# 520 STUDENT SURVEYS

***[Note: School districts are required by statute to have a policy addressing student surveys.]***

## I. PURPOSE

Occasionally, the school district utilizes surveys to obtain student opinions and information about students. The purpose of this policy is to establish the parameters of information that may be sought in student surveys.

## II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Student surveys may be conducted as determined necessary by the school district. Surveys, analyses, and evaluations conducted as part of any program funded through the U.S. Department of Education must comply with 20 United States Code section 1232h.

## III. STUDENT SURVEYS IN GENERAL

A. Student surveys will be conducted anonymously and in an indiscernible fashion. No mechanism will be used for identifying the participating student in any way. No attempt will be made in any way to identify a student survey participant. No requirement that the student return the survey shall exist, and no record of the student's returning a survey will be maintained.

B. The superintendent may choose not to approve any survey that seeks probing personal and/or sensitive information that could result in identifying the survey participant, or is discriminatory in nature based on age, race, color, sex, disability, religion, or national origin.

C. Surveys containing questions pertaining to the student's or the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) personal beliefs or practices in sex, family life, morality, and religion will not be administered to any student unless the parent or guardian of the student is notified in writing that such survey is to be administered and the parent or guardian of the student gives written permission for the student to participate or has the opportunity to opt out of the survey depending upon how the survey is funded. Any and all documents containing the written permission of a parent for a student to participate in a survey will be maintained by the school district in a file separate from the survey responses.

D. Although the survey is conducted anonymously, potential exists for personally identifiable information to be provided in response thereto. To the extent that personally identifiable information of a student is contained in his or her

responses to a survey, the school district will take appropriate steps to ensure the data is protected in accordance with Minnesota Statutes13 (Minnesota Government Data Practices Act), 20 United States Code section 1232g (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) and 34 Code of Federal Regulations Part 99.

E. The school district must not impose an academic or other penalty on a student who opts out of participating in a student survey.

## IV. STUDENT SURVEYS CONDUCTED AS PART OF DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PROGRAM

A. All instructional materials, including teacher's manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material which will be used in connection with any survey, analysis, or evaluation as part of any program funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education, shall be available for inspection by the parents or guardians of the students.

B. No student shall be required, as part of any program funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education, without the prior consent of the student (if the student is an adult or emancipated minor), or, in the case of an unemancipated minor, without the prior written consent of the parent, to submit to a survey that reveals information concerning:

1. political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;

2. mental and psychological problems of the student or the student's family;

3. sex behavior or attitudes;

4. illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;

5. critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;

6. legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;

7. religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parent; or

8. income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

C. A school district that receives funds under any program funded by the U.S. Department of Education shall develop local policies consistent with Sections IV.A. and IV.B., above, concerning student privacy, parental access to information, and administration of certain physical examinations to minors.

1. The following policies are to be adopted in consultation with parents:

a. The right of a parent to inspect, on request, a survey, including an evaluation, created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed by a school to a student, including procedures for granting a parent's request for reasonable access to such survey within a reasonable period of time after the request is received.

"Parent" means a legal guardian or other person acting *in loco parentis* (in place of a parent), such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the welfare of the child.

b. Arrangements to protect student privacy in the event of the administration or distribution of a survey, including an evaluation, to a student which contains one or more of the items listed in Section IV.B., above, including the right of a parent of a student to inspect, on request, any such survey.

c. The right of a parent of a student to inspect, on request, any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for the student and procedures for granting a request by a parent for such access within a reasonable period of time after the request is received.

"Instructional material" means instructional content that is provided to a student, regardless of format, including printed or representational materials, audio-visual materials, and materials in electronic or digital formats (i.e., materials accessible through the Internet). The term does not include academic tests or academic assessments.

d. The administration of physical examinations or screenings that the school district may administer to a student. This provision does not apply to a survey administered to a student in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1400, *et seq.*).

e. The collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that

information (or otherwise providing the information to others for that purpose), including arrangements to protect student privacy that are provided by the school district in the event of such collection, disclosure, or use.

(1) "Personal information" means individually identifiable information including a student or parent's first and last name; a home or other physical address (including street name and the name of the city or town); a telephone number; or a Social Security identification number.

(1) This provision does not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions, such as:

(a) college or other post-secondary education recruitment or military;

(b) book clubs, magazines, and programs providing access to low cost literary products;

(c) curriculum and instructional materials used by elementary and secondary schools;

(d) tests and assessments used by elementary schools and secondary schools to provide cognitive, evaluative, diagnostic, clinical, aptitude, or achievement information about students, or to generate other statistically useful data for the purpose of securing such tests and assessments and the subsequent analysis and public release of the aggregate data from such tests and assessments;

(e) the sale by students of products or services to raise funds for school-related or education-related activities; and

(f)student recognition programs.

(2) The right of a parent to inspect, on request, any instrument used in the collection of information, as described in Section IV.C.1., Subparagraph e., above, before the instrument is administered or distributed to a student and procedures for granting a request by a parent for reasonable access to such



an instrument within a reasonable period of time after the request is received.

2. The policies adopted under Section IV.C., Subparagraph 1., above, shall provide for reasonable notice of the adoption or continued use of such policies directly to parents of students enrolled in or served by the school district.

a. The notice will be provided at least annually, at the beginning of the school year, and within a reasonable period of time after any substantive change in a policy.

b. The notice will provide parents with an opportunity to opt out of participation in the following activities:

(1) Activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information, or otherwise providing that information to others for that purpose.

(2) The administration of any third-party survey (non-Department of Education funded) containing one or more of the items contained in Section IV.B., above.

(3) Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school and scheduled by the school in advance, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student or other students.

"Invasive physical examination" means any medical examination that involves the exposure of private body parts, or act during such examination that includes incision, insertion, or injection into the body, but does not include a hearing, vision, or scoliosis screening.

c. The notice will advise students of the specific or approximate dates during the school year when the activities in Section IV.C.2., Subparagraph b., above, are scheduled, or expected to be scheduled.

d. The notice provisions shall not be construed to preempt applicable provisions of state law that require parental notification and do not apply to any physical examination or screening that is permitted or required by applicable state law, including physical examinations or screenings that are permitted without parental notification.



## V. NOTICE

A. The school district must give parents and students notice of this policy at the beginning of each school year and after making substantive changes to this policy.

B. The school district must inform parents at the beginning of the school year if the district or school has identified specific or approximate dates for administering surveys and give parents reasonable notice of planned surveys scheduled after the start of the school year. The school district must give parents direct, timely notice when their students are scheduled to participate in a student survey by United States mail, e-mail, or another direct form of communication.

C. The school district must give parents the opportunity to review the survey and to opt their students out of participating in the survey.

***Legal References:*** Minn. Stat. Ch. 13 (Minnesota Government Data Practices Act)
Minn. Stat. § 121A.065 (District Surveys to Collect Student Information; Parent Notice and Opportunity for Opting Out)

20 U.S.C. § 1232g (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) 20 U.S.C. § 1232h (Protection of Pupil Rights)
34 C.F.R. § 99 (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations)
*Gonzaga University v. Doe*, 536 U.S. 273 (2002)
*C.N. v. Ridgewood Bd. of Educ.*, 430 F.3d. 159 (3rd Cir. 2005)
*Fields v. Palmdale School Dist.*, 427 F.3d. 1197 (9th Cir. 2005)

***Cross References:*** MSBA/MASA Model Policy 515 (Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records) MSBA/MASA Model Policy 521 (Student Disability Nondiscrimination) MSBA/MASA Model Policy 522 (Title IX Sex Nondiscrimination, Grievance Procedure and Process)