

ADVERTISING, SPONSORSHIPS, PARTNERSHIPS, and COMMERCIAL SERVICES POLICY

The district will provide an environment as free as possible from commercial advertising without hampering philanthropic efforts to support education. The Groton-Dunstable School Committee believes that public school programs, including student activities, should be fully funded by member towns as well as Federal and State revenues. However, the Committee also recognizes that it may be necessary to seek alternative funding beyond what is provided by state and local revenues. Businesses and other community organizations may have a financial role in supporting or sponsoring school programs and activities.

Definitions

The relationship types covered by this policy are Advertising (transactional, fee-for-promotion engagements), Sponsorships (recognition-based financial support engagements which may or may not include advertising elements), Partnerships (more complex engagements which may include both advertising and sponsorship elements), and Commercial Services (engagements with commercial providers for supportive activities and products). For the purposes of this policy the following definitions shall apply:

Advertising - Advertising is an audio, oral, written or graphic statement made by the producer, manufacturer, or seller of products or services, which call for the public's attention to promote a desire to buy, use or patronize products or services. This includes the visible promotion of product logos for other than identification purpose. Brand names, trademarks, logos or tags used for product identification purposes (i.e. manufacturer's logos on shoes or shirts) are not considered advertising. Examples of advertising include local merchant ads in school play programs and banners at athletic events.

Sponsorship - A sponsorship is an agreement between the district, an individual school or site-based or parent based group with an external commercially-oriented organization through which the sponsor provides financial or resource support in exchange for recognition. Sponsorships may include advertising as defined above, and should be covered by a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or memorandum of agreement (MOA). Examples of sponsorships include the robotics program at the high school and the elementary savings account program at the elementary schools.

Partnership - A partnership is an agreement between site or district administration and an external non-commercial organization which involves joint

planning and execution of a coordinated, program-based engagement which will financially benefit the site or district and/or further the educational goals of the site or district. Partnerships may include advertising, as defined above. The basis and the terms of the relationship are set by the site or district administration and agreed upon by the private entity. Frequently a partnership will not require a contract, but all partnerships must be covered by, at a minimum, an MOU or MOA. Examples of partnerships include relationships with GDSTEM and the Groton Dunstable Education Foundation.

Commercial Services – Agreements may be established with external commercial entities which provide products or services at one or more sites which are consistent with and supportive of district educational goals. Commercial services engagements are expected to include advertising, as defined above. All commercial service engagements must be governed via contract. Examples of commercial service engagements include book sales and school pictures.

Policy

The School Committee believes that educators are obligated to protect the welfare of students and maintain the integrity of the learning environment. All Partnerships, Sponsorships, Commercial Services, and Advertising engagements must be based on principles that are consistent with school committee policies, the district's mission, strategic plan, educational goals and federal, state and local laws. Business advertising which promotes alcohol, tobacco, gaming, firearms, or political endorsement of controversial products or services will not be permitted.

Any advertising by outside agencies within the schools must not take precedent over the identity and prominence of the school or the district. Advertising will not be sold for spaces or sound waves in classroom settings, inside or outside the building during school hours, or transportation. Advertising during extracurricular activities is allowed, but must adhere to both district policy and school handbooks, and shall be limited to the time duration of the event or activity.

Advertising materials may be distributed by the district for organizations that are non-profit and volunteer-based, or represent voluntary community service programs, as long as the activities advertised are deemed by school administration to be of educational value and benefit to students. Promotional materials from businesses or other organizations that financially profit from the program or activity will not be allowed to be distributed to parents via students. A designated area, such as a bulletin board or display case, will be established at each school site where advertisements that are not eligible for distribution may be posted, as long as the subject has educational value for students and is consistent with curriculum.

The district may publicly recognize supporters for sponsorships or partnerships through the following means: Press Releases, Announcements, or Newsletters. These acknowledgements will not take the form of advertisements nor include the use of logos.

This policy is not intended to limit announcements, information, or use of logos representing school-related non-profit organizations, including PTAs, PTOs, APTs, other parent-teacher organizations, the Groton-Dunstable Education Foundation, Groton-Dunstable Alliance for Youth (GDAY) , Groton-Dunstable Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (GD STEM), or the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SPED/PAC).

Revenues derived through Partnerships, Sponsorships, Commercial Services, and Advertising shall be used only to enhance student achievement, enrich educational or extra-curricular experiences and/or promote quality learning opportunities. Partnership, Sponsorship, Commercial Services, or Advertising engagements will not be accepted in any such way as to dictate or substantially influence curriculum content or direction. Any financial compensation or materials received under any agreement governed by this policy are the property of the district.

No Partnership, Sponsorship, Commercial Service or Advertising engagement with the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District shall be exclusive, nor shall it be construed as an endorsement of the business, its products or its services. Site or district administration should not be required by any sponsorship or partnership to sell products to students, expose students to advertisements during school time, or place advertising on school property.

The Superintendent will make available information regarding any Commercial Service, Sponsorship or Partnership and the corresponding contracts, MOUs, or MOAs for approval by the School Committee. The GDRSD School Committee reserves the right to override these policies for specific sponsorships or partnerships where there is a clear benefit to the district that is consistent with education objectives and principles.

This policy does not apply to donations or gifts – please see policy KCD.

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 71:59D, 167L:37B
Reference: KGD-R Examples of Relationships Governed by Policy KGD

Adopted
Groton-Dunstable Regional Schools