are intended to serve young people under the age of 21.

Staff use of district property and facilities is subject to this policy when the use is for reasons unrelated to the staff member's duties with the district.

USE RESTRICTIONS

The superintendent or designee will determine which district facilities are available for public use and may determine that some district facilities or equipment are not available for public use. The superintendent or designee may limit the hours or days that district facilities may be used based on staff availability and other relevant factors and may prohibit some uses that might be disruptive or damaging to district property. To accommodate all groups, the superintendent or designee may limit the number of times groups may use district facilities in a school year if multiple groups request access to the same facilities. Only governmental entities or nonprofit community groups (such as the Boy Scouts of America or the Girl Scouts of the United States of America) directly serving district students are permitted to use school buildings two hours before and two hours after the official academic day.

Because students are frequently on school grounds even when school is not in session, the district expects all groups to behave in a manner that is appropriate around children, as determined by the district. All groups using district facilities are required to follow district policies or procedures and other directives by district staff.

SECURITY AND SAFETY

All groups using district facilities must follow district security rules. Only district employees will unlock district facilities or possess keys or security codes unless otherwise authorized by the superintendent or designee. District facilities may not be used for any purpose prohibited by law and must comply with state and local fire, health and safety regulations.

The district may require a group to pay for and provide additional security for the group's events if additional security is deemed necessary for traffic control, crowd control or the protection of persons or property.

FEES

The district will charge rental fees for the use of district facilities. The Board will set the fees annually after a recommendation from the superintendent or designee. The district will also charge for additional costs associated with the use, such as the cost of custodial services, food services, technician services or security services, as deemed necessary by the superintendent or designee. The superintendent or designee may require a group to provide a security deposit prior to using the district's facilities.

Groups using district facilities must provide proof of insurance in an amount set by the superintendent or designee and must agree to indemnify and hold the district harmless for any damages and pay for the actual cost of replacing or repairing damaged property. The district may require a group to pay fees owed prior to using the facility.

The superintendent or designee may waive the fees for groups created to support the district; nonprofit organizations with longstanding ties to the district; and groups with a reciprocal relationship with the district, such as the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and booster clubs. Regardless of whether fees have been waived, representatives from all groups must provide proof of insurance and sign an indemnity and hold harmless agreement.

CANCELLATION

The district reserves the right to cancel a scheduled use of district facilities at any time including, but not limited to, situations where the district needs to use the space in the event of or as a result of inclement weather or an emergency.

USE OF EQUIPMENT

The superintendent or designee may authorize the use of district equipment by community groups for educational, recreational, social, civic, philanthropic and other similar purposes. Equipment will not be removed from district property without permission from the superintendent or designee. Fees may be charged for equipment usage in accordance with this policy.

EMERGENCY USES

The superintendent or designee may authorize the use of district facilities as an emergency shelter or for other emergency purposes if such use does not otherwise conflict with the district's needs.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Statement of Purpose

- Facilities open to community use: A general statement identifying school district support for community use of school property.
- Recreational use is expressly permitted: Recreational use is identified in policy as one type of allowable community use; district-sponsored and school related programs, events, and activities have first priority.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Yes

Comments/analysis

In the introduction paragraph and definition section, recreational use is identified and permitted to community members. More specifically, in the definition sections, gymnasiums, athletic fields, and courtyards are listed which supports the recreational use. The introduction paragraph also puts school related programs and activities first. The standards allow community use "when the facilities are not being used by the district or district-sponsored groups."

Policy Consistency

- Cross-reference of policies: List policies, rules, regulations and forms that intersect for easy updating and cross-referencing.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Yes

Comments/analysis

Fees/security: Policy states, "The district may require a group to pay for and provide additional security for the group's events if additional security is deemed necessary for traffic control, crowd control or the protection of persons or property."

Procedure states, "Adequate police or security protection, as determined by the superintendent or designee, may be required at the expense of the group using the district's facilities."

Both the policy and procedure documents reference the facilities that the community may use. In the policy section, it is listed under the definitions. In the procedure document, it is listed under the "Available Spaces" section.

Specific sections, such as "Only governmental entities or nonprofit community groups (such as the Boy Scouts of America or the Girl Scouts of the United States of America) directly serving district students are permitted to use school buildings during the two hours before and two hours after the official academic day" are used in both documents.

There is reference in both documents to cancelations. However, the procedure document goes further to specify the time frame of cancelations to receive refunds.

The procedure document does state, "All groups are required to follow the law; district policies, regulations and procedures; and directives from district staff." This reference to the district policies may be considered a direct cross-reference. However, there are no other direct cross-referencing such as "refer to policies," "refer to procedures," or "as stated in the procedure document," etc.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Authority

- Approval by school district: Identified person(s) with authority to approve facility use permits and to sign any facility use agreements/forms on behalf of the district; include a signature line for district representative on each such agreement/form.
- Approval by user: Include a signature line for the representative of the user on each relevant agreement/form.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Yes

Comments/analysis

Under the introduction paragraph, the language states, "The Board of Education may allow community groups as defined in this policy to use district facilities for educational, recreational, social, civic, philanthropic and other similar purposes when the facilities are not being used by the district or district-sponsored groups. The superintendent or designee is directed to create and enforce procedures addressing facility use and may approve or deny facility use requests in accordance with this policy." This identifies a broad group of the Board of Education, but narrows it within the next sentence to the superintendent or designee.

Furthermore, later in the document, the phrase, "The superintendent or designee will determine which district facilities are available for public use and may determine that some district facilities or equipment are not available for public use" is stated. Again, this provides some guidance, but is lacking who the "designee" actually is.

