

## **Community Relations**

### **MEDIA RELATIONS**

**BP 1112**

The Governing Board recognizes that the media significantly influences the community's understanding of school issues and programs and can greatly assist the district in communicating with the community about school needs.

The Board respects the public's right to information and recognizes that the media has a legitimate interest in the schools and a responsibility to provide the community with news. In order to develop and maintain positive media relations, the Board and the Superintendent desire to reasonably accommodate media requests for information and to provide accurate, reliable and timely information.

The Superintendent or designee shall coordinate the release of information concerning the district and the actions of the Board.

Media representatives are welcome at all Board meetings and shall receive meeting agendas upon request.

*(cf. 9322 - Agenda/Meeting Materials)*

Like all visitors, media representatives shall register immediately upon entering any school building or grounds when school is in session so as to avoid causing disruption or confusion. The principal or designee of each school shall provide the media with information relating to his/her school, including information about school accomplishments and events of special interest.

*(cf. 1250 - Visitors/Outsiders)*

*(cf. 3515.2 - Disruptions)*

The Superintendent or designee may provide the media with student directory information, including, but not limited to, the name of a student, school of attendance, grade level, honors, and activities, unless the student's parent/guardian has submitted a written request that such information not be disclosed. The district shall not release information that is private or confidential as required by law, Board policy or administrative regulation. No other access to student records or personally identifiable student information may be provided without written parent/guardian permission.

*(cf. 1340 - Access to District Records)*

*(cf. 4119.23/4219.23/4319.23 - Unauthorized Release of Confidential/Privileged Information)*

*(cf. 5125 - Student Records)*

*(cf. 5125.1 - Release of Directory Information)*

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*(cf. 9010 - Public Statements)*

*(cf. 9321.1 - Closed Session Actions and Reports)*

#### **Interviewing and Photographing Students by the Media**

The district shall not impose restraints on students' right to speak freely with media representatives at those times which do not disrupt students' educational program. Interviews of students must not create substantial disorder or impinge on the rights of others. Therefore, in order to minimize possible disruption, media representatives who wish to interview students at school are strongly encouraged to make prior arrangements with the principal. At their discretion, parents/guardians may instruct their children not to communicate with media representatives.

*(cf. 5145.2 - Freedom of Speech/Expression)*

In order to protect the privacy and safety of students, a media representative who wishes to photograph students on school grounds should first make arrangements with the principal or designee. Parents/guardians may opt out of having their child interviewed, filmed or photographed by the media by returning the "News Media Access to Students" form that is distributed at the start of the school year. If the parent/guardian fails to sign and return this form, it will be assumed that there is authorized consent for the child to be interviewed, filmed or photographed by the news media.

When interviewing or photographing a special education student, he/she shall not be identified as a special education student without prior, written parent/guardian permission.

#### **Board and District Relations with the Media**

Definition of media:

"A publisher, editor, reporter, or other person connected with or employed upon a newspaper, magazine, or other periodical publication, or by a press association or wire service, or a radio or television news reporter or other person connected with or employed by a radio or television station."

In order to help develop strong relations with the media, the Superintendent or designee shall specify the district's and/or site's primary media contact to whom all media inquiries shall be routed. Spokespersons designated to speak

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to the media on behalf of the district include the Board President, Superintendent and Public Information Officer. Other Board members and staff may be asked by the Superintendent or designee to speak to the media on a case-by-case basis, depending on their expertise on an issue.

*(cf. 0510 - School Accountability Report Card)*

*(cf. 1100 - Communication with the Public)*

*(cf. 1160 - Political Processes)*

The Superintendent or designee shall provide training on effective media relations to all designated spokespersons.

*(cf. 9240 - Board Development)*

### **Crisis Communications Plan**

During a disturbance or crisis situation, the first priority of school staff is to assure the safety of students and staff. However, the Board recognizes the need to provide timely and accurate information to parents/guardians and the community during a crisis. The Board also recognizes that the media have an important role to play in relaying this information to the public. In order to help ensure that the media and district work together effectively, the Superintendent or designee shall develop a Crisis Communications Plan to identify communication strategies to be taken in the event of a crisis.

*(cf. 0450 - Comprehensive Safety Plan)*

*(cf. 3516 - Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Plan)*

The Crisis Communications Plan may include but not be limited to identification of a media center location, development of both internal and external notification systems, and strategies for press conference logistics.

The Superintendent or designee shall include local law enforcement and media representatives in the crisis planning process.

*Legal Reference:*

#### EDUCATION CODE

*32210-32212 - Willful disturbance of public school or meeting*

*32211 -Threatened disruption or interference with classes*

*35144 - Special meetings*

*35145 - Public meetings*

*35145.5 - Agenda; public participation*

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*35146 - Closed sessions*

*35160 - Authority of governing boards*

*35172 - Promotional activities*

*EVIDENCE CODE*

*1070 - Refusal to disclose news source*

*PENAL CODE*

*627-627.10 - Access to school premises*

*COURT DECISIONS*

*Lopez v. Tulare Joint Union High School District, (1995) 34 Cal.App.4th 1302*

*ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS*

*95 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 509 (1996)*

*Management Resources:*

*CSBA PUBLICATIONS*

*911: A Manual for Schools and the Media during a Campus Crisis, 2001*

*WEB SITES*

*CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>*

**Policy**

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**PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Pasadena, California