A. PURPOSE

1. The Board respects the right of students to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures as well as its responsibility to fulfill the Intermediate Unit’s interest in protecting and preserving the health, safety, and welfare of the school population; enforcing rules of conduct; and maintaining an appropriate atmosphere conducive to learning.

B. AUTHORITY

1. Intermediate Unit officials have the authority to lawfully search students or their belongings, including lockers, automobiles, electronic devices, purses, backpacks, clothing, and other possessions, without a warrant, when in an Intermediate Unit facility, while attending an Intermediate Unit program, while on Intermediate Unit grounds, or when otherwise under supervision of the Intermediate Unit, if there is a reasonable suspicion that the place or thing to be searched contains prohibited contraband; material that would pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of the school population; or evidence that there has been a violation of the law, Board policy, or school rules. The scope and extent of searches must be reasonable in relation to the nature of the suspected evidence, contraband, or dangerous material, and to the grounds for suspecting that it may be found in the place or thing being searched.

2. The Board has a compelling interest in protecting and preserving the health, safety, and welfare of the school population, which under certain circumstances may warrant general or random searches of students and their lockers, vehicles, or other belongings without individualized suspicion, for the purpose of finding or preventing entry onto Intermediate Unit property and into Intermediate Unit programs of controlled substances, weapons, or other dangerous materials.

C. DELEGATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

1. The Board authorizes the administration to conduct searches of students or their belongings, including lockers, automobiles, electronic devices, purses, backpacks, clothing, and other possessions in accordance with all applicable legal standards. When the Intermediate Unit program is located in a district that has an adopted policy governing searches, Intermediate Unit employees shall comply with such policy. Intermediate Unit employees working in locations without such policy shall comply with this Board policy.

D. GUIDELINES

1. The Director of Special Programs & Services or designee shall develop administrative guidelines and procedures regarding searches, in accordance with all applicable legal standards.
2. Students, parents/guardians and staff shall be notified at least annually through the student handbook, or more often if deemed appropriate by administration, about the standards and procedures in effect pursuant to this policy.