In summary, this document, being a standard form, does not provide an actual name. Most of the document refers to the Board of Education. This does not give much guidance to viewers on who to actually contact. This is a huge downside to this section. However, being a standard document, the name would change from district to district. A possible route around this would be to leave a insert gap for districts to manually insert the contact.

This does run the risk of schools still not providing the information and leaving the section blank.

There are no signature lines for either party. However, in a few districts, further documents are provided that do have these components. This is not the standard for the policy document.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Scheduling

- Who does scheduling: Specific person(s) identified to complete scheduling.
- Changes in schedule: Process identified when changes/cancelations occur.
- Priority of users/uses: List of who has priority of use (after all school-related functions). Considerations include (1) non-commercial status/purpose (e.g., non-profit); (2) user groups located in the district; (3) residents of the district are primary participants; or (4) school-age children within the District are primary participants.
- Time and place of each approved activity: Specific information on the time, site and specific area of the school/grounds that will be used for each approved activity.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Yes

Comments/analysis

There is no specific mention to as who makes the scheduling. However, it is stated, "To accommodate all groups, the superintendent or designee may limit the number of times groups may use district facilities in a school year if multiple groups request access to the same facilities." This statement may be interpreted that the superintendent or designee conducts the scheduling to make sure there are no conflicts.

As far as cancelation goes, there is a statement that "the district reserves the right to cancel a scheduled use of district facilities at any time including, but not limited to, situations where the district needs to use the space in the event of or as a result of inclement weather or an emergency."

The priority of use goes to district or district-sponsored groups. "May allow community groups as defined in this policy to use district facilities for educational, recreational, social, civic, philanthropic and other similar purposes when the facilities are not being used by the district or district-sponsored groups."

No reference to time and place other than, "Only governmental entities or nonprofit community groups (such as the Boy Scouts of America or the Girl Scouts of the United States of America) directly serving district students are permitted to use school buildings two hours before and two hours after the official academic day."

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Security

- Requirements for security: Any requirements for security for events; may be based on type of activity and number of participants/attendees.
- Security needs and plan: Specific plan for specific activity, including who will provide security.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Yes

Comments/analysis

There is a small security section. This section states in full, "All groups using district facilities must follow district security rules. Only district employees will unlock district facilities or possess keys or security codes unless otherwise authorized by the superintendent or designee. District facilities may not be used for any purpose prohibited by law and must comply with state and local fire, health and safety regulations.

The district may require a group to pay for and provide additional security for the group's events if additional security is deemed necessary for traffic control, crowd control or the protection of persons or property."

This section is missing the types of activities and number of participants that are needed for requiring additional security. This section does provide that the group must pay for additional security when needed. In addition, this section also specifies that unless otherwise authorized, district employees will be the ones to use the keys and security codes.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Staffing

- School district staff: Requirements for school district staffing for events, including those required onsite during activity, including custodial and food service staff.
- Requirements of custodial staff: Specifics on when custodial staff is needed and what roles and responsibilities of custodial staff are during event.
- Custodial services plan: Specific plan for specific activity, including roles and responsibilities for custodial staff and user of school facilities.
- Requirements of food service staff: Specifics on when food service staff is needed and what roles and responsibilities of food service staff are during event, including why food service staff need to be present to comply with state and federal law and limits on use of kitchen equipment.
- Food service staff plan: Specific plan for specific activity, including roles and responsibilities for food service staff and user of school facilities, including limits on use of kitchen equipment.
- Employees involved in security plan: Specifics on which school district employees, if any, may be involved in security; who should be contacted in event of security/safety concern.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Very little

Comments/analysis

There is a statement in this document that states, "The district will also charge for additional costs associated with the use, such as the cost of custodial services, food services, technician services or security services, as deemed necessary by the superintendent or designee." This sentence shows that in certain situations, there may be a need for custodial, food, technician, or security services. However, what this document is lacking is situations when these services are needed and the requirements of these services. This information is important and greatly lacking.

Supervision

- Requirements for supervision: Define expectations for supervision of events; consider specifying a minimum ratio of supervision, possibly citing to other school policies (i.e. school field trip ratio requirements).
- Supervision plan for minors: Specific plan for supervision of minors for specific activity.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

No

Comments/analysis

There is no mention of requirements for supervision other than that security may be needed (as mentioned in above sections). In addition, there is no reference to minors and specific plan for supervision of minors no matter the activity.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Facilities

- What equipment/facilities are open to use: List of specific parts of the school, both inside and outside, that are available for general use without scheduling (such as playgrounds and open green space) and what are open for scheduled use. Best practice is to include hallways, classrooms, and all outdoor facilities for scheduling.
- List of facilities If particular facilities are commonly requested, consider listing these in a “checklist” on an application/permit/agreement; leave an option for “other” if the list is not exhaustive.
- Description of recreational activity Specific description of the type of recreational activity planned for the facility.
- Time of community use: List either generally or specifically the dates and times that community use is either normally available, or normally restricted.
- Upkeep of facilities and inspection: List of roles and responsibilities for the school district and for users for upkeep and inspection, as well as a process for users to report problems to the school/school district.
- Which ancillary facilities are included in access (toilet, parking)? List of which ancillary facilities are (or may be) available with use, such as locker rooms, toilets, and parking; identify any restrictions for that use (e.g., use of such ancillary facilities is non-exclusive).
- School district responsibility for materials and equipment: Outline of school district roles and responsibility for materials and equipment.
- User repair responsible and payment: Outline of user roles and responsibility notifying of repairs, and responsibility and payment for damage caused during use.
- Provisions addressing termination of agreements and/or cancellation of specific events: On occasion, it may be necessary to terminate agreements/forms or to cancel events. Address conditions and procedures for termination/cancellation by the district and by the user.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Yes

