

<b>SCHOOL DISTRICT LEGAL STATUS</b>
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The legal basis for education in the Fort Smith School District is vested in the will of the people as expressed in the Constitution of the State of Arkansas, the statutes pertaining to education and court interpretation of the validity of these laws and the powers implied under them.

The School District derives its legal status from the State General Assembly which in turn is subject to Constitutions of both the State of Arkansas and the United States. Authority of the General Assembly is specified in Article XIV, Section 4 of the Arkansas Constitution which states . . .

“The supervision of public schools and the execution of the laws regarding the same shall be vested in and confided to such officers as may be provided for by the General Assembly.”

This School District is under the control and management of a local 7-member Board of Education and will operate in accordance with all applicable constitutional and statutory provisions and requirements of the State of Arkansas and the United States.

The District will have corporate boundary limits as now established, or as hereafter established according to state law, to include land described in the legal property descriptions approved at the time of District reorganization or as changed through subsequent boundary change procedures.

Approved 1-24-2000  
Supersedes 1110 dated 10-27-75

<b>TYPE OF SCHOOL DISTRICT</b>
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The Fort Smith School District was authorized by an act of the General Assembly soon after the adoption of the present Constitution of the State of Arkansas. Subsequently, all distinction between special and standard school districts was abolished.

<b>NONDISCRIMINATION/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY</b>
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The District is required by federal and state laws, executive orders, rules and regulations not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability condition or marital status. The District therefore commits itself to nondiscrimination in all its educational and employment activities.

The District will require all persons, agencies, vendors, contractors and other persons and organizations doing business with or performing services for the District to subscribe to all applicable federal and state laws, executive orders, rules and regulations pertaining to contract compliance.

The Board of Education and the superintendent are committed to the attainment of equal employment opportunity and nondiscrimination in the firm belief that the end result will produce quality education for all children. Further, the Board of Education affirms the right of all students and staff, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status or disability condition to be treated with respect and to be protected from intimidation, discrimination, physical harm and/or harassment.

Harassment/discriminatory behavior that denies civil rights or access to equal educational opportunities includes comments, name-calling, physical conduct or other expressive behavior directed at an individual or group that intentionally demeans the race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status or disability condition of the individual or individuals, or creates an intimidating, hostile or demeaning environment for education.

Grievances will be dealt with in accordance with Board regulations and policies.

<b>NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX</b>
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The Board, pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, declares that the School District does not and will not discriminate on the basis of sex in the educational programs and activities of the District. This policy will extend not only to students with regard to educational opportunities, but also to employees with regard to employment opportunities and to individuals with whom the District does business.

It shall be the policy of the District to continually evaluate its practices and procedures to ensure fair and equitable educational and employment opportunities without regard to sex to all of its students and employees. The Board will designate an individual to act as the District's Title IX Compliance Officer. The name, office address and telephone number of the Compliance Officer will be designated and publicized.

It shall be the policy of the Board that individuals be assured the opportunity for an orderly presentation in review of grievances. No person shall suffer reprisals as a result of having initiated or presented a grievance. Procedures to resolve grievances and alleged discrimination shall be publicized to District employees.

<b>NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITY</b>
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The Board believes that discrimination against employees with disabilities solely on the basis of their disability is unfair. Furthermore, the Board believes that employees with disabilities should be in the mainstream of life in the school community to the extent which is reasonably permissible and/or possible.

Therefore, pursuant to law, the Board declares that the School District does not and will not discriminate on the basis of a person's disability in the educational programs and activities of the District. This policy will extend not only to students with regard to educational opportunities, but also to employees with regard to employment opportunities and to individuals with whom the Board does business.

Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-112) and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-142), a school district:

- A. May not discriminate against qualified employees in any aspect of school district employment solely on the basis of disability;
- B. Must make facilities, programs and activities accessible, usable and open to qualified persons;
- C. Must provide free appropriate education at elementary and secondary levels including non-academic and extracurricular services and activities to qualified employees with disabilities;
- D. May not exclude any qualified persons solely on the basis of disability from participation in any preschool education or after-school program or activity or any adult education or vocational program or activity; and
- E. Must provide each person who has a disability with the same health, welfare and other social services as are provided other persons.

Accordingly, it will be the policy of the District to continually evaluate its practices and procedures to ensure fair and equitable educational and employment opportunities without regard to disability condition to all of its students and employees.

Approved 1-24-2000  
New Policy

<b>EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY/SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION</b>
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The Board of Education recognizes that education is a process of growth and includes the mental, moral, emotional and physical aspects of the individual. Each student is seen as a unique person who possesses certain potentials, needs, aspirations and interests. As each student is different, it is the purpose of education to provide him/her with different experiences in school which will enable the student to achieve his/her potential and be a useful and productive member of society.

