

CONSIDERATION OF FIELD TRIPS

The Peru Central School District Board of Education recognizes the value that field trips may offer to students. The Superintendent of Schools is encouraged to engage Principals, faculty, and parents to work toward a K-12 pathway of age-appropriate field trip experiences that complement the school district's curriculum. The intent is to reduce unintended duplication of field trip experiences, thereby providing students a broader set of field trips.

The Superintendent of Schools is encouraged to advance for school board consideration, by January of each budget development season, such a K-12 pathway of field trips to be considered for funding via the annual budget. The Board of Education's longer term goal is to eliminate school community fund raising associated with field trips that are part of the curriculum.

To promote student safety and good stewardship of time and resources, transporting students from the central campus for field trips is to be done using the least amount of resources, time and distance that are necessary to accomplish the expressed educational purpose of that field trip.

General Guidelines

- A. Student safety is to be given first consideration and is to be evident in the field trip proposal.
- B. Each field trip proposal submitted for administrative consideration is to detail the educational relevance and purpose for the proposed field trip. Doing so will help determine whether or not that proposed field trip warrants the investment of time and other resources. Interscholastic athletics field trips associated with sectional or state-level competition are excluded from this requirement to detail the relevance and value.
- C. Proposals for out-of-county field trips or that involve time beyond the regular school day or that involve overnight accommodations or that involve weekends are to be submitted in time for consideration by the Principal or Director eight weeks in advance of the proposed field trip, prior to any substantial trip planning, and in advance of any payment or reservation. Such proposals warranting further consideration are to be forwarded by the Principal or Director to the Superintendent, no less than seven weeks in advance of that proposed field trip.
- D. Field trips that involve weekends or overnight accommodations or donation of funds require school board authorization at a regular monthly meeting prior to the month of the requested field trip. Such requests are to be provided to the district clerk two weeks in advance of that regular monthly meeting.
- E. All details of any proposed fund raising activities and proposed student requirements for the proposed field trip are to be included within the field trip proposal.
- F. Peru CSD employees are not authorized to engage in field trips with Peru CSD students without prior school district authorization obtained via this policy.

Budgeting, Donations and Fund Raising

Field trips that are intended to be part of the instructional program and course curriculum are to be scheduled only to the extent there is sufficient district funding budgeted to support such trips. The school board's longer term goal is that all costs associated with such designated field trips are to be paid from district funds. Students are prohibited from raising funds to pay for such trips identified as being part of the instructional program and course curriculum.

Any club or organization that wishes to donate monies for curricular activities may do so following approval of the Superintendent of Schools and Board action to accept such donated funds into the district's general fund. No donation or request for donations may take place at the building level. Monies for approved curricular activities associated with such approved donations to the district's general fund are to be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools via the district's general fund are to be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools via the district's Treasurer or Business Administrator at least one week in advance of any vendor deadline for district payment.

Extracurricular field trips sponsored by clubs and booster organizations may be proposed and such clubs and organizations may engage in fund raising to support such extracurricular field trips. However, such field trips may not be scheduled for days and times when school is in session, and such field trips are not considered to be part of the instructional program or course curriculum.

Safety, Supervision and Chaperone Training

Field trip leaders are to be prepared for:

- A. "What if"" A student gets sick? Is not accounted for? There's an emergency at the student's home?
- B. Identification of students with medical needs and students requiring medication during the time of the trip.
- C. The most important task for staff and chaperones: supervision. The trip leader is to supervise and manage the activities of both students and chaperones. Although properly trained with an understanding of what is expected, chaperones without adequate experience in the field need to be organized and directed.

A brief gathering of chaperones to provide essential safety and supervision information is to take place immediately prior to any field trip. Any overnight field trip requires a training session for all chaperones prior to the date of the overnight field trip. Chaperones often do not have experience supervising groups of students. They are generally not aware of the district's policies and procedures concerning travel and may not have reviewed the district's code of conduct.

