

Portland Public School District 1st Reading

DATE OF FIRST READING: August 06, 2024

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR

Revision of Policy 6.50.010-P:

Field Trips, Foreign Travel, and Other Off-Campus Activities

The Portland Public School District is providing Notice of Proposed Revised Policy and Public Comment to offer interested parties reasonable opportunity to submit data or comments on the proposed policies noted below.

Public comment may be submitted in writing directly to the district or through the district website noted below. Written comments must be submitted by 5:00pm on the Last Date for Comment listed below.

Open for Comment until at least:

August 27, 2024

Summary: Field Trips, Foreign Travel, and Other Off-Campus Activities
6.50.010-P

1st Reading by: Director Julia Brim-Edwards
Portland Public School Board, Policy Committee Chair

Recommended for a 1st Reading by:
Portland Public Schools Board of Education, Policy Committee

Draft Policy Web Site: <http://www.pps.net/draftpolicies>

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Draft Policy Comment Form: <https://forms.gle/VqYbmVA36qqADj6n6>

Included in Packet	Page
Staff Report	03
Redlined Policy with Proposed Changes	06
Original Policy	11



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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STAFF REPORT

Date: July 21, 2024

To: Portland Public Schools Board of Directors

CC: Kimberlee Armstrong, Superintendent
Liz Large, Contracted General Counsel

From: Jon Franco, Chief of Schools
Christyn McCloskey, Senior Director of Schools
Margaret Calvert, Assistant Superintendent

Subject: Proposed revision to Field Trips, Foreign Travel, and Other Off-Campus Activities 6.50-010-P

BACKGROUND

Board Policy 6.50.010-P (Field Trips, Foreign Travel, and Other Off-Campus Activities) was last updated in 2019 to mitigate the adverse academic impacts on students traveling as well as students who remain on campus. Since the update, we have reviewed and approved planning for international off-campus learning activities that meet the five-day threshold contained in the Administrative Directive that implements the policy, including trips to Taiwan and Japan. The schools were able to meet their learning objectives and stay within guidelines by scheduling trips in coordination with non-instruction days, including breaks, weekends, and holidays. Two DLI programs in particular have struggled to meet this requirement, thus prompting an exception in 2023 for two trips and then again in 2024 for just one trip. As a result, the Policy Committee has proposed to amend Board Policy 6.50.010-P to extend the time students can be away from campus up to 10 days, so long as certain criteria are met. Staff has expressed and continues to have concerns about the academic impacts on traveling students and students remaining at the school when students are gone for ten consecutive days for international trips.

RELATED POLICIES/BEST PRACTICES

[6.50.011-AD](#) Field Trips

[6.50.012-AD](#) Travel Study Programs

[6.50.021-AD](#) Foreign Travel- Study Programs

ANALYSIS OF SITUATION

The District recognizes the value in off-campus learning experiences for students while also acknowledging that these experiences provide learning opportunities for a portion of the participant's classes. In the past year, we reviewed over 200 requests from schools to travel for student learning experiences that were either overnight or wilderness. In addition, the Office of

Teaching and Learning has been developing a Middle Grades Redesign to include a capstone project tied to a field trip for all middle schoolers. It is the intention of the District for all Middle Grade students to have place-based learning experiences that are connected to a capstone project.

In looking at how to provide these off-campus learning experiences, we must balance the undeniable educational value of the trip (language and cultural immersion, especially) against potential educational losses that come from students being absent from ongoing classroom work (math and language arts, especially) that is not connected to the trip, as well as disruptions in the continuity of the curriculum in the other classes for both traveling and non-traveling (6th through 8th grade) students.

School Environment/Nontraveling Students: In assessing the proposed policy amendment, we also need to look at the impact of the teachers' and administrators' absence in the building when they supervise a student trip and are off-campus for two weeks. Administrator presence at school sites support student learning and a healthy school climate by providing consistency and guidance to staff, students and community members. This can be particularly important when they are addressing staff and student concerns or when incidents arise in the building or when managing relationships with families and communities at large. When teachers chaperone off-campus learning with some of their students, students who remain on-site (in the classes that are traveling and in courses not included in the trip) are provided substitute teachers, which interrupts the learning experience for the students who remain on campus. For some of the immersion classes, a substitute teacher brought in to cover classes may not be bilingual, causing even greater disruption to their learning. These are examples of the impacts we consider when balancing the positive experiences of extended travel/experiences.

