



### **POLICY 5.045**

**4-G** I recommend that the Board adopt the proposed revised Policy 5.045, entitled "International Student Exchange Program."

[Contact: Ana Meehan and Ray Ranghelli, PX 48010.]

#### **Adoption**

#### **CONSENT ITEM**

- The Board approved development of this revised Policy at the development reading on November 5, 2008.
- The revised policy provides for the School District's acceptance of international students through the US Department of State exchange visitors programs under which foreign national secondary school students are afforded the opportunity for up to one year study while living with an American host family.
- The revised policy also provides a process for School District students' participation in international exchange students programs, based upon a decision of the student and the student's parents or guardians. See Paragraph 4.
- The revised policy provides definitions consistent with federal laws for the sponsoring organization, sponsor, local representative, and J-1 Visa exchange student. See Paragraph 2.
- For an organization to be a sponsoring organization, the revised policy provides the organization must be a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization and listed officially with the Council of Standards for International Educational Travel, an organization approved by the US Department of State for the School District. See Paragraph 3A.
- The revised policies outlines responsibilities for the sponsoring organization which include ensuring the prospective international exchange student has fulfilled all requirements to obtain the required J-1 Visa; obtaining a host family placement and completing the federally required background check of the host family members; securing required information from the prospective international exchange student's high school; obtaining clearance from the School District by providing certain documented evidence; and assuming responsibility for the international exchange student's health, safety, educational financial and legal obligations. See Paragraph 3B.
- An acceptance process for a prospective international exchange student provides the student may not request or require a diploma from the School

District, but affords the student all rights and responsibilities accorded other students in the School District. The process also requires the school principal to approve the admission of the student, as the student is to be assigned within the regular school attendance boundary of the host family's residence.

- This revision also updates statutory references.

## POLICY 5.045

### INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM Foreign Student Exchange Programs

1. **Purpose.** The School Board encourages participation in international student exchange programs to improve foreign students' knowledge of the American culture and language through active participation in American family, school and community life; to improve American students' knowledge of a foreign culture and its language(s); to contribute to international understanding through a sharing of personal experiences; and to provide a balanced understanding of the world.
2. **Definitions.**
  - a. Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) is a not-for-profit organization that sets standards for international educational youth exchange programs; monitors organizations' compliance with CSIET Standards; provides a process to review and evaluate an organization's compliance with its standards; annually publishes the results of the evaluation process in the Advisory List and distributes the Advisory list throughout the educational community. CSIET is endorsed by the United States Department of State.
  - b. Sponsoring Organization is a non-profit organization as conferred by the Internal Revenue Services (IRS) pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and offering international educational and cultural youth exchange experiences through their programs and appears in the Advisory List of International Travel and Exchange Programs of CSIET. There shall be documentation that the organization has a local representative meeting the requirements herein or as required by federal laws.
  - c. Sponsor is the person from the participating international exchange student organization who undertakes responsibility for the recruitment, placement and overseeing the local, organization representative of the international exchange student for the student's entire exchange experience.
  - d. International Exchange Student is a international national secondary student who has been selected by a sponsor of a youth exchange organization, to participate for up to one year of study in a United States public or private secondary school, while living with an American host family or residing at an accredited U.S. boarding school, and who is seeking to enter, or has entered, the United States temporarily on a J-1 VISA.
  - e. Local Organization Representative is the person from the participating international exchange student program/organization that lives within 120

miles of the international exchange student; authorized to act on the sponsor's behalf in both routine and emergency matters arising from the student's participation in their exchange program.

3. **International Exchange Students Entering a Palm Beach County School**

a. Approval of Sponsor.

i. Only organizations with tax-exempt status as conferred by the IRS pursuant to section 501(c)(3), and organizations that are listed officially with the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET), may sponsor an international exchange student program in the Palm Beach County School District.

ii. The School Board reserves the right to work with international exchange organizations that have proven their commitment and responsiveness. Sponsors who do not consistently screen and monitor exchange students and host families, or who have been suspended or terminated from the student exchange visitor program, will lose the privilege of placing students in the School District.

b. Sponsor Responsibilities.

i. The sponsoring organization shall work with the appropriate governmental agencies to ensure that the prospective international exchange student has fulfilled all requirements for entry into the United States on a J-1 Visa.

ii. Sponsors of student exchange organizations shall secure, prior to the student's departure from their home country, a host family placement for each student participant.

iii. As required by the U.S. Department of State, a background check must be completed by the sponsoring organization for each member of the host family household, eighteen years of age or older, and for the local organization representative of the organization.

iv. In the event of unforeseen circumstances that necessitate a change of host family placement, the sponsor shall document the reasons necessitating such change and immediately provide this information to the school's guidance department.

v. A written statement from the sponsoring organization or student's home school indicating that the student has not received a high school diploma from his/her country of origin.

