

Regulation

COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC

Standards of presentation

Material released in the district's public information program should:

- A. Be factual, topical, newsworthy, and consistent with the educational goals adopted by the board of education;
- B. Represent the activities at all grade levels, subject areas, and schools and not favor one school population or activity over another;
- C. Strive to interpret the educational program to the public in language that is understandable and avoid the use of professional terminology; and
- D. Present an integrated district-wide picture of district-wide programs rather than fragmented information.

Information regarding an individual student, other than information classified as directory information in board policy 1111 District Publications shall be released only with the express written permission of the student's parent or the adult student. Student "information" includes verbal and photographic material, whether or not the student depicted is individually identified. Directory information regarding an individual student may be released only if the student's parent or the adult student has not prohibited its release in accordance with board policy 5125 Student Records.

Preparation of Information for Public Distribution

- A. Information will be released in a systematic manner to avoid confusion and misunderstanding;
- B. Information planned for the general public should first be reviewed by interested district employees;
- C. News bulletins issued by individual schools or departments within the district must identify the issuing school or department as a part of the school district. Letterheads, bulletins, and publications should carry the name of the Passaic Public Schools;
- D. At least once each year, the principal of each school should prepare a bulletin containing news item of interest in his or her building. A copy of the items will be sent to the superintendent for clearance before the bulletin of items may be released to the press and/or posted on the school website;

- E. The office of the superintendent will prepare, disseminate and/or post on the district website:
1. An annual calendar of board, district, and school events open to the public;
 2. A district newsletter;
 3. The school report cards;
 4. Information about the proposed budget, in accordance with board policy 3100 Budget Planning, Preparation and Adoption;
 5. Information regarding district harassment, intimidation and bullying programs including the school policy (file code 5131.1 Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying); contact information for the district anti-bullying coordinator, school anti-bullying specialists and school safety teams; and the district and school grades;
 6. News releases about board activities and district-wide activities.
- F. The principal of each school will prepare, submit to the superintendent for approval, and disseminate the following public information publications:
1. A student handbook will be given to each student enrolled in the school or to the student's parent. The handbook will include, as appropriate to the grade levels in the school:
 - a. The organization of the school;
 - b. The code of student conduct;
 - c. Student rights and responsibilities;
 - d. Information about school operations including but not limited to: health services, counseling services, attendance expectations, safety and security plans, emergency closings;
 - e. Descriptions of student activities and programs;
 - f. The student grievance procedure, and
 - g. Academic requirements.
 2. A calendar of school events will be distributed to all students, parents, and staff members;
 3. As appropriate to the grade levels of the school, a listing of course offerings and requirements will be distributed to all parents and students;
 4. Programs for specific performances and athletic contests will be distributed to attendees and participants.

Release of Information to the Press

- A. Information determined by the board to be of particular community impact and interest will be released to the press only with board approval;
- B. Information regarding board actions of lesser importance may be released to the press by the superintendent;
- C. Information regarding the activities of the schools and of individuals in the schools may be released to the press on the approval of the superintendent;

- D. All inquiries from members of the press will be referred to the superintendent for response. A staff member who is requested to give an interview to a member of the press shall inform the superintendent. The superintendent shall review and approve the request prior to the interview. The superintendent may be present at the interview;
- E. In the event of a crisis, controversy or event in the school district that arouses substantial public interest, the superintendent will accommodate the needs of the press by establishing a temporary press center:
1. A room will be prepared, as close to the main office as feasible and equipped with a computer, telephone, typewriter, access to copying equipment, paper, and other equipment and supplies as may reasonably facilitate the tasks of reporters and photographers;
 2. Members of the press will be directed to gather in the press room, where they will hear and may question the district's spokesperson;
 3. All information about the crisis, controversy or event will be relayed through the designated district spokesperson who should be given direct access to the information and people necessary to the gathering of accurate data;
 4. d. School officials who are asked to give statements to the press regarding the development shall prepare statements in conjunction with the superintendent.

Displays and Website Postings

- A. Displays and website postings of the accomplishments of district students and the results of educational programs may be placed in locations in the school buildings or on the district and school websites that afford a high level of public visibility;
- B. Any display or website posting must be approved in advance by the school principal;
- C. Displays may also be created outside the school grounds as appropriate in local commercial establishments, municipal offices, health facilities, libraries, and banks. The following rules shall apply to all displays off school property:
1. The staff member planning a display outside of school grounds must request and receive in writing the permission of the facility in which the display will be placed;
 2. The request will clearly indicate the duration of the display, the time when it will be installed, and any particular accommodations that are necessary to the display;
 3. A letter of appreciation shall be sent to the facility after the display is removed.

First Reading: November 3, 2016
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