Comments/analysis

In definitions section includes both of the statements, “Buildings, rooms, gymnasiums, auditoriums, athletic fields, courtyards or other spaces on district property an individual or group seeks to use,” and “Any property owned by the district that is not permanently affixed to the building including, but not limited to, athletic gear, kitchen appliances and utensils, electronic equipment, desks and chairs. District equipment includes property donated to the district or purchased with donated funds.” This helps to give an idea of what facilities are available for use. In addition, this also creates an image of what is included under the term “equipment”, such as athletic gear, utensils, and even certain types of furniture.

However, one downside is the lack of scheduling information. There is no information to help a user with what is available during what times. This information is explained more in the procedures document, but when districts only adopt one document, much needed information is left out.

In further explanation of equipment use, a section states, “The superintendent or designee may authorize the use of district equipment by community groups for educational, recreational, social, civic, philanthropic and other similar purposes. Equipment will not be removed from district property without permission from the superintendent or designee. Fees may be charged for equipment usage in accordance with this policy.”

In reference to cancelation, this document does state, “The district reserves the right to cancel a scheduled use of district facilities at any time including, but not limited to, situations where the district needs to use the space in the event of or as a result of inclement weather or an emergency.” The problem with this section is that it is worded as a catch all/liability section with no discussion of procedures for the cancelation. However, again, this is information that is generally discussed in the procedures document.

All other further description is not discussed in this document.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Communication

- Post facility use agreements/forms on website: Process for posting the most recent versions of relevant documents on the district website, and where it will be posted.
- Website section about community use: Requirement for school district and individuals schools to have a portion of websites to be dedicated to information about community use.
- Community engagement plan: Plan for community engagement to involve community members in underserved populations and organizations serving those community members to facilitate recreational use of school property during non-school hours .
- Community education advisory council: Create and maintain a community advisory council or other working group to identify opportunity, overcome barriers and identify finding sources to support community use.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Partial

Comments/analysis

School districts that adopt this MSBA document will have general discussion and information about community use. However, lacking process for posting the most recent versions of relevant documents and information about where that information may be located. This document is cited to the MSBA, so a reasonable district would be able to find the MSBA website by a easy search. But, once again, this information is not specifically listed on the document itself.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Cost

- Cost of food service staff: Specifics on what the hourly rate is for food service staff (if food service is an available use); consider allowance for sharing cost with other groups when multiple groups have overlapping use.
- Cost of custodian: Specifics on what the hourly rate is for custodial staff; consider allowance for sharing cost with other groups when multiple groups have overlapping use.
- Fee schedule by type of facility and class of organization: List of fee schedule and what the different users would pay. Many districts establish low fees or free use by, for example, non-profits providing recreational opportunities for school district community members, and higher fees for for-profit users. Ensure that classifications are lawful and nondiscriminatory.
- Fees for equipment: Fees for use of district equipment. Again, these fees may vary by the type/class of user.
- Fee waiver/reduction request process: Process for granting a fee waiver or reduction in fees where appropriate, who is in charge of granting request, and process for requesting fee waiver. Be careful that any fee waiver criteria are lawful and non-discriminatory. Highlight when users can request waiver of fees. Security costs Specifics on what the hourly rate is for security staff (if provided by the school district) and other security costs.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Not provided (other than information regarding fee waiver)

Comments/analysis

The "fee" section states in full, "The district will charge rental fees for the use of district facilities. The Board will set the fees annually after a recommendation from the superintendent or designee. The district will also charge for additional costs associated with the use, such as the cost of custodial services, food services, technician services or security services, as deemed necessary by the superintendent or designee. The superintendent or designee may require a group to provide a security deposit prior to using the district's facilities.

Groups using district facilities must provide proof of insurance in an amount set by the superintendent or designee and must agree to indemnify and hold the district harmless for any damages and pay for the actual cost of replacing or repairing damaged property. The district may require a group to pay fees owed prior to using the facility.

The superintendent or designee may waive the fees for groups created to support the district; nonprofit organizations with longstanding ties to the district; and groups with a reciprocal relationship with the district, such as the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and booster clubs. Regardless of whether fees have been waived, representatives from all groups must provide proof of insurance and sign an indemnity and hold harmless agreement."

As a viewer may notice, no cost or fee information is provided other than statements that fees will be charged. There is, however, a statement (as seen above) regarding a waiver of fees. But even this section is lacking procedure and information about the steps to take.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Liability

- Risk management strategies: Outline risk management strategies that the school district requires to limit damages and injuries. Consult with district legal counsel and district insurers.
- Insurance requirements: Outline the requirements for users to hold and provide proof of liability and/or property insurance, including dollar amount of insurance and situations where insurance requirements can be waived. Ensure that any insurance waiver criteria are lawful and nondiscriminatory and consistent with the district's risk management goals.
- Waiver process for insurance requirements: Outline process for requesting a waiver for insurance requirements.
- Requirement for participants to receive or sign and return any notices, waivers, etc.: If the district or state law (e.g., head injuries and concussions) requires participants to receive or sign and return specific notices, waivers, etc., then outline the requirement for the user and reporting requirements, as well as whether a template waiver will be provided.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Yes

Comments/analysis

This document states in the fee section, "Groups using district facilities must provide proof of insurance in an amount set by the superintendent or designee and must agree to indemnify and hold the district harmless for any damages and pay for the actual cost of replacing or repairing damaged property. The district may require a group to pay fees owed prior to using the facility."

