**Policy Booster: Public Purpose Board Policy**

Over the last several years, local government use of funds for many purposes triggered state auditor investigations and elicited findings that inform best practice for public entities responsible for the good stewardship of taxpayer resources.

This sample policy sets some definitions and parameters for expenditure of funds that require documentation and reference to public use. This policy sets an expectation for use of public monies to meet the test of auditor recommendations applied to those earlier investigations. Even if your current public use policy is in alignment with best practice, this will serve as a good reminder to staff as the new school year begins. There is much local latitude in defining these terms of public purpose, public use and reasonable expectation of documentation and compliance. In creating a public use policy for the first time or reviewing your existing policy, school boards should consider the following factors in defining these terms, as one size does not fit all schools or all communities:

* Who or what will be served by the expenditure of public money or use of district property?
* Is this use of district property or expenditure intended to benefit the public as a whole rather than an individual?
* Is this determination an equitable, carefully considered logical conclusion which an independent prudent person and the auditor would also reasonably conclude?
* Your policy should require public purpose to be documented. If hard to document, it probably isn’t a good public purpose.
* What has our district historically provided in the context of supporting employees and/or the public during meetings? Have we provided snacks or lunch during professional development, meetings or other gatherings in the past? How do we reward and show appreciation for staff?
* What other policies do we have that should align to this? Travel, cell phone, use of district vehicles, etc.

**Sample Draft Policy**

We’ve attached a sample Board Policy to this Policy Booster for your reference by adding public purpose definitions and expectation to ISFIS 700 Purpose of Non-instructional and Business Services. This policy is a middle-of-the-road approach. If your district requires much more in depth delineation of public purpose processes and expenditures, or much less, let us know as we can provide other samples to meet your needs.

Contact [margaret@iowaschoolfinance.com](mailto:margaret@iowaschoolfinance.com) with questions.

***The “dot your I’s and cross your T’s” disclaimer:*** *This Policy Booster is not a substitute for legal advice, but rather, the impetus to get the local ball rolling. Check with your local school attorney and consider the impact this policy will have on other policies, handbooks, bargaining agreements, administrative procedures and forms in the district.*

**700 PURPOSE OF NON-INSTRUCTIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES**

700 PURPOSE OF NON-INSTRUCTIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES

The school district's non-instructional services and business operations assist in the delivery of the education program and include, but are not limited to, transportation, the school lunch program, and child care. The board, as it deems necessary, will provide additional non- instructional services to support the school district’s education program. It shall be the goal of the board to provide non-instructional services and to conduct its business operations and use of public funds in an efficient manner.

**Expenditure for Public Purpose**

The Board of Directors recognizes and supports the principle that District funds are to be expended only for legitimate public purposes and not for private personal gain for which services of comparable value have not been rendered to the District. The Board of Directors believes it is important to designate those expenditures for officers, directors, employees, and volunteers, which are in addition to salaries and benefits authorized and/or specified in Code 400 and legitimate expense reimbursements, which serve a legitimate public purpose.

The Board of Directors authorizes the expenditure of District funds for District officers, directors, employees, and volunteers for the following purposes, as these are commonly-granted benefits for employees and volunteers in public and private organizations which aid in recruitment of personnel, promote improvement of staff morale and cooperation, assist in building a commitment to the District, and improve employee and business efficiency, thus assisting in creating a more productive learning environment:

* Mementos for employees for recognition of every five years of service to the District, with the mementos not to exceed $\_\_\_\_\_\_ each in cost to the District.
* A retirement appreciation function once per year to recognize retiring employees with the cost not to exceed $\_\_\_\_\_\_ per attendee.
* A recognition item upon the retirement of an employee, with the recognition item not to exceed $\_\_\_\_\_\_ in cost to the District.
* A recognition item upon the end of service by a Board member not to exceed $\_\_\_\_\_\_ each in cost to the District.
* A recognition item for the president of the Board of Directors upon completion of service as president, not to exceed $\_\_\_\_\_\_ in cost to the District.
* Staff welcome and appreciation breakfast or lunch which Board members and employees attend (a limited number of invited community members may be invited also), once per school year, to recognize employee contributions and to promote communication between Board members, administrators, and other staff members, with the cost of the breakfast to the District not to exceed $\_\_\_\_\_\_per attendee.
* Meals for licensed interviewees (and if the interviewee is an administrative candidate, the interviewee’s spouse) and members of the interview committee accompanying the interviewee at the time of an interview not to exceed $\_\_\_\_\_\_ per attendee if the interview extends over lunch and/or dinner.
* Meals on-site during staff development (in-service) meetings, committee meetings, and meetings hosted at Urbandale with the costs of the meals to the District not to exceed $\_\_\_\_\_\_per attendee. This is to promote a more efficient day so that staff members and attendees do not leave the premises.
* Light meals may also be served to Board members, the administrators, and other school personnel required to be present at Board meetings if the meetings are called prior to \_\_\_\_\_\_p.m., or if they go unusually long, in order to enable the Board to continue with business without interruption, with the cost to the District not to exceed $\_\_\_\_\_\_per attendee.
* A volunteer appreciation function which Board members, employees, and volunteers may attend once a year to recognize the contributions of volunteers with the cost not to exceed $\_\_\_\_\_\_per attendee and where tokens of appreciation may be given to volunteers not to exceed $\_\_\_\_\_\_per volunteer in cost to the District.

The Board of Directors also authorizes the expenditure of District funds for coffee and soft drinks in the school buildings. Coffee, soft drinks, light refreshments, such as cookies, may also be made available at Board and committee meetings to promote a welcoming environment and as a common courtesy for individuals who travel to the District building for attendance at District meetings and conferences.

No District funds will be used to pay the cost of any alcoholic beverage and no alcoholic beverage will be available on school grounds.

**Date of Adoption: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Legal References: Iowa Constitution Article III, Section 31; 279.8, 721.2(5) Code of Iowa