Traveling Students: In addition, there are collateral academic impacts on traveling students, as well. For example, traveling for ten school days off campus could consume up to half of a math unit. Depending on the grade level, this could hold true for not only math, but the other courses that are not in the integrated unit of study, which could be up to five subject areas. Schools outline support for students traveling, some of which ask students to complete units of study prior to departure, which include having materials ready for them during school break (e.g., having a language arts unit posted on Canvas during spring break). This becomes more challenging for students with special educational and language learning needs, particularly for extended trips. Another strategy to support student learning described by one school was for the teachers of non-DLI courses to make themselves available to students upon their return during academic support time, if it exists at the site, to answer questions or review material. The longer the trips, the more complex the plans have to be to help all students maintain academic momentum in all of their courses.

With respect to changes to the policy, much of the discussion on traveling for off-campus learning has centered on a few of the twelve DLI programs (Japanese, Mandarin and Vietnamese at the middle school level); it did not address other grade levels or Russian or Spanish programs. The policy applies to all off-campus learning and other international travel and field trips.

Many international trips have been able to meet the five-day threshold, as well as their learning objectives, while staying within policy guidelines. The trip leaders used natural breaks in the school calendar (planning days, spring break, etc.) to extend the trip thereby minimizing the adverse impact on the students' education across the span of their enrolled courses. Both the MDLI and VDLI programs were also able to meet the policy guidelines this year:

- Vietnamese DLI trip: May 17-27, 2024 (8 students), 5 school days and using Memorial Day weekend
- Mandarin DLI trip: March 24 - April 8, 2024 (29 students), Spring Break, 5 school days and the grading day on April 5

- Only the JDLI trip operated outside of policy expectations and the 5-day threshold.

Additional information on these trips can be found [here](#).

FISCAL IMPACT

International trips require a building administrator and one or more teachers to attend. This requires airfare, lodging, meals, etc., and also securing an administrator and teacher substitutes to cover the building while the principal or assistant/vice principal and the teacher are on the trip. Doubling the number of school days missed with this policy change also doubles the cost of admin/teacher subs. During the Policy Committee meeting on June 10, it was suggested that perhaps administrator attendance is unnecessary on international trips. After gathering input from four school leaders whose programs embarked on international trips this spring, all were in agreement that an administrator presence is necessary for the safety of students and adults on the trip. Some of their reasons include:

- Providing student management and chaperone support
- Serving as ambassadors while attending school visits and meeting with local school boards and mayors
- Navigating emergencies (big or small) as they arise

Schools also need to hire substitute teachers to cover the 6th and 7th grade classes for the teacher(s) chaperoning the trip, which carries a fiscal impact on the school building. Substitute teachers receive \$247.58 per day. \$276 per day if they go over 10 days. Substitute administrators receive \$75/hour.

The cost of the trip and how it is funded varies by school and program. The overall cost to the District inevitably increases as the trip length extends. The most recent JDLI trip, for instance, cost over \$300,000 dollars.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community members and staff who lead the JDLI, MDLI, and VMLI trips presented their positions at a variety of Board Committee meetings, as well as before the full Board and in written comments.

CONNECTION TO BOARD GOALS

Board goals are incrementally implicated if students are traveling for ten school days, specifically as it relates to eighth-grade math and reading goals. A number of courses are not explicitly incorporated into the interdisciplinary DLI off-campus learning unit, which may mean students miss explicit math and reading instruction and compromise the continuity curriculum for up to two weeks (10 school days, as proposed).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Ten-day absences are not recoverable by all traveling students in all classes. In addition, the impact on the school environment of absent students, absent teachers, and absent administrators is also too significant for 10 consecutive days. As an alternative to the proposed amendment, staff recommends Board Policy 6.50.010-P keep the 5-school day threshold intact, with an allowance for 2 additional days for trips that require over 10 hours of travel.



Board Policy

6.50.010-P

Field Trips, Foreign Travel, and Other Off-Campus Activities

The District believes in the value of experiences outside the classroom and endeavors to make these opportunities available to all. As in all other aspects of school life, PPS is committed to both the access to and the inclusivity of off-campus activities. In planning and authorizing off-campus activities, primary consideration shall be given to the educational outcomes derived, the safety and welfare of students involved, District expectations of conduct and behavior on the part of all participants, and the selection of appropriate adult supervision in accordance with Board Policy [5.10.064-P Professional Conduct between Adults and Students](#).

I. District-Sponsored Activities

Special activities outside the classroom are an important part of an educational experience. Students shall be allowed to participate in carefully planned learning experiences or co-curricular activities, which fall outside the normal school program, school day, and/or are off-campus when they serve a legitimate educational purpose. Off-campus activities should promote and not compromise the integrity and purpose of the District's educational programs. Plans for continuity of curriculum must be made for the off-campus activity and likewise for students remaining on campus. This policy applies to all off-campus activities, unless otherwise noted.