However, this document is still missing a waiver process for insurance requirements and requirements for participants to receive or sign any notices, waivers, etc. Some of this information may be on separate documents, but is lacking on this policy form. This policy form could also specify more about the risk management and limitations on damages and injuries.

Other

- A list of all general rules and conditions relating to use of facilities: This list would address, e.g., prohibitions against alcohol, drugs and weapons; limitations on signs; etc.
- Statement prohibiting advertising Specific statement regarding limits on advertising during community use of school property.
- Statement about commercial gain: Outline limits for commercial gain during community use of school property.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Partial

Comments/analysis

One statement that has not yet been mentioned in this document is, "Granting a request to use district facilities does not constitute district endorsement of the activity, organization, organization's mission or any opinion expressed by the groups or members of the groups." This is seen in the introduction paragraph. However, this policy form does not go into the conditions relating to prohibitions, limitations, etc. This information is left to the procedure document.

Missouri School Board Association (MSBA) Standard Template Language — Procedures

APPLICATION FOR USE

Governmental entities and nonprofit organizations that wish to use district facilities must receive permission from the superintendent or designee. All other individuals or groups must have permission from the Board. The district will not reserve the space or grant permission until after the group provides the superintendent or designee:

1. A completed application to use district facilities. The application must be made at least two weeks prior to the date of requested use and must be signed by a representative of the group who is at least 21 years old and has the legal authority to bind the group contractually. This representative is responsible for the actions of the group and is required to arrive prior to the gathering and remain until all persons leave.
2. Proof of insurance in the same amount that the district carries. The district may provide information regarding event insurance, when applicable.
3. A completed indemnity and hold harmless agreement signed by the group representative on behalf of the group.
4. Applicable deposits and fees as determined by the superintendent or designee.

FEES

The fees charged for use are set annually by the Board. If the superintendent or designee determines that an employee is necessary to assist a group using district facilities, and that providing this assistance will disrupt the employee's regular job duties or cause the employee to work extra hours, the district will charge the group the cost incurred by the district for providing the employee assistance. If an employee's presence is deemed necessary, the group may not use the facility if the designated employee is not available at the requested time.

Adequate police or security protection, as determined by the superintendent or designee, may be required at the expense of the group using the district's facilities.

AVAILABLE SPACES

Only the following spaces are available for use, unless an explicit exception is granted by the superintendent or designee:

1. Classrooms
2. Auditoriums
3. Stadiums
4. Athletic Fields
5. Gymnasiums
6. Playgrounds
7. Cafeterias
8. Kitchens, but only if a member of the district's food service staff is present

DAY AND TIME RESTRICTIONS

The following rules apply unless an explicit exception is granted by the superintendent or designee:

1. District-sponsored groups and activities will receive priority over any other group use. The district will deny requests if the superintendent or designee determines that the use may disrupt a district-sponsored activity or event nearby or otherwise distract from a district function. A group's use may be canceled if a district-sponsored group needs to use the facility.
2. District facilities are not available for community use during the school day when students are present, and all use must occur between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.
3. Only governmental entities or nonprofit community groups (such as the Boy Scouts of America or the Girl Scouts of the United States of America) directly serving district students are permitted to use school buildings during the two hours before and two hours after the official academic day.
4. The superintendent or designee will maintain the official district calendar and clearly designate days in which the district's facilities may not be used. No entity or group may use district facilities on any day designated as a holiday by the Board of Education.
5. When the district or the district building to be used is closed due to inclement weather or an emergency, all group uses will be canceled for that day.
6. Groups must provide written notice of cancellations at least 24 hours prior to the date of the scheduled use to be eligible for a refund of fees paid for facility use.

USE REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS

The following rules apply unless an explicit exception is granted by the superintendent or designee:

1. Groups issued permits to use district facilities must make the permits available for district staff to review during all authorized use periods. A permit to use district facilities granted to one group is not transferrable to a different group.
2. Groups will only be provided access to the rooms or spaces specifically requested in the application and only for the dates requested and approved.
3. A group may use desks, chairs and tables located in the room or facility designated for the group's use, but otherwise a permit to use district facilities does not give permission for the group to use district equipment such as interactive whiteboards, computers, electronic equipment, projectors, kitchen appliances, scoreboards or athletic gear. The superintendent or designee may provide access to equipment at his or her discretion and may charge a fee or a security deposit for such use. The superintendent or designee may determine that some equipment may only be used by district staff and charge the group for the cost of providing a knowledgeable employee, such as a technician for the auditorium or a cook for using kitchen appliances.

4. The group representative who made the reservation is responsible for maintaining order and monitoring the behavior of those attending. Groups are responsible for supervising children associated with the group. Excessive noise or disturbance to neighbors of the facility or other persons using district facilities is prohibited. The district does not assume any liability for the behavior or actions of the group.
5. All groups are required to follow the law; district policies, regulations and procedures; and directives from district staff. The use, possession or sale of tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, fireworks, explosives or weapons is prohibited. Persons under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs are not permitted on district property.
6. Gambling is prohibited, except for raffles and sweepstakes conducted by charitable organizations in accordance with law.
7. Groups may not bring live animals onto district property unless they are service animals allowed by law.
8. Groups are not allowed to use district facilities for storage.
9. Groups are expected to leave the facility neat, orderly and as clean as it was prior to the group's use. Nothing may be attached to the walls, ceilings or floors without prior approval.

