

STUDENT ACCESS TO NETWORKED INFORMATION RESOURCES

The Board of Education and County Superintendent of Schools recognize that as telecommunications and other new technology shift the ways that information may be accessed, communicated, and transferred by members of the society, those changes may also alter instruction and student learning. The Board and County Superintendent generally support access by students to rich information resources along with the development by staff of appropriate skills to analyze and evaluate such resources. In a free and democratic society, access to information is a fundamental right of citizenship.

Telecommunications, electronic information sources and networked services significantly alter the information landscape for schools by opening classrooms to a broader array of resources. In the past, instructional and library media materials could usually be screened—prior to use—by committees of educators and community members intent on subjecting all such materials to reasonable selection criteria. Telecommunications, because they may lead to any public files server in the world, will open classrooms to electronic information resources that have not been screened by educators for use by students of various ages.

Electronic information research skills are now fundamental to preparation of citizens and future employees during an Age of Information. The Board and County Superintendent expect that staff will blend thoughtful use of such information throughout the curriculum and that the staff will provide guidance and instruction to students in the appropriate use of such resources. Staff shall consult the guidelines for instructional materials contained in Board Policy 6161.1 and shall honor the goals for selection of instructional materials contained therein.

Students are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or a school hallway. General school rules for behavior and communications apply (see Board Policy 5145.2). Access to network services will be provided to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner.

Access to telecommunications will enable students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards while exchanging messages with people throughout the world. Independent student use of telecommunications and electronic information resources will be permitted upon submission of permission forms and agreement forms by parents of minor students (under 18 years of age) and by students themselves.

The Mendocino County Office of Education requires user agreement to acceptable use policies on standards for behavior and communication.

Parents and guardians of minors are also responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. To that end, the County Office supports and respects each family's right to decide whether or not to apply for independent access.

The County Superintendent shall prepare appropriate procedures for implementing this policy and for reviewing and evaluating its effect on instruction and student achievement.

Policy adopted: February 11, 2003

Revised: