

Student field trips can enhance student learning, help to develop new interests and more excitement for learning, and provide useful opportunities for students to engage with people, environments, activities, and resources outside of the confines of the school campus. At the same time, field trips require substantial advance planning, can sometimes be costly, and introduce certain safety risks.

District employees and other agents of the District are always responsible for ensuring that they have been sufficiently authorized to allow students to participate in any off-premises, District-supervised trip, event, or activity. However, within this policy, a “field trip” means a District-approved and District-supervised off-premises activity for students, but excludes all of the following:

1. Travel between two or more District schools;
2. Off-premises activities that are an inherent and appropriately-authorized aspect of a District-sponsored class or other activity, such that the student's participation in the class or activity necessarily requires or reasonably implies the student's participation in the off-premises aspect(s) of the class or other activity (e.g., an athletic team's scheduled away contests, attending a dual-credit course on a post-secondary campus, or workplace apprenticeships at a jobsite are not “field trips”);

If District funds are allocated in the annual budget for field trips, funds will be allocated with sensitivity to equity considerations (such as possible perceptions that students in different schools or classes are not offered comparable opportunities).

Field trips under this policy are offered to students as a learning activity or experience that enhances the District's curriculum and directly contributes to student attainment of the course priority standards. If the health or safety of the students or staff demands it, an administrator may deny a student the opportunity to participate in a field trip. The student shall be provided with an alternate learning activity that is aligned with the same standards that are related to the field trip learning experience.

Field Trip Proposals

Field trip requests shall be considered for possible approval if they are supported by a sufficient proposal that is submitted to an appropriate administrator by the staff member(s) who are responsible for planning and organizing the field trip.

A field trip proposal shall consist of a description of at least the following:

1. The name(s) of the staff member(s) who are submitting the proposal and who are responsible for the planning and organization of the proposed field trip;
2. Location (destination(s)/distance);
3. Proposed date;
4. Expected duration;
5. Identification of the eligible student group (e.g., by class, grade level(s), or activity);
6. Expected cost per student and identification of the proposed source(s) of funding (e.g., identifying any proposed District share and any student/family share);
7. A description of the connection between the planned activities and the prioritized standard(s) for the course;
8. The plan for student supervision, which shall be consistent with the District policy related to District-authorized volunteers to the extent applicable;
9. The plan for transportation;
10. The plan for meals/food (if needed);
11. Assessment of accessibility considerations for students with disabilities;
12. Assessment of such health and safety considerations as the approving authority may require, keeping in mind issues such as medication administration and emergency preparedness, including possible medical emergencies; and
13. The plan for the supervision of and alternative activities for any non-participating students.

District Authorization/Approval

The building principal may approve a student field trip that otherwise complies with this policy, including the following guidelines:

1. General class or grade-level field trips that occur on non-school days, that depart from school before the students' normal arrival time, or that return to school after the students' normal departure time are discouraged, but may be approved by the administration if the administration determines that (1) the proposed trip has substantial value that cannot be easily replicated or replaced through an alternative activity; and (2) that it would be highly impractical to schedule the activity within a regular school day.
2. Field trips primarily for the purpose of entertainment and recreation are discouraged but may be approved by the building principal as a behavioral celebration or as a capstone-type privilege (e.g., an end-of-year class trip for 8th grade students) provided that the approval of any such trip does not compromise the District's ability to meet mandatory instructional hours requirements.

Permission of Parent or Guardian

Before any student is permitted to participate in a school field trip, the District personnel who are organizing and supervising the field trip must ensure that the student's parent or guardian has given permission. In this context, a "parent" includes an adult who is regularly responsible for the day-to-day care, supervision, and well-being of the child and who, on a documented basis, is serving in the capacity of a parent for other school-related purposes and decisions on either a temporary or permanent basis.

The District may elect to annually request parent permission via a single form or similar communication for a student to participate in multiple intra-school-day field trips, provided that the trips occur within the same school year. Even with this advance permission granted, the staff organizing the field trip are to provide advanced communication to the parents regarding the details of the trip. In the event that a parent withdraws approval to participate in the intra-school-day field trip, the staff will provide an alternate learning experience for the student.

Parent or guardian permission must be in writing. School personnel may, at their sole discretion, accept an electronic communication that includes the pertinent information and that has sufficient indicators of authenticity.

If sufficient permission is not received by the school-communicated deadline, or if District personnel have reason to doubt the authenticity of a communication that purports to grant permission, District personnel may deny a student participation in the field trip.

Fees Assessed to Students/Families

Students may be assessed fees to cover all or a portion of the actual costs associated with their participation in a field trip. The amount of such fees, or a reasonable estimate thereof, must be approved in connection with approving the field trip. Material changes to an approved student fee must be submitted for re-approval.

A parent or guardian may request a fee waiver for certain trips or trip expenses under applicable District policies by contacting the field trip organizer.

Any school-supervised fundraising that is to be conducted to cover the costs of a field trip must have appropriate approval and follow the District's applicable policies and procedures regarding fundraising.

The District cannot guarantee that pre-paid fees will be refundable in the event of a cancellation or if any student does not participate in a trip/activity as expected for any reason.

Transportation

District-provided transportation for any field trip shall be by school bus unless the group is small enough to use a District-owned van with all passengers wearing a seatbelt.

If permitted and authorized by the District, District-provided transportation of students for a field trip by any vehicle other than a school bus (e.g., via a private vehicle arranged by the District) must comply with all legal requirements that apply to such vehicles and their drivers.

Alternative Activities; Make-Up Work

District personnel who are responsible for planning a field trip must also plan for the appropriate supervision of and alternative activities for non-participating students who are in the relevant class, activity, or group and who attend school on the day of the field trip. A student may not be denied school attendance or alternate learning activities aligned to the same curricular standards because they are not participating in a field trip.

When students participate in a field trip that is planned and approved by school officials, they are not considered absent from school and shall be permitted a reasonable period of time, not less than the time allowed for a student with an excused absence, to make up any school work that has been missed due to the trip. Such make up work shall be arranged and accepted without penalty or any other undue disadvantage to the student.

Legal References:

Wisconsin Statutes

[Section 118.13](#) [student nondiscrimination]

[Section 121.54\(7\)](#) [transportation of students for extracurricular activities, including school outings and field trips]

Wisconsin Administrative Code

[PI 9](#) [student nondiscrimination]

Cross References: 352.1 District Sponsored Trips/Activities Involving Long-Distance Travel or Overnight Stay

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Amended: 05/04/98

12/20/21