

## **FIELD TRIPS AND OTHER STUDENT TRAVEL**

The Board recognizes the educational value of school-sponsored trips as a means of extending the curriculum and as a vehicle for encouraging and supporting student participation in academic, artistic, and athletic activities, performances and competitions. In addition, some school-sponsored trips may provide social experiences and contribute to the development of a positive school culture.

This policy provides guidance for the various kinds of trips that may be sponsored Regional School Unit #34 (RSU #34) Schools:

### **Field Trips**

“Field trip” means a trip that takes place during the school day and is organized and conducted by one or more RSU #34 employees as a means of accomplishing particular curriculum objectives. All students within the class or grade, or curriculum related subgroup within a class, will be eligible to participate.

Field trips must be approved in advance by the building principal and Superintendent of Schools. Teachers and principals will be expected to consider the following factors in planning and approval of field trips:

- A. Objectives of the proposed trip and the anticipated learning outcomes;
- B. Specific learning activities to be experienced during the trip;
- C. Suitability of the activity and distance traveled to the age of students;
- D. Mode and availability of transportation, with school bus transportation arranged so as not to disrupt school bus schedules;
- E. Arrangements for meals (if applicable);
- F. Availability of funding for all necessary expenses through the school budget or other appropriate sources.

In addition the Board requires that:

- A. Parents/guardians give written permission for field trip participation;
- B. Adequate staff supervision be provided to maintain discipline and safety and to respond to emergencies; and
- C. Students participating in field trips conduct themselves in a manner consistent with Board policies and school rules.
- D. Any overnight and or out of state travel trip must be approved by the Board.

### **Competition Trips**

“Competition trip” means any trip related to an academic, artistic, athletic, or other student competition or performance that involves individual students or teams. Any competition trip that is outside of those scheduled for the year must be approved in advance by the Superintendent. Approval may be contingent upon availability of funding through the school budget or other sources. Any overnight and or out of state travel must be approved by the Board.

### **Other School-Sponsored Trips**

Other school-sponsored trips are those that are organized and conducted by one or more employees of RSU #34 as a supplement to the curriculum, as a class social activity, or as an activity planned by a student club, team or organization. Such trips may include overnight, long-distance in-state or out-of-state travel, or foreign travel. To be school-sponsored, the trip must relate directly to the curriculum or to activities for which the student club, team or organization is organized.

Participation in such trips is entirely voluntary. There shall be no extra credit awarded for participation and no loss of credit for not taking a trip.

Participation may be limited to students taking courses related to the purpose of the trip or to students who are affiliated with the student club, team or organization planning the trip.

The Superintendent of Schools and Board must approve, in advance, any trips involving out of state travel and all overnight and foreign trips. Approval may be contingent upon availability of funding from the school budget and other sources, including student fundraising.

Staff or administrators seeking approval for school-sponsored trips must furnish the following information in advance when seeking Board approval:

- A. Objectives of the trip and anticipated outcomes;
- B. Specific experiences to be provided;
- C. Number and grade(s) of students;
- D. Criteria for student participation;
- E. Maximum number of students who may participate;
- F. Cost per student, including funds requested (if any) from RSU #34 and from individual students;
- G. Fundraising plans (if applicable);
- H. Transportation arrangements;
- I. Itinerary;
- J. Arrangements for meals and lodging;
- K. Arrangements for adult supervision/chaperons;
- L. Plans for safety, accommodation of student health issues as well as emergencies and
- M. Plans for communicating information to parents and obtaining parental permission.

### **All Travel / Trips**

Adequate supervision must be provided to maintain discipline and safety and to respond to emergencies.

Students participating in field trips and other school-sponsored trips must conduct themselves in a manner consistent with Board policies and school rules. Students who violate Board policy or school rules will be subject to disciplinary consequences.

In cases where Board approval is required (overnight or out of state travel) student participation in requesting Board approval is recommended.

### **Non-School-Sponsored Travel**

Travel organized by RSU #34 employees, parents or others that is not an extension of the instructional program or school-sponsored activities and has not been approved as a school-sponsored trip in compliance with this policy will be considered a non-school-sponsored trip.

All responsibility for non-school-sponsored trips lies with the individual(s) or group(s) organizing them. The Board accepts no responsibility for non-school-sponsored trips, and organizers should be aware that such trips or excursions are not covered by the school unit's liability insurance.

To minimize the impact of these trips on the instructional program and operation of the schools, the Board strongly encourages organizers/sponsors to schedule non-school-sponsored trips during weekends and/or vacation periods. Staff members planning or participating in non-school-sponsored travel must notify the building principal of such plans. Student absences due to participation in non-school sponsored travel will be considered unexcused absences.

Instructional time may not be used to promote the trip or distribute materials. Individuals or groups who wish to use the schools for the purpose of publicizing trips or recruiting participants and

parents/chaperones may do so in accordance with the Board's facilities use policy. Individuals or groups wishing to distribute promotional materials may do so only in accordance with Board policy. Non-school-sponsored trips must not be represented as school functions or as related to, or an extension of, RSU #34's instructional, co-curricular or extracurricular programs.

It is the responsibility of any staff engaging in such trips or activities to notify the parents of prospective and participating students that this is not a school activity, but an independent voluntary trip organized or lead by that teacher or staff member. To minimize any risk of misunderstanding, the following statement must be made in any informational meetings or materials promoting the trip:

"This trip is not approved or sponsored by the Regional School Unit #34 School Board. It has not been reviewed, approved or endorsed by authorized RSU #34 administrators and it is not covered by any of Regional School Unit #34's insurance policies."

First Reading: September 16, 2015

Second Reading/Adopted: October 21, 2015