

PRIOR LAKE - SAVAGE AREA SCHOOLS COMMITMENT TO PARENTAL RIGHTS AND TRANSPARENCY

A resolution to affirm the commitment of the Board of Education for Prior-Lake Savage Area Schools to the rights of parents to be informed of and to direct the education of their minor children.

WHEREAS, The Board of Education for Prior-Lake Savage Area Schools believes:

1. Parents¹ play the primary role as decision makers in the student's preK-12 educational experience.
2. Parents are their child's first teacher and remain teachers and role models throughout their child's educational journey.
3. The relationship between student and classroom teacher should be positive and formative but does not replace the relationship of parent and child².
4. The school day should focus on learning and individual development, with opportunities for constructive play and intellectual curiosity, and with appropriately challenging academic goals for every student.
5. All students deserve to feel welcome at school, regardless of religious beliefs, race, ethnicity or sexual orientation.
6. No student shall be compelled to affirm, through speech, writing or action, an opinion that violates their deeply held personal, religious or moral beliefs.
7. Minor student questions of gender identity and sexuality are personal and private. Any involvement in these topics by school staff should be done with the full consent or collaboration of the parents.
8. Consideration of controversial issues has a place in the instructional program of the district when related to the instructional goals of the course of study and when introduced and conducted properly, the content is age-appropriate, and is without bias or intent to cause harm or disruption.
9. Student physical safety at school is a District priority.
10. Students, and their parents, have a right to privacy, and information security.
11. Licensed student services professionals play a critical role in creating positive school environments and strengthening family-school partnerships, which are essential for student well-being and academic growth.
12. Access to technology is necessary in a modern learning environment. District-issued student devices are an extension of instructional resources and should not create an unmitigated risk of introducing harmful or inappropriate content.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education for Prior-Lake Savage Area Schools affirms its commitment to the fundamental rights of parents to play the principal role in directing the education of their children, to be fully informed of their children's educational experience, and to expect the district to work to ensure the best possible student outcomes in a safe, secure and inclusive environment.

Among these rights are the following:

- 1. Curriculum Appropriateness and Transparency:** Parents should expect their child to be appropriately challenged and supported in the learning environment, including access to special education and gifted programming, where appropriate. Parents have a right to know what is being taught in their child's classrooms and to know what resources are provided to or accessed by their child in the learning environment, including library materials, online resources and digital media, to inspect such materials before exposure to their child, and to be assured that those materials are relevant, age-appropriate and not deemed harmful to minors². Parents can expect classrooms, district facilities and district physical assets such as furniture, equipment and computers to be free from political and ideological messaging, signs, flags and symbols that go beyond the scope of relevant or approved curriculum or that do not comply with the district's controversial topics policy³.
- 2. Student Privacy and Safety:** Parents shall expect the district to protect their children's privacy by refraining from collecting or sharing student personal information, or information of student's family members, that is not deemed necessary for instructional purposes, essential operations of the district (i.e., transportation) or mandated by state or federal law². The district and its authorized affiliates should not collect, give, sell or negotiate access to student personal information without parental consent, and without legitimate purposes related to education or student well-being^{2,4}. Parents will be informed of any behavioral or safety events involving their children or dangerous or violent activity on school grounds that may affect their child, or that disrupts their child's educational environment⁵. District-issued student devices are an extension of classroom and approved individual learning resources, will not be used to monitor or collect unauthorized information from students, and will be protected from accessing material that is not directly linked to learning goals or that may be deemed inappropriate or harmful to minors⁵.
- 3. Deeply held Family Values:** Parents shall maintain authority over decisions that directly impact the health and well-being of their child. This includes a parent's right to opt their child out of allowable lessons or curriculum that may not align with the family's deeply held personal or religious beliefs. The district will not mandate physical or mental examination or medical intervention beyond statutory obligations, without parental consent². School psychologists, counselors, and social workers, play a critical role in district relations with families in determine the best course of action to serve those utilizing student services for mental health, behavior, emotional, career and learning support⁶.
- 4. Student personal and gender identity:** The district celebrates the diversity of our Prior Lake-Savage community and expects that students feel safe and welcome in the school environment. Staff will cooperate with parents to ensure students are referred to in ways that represent the student's identity⁷.

- a. District staff will not be permitted to call a minor student by names, nicknames or pronouns other than commonly shortened or abbreviated full names (for example, William to “Bill” or Jennifer to “Jen”) or pronouns consistent with the student’s biological sex, without written permission from the parent.
- b. Students will use shared bathroom and locker room facilities according to their biological sex. Students who request exceptions for shared facility use, shall have a plan on file with the school district that is determined by the Superintendent, is approved by the parent, and will not introduce an excess of safety or privacy risks for other District students.
- c. Students will participate in athletics programs consistent with their biological sex and the rules of the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL). Any consideration of alternate placement due to a student’s gender identity, must comply with MSHSL’s policy⁸ and be approved by the Board.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Education for Prior-Lake Savage Area Schools directs the Superintendent to develop or confirm procedures to fully protect these rights of District parents and their children to the extent allowed by state and federal law, effective September 1, 2023.

BE IT YET FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board calls on Representative Ben Bakeberg (MN House District 54B), Representative Jess Hanson (MN House District 55A), Representative Jon Koznick (MN House District 57A), Representative Kristi Pursell (MN House District 58A), State Senator Eric Pratt (MN Senate District 54), State Senator Lindsey Port (MN Senate District 55), State Senator Zach Duckworth (MN Senate District 57), State Senator Bill Lieske (MN Senate District 58), US Congresswoman Angie Craig, US Senator Amy Klobuchar, US Senator Tina Smith, and MN Governor Tim Walz to enhance state and federal legislation that further ensures these rights are protected and afforded to parents of school-age children in the School District of Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools in accordance with the Minnesota Constitution⁹ promising a free and appropriate education to all children, and under the due process clause of the 14th Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America¹⁰ affirming a parent’s right to make decisions concerning the care, custody and control of their children and to direct the upbringing and education of children under their control.

This is our collective work.

Approved this ____ day of _____, 2023, by a ____ vote of the School Board.

References and Footnotes:

1. For purposes of this policy, the term “parent” includes a legal guardian or other person standing in loco parentis (such as grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the welfare of the child)
2. Policy 515 Protection and Privacy of Student Records
3. Policy 601.1 Review of Curriculum Content and Alternative Instruction
4. Unless a legally directed investigation otherwise prohibits disclosure.
5. Policy 506 Student Discipline, Policy 524 & 409.1 Electronic Technologies Acceptable Use Policy (Staff and Students), Student Code of Ethics Using Social Media, 525 Website and Intranet Policy, 525.1 Student Use of Cellular Phones, Digital Imaging Devices and Other Personal Electronic Devices
6. MN Statute 124D.8955 Parent and Family Involvement Policy
7. Policy 506.1 Student Bullying Prohibition
8. Per MSHSL Transgender Participation Policy (2014)
9. MN Const.
10. U.S. Const. amend. XIX