

101 LEGAL STATUS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

I. PURPOSE

It is a primary principle of this nation that the public welfare demands an educated and informed citizenry. The power to provide for public education is a state function vested in the state legislature and delegated to local school districts. The purpose of this policy is to clarify the legal status of the charter school.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. The charter school is an independent school district, and may be referred to as charter school or school district. The school district is a public corporation subject to the control of the legislature, limited only by constitutional restrictions. The school district has been created for educational purposes.
- B. The legislature has authority to prescribe the school district's powers and privileges, its boundaries and territorial jurisdictions.
- C. The school district has only the powers conferred on it by the legislature; however, the school board's authority to govern, manage, and control the school district, to carry out its duties and responsibilities, and to conduct the business of the school district includes implied powers in addition to any specific powers granted by the legislature.

III. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ENTITIES

- A. The charter school is a separate legal entity.
- B. The charter school is coordinate with and not subordinate to the county(ies) and school district(s) in which it is situated.
- C. The charter school is not subservient to municipalities or other school districts within its territory.

IV. POWERS AND AUTHORITY OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

- A. Funds
 - 1. The school district, through its school board, has authority to raise funds for the operation and maintenance of its schools, and authority to manage and expend such funds, subject to applicable law.
 - 2. The school district has wide discretion over the expenditure of funds under its control for public purposes, subject to the limitations provided by law.
 - 3. School district officials occupy a fiduciary position in the management and expenditure of funds entrusted to them.

Note: The applicability and enforceability of this policy 204 is limited to, and qualified by, Minnesota or Federal law that, at the time any such circumstance within the scope of the policy arise, may be contrary to some aspect or all of the policy.

B. Raising Funds

1. The charter school is prohibited by law from levying taxes for any purpose, including the conduct of schools, payment of indebtedness, and all proper expenses.
2. The school district may issue bonds in accordance with the provisions of Minn. Stat. Ch. 475, or other applicable law.
3. The school district has authority to accept gifts and donations for school purposes, subject to applicable law.

C. Property

1. The school district may acquire property for school purposes. It may sell, exchange, or otherwise dispose of property which is no longer needed for school purposes, subject to applicable law.
2. The school district shall manage its property in a manner consistent with the educational functions of the district.
3. The school district may permit the use of its facilities for community purposes which are not inconsistent with, nor disruptive of, its educational mission.
4. School district officials hold school property as trustees for the use and benefit of students, taxpayers and the community.

D. Contracts

1. The school district is empowered to enter into contracts in the manner provided by law.
2. The school district has authority to enter into installment purchases and leases with an option to purchase, pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 465.71 or other applicable law.
3. The school district has authority to make contracts with other governmental agencies and units for the purchase, lease or other acquisition of equipment, supplies, materials, or other property, including real property as permitted and limited by law.
4. The school district has authority to enter into employment contracts and employment agreements with individuals independent of any bargaining unit.

E. Textbooks, Educational Materials, and Studies

1. The school district, through its school board and administrators, has the authority to determine what textbooks, educational materials, and studies should be pursued.
2. The school district shall establish and apply the school curriculum.

F. Actions and Suits

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The school district has authority to sue and to be sued.

Legal References:

Minn. Const. art. 13, § 1

Minn. Stat. Ch. 123B (School Districts, Powers and Duties)

Minn. Stat. Ch. 124D.10 (Charter Schools)

Minn. Stat. Ch. 179A (Public Employment Labor Relations)

Minn. Stat. § 465.035 (Conveyance or Lease of Land)

Minn. Stat. §§ 465.71; 471.345; 471.6161; 471.64 (Rights, Powers, Duties of Political Subdivisions)

Minnesota Association of Public Schools v. Hanson, 287

Minn. 415, 178 N.W.2d 846 (1970)

Independent School District No. 581 v. Mattheis, 275 Minn. 383, 147 N.W.2d 374 (1966)

Village of Blaine v. Independent School District No. 12, 272 Minn. 343, 138 N.W.2d 32 (1965)

Huffman v. School Board, 230 Minn. 289, 41 N.W.2d 455 (1950)

State v. Lakeside Land Co., 71 Minn. 283, 73 N.W.970 (1898)

Cross References:

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 201 (Legal Status of School Board)

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 603 (Curriculum Development)

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 604 (Instructional Curriculum)

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 606 (Textbooks and Instructional Materials)

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 705 (Investments)

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 706 (Acceptance of Gifts)

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 801 (Equal Access to School Facilities)

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