- 1) As authorized through this policy and Administrative Directives, the Superintendent's designees may authorize field trips and other extra-curricular activities involving travel off-campus when such activities contribute to educational goals.
- 2) District staff responsible for overseeing extended travel must notify building administrators in advance of the trip so that plans for continuity of curriculum and instruction can be assured for students remaining on campus. Those plans will be communicated to the school community and observed so that no disruption in curriculum or programming will occur for students remaining on campus.



Field Trips, Foreign Travel, and Other Off-Campus Activities

- 3) Certain trips may be authorized for an extended time when the distance traveled requires additional time, such as international travel, and when the trip involves a rigorous academic experience, as long as the following conditions are met:
 - a. Reasonable accommodations have been made to minimize the impact on students remaining on campus
 - b. Use of staff not usually assigned to the students traveling should take into consideration the needs of the students who remain at the school and the operations of the school, generally.
 - c. The plans made to minimize impacts have been approved by the school principal and the principal's supervisor.
 - d. If these conditions are met, the standard allowable travel time shall be 10 school days, although the Superintendent may approve longer durations when necessary to fulfill the educational purposes of an overseas trip.
- 3) Schools and staff to submit field trip requests for review, and approval or denial, prior to any planned activities.
 - a. Principals shall have the authority to approve regular off-campus field trips, subject to Risk Management approval, occurring during the course of one school day.
 - b. All off-campus trips comprising more than one school day will be reviewed by Risk Management and approved by the supervising Area Assistant Superintendent.
 - c. Specific timelines, procedures, and requirements of this field trip approval process will be outlined in a related Administrative Directive.
- 4) All out-of-state and foreign travel shall require prior Board approval with the exception of travel up to 150 miles from the PPS headquarters.
- 5) In planning for off-campus activities, staff members must avoid factors that might



Field Trips, Foreign Travel, and Other Off-Campus Activities

prohibit student participation, including financial burden, as well as any hazards or barriers for students arising from discriminatory policies or practices in the destination or during transit based on race, religion, culture, gender orientation, sexual identity, or immigration status. Trips should be designed to promote healthy, safe, and inclusive experiences for all students, and consider the identified special needs and required accommodations of students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and/or plans under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. .

- 7) Both students and adult supervisors should be acquainted with and comply with relevant District policies, administrative directives, and other guidance, including the *PPS Student Responsibilities, Rights, and Discipline Handbook*, while representing the District. These expectations should be reviewed again by all students and staff prior to any extended off-campus activity.



Field Trips, Foreign Travel, and Other Off-Campus Activities

II. Non-School Sponsored Off-Campus Activities Must Clearly Indicate They Are Not Affiliated with the District

The unique professional status of District staff members may at times make it difficult for students and families to distinguish between school-sponsored off-campus activities from non-school privately sponsored off-campus activities. While working as PPS staff and/or representing PPS, District staff may not develop, plan, and/or supervise off-campus activities represented as "school, class, club, etc." other than what has been approved under this policy and the implementing administrative directives. In addition, District staff or other persons may not use District email, social media, hardcopy distribution to students, or other methods of District-controlled distribution that are not open to the general public to communicate to District students or families about private, non-school sponsored off-campus activities, without the pre-approval of the school building administrator and in adherence with PPS Disclaimer Requirement (11.1.a)

1) Travel Study Programs

Travel Study Programs are activities involving student travel that are planned, marketed, and conducted by organizations other than Portland Public Schools. Portland Public Schools does not fund, sponsor, or endorse any such programs.

- a) Disclaimer Requirements: Any information about travel study programs must include the following disclaimer: "Portland Public Schools does not fund, sponsor, or endorse this travel study program. The District is not responsible for conducting or supervising this trip. Portland Public School employees who participate in travel study programs are not acting in their capacity as District employees and do so at their own risk. Students participating in travel study programs do so at their own risk."
- b) Any information distributed about travel study programs cannot contain the name of the District or any Portland Public school.
- c) Distribution of information by travel study organizations must follow distribution guidelines in Board Policy 3.30.035-P Distribution of Materials and Information to Students and Administrative Directive 3.30.038-AD. Information distributed about



Board Policy

6.50.010-P

Field Trips, Foreign Travel, and Other Off-Campus Activities

travel study programs shall not be made through PPS email, without the pre-approval of the school-building administrator and in adherence with PPS Disclaimer Requirement (see 11.1.a).

- d) Travel study organizations must use the Civic Use of Buildings (CUB) procedures for informational/planning meetings after the school day. See Policy 3.30.010-P Community Use of School Buildings and Facilities and 3.30.011-AD Community Use of School Buildings and Facilities: Short-Term Use.

Legal References: ORS 332.107; ORS 336.183; ORS 339.155

Amended 9/2002, Amended 3/2019



Field Trips, Foreign Travel, and Other Off-Campus Activities

Original/Current Policy

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Original/Current Policy

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