

Volunteers vs. Classroom Observation

This document provides an explanation to assist staff understand the difference between volunteers and classroom observers. This will assist staff to be able to comply with district policies and procedures regarding volunteers and classroom observers.

Volunteers

Community volunteers in our schools enrich the educational program and strengthen our schools' relationships with homes, businesses, public agencies, and private institutions. The presence of volunteers in the classroom, on school grounds, and at school sponsored functions also enhances supervision of students and contributes to school safety. The Superintendent or designee may authorize the use of volunteers and shall establish procedures to protect the safety of students and adults in accordance with laws related to tuberculosis testing, fingerprinting, and criminal record checks.

Volunteers shall act in accordance with District policies, regulations, and school rules. At his/her discretion, a staff member who supervises volunteers may ask any volunteer who violates school rules to leave the campus. Staff members also may confer with the principal or designee regarding any volunteers and their impact on school activities. The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for investigating and resolving complaints regarding volunteers.

Volunteer work shall be limited to those projects that do not replace the normal duties of classified staff. The Board nevertheless encourages volunteers to work on short-term projects to the extent that they enhance the classroom or school, meet a specific need, comply with established building and safety codes, and do not significantly interfere with maintenance workloads as established by employee commitments and contracts.

Classroom Observers

Classroom observers are either parents/guardians whose sole purpose is to observe their child in a school (educational) activity or college students who observe classroom activities to further their studies.

The observers are to sit in a designated area determined by the teacher and will not interact with students other than their own child. If they wish to talk with the teacher they will do so after class is over.

Per education code 49091.10, "a parent/guardian has the right to observe instruction and other school activities that involve his or her child in accordance with procedures determined by the governing board of the school district to ensure the safety of pupils and school personnel and to prevent undue interference with instruction or harassment of school personnel."

The observer must make a written or verbal request in a reasonable timeframe.

Refer to your district's guidelines for:

- What is determined to be a reasonable timeframe for the written request
- What are the limits (# of observations) allowed (too many observations can hinder the student's growth)
- What is the limit of the number of observers at one time

District guidelines should prohibit observations during:

- Testing (disturbs/stresses students)
- Sex ed classes (makes students uncomfortable & they may not ask questions if parents are present)