Training sessions with approved chaperones are to include instruction as to where they should be stations or whom they are to be supervising during the trip. The field trip leader is to emphasize the school district's expectation of chaperone performance and behavior. Chaperones should be aware of how their performance affects the district's reputation. The

field trip leader is to distribute and outline district policies on drugs and alcohol, sexual harassment and discrimination and other relevant policies. Prohibited behavior [and consequences] should be discussed. Emergency management plans for field trips are to be outlined to chaperones, as well.

At least one staff member other than the driver is to be on each school bus and 'in charge' of student conduct on that bus.

Higher Risk Activities

Higher risk activities such as rafting, mountain hiking, rock climbing, cave exploration, and skiing involve unusual hazards that require special attention:

- A. All required or recommended license and certification requirements for guides, outfitters and instructors should be reviewed and verified before the trip.
- B. A detailed description of the activities is to be featured in the parental/guardian permission slip. This gives parents and guardians the opportunity to evaluate their child's skills, physical condition and interest beforehand and determine if the child should participate.
- C. All participants, chaperones and staff must wear personal protective equipment as recommended or required.
- D. The permission slip may have an "opt-out" provision for individual students in a specific activity, such as use of rock-climbing wall at a recreation center.

Overnight Field Trips

Both male and female chaperones are required on overnight field trips involving male and female students. The teacher[s] requesting the field trip will schedule and conduct, in close consultation with the Principal or Director, a mandatory pre-trip meeting for parents, guardians, chaperones and students when overnight travel is occurring. The rules and itineraries [containing a detailed summary of each day's activities as well as lodging arrangements] must be distributed, along with the ramifications for breaking the rules and the penalties for violation.

Both the student and parent/guardian are to sign and acknowledge they have read and understand the district's code of conduct. Parents and/or guardians should be advised that they will be promptly notified if a student is going to be sent home for a major infraction, and that they will bear the cost of additional travel expenses. The field trip leader is to check overnight accommodations to make certain that they are suitable for students.

There should be no access to mini-bars or telephones that allow outside calls that can be charged to the room. Discourage use of in-room movies and games. Principals and Directors are to see that chaperones for overnight trips who are without prior Peru CSD service as chaperones for overnight trips complete a brief application that includes at least three references and that chaperone's authorization for a background check to be performed through the school district. Such applications should be reviewed by the Principal or Director, and references are to be checked and verified through the Principal or Director.

Protocols for Overnight Field Trip Itineraries

- A. Limit the amount of free or down time. Schedule staff to supervise students during these times.
- B. Provide security during the night. Depending on logistics, some chaperones should be on duty during the night with access into student sleeping quarters.
- C. Provide telephone access for chaperones and staff. They should have access at all times to phone numbers for a Principal or Director and a back-up administrator.
- D. Take 'head-counts' at different times during the day to keep track of the students and their whereabouts.
- E. Maintain the planned chaperone/student ratio. As a general rule, a chaperone ratio of 1:10 [trained chaperones to students] is expected. That ratio may be lower, depending on the student population and/or nature of the trip.
- F. Ensure that curfews are enforced with mandatory bed checks.
- G. Create and bring a phone chain [parent/guardian numbers]. Students are to provide the trip leader with a recent photo of that student's face, with that student's personal information on the back of the photo. Such photos are to be returned to the student at the end of the field trip.
- H. Plan for disruptions in schedules. For example, if there is inclement weather and a rainout, be prepared with substitute activities.
- I. Sleeping arrangements on coed trips also present unique challenges. Adjoining rooms between males and females are discouraged. Coed room visits are prohibited and considered a major infraction.

Note: This document is a major update to the Consideration of Field Trips policy adopted June 2003. Various topics and sections of this preliminary draft are based on NYSSBA, NYSIR [New York State Insurance Reciprocal] and the Plainview-Old Bethpage UFSD's guidelines on field trips. This updated policy follows June 2007 constituent review and comment.

First reading: July 10, 2007; Second Reading & Adopted: August 14, 2007