

MEDIA RELATIONS

Background

Media play a key role in keeping the public informed about school or District activities and issues. This Administrative Procedure will help ensure the District can develop and maintain strong relations with the media based on openness, fairness, accuracy of information, and consistency

Procedures

1. Delegation of responsibility
 - 1.1. The Superintendent through delegation to the Communications Specialist, coordinates media relations for the District.
2. Spokesperson(s)
 - 2.1. As per Board Policy 5 - Role of the Board Chair, the Board Chair (or Vice Chair in his/her absence) will act as the official spokesperson for all matters pertaining to District operations and Board policy. The Board Chair may delegate this duty to the Superintendent.
 - 2.2. District employees are not permitted to act as an official spokesperson unless designated to do so by the Board Chair or Superintendent.
 - 2.3. If a public statement by the District and/or Board is required, the Communications Specialist will work with the District senior management and/or principals to establish the known facts of the situation, summarize the District's position, and will issue the statement.
3. Media inquiries
 - 3.1. All media inquiries pertaining to District schools, operations, or the Board are to be directed to the Superintendent, through the Communications Specialist. The District will respond to Media inquiries as quickly as possible.
 - 3.2. District employees contacted directly by media are to redirect the inquiry to the Communications Specialist. Where applicable, employees are to contact the Communications Specialist as soon as possible with pertinent details of the request or issue, to help expedite the response to Media.
 - 3.3. Principals are to notify the Communications Specialist if media arrive on school property. If support is required, it will be provided.
4. News releases
 - 4.1. All news releases pertaining to District or school operations, programs, or students and Board matters will be prepared by the Communications Specialist, in partnership

with principals as needed, and approved by the Superintendent and Board Chair prior to distribution.

5. Filming and Photography Guidelines

- 5.1. Media are not permitted to film, photograph or interview on District property without permission from the Superintendent.
- 5.2. Students under the age of 18 must have parental consent prior to being filmed, interviewed, or photographed on school property.
- 5.3. If media are filming, photographing or interviewing on school property without permission, staff may ask them to stop filming and direct them to the Communications Specialist.
- 5.4. If media interview, film, or photograph a student who's considered a minor off school property, District employees may wish to notify the parents; if they do not give consent, the parent can contact the media outlet directly.

6. Crisis/emergency Communications

During a crisis or emergency situation, the first priority of the school administration is to ensure the safety of students and staff. However, the District recognizes the need to provide timely, accurate information to parents, and knows that the media plays an important role in relaying this information. Therefore:

- 6.1. The Superintendent, and/or the Communications Specialist will assist the Principal by coordinating communication efforts, with a focus on known facts and required actions.
- 6.2. The Superintendent will serve as spokesperson, when required. This allows the Principal to concentrate on the needs of the school community

7. Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

- 7.1. The Board and District are committed to open and honest communication in all aspects of District operations and will provide information unless it falls within the restrictions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation, or is considered confidential/sensitive information.
- 7.2. All students being photographed, filmed, or interviewed by a media outlet (for publication, broadcast and/or social media use) must have signed media consent form ([Form 151-1](#)). This also applies to any photos, videos, or personal information about a student being released to media by District and/or school staff (including, but not limited to, being identified in a news release).

Reference: Section 8, 20, 22, 65, 85, 177 School Act
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Adopted: September 26, 2017

Amended: September 1, 2018