

## ADVERTISING IN THE SCHOOLS

The Groton-Dunstable Regional School District will provide an environment as free as possible from commercial advertising without hampering philanthropic efforts to support education. The 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**

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

*Advertising* - Advertising is an audio, video, written, or graphic statement made by the producer, manufacturer, or seller of products or services, which calls 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 purposes. Brand names, trademarks, logos, or tags used for product identification purposes (e.g., manufacturers' logos on shoes or shirts) are not considered advertising. Examples of advertising include local merchant advertisements in school play programs and banners at athletic events.

*Sponsorship* - A sponsorship is an agreement between the District, an individual school, or a 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 in the high school and the savings account programs in the elementary schools.

*Partnership* - A partnership is an agreement between site or District administration and an external non-commercial organization that involves joint planning and execution of a coordinated, program-based engagement that 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. Although a contract is not required, all partnerships must be covered by an MOU or MOA. Examples of partnerships include the District's relationships with Groton-Dunstable Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (GD STEM) and the Groton Dunstable Education Foundation (GDEF).

*Commercial Services* - Agreements may be established with external commercial entities that provide products or services at one or more sites and that 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, or any promotion, involving any item or activity that conflicts with District policies will not be permitted.

Any advertising by outside organizations within the District must not take precedence over the identity and prominence of any school or the District. Advertising will not be sold for spaces or sound waves in classroom settings during school hours, inside or outside the buildings, or while students are being transported by the District. Advertising during extracurricular activities is allowed, but must adhere to both District policies and school handbooks, and must be limited to the duration of the event or activity.

Advertising materials may be distributed by the District or sites only for non-profit organizations, and only if the activities and products advertised are deemed by the District or site administration to be of educational value and benefit to students. The organizations must submit formal documentation to demonstrate their status as a non-profit entity within Massachusetts. Promotional materials from other pre-K-12 institutions will not be allowed. Promotional materials from businesses or other organizations that financially profit from the program or activity will not be distributed to the students, to the parents, or to the parents via the 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 or sites may publicly acknowledge organizations that provide financial support to partners of the District through press releases, announcements, or newsletters. These acknowledgements will neither take the form of advertisements nor include the use of logos.

Revenues derived through Partnerships, Sponsorships, Commercial Services, and Advertising must 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 manner that dictates or substantially influences 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 District will be exclusive, nor should it be construed as an endorsement of the business, its products, or its services. Neither site nor District administration should be required by any sponsorship or partnership to sell products to students, expose students to advertisements during school hours, or place advertising on school property.

This policy is not intended to limit announcements, information dissemination, or the use of logos representing school-related non-profit organizations, including, but not limited to, Parent-Teacher Associations, Parent-Teacher Organizations, GDEF, Groton-Dunstable Alliance for Youth (GDAY), GD STEM, or the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SPED/PAC).

The Superintendent will provide information to the School Committee regarding any new or substantially altered Partnership, Sponsorship, Commercial Service, or Advertising engagement. All contracts, MOUs, or MOAs must be approved by the School Committee. The Chair will ensure that all contracts, MOUs, or MOAs in effect will be reviewed by the School Committee at least once every three years.

This policy is intended to provide guidance to the District and site administrations for most of the situations that are likely to be encountered in developing Partnership, Sponsorship, Commercial Service, or Advertising engagements. Nevertheless, due the complexity of some situations, the School Committee will consider a recommendation from the District administration for a specific Partnership, Sponsorship, Commercial Service, or Advertising engagement that may not meet all of the criteria specified in this policy. This consideration will be performed on an exception basis if the administration believes there is a clear and overriding benefit to the District that is consistent with its educational objectives and principles.

This policy does not apply to donations or gifts, which are covered by policy KCD.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. Chap.71, Sect. 59D, School-Community Partnerships  
M.G.L. Chap. 167, Sect. 37B, Establishment of Banks by Certain Students

REF.: KHB-E, Advertising in the Schools - Sample Policy Applications

Adopted 9/16/09

## **ADVERTISING IN THE SCHOOLS SAMPLE POLICY APPLICATIONS**

### **Robotics Company Sponsors Robotics Club**

This sponsorship would include advertising on the project during the event as is customary with these types of events. As this is a co-curricular event, the advertising would be allowed. If the project was to be displayed in an area of a school that was occupied by students during class time, any advertising would need to be removed.

### **Local Company Donates Scoreboard to be Installed on Field**

As the scoreboard is on a field that is used as part of a classroom activity, the scoreboard may not contain the company name or logo (advertising), unless it is to identify the product brand. Such a donation without a logo may be accepted and the donation noted in any bulletin handed out at sporting events.

### **School Play Bulletin Acknowledges Sponsors from Local Businesses and Community Members**

As the bulletin is only for the duration of the event, this sort of advertising is acceptable.

### **Banners Promoting Sponsors at Sporting Events**

As long as the message is not inconsistent with policies of the district, (e.g., promoting alcohol or cigarette products), and the banners are up for the duration of the event, this sort of advertising may be permitted.

### **GDEF and STEM**

These partnerships are encouraged by the district. Clearly, the decisions regarding curriculum direction are the responsibilities of the members of the district's educational staff.

### **Book Club Promoting Book Sales in the Classrooms**

As this is a commercial service that promotes reading, it may be approved by the district. The agreement may not benefit district employees and must be approved as an exception by the School Committee.

### **Class Pictures**

As this is a commercial service that promotes social cohesiveness and a sense of community, it may be approved by the district. The agreement may not benefit district employees and must be approved as an exception by the School Committee.

### **Group Provides Science Textbooks that Omit or Include Information that Promotes a Political or Religious View**

As this dictates the science curriculum, this sponsorship would not be acceptable.

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