

POLICY RELATING TO SUPPORT OPERATIONS

SPONSORSHIP AND ADVERTISING

Context and Purpose: The Wachusett Regional School District (WRSD) historically has benefited from income generated when outside entities, including businesses and individuals, provide funding in the form of sponsorships of programming or advertising displayed in school district publications, on school district grounds event programs, the high school yearbook, etc. The Wachusett Regional School District Committee (WRSDC) encourages the use of sponsorships and advertising to provide an alternative source of revenue to fund educational programming and/or to provide supplementary resources. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to the Superintendent of Schools, school administrators, and other personnel regarding what forms of sponsorships and advertising are acceptable to the WRSD and to provide a framework for arranging such transactions.

Definitions: For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall be used:

Sponsorships are defined as agreements between the school district, a school, or a department where an outside organization provides funding or resources in exchange for recognition. Such recognition may include verbal notification of the public at meetings, events, or other opportunities; or written notification through press releases, newsletters, email, and the school district website. In certain circumstances, the WRSD may agree to use a sponsor's name in connection with a particular program or physical space supported through the sponsor's support (e.g., a laboratory, an athletic field or facility, etc.). Sponsorship involves funds provided for an activity that the WRSD has determined is desirable for the system to undertake.

Advertising is defined as written, graphic, or oral representations made by or on behalf of another entity which are designed to make others aware of the entity's product, service, etc. Advertising involves funds provided for recognition not directly connected to funding an activity.

Guidelines: The WRSDC requires that sponsorships and advertising agreements be made with the best interests of the WRSD in mind, relative to the District's mission and core values. As a public entity with the central purpose of educating, the WRSD must be judicious in determining the identity, scope, and content of sponsorships and advertising to avoid over-commercialization of the educational process. The following guidelines are to be followed by WRSD administration:

1. WRSD property and WRSD communications are non-public forums. The intent of sponsorships and advertising is to provide funding revenues, not to promote public discourse, or a point of view. There is no obligation on the part of the WRSD to provide equal access to advertising for competitors.
2. Since policy evolves, approval of a sponsorship or ad does not constitute a precedent and does not necessarily lead to approval of similar requests in the future.

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SPONSORSHIP AND ADVERTISING (continued)

3. Approval of sponsorships or advertising does not constitute endorsement by the WRSDC or the WRSD of a sponsor's or advertiser's products, programs, or services.
4. The WRSDC delegates authority to the Superintendent of Schools or the Superintendent's designee to approve sponsorships or advertising (less than \$5,000), including content, communication, display, and distribution of such, as well as to negotiate sponsorship amounts and advertising rates. Agreements of significant value (defined as \$5,000 or more annually) to utilize a sponsor's name in relation to a specific program or physical space shall require a recommendation from the Superintendent and a majority vote of the WRSDC.
5. All sponsorships and advertisements must align with the WRSD's mission, values, and policies, as well as with state and federal laws, including those related to non-discrimination practices, including Massachusetts General Law Chapter 272, Section 92A and any other applicable statute or regulation.
6. There shall be no *quid pro quo* arrangements between sponsors/advertisers and the WRSD relative to educational practices in the District. That is, educational decisions regarding the use of curriculum materials, instructional equipment, and other resources related to school programming shall be made regarding what is in the best interests of students and shall not be influenced by outside entities due to the provision of materials, services, or funding.
7. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall consider the impact of sponsorships and advertisements on students, relative to students' age and impressionability, about content, intended audience, form, and the closeness of the connection to the educational process. The Superintendent or his/her designee has full editorial control regarding placement, content, size, wording, appearance, etc. of advertising, and has the right to reject sponsorships or advertising that is, in his/her judgment, inappropriate or inconsistent with the mission and values of the WRSD and the best interests of its students (e.g., advertising for tobacco, alcohol, etc.).
8. Outside entities who rent WRSD facilities must receive approval from the Superintendent or his/her designee if they wish to post temporary advertising in the space rented (e.g., signs along athletic field fencing, banners in an auditorium, etc.).
9. Sponsorships or advertisements from elected officials and political candidates or groups will not be accepted.

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SPONSORSHIP AND ADVERTISING (continued)

Types of Sponsorships and Advertising: The Superintendent or his/her designee shall follow the guidelines below, and shall consult with the WRSDC in situations that do not fit clearly within these guidelines.

1. Writing and images in physical form (e.g., advertisements in event programs or newsletters; posters; signage; banners, etc.).
2. Writing and images in electronic form.
3. The use of logos or other similar images other than what would be used normally in identifying the brand of equipment, instructional materials, etc. (e.g., a manufacturer's logo on an athletic uniform is not sponsorship/advertising, but a banner with such a logo in the gymnasium placed there for a fee would be). The use of logos or images of outside entities is permissible in programs, yearbooks, newsletters, web site etc., per the judgment of the Superintendent or his/her designee.
4. Distribution of Information through the Schools - The WRSD will not provide the free distribution of materials, including advertising, on behalf of for-profit organizations, whether brought home physically by students, or through electronic means. This differs from sponsorship or advertising arrangements made between the WRSD and an outside entity, which are subject solely to the discretion of the WRSD. However, the communication of sponsorships or activities where for-profit organizations partner with the WRSD or non-profit organizations such as Parent Teacher Organizations may be included in messages that originate from the non-profit organization (e.g., a PTO/PTA may distribute information regarding a fundraiser with a local restaurant and utilize the restaurant's logo in its communication, but the message must come from the PTO/PTA, not the restaurant).
5. Advertising local educational access channel shall be subject to laws and policies governing this medium. This medium may be used to communicate regarding sponsorships.

Administration of Policy: The Superintendent or his/her designee shall adhere to the guidelines listed above and shall use sound business practices with regard to entering into written contractual agreements with sponsors and advertisers.

First Reading: 11/13/17
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