CONSEQUENCES

Failure to obey district rules could result in forfeiture of security deposits or refunds and denial of all future requests for use. In addition, the district will take all legal action to collect for any damage done.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Statement of Purpose

A general statement identifying school district support for community use of school property.

A statement that explicitly permits recreational use. Recreational use is identified in policy as one type of allowable community use. However, it also states that district sponsored and school related programs, events, and activities have first priority.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Partial

Comments/analysis

The general statement was identified in the policy document. This statement is not presented here. However, this document does expressly list the spaces available for use, "Only the following spaces are available for use, unless an explicit exception is granted by the superintendent or designee: 1. Classrooms 2. Auditoriums 3. Stadiums 4. Athletic Fields 5. Gymnasiums 6. Playgrounds 7. Cafeterias 8. Kitchens, but only if a member of the district's food service staff is present."

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Policy Consistency

- Cross-reference of policies. List policies, rules, regulations and forms that intersect for easy updating and cross-referencing.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Yes

Comments/analysis

Fees/security: Policy states, "The district may require a group to pay for and provide additional security for the group's events if additional security is deemed necessary for traffic control, crowd control or the protection of persons or property."

Procedure states, "Adequate police or security protection, as determined by the superintendent or designee, may be required at the expense of the group using the district's facilities."

Both the policy and procedure documents reference the facilities that the community may use. In the policy section, it is listed under the definitions. In the procedure document, it is listed under the "Available Spaces" section.

Specific sections, such as "Only governmental entities or nonprofit community groups (such as the Boy Scouts of America or the Girl Scouts of the United States of America) directly serving district students are permitted to use school buildings during the two hours before and two hours after the official academic day" are used in both documents.

There is reference in both documents to cancelations. However, the procedure document goes further to specify the time frame of cancelations to receive refunds.

The procedure document does state, "All groups are required to follow the law; district policies, regulations and procedures; and directives from district staff." This reference to the district policies may be considered a direct cross-reference. However, there are no other direct cross-referencing such as "refer to policies," "refer to procedures," or "as stated in the procedure document," etc.

Authority

Identifies person(s) within the school or school district that have the authority to approve facility use permits and to sign any facility use agreements/forms on behalf of the district.

Provides facility use permits and agreement forms that include a signature line for a district representative and a signature line for the representative of the user on each relevant form.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Yes

Comments/analysis

Language is contained that states, "Governmental entities and nonprofit organizations that wish to use district facilities must receive permission from the superintendent or designee. All other individuals or groups must have permission from the Board." This provides viewers with information of who to contact, but not the names or how to contact these individuals. There are also no signature lines for either party within this form.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Scheduling

States who does scheduling. This includes the name of the specific person(s) authorized to complete scheduling.

Outlines a process to modify the schedule in the case of changes or cancelations.

States the priority of users and types of use. Lists who has priority use after all school-related functions. Considerations include:

(1) non-commercial status/purpose (e.g., non-profit); (2) user groups located in the district; (3) residents of the district are primary participants; or (4) school-age children within the district are primary participants.

Sets time and place of each approved activity with specific information. This includes: time, site, and the specific area of the school or grounds that can be used for each approved activity.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Yes

Comments/analysis

Looking at the "Day and Time Restrictions" gives a viewer a great start to the scheduling and priority of use. This section, as seen in the template, states in full, "1. District-sponsored groups and activities will receive priority over any other group use. The district will deny requests if the superintendent or designee determines that the use may disrupt a district-sponsored activity or event nearby or otherwise distract from a district function. A group's use may be canceled if a district-sponsored group needs to use the facility; 2. District facilities are not available for community use during the school day when students are present, and all use must occur between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.; 3. Only governmental entities or nonprofit community groups (such as the Boy Scouts of America or the Girl Scouts of the United States of America) directly serving district students are permitted to use school buildings during the two hours before and two hours after the official academic day; 4. The superintendent or designee will maintain the official district calendar and clearly designate days in which the district's facilities may not be used. No entity or group may use district facilities on any day designated as a holiday by the Board of Education; 5. When the district or the district building to be used is closed due to inclement weather or an emergency, all group uses will be canceled for that day;

6. Groups must provide written notice of cancellations at least 24 hours prior to the date of the scheduled use to be eligible for a refund of fees paid for facility use."

From this section, we are given the priority (district-sponsored groups, times open to public, and who maintains the calendar). We also have information relating to when groups must provide notice of cancellations. This section could be better at maintaining a more exclusive list of the priority.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Security

Gives requirements for security which includes any security requirements for events. Security requirements may vary based on the type of activity and number of participants/attendees.

States specific plans for specific activities. This includes who will provide security.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Partial

Comments/analysis

The only language contained within this procedure document is, "Adequate police or security protection, as determined by the superintendent or designee, may be required at the expense of the group using the district's facilities." The security section, as seen before, is contained within the policy form in more detail.

Staffing

States when school district staff are required for events and other scheduled community use times. This includes staffing during on-site activities, such as custodial or food service staff.

States when custodial staff is required and their specific roles and responsibilities during events or community use times.

Provides activity-specific custodial services plan that outlines the roles and responsibilities for both custodial staff and the users of school facilities.

Provides an activity-specific food service staffing plan that states when food service staff is needed and what roles and responsibilities they have during events. It explains why food service staff need to be present to comply with state and federal law and the limits on use of kitchen equipment.

