



# Lawrence Public Schools

## Policy of the School Committee

**Section K: SCHOOL / COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

**KF**

**Subject: COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES**

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### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The School Committee believes that its schools are "owned" by the citizens of Lawrence and as such, community use of school facilities is to be encouraged. However, given the level of responsibility in opening the schools to the public, the Committee shall establish specific rules, regulations, and procedures which all such non-school groups must adhere to in order to use school buildings and/or school grounds. Such rules, regulations, and procedures may include: strict limitations on timely notification, the collection of monetary deposits and fees, requirements to hire police, custodians, or other supervisory staff, or other restrictions which the School Committee or the Superintendent of Schools may from time to time promulgate. Smoking and alcoholic beverages shall not be allowed in any school facility or on school grounds.

Any individuals or associations may request permission to utilize school buildings and/or grounds for such educational, recreational, social, civic, philanthropic, and like purposes deemed of interest to the community. The affiliation of any association with a religious organization shall not disqualify it from being allowed such a use for such a purpose. Fees shall be assessed for use of school facilities, staffing required, and equipment usage based upon a Fee Schedule approved by School Committee. There will be no waiver of fees, as the fees are collected to support the ongoing operation and maintenance of the facilities and a set aside of 15% of the fees collected shall be used to support student activities led through the Parent-Teacher Organizations in the schools. For the Performing Arts Center rentals, the 15% set aside will be used to support the performing arts programs at the Lawrence High School Campus.

There are three exemptions of the rental fee requirements, which are detailed below:

- 1) The use of such property as a place of assemblage of citizens to hear candidates for public office via Candidate Forums/Nights shall be considered a civic purpose within the meaning of this policy.
- 2) Municipal/governmental use of facilities for informational and community meetings or forums will be allowed.
- 3) Facility usage for activities that are part of a school-based partnership that will serve less than 30 attendees.

All completed applications for use of school facilities will be reviewed with the Building Administrator of the requested facility to determine date availability. All recommendations will then be forwarded to the School Committee for action at the next scheduled School Committee meeting.

The School Committee shall award concessions for food at any field or building under its control only to the highest responsible bidder.

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 71:71; 30B:1-12

The following rules and regulations shall govern the use of all school buildings and grounds.

1. All applications for the non-school use of school facilities shall be made through the Office of Facilities and Plant Management, 255 Essex Street, fourth floor. Applications for the use of school buildings or grounds must be completed and submitted to the Office of Facilities and Plant Management, at least 30 days prior to the date of requested use.
2. All completed applications will be submitted to the Building Administrator of the requested facility to determine date availability. In the event of any conflict with school-associated activities, the school activity will take precedence and the non-school group will be required to cancel or reschedule its request.
3. All completed applications for use of school facilities will be reviewed by the Facilities and Plant Management Office to determine costs associated for the requested facility usage in accordance with the approved Rental Fee Schedule. All recommendations will then be forwarded to the School Committee for action.
4. The Facilities and Plant Management Office should be notified within ten days in the event of cancellation.
5. If lighting and/or sound systems are required in usage of school facility rental, there will be an hourly fee charged to have a school department staff member work the lights and sound system for the function at the school facilities.
6. School authorities will indicate the number of staff required, dependent upon the size of the function, ~~and~~ the number of spaces to be used, and the requirements of union contracts.
7. Rental fees also include opening the building an hour before a function and an hour after the group leaves to clean and close the building.
8. Groups that use the schools may place temporary identification signs on school grounds if first approved by Superintendent of Schools.
9. In the event that cafeteria facilities and cafeteria equipment are to be used, the Director of Nutrition Services and/or employees designated by him/her must be present at the expense of the hiring authority. No cafeteria equipment may be used without first receiving permission from the Director of Nutrition Services.
10. The person whose name appears on the application for the use of the facility by any group shall be considered the agent of said group and shall be held responsible for their actions.
11. The applicant shall be responsible for the preservation of order within the building and on the grounds. Police and Fire supervision as required by local ordinance or state law and designated by the school authorities shall be provided at the expense of the applicant.
12. Putting up decorations or scenery, moving pianos, or other furniture, is expressly prohibited unless special permission is granted. No scenery or other property belonging to the renting agency shall be stored on school property. It is understood that the use of school equipment shall not be allowed except by express approval of the School Committee. Nailing of scenery to floors is prohibited. If tape is used on walls, it must be approved by the Director of Facilities and Plant Management.

13. Any space used by the applicant shall be examined carefully after use and the applicant agrees to promptly make good on any loss or damage occurring during the applicant's use of the facilities. The School Committee or its representatives have free access to all spaces at all times.
14. No reservations will be made for the use of any facility until the application for such use is approved by the School Committee.
15. There shall be no smoking and no alcoholic beverages brought to or consumed in any school building or on any school grounds.
16. Nothing shall be sold, given, exhibited or displayed without permission from the Superintendent of Schools.
17. The School Committee reserves the right to revoke a permit, for just cause, at any time.
18. On days when schools have been closed because of emergency conditions, the school buildings will not be available, and all scheduled use is automatically canceled. The City of Lawrence and/or the Lawrence Public Schools shall not be responsible for the cancellation of an application for use of school property in case of an emergency which results in the closing of schools.

*Original adoption: 5/11/95*

*Adopted as Amended: 10/8/09*

*First Reading as Amended: 5/26/11*

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