

## 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 by RSU 26.

### Field Trips

“Field trip” means a trip that takes place during the school day and is organized and conducted by one or more RSU 26 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 expected to participate.

Field trips must be approved in advance by the building principal.

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 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 curriculum-related trip must be approved by the Superintendent.

### 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.

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

Other school-sponsored trips are those that are organized and conducted by one or more employees of RSU 26 as a supplement to the curriculum, as a class social activity, or as an activity planned by a student club 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 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 or organization planning the trip.

The Superintendent must approve, in advance, any trips involving out-of state travel and overnight trips. The School Board must approve all 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:

- 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 from RSU 26 funds 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/chaperones;
- L. Plans for safety and emergencies;
- M. Plans for communicating information to parents and obtaining parental permission; and
- N. Accountability for student conduct.

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.

### **Chaperones**

Any non-employee assisting supervision of a field trip, competition trip, or other school-sponsored-trip under this policy must have completed a school volunteer form and background check and be approved under our school volunteer policy (IJOC and IJOC-R).

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

Travel organized by RSU 26 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, the school unit'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 led 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 RSU 26 Board or RSU 26. This trip is not covered by any of RSU 26's insurance policies.”

Cross Reference:       EEAG - Use of Private Vehicles or School Buses  
                              KHB – Advertising in the Schools  
                              KHC - Distribution/Posting of Non-School Materials  
                              JEA – Compulsory Attendance  
                              JEAA – Student Attendance

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