Specifies which school district employees, if any, may be involved in security and who should be contacted in event of security/safety concern.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Partial

Comments/analysis

The only section that mentions staffing is the fees section. This section states, in part, "If the superintendent or designee determines that an employee is necessary to assist a group using district facilities, and that providing this assistance will disrupt the employee's regular job duties or cause the employee to work extra hours, the district will charge the group the cost incurred by the district for providing the employee assistance. If an employee's presence is deemed necessary, the group may not use the facility if the designated employee is not available at the requested time." This fails to provide the requirements for when a staff member is needed. This statement only tells a community user that employees may be necessary if the superintendent or designee determines it to be so. In addition, there is no explanation of custodial service plans, food service staff, or employee security (other than that security may be need as mentioned above).

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Supervision

Requirements for supervision: Define expectations for supervision of events; consider specifying a minimum ratio of supervision, possibly citing to other school policies (i.e. school field trip ratio requirements).

Supervision plan for minors: Specific plan for supervision of minors for specific activity.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Yes

Comments/analysis

Supervision discussion is present. The language states, "The group representative who made the reservation is responsible for maintaining order and monitoring the behavior of those attending. Groups are responsible for supervising children associated with the group. Excessive noise or disturbance to neighbors of the facility or other persons using district facilities is prohibited. The district does not assume any liability for the behavior or actions of the group." As a viewer may notice, there are no expectations for supervision specified, other than that the groups are responsible for supervising children and that excessive noise is prohibited.



BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Facilities

Lists what equipment and facilities are open to use. Lists specific parts of the school, both inside and outside, that are available for general use without scheduling (such as playgrounds and open green space) and what are open for scheduled use. Best practice is to include hallways, classrooms, and all outdoor facilities for scheduling.

If particular facilities are commonly requested, consider listing these in a "checklist" on an application/permit/agreement; leave an option for "other" if the list is not exhaustive.

Gives a general description of recreational activities and specific descriptions of the types of recreational activity planned for the facility.

States times for community use. Lists either generally or specifically the dates and times that community use is either normally available, or normally restricted.

Discusses upkeep of facilities and inspections. Provides a list of roles and responsibilities for the school district and users for upkeep and inspection. Including a process for users to report problems to the school or school district.

States which ancillary facilities are included in access and available with use such as: locker rooms, restrooms, and parking. Also identifies any restrictions for that use (e.g., use of such ancillary facilities is non-exclusive).

States school district responsibility for materials and equipment through an outline of school district roles and responsibility for materials and equipment.

States user repair responsibility and payment. Outlines user roles and responsibility for notification of repairs needed, as well as responsibility and payment for damage caused during use.

Includes provisions addressing termination of agreements and/or cancellation of specific events. Addresses conditions and procedures for termination/cancellation by the district and by the user.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Yes

Comments/analysis

There is an express list of spaces available to the community for use. This list specifies: 1. Classrooms 2. Auditoriums 3. Stadiums 4. Athletic Fields 5. Gymnasiums 6. Playgrounds 7. Cafeterias 8. Kitchens. This form also states that, "A group may use desks, chairs and tables located in the room or facility designated for the group's use, but otherwise a permit to use district facilities does not give permission for the group to use district equipment such as interactive whiteboards, computers, electronic equipment, projectors, kitchen appliances, scoreboards or athletic gear."

Going to the repair responsibility, the district states that it will take legal action if necessary to collect for damages done to the property.

This form does, as mentioned above, list when the facilities are available for use by the community. "District facilities are not available for community use during the school day when students are present, and all use must occur between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m." However, there is a provision that states "Only governmental entities or nonprofit community groups (such as the Boy Scouts of America or the Girl Scouts of the United States of America) directly serving district students are permitted to use school buildings during the two hours before and two hours after the official academic day."

There is language regarding termination, such as that a notice must be given with at least a 24 hour notice.

Under this form, there is still a lot of information missing from the "best practices". There needs to be information regarding the school district's responsibilities for materials and equipment. There is also no mention of ancillary facilities including services such as parking, locker rooms, toilets, etc.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Communication

Post facility use agreements/forms on website: Process for posting the most recent versions of relevant documents on the district website, and where it will be posted.

Website section about community use: Requirement for school district and individuals schools to have a portion of websites to be dedicated to information about community use.

Community engagement plan: Plan for community engagement to involve community members in underserved populations and organizations serving those community members to facilitate recreational use of school property during non-school hours .

Community education advisory council: Create and maintain a community advisory council or other working group to identify opportunity, overcome barriers and identify finding sources to support community use.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Partial

Comments/analysis

School districts that adopt this MSBA document will have general discussion and information about community use. However, lacking process for posting the most recent versions of relevant documents and information about where that information may be located. This document is cited to the MSBA, so a reasonable district would be able to find the MSBA website by a easy search. But, once again, this information is not specifically listed on the document itself.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Cost

- States the cost of food service staff, specifically the hourly rate of food service staff (if food service is an available use). Considers an allowance for sharing cost with other groups when multiple groups have overlapping use.
- States the cost of custodial staff, specifically the hourly rate of custodial staff. Considers an allowance for sharing cost with other groups when multiple groups have overlapping use.
- Provides a fee schedule by type of facility and class of organization. Provides a list of the fee schedule and what the different users would pay. May establish a reduced or free use for non-profits providing recreational opportunities for school district community members while having full-price fees for for-profit users. Ensure that classifications are lawful and nondiscriminatory.
- States fees for use of district equipment. These fees may vary by the type or class of user.
- Provides a fee waiver or reduction request process for granting a fee waiver or reduction in fees when appropriate. States who is in charge of granting requests as well as the process for requesting a fee waiver. Ensure that fee waiver criteria are lawful and non-discriminatory. Highlight when users can request waiver of fees.
- Specifies an hourly rate for security staff (if provided by the school district) and other security costs.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

