

PARENTAL BILL OF RIGHTS March 2023

Preamble

Parent, parents or guardians (parent) are responsible for providing for the physiological, physical, economic, emotional, and spiritual needs of their child/children (child). School personnel (employees and volunteers who work with students) are to provide an education based on academic standards established by local and state policy makers. That education should be delivered in an environment that is safe, secure, encouraging and effective and reflect a partnership with the child's parent. The child will succeed at the highest level when the adults in their life take responsibility for each respective role played and then work cooperatively. This document defines the expectation of the rights of parents and limitation on the actions of those adults involved with the formal education of the child. The listing of rights is not meant to be a link to laws addressing the topic but is meant to be an affirmation of the rights every parent can reasonably expect.¹

The parent has the right to:

1. **make final decisions** on their child's behalf despite contrary views or objections from school personnel.
2. **work cooperatively** with school personnel in reaching mutual agreement. When concerns or conflicts occur, they will be resolved within five school days.
3. **respectful, considerate, honest, transparent, and timely information** about their child from school personnel.
4. **full disclosure of all information** regarding their child including all official and unofficial school records. School personnel will not willfully conceal information or events from the child's parent unless a unique legal circumstance exists such as a "no contact" order issued by a judge is in effect.
5. make **inquiry and receive all curricular materials** used or proposed to be used in the child's education in five days following the inquiry. This includes presentations by guest speakers. Full disclosure to the parent must be made prior to the student being exposed to any materials must occur with time to respond and/or negotiate an alternative experience.
6. **request an alternative form** of schoolwork (e.g. traditional paper assignment instead of a computer-based assignment) if the child is not making satisfactory progress.
7. **advocate for the child** if minimum academic standards are not being met and work with the school personnel, without encumbrance, to develop a written academic plan. This

¹ One parent's encounter with her ten year old's unresponsive school personnel lead to formation of an ad hoc group of people interested in enumerating parental rights came together to produce this document. The group consists of the frustrated parent (Cassie Fredregill), a blogger Gary Gross, two grandparents who are retired educators (John Palmer and Phyllis VanBuren) and a parent that is a practicing educator (Jeff Johnson).

plan could be based on deficient academic work or a more formalized plan like an IEP/504 that makes student-specific reasonable accommodations.

8. **inspect** all internal and external standardized student surveys at least five school days before being distributed to students.
9. **opt their child out** of surveys or if the student takes the survey, to opt out of any personal demographic collection that could identify a specific child.
10. a **hostile free environment** where school personnel, students, and visitors will not harass, demean, isolate, or retaliate against the parent or the child.
11. have their child **opt out** of class activity, including field trips, and be given an appropriate alternative assignment, within five school days, that is amenable to both the teacher and parent. An alternative assignment will not be punitive in nature. If an agreement cannot be reached, the parent can opt their child out of an activity without child suffering academic or disciplinary penalty.
12. **ask their child** about classroom curricular materials and other school matters and the child has the right to freely answer the parent without fear of disciplinary action or retaliation by school officials.
13. **sit in and quietly observe** their child's classroom after arrangements have been made in advance of the observation time.
14. **encourage** their child to take responsibility by self-advocating (e.g., questioning a grade, asking about a homework deadline) in a respectful manner with school personnel.
15. **inquire** about the credentials of a teacher, substitute teacher, para, or any guest speaker working in the child's classroom. Any inquiry made must receive an appropriate response in five school days.
16. **request**, that during a disciplinary proceeding, a child advocate be present when one-on-one conversations take place between anyone 18 years of age or older. This is for the protection of both the child and the school employee. The advocate could be a child's parent, trusted relative or teacher who was not involved in the event, the dean of students, or school office receptionist.

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