

Dear SMB Members,

On Tuesday May 7th, 2024 the LGSUHSD board is seeking to approve an addition to their current board policy “**Board Policy 6153 REDLINED School-Sponsored**” (see bottom of letter). This addition seems to be encouraging Non-School Sponsored Trips in lieu of the district/board not supporting a sponsored trip.

The questions arising from this new addition are:

1. Is there a district plan to move toward a non-sponsored trip route for international trips?
2. What will cause a trip to be non sponsored? Or in other words, deny an international trip from being school sponsored
3. The ambiguous addition to the mentioned policy using terms loosely like ‘Third Party’ without defining what is considered to be a Third Party is a cause of concern. Is this ambiguity by design?
4. Why the need to include this, since SMB has been supporting international trips for decades? All of them were approved as school sponsored trips.
5. The last point ‘The Superintendent or designee shall prepare regulations addressing non-school sponsored trips, and governing use of district or school name, equipment, and/or facilities related to non-school sponsored trips.’ implies they intend to hold a vote without fully understanding the regulations ahead of time. It seems precocious to be approving this addition without fully understanding the guidelines. Is there too much power being assigned to the Superintendent without the board fully understanding the scope?
6. Is fear of a lawsuit crippling the support from the district to encourage big educational opportunities?
7. Does the district not want to pursue the best liability coverage moving forward?
8. Is there a plan to cut costs at the expense of our children’s education?

SMB, this year, is celebrating its 50th year since its founding. The reason it was founded was to support the vision of its music directors to offer quality experiences that go beyond the classroom and be the vehicle required to allow this opportunity to be accessible to all students. All these trips were School Sponsored Events as is the Los Gatos High School’s International Music trip taking place this summer (2024).

Why is it important to have trips be school sponsored?

1. We hope the district takes pride in what is actually taking place in our schools and support and want every trip to be school sponsored.
2. The Music Directors are able to use their official school channels to communicate.
3. The Music Directors are able to call meetings on school grounds to communicate with travellers.
4. The students are able to use school equipment and perform in school facilities to prepare for such a trip.
5. The Music Directors will have liability coverage through the District’s Insurance policy.

6. Quite simply it IS a school event.
7. There is ZERO cost to the district to have our students and directors embark on these trips.
8. Every district [PER ED CODE LAW Section 35330 \(field trips\)](#) must have liability coverage to ensure sponsored trips take place.
9. Per our district's JPA the district, at present, has the coverage required to transact in a foreign country.

The non sponsored trip route seems like a detached approach from the district. It appears their initiative to include this goes against the hope we have that they strive for excellence and opportunities, working in union with the educators in pursuit of shared goals for our schools. When a trip is non sponsored the Music Directors will not be able to work through school channels (emails, in auditorium etc) to communicate with music students and families, they will not be allowed to use school equipment and facilities, nor will they be able to use the school name. Needless to say, the directors/staff will not be protected by the district's insurance coverage.

One of the greatest prides of SMB and shared by the music directors is every child who wishes to partake in this once in a lifetime opportunity to travel as a high school ensemble travels no matter their financial situation. With non school sponsored trips SMB will not be able to support this initiative because SMB is an organization founded to support SHS and SUSD goals. We will NOT be able to assist if it is non school sponsored. This also means the payment is NOT a donation and it will be a requirement in order to participate leaving the culture of school embrace behind.

On Feb. 8th Superintendent, Bill Sanderson, offered a 'State of the District' presentation during a SHS PTSO general meeting. At the end of the presentation Sanderson took questions from the community and once all questions were addressed the SMB President raised her hand to ask the Superintendent what was his vision to improve the school climate at both schools that are currently feeling misled. Specifically the Sporting community at SHS and the Music Community in LGHS as their world trip was denied at the time of his presentation. The question asked how he planned to address and resolve these issues and establish a line of communication with the affected stakeholders especially keeping in mind the current school climate and work to resolve this?

His response: 'Alicia as you know this is resolved and was addressed with you and other members and I have the support of the board.' SMB President made it clear by stating 'No, I did not know and I was not invited to any conversation addressing any of these issues.' to which the Superintendent responded "Nor will I ever speak to you about them'.

This is the first time SMB is faced with a district superintendent who refuses to communicate with SMB. Successful relationships are made possible with honest communication, working toward the common goal: offer the best opportunities to all students. If SMB is facing this wall of silence what type of relationship is Sanderson having with all his teachers and staff in general? Having such a position of power is a privilege, it takes great skill and intelligence to work with all your community members and work collaboratively to ensure successes for your educators and students. SMB hopes for the return of the spirit of partnership and

mutual trust, once prioritized by all prior Superintendents, because it is their belief that the best outcomes are only possible when working collaboratively.

These are SMB's open questions, concerns and goals.

SMB Executive Board

**Board Policy Manual  
Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School**

**Policy 6153: School-Sponsored Trips**

**Original Adopted Date:** 11/06/2007 | **Last Revised Date:** 04/03/2024 06/27/2023- | **Last Reviewed Date:** 06/27/2023 04/03/2024

The Governing Board recognizes that field trips supplement and enrich the classroom learning experience, lead to increased student achievement, and foster student engagement. The Board encourages field trips to reinforce and increase learning opportunities and to enhance district programs.

Field trips shall be conducted in connection with the district's course of study or school-related social, educational, cultural, athletic, school band, or other extracurricular or cocurricular activities. A field trip to a foreign country may be permitted to familiarize students with the language, history, geography, natural science, and other studies relative to the district's course of study. (Education Code 35330)

Requests for field trips involving out-of-country shall be submitted to the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent or designee shall review the request and make a recommendation to the Board as to whether the request should be approved by the Board.

Requests for field trips involving out-of-state shall be submitted to the Superintendent or designee for approval. The Superintendent or designee shall submit all out of state approvals to the Board for ratification at the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

All other field trips shall be approved in advance by the principal.

The principal shall establish a process for approving a staff member's request to conduct a field trip. When planning trips, staff shall consider student safety, objectives of instruction, the most effective use of instructional time, the distance from school, district and student expense, and transportation and supervision requirements. Principals may exclude from the trip any student whose presence on the trip would pose a safety or disciplinary risk.

No field trip shall be authorized if any student would be excluded from participation because of a lack of sufficient funds. The Superintendent or designee shall coordinate with community groups to supply funds for students in need. (Education Code 35330)

The Board may approve the use of district funds for student expenses for in-state, out-of-state, or out-of-country field trips or excursions when permitted by law. In addition, expenses of instructors, chaperones, and other personnel participating in such trips, as well as incidental expenses for the use of district equipment during the trip, may be paid from district funds. (Education Code 35330)

**Non-School Sponsored Trips**

The Governing Board recognizes that district students and employees may participate in non-school sponsored trips that are organized and/or promoted by third parties. Any district employee who organizes and/or attends a non-school sponsored trip is considered a third party for purposes of this policy. The district shall not be responsible or liable for any non-school sponsored trips.

The Superintendent or designee shall prepare regulations addressing non-school sponsored trips, and governing use of district or school name, equipment, and/or facilities related to non-school sponsored trips.