The educational process should develop a feeling of self-worth and accomplishment within each student and should be built upon a thorough understanding of the basic skills. Furthermore, the self-actualization of each child should be in harmony with appreciation for the importance of our democratic way of life in America. The preservation of our democratic way of life must always be learned and earned anew by each generation in order for it to be perpetuated.

Therefore, the role of education is to be one of helping individuals achieve their greatest potential which will in turn enable them to make their greatest contribution to society. In addition, the educational program of the District, while maintaining flexibility in adapting to an ever-changing society, will be dedicated to the development of each student to the limits of his/her ability and interest in a sequentially coordinated curriculum which allows for individual differences. It is therefore the responsibility of the Fort Smith School District to provide an educational environment for children of the District which will foster and accelerate their intellectual, physical, social and career development.

The Board of Education accepts the conclusion that the education of children is a comprehensive program which must be undertaken in cooperation with other institutions of society and will seek to establish and maintain strong ties with parents and community programs.

These underlying principles are reflected in the School District Mission Statement as follows:

“The mission of the Fort Smith Public Schools is to serve the community by providing to every student a comprehensive education of the highest quality in a safe and nurturing environment. We recognize the diversity of needs and aspirations among our students, and we are committed to the development of each individual as a successful, responsible and productive citizen who is prepared for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”

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New Policy

<b>SCHOOL DISTRICT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES</b>
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The Board of Education believes that a strong, effective system of public education is essential for the continuation of our democratic form of government for the good of its citizens.

To have an effective and continually improving education program, it is necessary that goals and objectives for the School District and for each school be stated and accepted by employees and the public. These goals and objectives will enable all professional employees to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and of their efforts.

The School District must have formulated general statements of goals and objectives. Each professional employee is expected to make every reasonable effort to understand the significance of these objectives and to help achieve them in the programs of the School District. Such goals and objectives shall include the following concepts:

- A. A strong system of public education, compatible with our democratic form of government, shall be maintained;
- B. The opportunity of education in the public schools shall be equally available for all students residing in the School District regardless of disability, race, color, gender or national origin;
- C. The instructional program of this District shall focus on basic academic skills and provide for individual needs and differences that exist in all students;
- D. In view of the importance of good citizenship to our democratic government and society, the schools shall develop programs to encourage the growth of good citizenship in every student;
- E. The public schools of this District shall develop programs which promote proper attitudes and practices toward physical fitness, health and care of the body;
- F. Schools shall strive not only to prepare students for further education but to equip them with vocational information and skills which will enable them to obtain employment upon graduation from high school;
- G. Public schools shall provide opportunity for understanding and appreciation of our cultural heritage, including such areas as art and music; and
- H. The highest quality of education shall be provided in a safe and nurturing environment.

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New Policy

**DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS**

The following statement and procedure is published in compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, 34 CFR Part 85, Sub Part F, Public Law 100-690 and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1987, Public Law 101-226:

The Fort Smith School District is dedicated to providing drug-free schools and workplace for all employees. Fort Smith School District employees and students are advised that all employees in the Fort Smith School District engaging in any of the prohibited activities as defined by the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1987 may be subject to disciplinary action.

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New Policy



<b>TOBACCO-FREE SCHOOLS</b>
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A tobacco-free facility will provide a healthier, cleaner and safer environment for employees, students, visitors and patrons. Use of tobacco products at school facilities conflicts with the schools' goals of setting high standards and providing good role models for students.

In accordance with action of the Arkansas General Assembly in A.C.A. 6-21-609 and in recognition of repeated warnings from the Surgeon General that being in close proximity to a smoke-filled environment can create potential health hazards, smoking or use of tobacco or products containing tobacco in any form in or on any property owned or leased by the Fort Smith School District, including school buses, is prohibited.

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New Policy

<b>ACCOUNTABILITY/COMMITMENT TO ACCOMPLISHMENT</b>
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The Board of Education accepts its ultimate responsibility for all facets of school operations and programs. Because it is accountable to residents of the District, the Board will maintain a program of accountability which consists of the following elements:

- A. Clear statements of purpose as these relate to operations, programs and positions;
- B. Provisions for the staff, resources and support necessary to achieve stated expectations and purposes subject to available financial resources;
- C. Evaluation of operations, programs, instruction and services to determine how well expectations and purposes are being met; and
- D. Evaluation of the efforts of the employees of the Board and of the Board itself in line with identified objectives. The first purpose of employee evaluation will be to help each individual make a maximum contribution to the goals of the School District.

The Board will adopt and maintain an accountability program to measure the adequacy and efficiency of the educational program. Every effort will be made by the Board, the superintendent and the staff to fulfill the responsibilities inherent in the concept of accountability, as well as the intent of legislative accountability initiatives.