STUDENT ACCESS TO NETWORKED INFORMATION RESOURCES

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

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. Board policy requires that all such materials be consistent with district-adopted guides, supporting and enriching the curriculum while taking into account the varied instructional needs, learning styles, abilities and developmental levels of the students.

Telecommunication, because it may lead to any publicly available fileserv er in the world, will open classrooms to electronic information resources which have not been screened by educators for use by students of various ages.

Network information resources are designed for research and/or education. Electronic research skills are now fundamental to preparation of citizens and future employees during an Information Age. The Board expects that staff will blend thoughtful use of such information throughout the curriculum and that they will provide guidance and instruction to students in the appropriate use of such resources. This includes adherence to all copyright laws. Staff will consult the guidelines for instructional materials contained in Board policy and will comply with 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.

Communications on computer networks are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply. Network access is provided for students to conduct research and communicate with others. Access to network services will be provided to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. It is the policy of the Salem School District to maintain an environment that promotes ethical and responsible conduct in all network activities by staff and students. It shall therefore be a violation of this policy for any employee or student to engage in any computer activity that does not conform to the established purpose and general rules and policies of the Salem School District.

Access to telecommunications will enable students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards while exchanging messages with people throughout the world. The Board believes that the benefits to students from access in the form of information resources and
opportunities for collaboration, exceed the disadvantages. But ultimately, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. To that end, the Salem School District supports and respects each family's right to decide whether or not to grant permission for supervised access.

The Board authorizes the Superintendent to prepare appropriate procedures for implementing this policy and for reviewing and evaluating its effect on instruction and student achievement.