

Board Policy Document

STUDENT PERSONNEL

Series 500

Policy Title: Freedom of Expression

Code Number: 503.13

Certain expressions, including expressions by students, are protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. It is the policy of the Sioux City Community School District to afford such freedom of expression to students as long as the expression is reasonable and does not materially or substantially disrupt the educational activities and purposes of the school, and so long as it falls within Constitutionally protected interpretations of the First Amendment. Accepting expression of student opinion, and allowing students to learn to express themselves, is an important part of education in a democratic society.

Student expression must be appropriate to ensure that students learn and meet the education goals of the school district, and that the potential audience of student expression, viewpoints, or opinion is responsible, and that the potential audience is not exposed to material or statements that may be harmful, or inappropriate for their level of maturity.

Student expression shall be subject to restrictions. The District may prohibit expression which:

1. is obscene to minors, or is indecent or vulgar;
2. is libelous, slanderous, or defamatory;
3. endangers the health or safety of another person;
4. constitutes insulting or fighting words, the very expression of which injures, harasses, or intimidates other people, including, but not limited to: threats of violence or defamation of character, or of a person's race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, religion, age, marital status, or disability; or
5. presents a clear and present likelihood that, either because of its content or the manner of distribution or presentation, it will cause a material and substantial disruption of the proper and orderly operation and discipline of

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- the school, or of school activities, or will cause the commission of unlawful acts or the violation of lawful school regulations or codes of conduct;
6. advertises any product or service not permitted to minors by law.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to limit the Districts' ability to place additional restrictions or prohibitions on student speech.