

Series 2006-2007
Circular Letter C-8

TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: George A. Coleman, Interim Commissioner of Education

DATE: April 12, 2007

SUBJECT: Charges for Classroom Supplies

The State Department of Education has received complaints from parents that some school districts are requiring parents to provide school supplies for “community use” within a school classroom. Because at this time of the year boards of education are preparing budgets for the upcoming school year, I would like to remind school districts that it is inconsistent with state law to require parents to supply materials for general use in the classroom.

Although parents may be asked to supply their children with certain incidental materials that are for their own child’s use, such as notebooks, pencils and pens, parents should not be required to provide items from supply lists containing items for “community use.” Examples of such “community” supplies include white board markers, facial tissues, post-it notes, dictionaries/thesaurus’, plastic reclosable baggies, glue bottles/sticks, red ink pens, library books, multiple packages of pens, pencils, cap erasers or crayons. Copies of certain “supply lists” provided to the State Department of Education specifically state that such items should not be labeled because the supplies will be combined to create community supplies within each classroom.

As noted above, requiring parents to provide general classroom supplies is inappropriate. Parents may voluntarily donate supplies to the school, but they cannot be required to provide such materials. However, you should also be cautious in soliciting donations from parents to avoid any appearance that such donations are expected or necessary for the classroom to function properly. While we all recognize the limitations in school budgets for classroom supplies, we should not transfer that burden to parents.

Please take appropriate action to ensure that your district’s budget for the upcoming school year provides sufficient funding to adequately meet the needs of your students.

Thank you.

GAC:msa