- vi. Procedural clearance for enrollment in the School District must be finalized not less than fifteen (15) workdays prior to the student's departure from the country of origin. If subsequent documentation indicates that such procedural clearance was not finalized within the required timeframe, the exchange student shall not be admitted to a school in the School District. Requests for procedural clearance submitted from any designated sponsor after the required fifteen (15) workday periods shall not be honored.
- vii. Ensure a valid transcript from the student's sending school, which includes the criteria for translating the foreign grades into an English comparison, is provided to the School District.
- viii. The designated sponsoring organization shall assume responsibility for the student's health, safety, educational financial and legal obligations.
- ix. For the international exchange student to be eligible for enrollment in the School District, the local organization representative, from the sponsoring organization, of the international exchange student shall provide documented evidence of the following:
  - A. The named host family that has pledged to provide housing for the student during the period of enrollment in the school system.
  - B. Health, accident, and liability insurance that is valid in the United States.
  - C. Immunization in accordance with Florida statutes prior to the student's first day of attendance in the School District.
  - D. A written statement indicating who is responsible for the affected student in case of emergency.
  - E. Evidence of sufficient English language proficiency, including reading, writing and speaking, that will enable the student to successfully function at the academic level in which he/she is enrolled.
- x. The sponsor organization shall adhere to all provisions required by federal laws and regulations.

c. ACCEPTANCE OF STUDENT

- i. The exchange student shall gain legal entry into the United States as certified with a J-1 Exchange Visa, which includes clearance by Homeland Security or the appropriate government agency, be a high

school (grades 9-12 or the equivalent) student, and shall present documented proof with a birth certificate or passport, showing that he/she will be at least sixteen (16) years of age, but not have attained the age of eighteen and a half (18.5), prior to attendance at a school in the District.

ii. The exchange student shall not, as a condition of enrollment, request or require a diploma of graduation from the School District. International exchange students have all rights and responsibilities accorded to students in the School District except the right to a diploma.

iii. The exchange student who is a high school graduate or equivalent (General Education Equivalency diploma or similar document) from the country of origin must be cleared for the program by the appropriate Area Superintendent and the Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction/Student Support or designee.

iv. The principal of the school or designee shall approve the admission of each exchange student.

v. Upon receiving procedural clearance, the student may register at the appropriate high school, which shall be designated as the school within the regular school attendance boundary of the host family's residence.

vi. Rules, regulations and policies for all students, including The Code of Student Conduct of the School District, shall apply to and shall be adhered to by the exchange student.

4. **Palm Beach County Students Participating in an International Exchange Program.**

The participation of School District students in such programs is a determination to be made by the student and the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student. Therefore, neither the School Board nor its employees shall endorse a specific international exchange study program, nor is the School Board in any way responsible for the activities of the program. Any student of the School District participating in an international exchange program shall:

a. Be withdrawn from their home school in the United States.

b. Upon application for re-enrollment in the School District present an official transcript from the international school attended for evaluation by the receiving School District high school.

~~The School Board of Palm Beach County, Florida, encourages participation in approved foreign student/visitor exchange programs in order to improve foreign students' knowledge of American culture and language through active participation in American~~

family, school, and community life; to improve American students' knowledge of foreign languages and cultures; and to contribute to international understanding through a sharing of personal experiences.

The Superintendent shall establish guidelines, rules, and regulations governing the participation of foreign exchange students/visitors in/from district schools. These guidelines shall:

- i. limit participation to students sponsored by agencies recognized and approved by the United States Information Agency;
- ii. restrict participation to senior high school students, 16 years of age or older, who have not received a diploma or its equivalent in their home country;
- iii. require that all district, state, and federal requirements are met prior to the arrival of the student at the school center; and

establish procedures for Palm Beach County students to apply for participation in exchange programs with other countries.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Fla. Stat. §§ ~~230.22; 232.41~~ 1001.41; 1001.42; 1001.43  
LAWS IMPLEMENTED: 8 USC 1101; 22 CFR 62.25  
HISTORY: 11/4/87; \_\_\_/\_\_\_2008

Legal Signoff:

The Legal Department has reviewed proposed Policy 5.045 and finds it legally sufficient for development by the Board.

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Attorney

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Date

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