

## **CUSTODIAL AND NONCUSTODIAL PARENTS**

The Dent-Phelps R-III School District Board of Education encourages parents to be actively involved in their child's education. Further, Missouri law states a preference for continuing and meaningful contact with both parents. Therefore, in accordance with Board policy, the district will not prohibit parents from accessing records, attending activities or participating in conferences pertaining to their child unless otherwise required by court order or law.

### **Definitions**

*Parent* -- A biological or adoptive parent, including parents who are unmarried; a guardian; or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of the parent or guardian.

*Joint Legal Custody* -- Parents share decision-making rights, responsibilities and authority relating to the health, education and welfare of the child.

*Joint Physical Custody* -- Each parent has periods of time, not necessarily equal, during which the child resides with or is under the care or supervision of that parent.

### **Visitation Schedules**

Visitation schedules and parenting plans are agreements between parents and are not binding on the district. The district will release a student to either parent in accordance with Board policy unless otherwise directed by a valid court order.

### **Court Appearances**

The district discourages parents from involving district staff in disputes over custody, visitation schedules, child support and other such issues. Staff members must stay focused on providing students an education. To do so, they must maintain good relationships with both parents and should not be asked to support one (1) parent over another. District employees will not testify or otherwise participate in a custody dispute in their capacities as district employees unless served with a subpoena. Often, student records can provide the same information as the testimony of a staff member, and parents have access to student records by law. Parents are encouraged to use records rather than staff testimony in resolving disputes over their child.

### **Student Records**

A parent will have access to all records and information pertaining to his or her child unless that parent has been denied custody or visitation rights. The district will provide access to all such records unless a court order showing the denial of legal custody or visitation is provided to the district. A court may also order that such records not include the address of the custodial parent or child. A copy of any court order received by the district pertaining to a student will be forwarded to the principal of the building where the student attends.

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**Note: The reader is encouraged to check the index located at the beginning of this section for other pertinent policies and to review administrative procedures and/or forms for related information.**

Adopted: 3/23/06 Re-adopted 6-28-12

Revised:

Cross Refs: BDC, Closed Meetings, Records and Votes  
JEDB, Student Dismissal Precautions  
JO, Student Records

Legal Refs: §§ 452.375, .376, 610.010, .021, RSMo.  
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g

Dent-Phelps R-III School District, Salem, Missouri

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