None

Comments/analysis

This section only states, "The fees charged for use are set annually by the Board." This section does not provide for specific fees for equipment, services, or any other type of fee schedule. In addition, this form mentions that there may be a need to pay for additional security, however, there is no standard of when they must be provided and if they need to be, how much that would cost. This would be a tough section to add, but perhaps if the standard form had a fee schedule of what may be deemed reasonable, school districts would have to manually change it or keep it. This would get schools to actually realize this section is necessary and puts the districts on the spot for creating their own fee.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Liability

- Outlines risk management strategies that the school district requires to limit damages and injuries. These are created in consultation with district legal counsel and district insurers.
- Outlines the requirements for users to hold and provide proof of liability and/or property insurance. This includes the dollar amount of insurance and situations where insurance requirements can be waived. Ensure that insurance waiver criteria are lawful, nondiscriminatory, and consistent with the district's risk management goals.
- Provides a process for requesting a waiver for insurance requirements.
- States the requirements for participants to receive or sign and return any notices, waivers, etc. States if the district or state law (e.g., head injuries and concussions) requires participants to receive or sign and return specific notices, waivers, etc. Outline the requirements for the user and reporting requirements, as well as whether a template waiver will be provided.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Yes

Comments/analysis

There are three points that relate to insurance and liability within this form. These are, "1. A completed application to use district facilities. The application must be made at least two weeks prior to the date of requested use and must be signed by a representative of the group who is at least 21 years old and has the legal authority to bind the group contractually. This representative is responsible for the actions of the group and is required to arrive prior to the gathering and remain until all persons leave; 2. Proof of insurance in the same amount that the district carries. The district may provide information regarding event insurance, when applicable; and 3. A completed indemnity and hold harmless agreement signed by the group representative on behalf of the group." This form does not state anything about waiver of insurance or the requirements to do so.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Additional

- Provides a list of all general rules and conditions relating to use of facilities. This list would address, for example, prohibitions against alcohol, drugs and weapons, limitations on signs, etc.
- Includes a statement on prohibiting advertising or a statement regarding specific limits on advertising during community use of school property.
- States limits for commercial gain during community use of school property.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Yes

Comments/analysis

This form does provide a list of many actions that are prohibited by the community users. These are things such as using school property for storage, bring pets onto school property, using drugs or alcohol, using tobacco, gambling, etc. There is also a catch all phrase that states, "All groups are required to follow the law; district policies, regulations and procedures; and directives from district staff."

Additional Provisions: This form does contain additional provision that are not discussed in the "best practices" guideline. This provisions are:

"When the district or the district building to be used is closed due to inclement weather or an emergency, all group uses will be canceled for that day."

"Groups issued permits to use district facilities must make the permits available for district staff to review during all authorized use periods. A permit to use district facilities granted to one group is not transferrable to a different group."

"Groups will only be provided access to the rooms or spaces specifically requested in the application and only for the dates requested and approved."

"A group may use desks, chairs and tables located in the room or facility designated for the group's use, but otherwise a permit to use district facilities does not give permission for the group to use district equipment such as interactive whiteboards, computers, electronic equipment, projectors, kitchen appliances, scoreboards or athletic gear. The superintendent or designee may provide access to equipment at his or her discretion and may charge a fee or a security deposit for such use. The superintendent or designee may determine that some equipment may only be used by district staff and charge the group for the cost of providing a knowledgeable employee, such as a technician for the auditorium or a cook for using kitchen appliances."

"Groups are expected to leave the facility neat, orderly and as clean as it was prior to the group's use. Nothing may be attached to the walls, ceilings or floors without prior approval."



Final comments

Although the two documents (policy form & procedure form) together provide a fairly good basis for a viewer to understand community use within the district, much information is still missing. Most importantly, it is common for schools to only adopt the policy form. If this is the case, this leaves out very important information that is vital to a viewer that is presented within the procedure form. To avoid this problem, the policy form needs to have more cross-referencing to the procedures form to put pressure on districts to adopt this additional form, or to simply add in more of the information under the policy form. The first option would perhaps be a better route to avoid complete redundancy. However, if districts still fail to adopt both documents, the problem would not be solved and the document would fail to make sense as the cross-referencing would confuse the viewer.

It was fairly common for school districts to post their own additional forms that were either forms to fill out and sign, or forms that listed fees for every facility and service. If this information was standard within the template, perhaps more schools would keep it in or actually think about what they would charge for a fee. This would make it very easy on the viewer to know what to expect and if it is within their means to reserve a space.

Appendix B

This document looks at the Missouri Consultants for Education (MCE) school board policy on the shared, community use of school property ([PRF 1420 Community Use of School Facilities](#)) and compares that language to the [best practices for shared use of school property policies](#).

Missouri Consultants for Education (MCE) — Policy

School District facilities are available for community use when facilities are not required for instructional or administration purposes. Use of District facilities is subject to approval of the community group’s application and is subject to conditions established by the Board of Education as set forth in administrative regulations.

To the extent that school facilities are available for community use, such facilities will be open, under the same terms and conditions, to youth groups including but not limited to Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Big Brothers-Big Sisters of America, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Little League Baseball and similar groups. When outside groups are permitted to use school facilities under this policy, the District will not unlawfully discriminate against groups based upon a group’s religious, political or philosophical content of the speech at such meetings.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE	
Statement of Purpose	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilities open to community use: A general statement identifying school district support for community use of school property. Recreational use is expressly permitted: Recreational use is identified in policy as one type of allowable community use; district- sponsored and schoolrelated programs, events, and activities have first priority. <p>Any Policy Language fit best practices? Partial</p>	<p>Comments/analysis</p> <p>Community use is expressly permitted to the community and other organizations. However, “recreational” use is not expressly permitted nor defined within this form.</p>
Policy Consistency	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross- reference of policies: List policies, rules, regulations and forms that intersect for easy updating and cross- referencing. <p>Any Policy Language fit best practices? Partial</p>	<p>Comments/analysis</p> <p>There is a statement, “as set forth in administrative regulations.” This is the only specific cross- reference. Furthermore, these forms are consistent with each other.</p>

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Authority

- Approval by school district: Identified person(s) with authority to approve facility use permits and to sign any facility use agreements/forms on behalf of the district; include a signature line for district representative on each such agreement/form.
- Approval by user: Include a signature line for the representative of the user on each relevant agreement/form.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Partial

Comments/analysis

"Use of District facilities is subject to approval of the community group's application and is subject to conditions established by the Board of Education as set forth in administrative regulations. However, no specific identified person is specified to approve facility use."

Scheduling

- Who does scheduling: Specific person(s) identified to complete scheduling.
- Changes in schedule: Process identified when changes/cancellations occur.
- Priority of users/uses: List of who has priority of use (after all school-related functions). Considerations include (1) non-commercial status/purpose (e.g., non-profit); (2) user groups located in the district; (3) residents of the district are primary participants; or (4) school-age children within the District are primary participants.
- Time and place of each approved activity: Specific information on the time, site and specific area of the school/grounds that will be used for each approved activity.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Partial

Comments/analysis

The only reference to scheduling is a mention of priority. The language states, "School District facilities are available for community use when facilities are not required for instructional or administration purposes."

Security

- Requirements for security: Any requirements for security for events; may be based on type of activity and number of participants/attendees.
- Security needs and plan: Specific plan for specific activity, including who will provide security.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

No

Comments/analysis

No mention of security within this document.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Staffing

- School district staff: Requirements for school district staffing for events, including those required onsite during activity, including custodial and food service staff.
- Requirements of custodial staff: Specifics on when custodial staff is needed and what roles and responsibilities of custodial staff are during event.
- Custodial services plan: Specific plan for specific activity, including roles and responsibilities for custodial staff and user of school facilities.
- Requirements of food service staff: Specifics on when food service staff is needed and what roles and responsibilities of food service staff are during event, including why food service staff need to be present to comply with state and federal law and limits on use of kitchen equipment.
- Food service staff plan: Specific plan for specific activity, including roles and responsibilities for food service staff and user of school facilities, including limits on use of kitchen equipment.
- Employees involved in security plan: Specifics on which school district employees, if any, may be involved in security; who should be contacted in event of security/safety concern.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

No

Comments/analysis

No mention of staffing within this document

Supervision

- Requirements for supervision: Define expectations for supervision of events; consider specifying a minimum ratio of supervision, possibly citing to other school policies (i.e. school field trip ratio requirements).
- Supervision plan for minors: Specific plan for supervision of minors for specific activity.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

No

Comments/analysis

No mention of supervision within this document

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Facilities

- What equipment/facilities are open to use: List of specific parts of the school, both inside and outside, that are available for general use without scheduling (such as playgrounds and open green space) and what are open for scheduled use. Best practice is to include hallways, classrooms, and all outdoor facilities for scheduling.
- List of facilities If particular facilities are commonly requested, consider listing these in a “checklist” on an application/permit/agreement; leave an option for “other” if the list is not exhaustive.
- Description of recreational activity Specific description of the type of recreational activity planned for the facility.
- Time of community use: List either generally or specifically the dates and times that community use is either normally available, or normally restricted.
- Upkeep of facilities and inspection: List of roles and responsibilities for the school district and for users for upkeep and inspection, as well as a process for users to report problems to the school/school district.
- Which ancillary facilities are included in access (toilet, parking)? List of which ancillary facilities are (or may be) available with use, such as locker rooms, toilets, and parking; identify any restrictions for that use (e.g., use of such ancillary facilities is non- exclusive).
- School district responsibility for materials and equipment: Outline of school district roles and responsibility for materials and equipment.
- User repair responsible and payment: Outline of user roles and responsibility notifying of repairs, and responsibility and payment for damage caused during use.
- Provisions addressing termination of agreements and/or cancellation of specific events: On occasion, it may be necessary to terminate agreements/forms or to cancel events. Address conditions and procedures for termination/cancellation by the district and by the user.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

No

Comments/analysis

There is no mention of the facilities that are available. The language only states that “faciliities” are available for community use. What those facilities are is not discussed.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY USE

Communication

- Post facility use agreements/forms on website: Process for posting the most recent versions of relevant documents on the district website, and where it will be posted.
- Website section about community use: Requirement for school district and individuals schools to have a portion of websites to be dedicated to information about community use.
- Community engagement plan: Plan for community engagement to involve community members in underserved populations and organizations serving those community members to facilitate recreational use of school property during non- school hours.
- Community education advisory council: Create and maintain a community advisory council or other working group to identify opportunity, overcome barriers and identify finding sources to support community use.

Any Policy Language fit best practices?

Yes

Comments/analysis

The MCE does have both a policy section and a regulation section specifically for community use.