

9400.1 SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFF/MEDIA RELATIONS

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of maintaining good relations with the media to effectively communicate with the public.

The Board of Education must give formal approval to all basic practices governing relations between the media and the school district and reserves the right to negotiate, on terms most favorable to the school district, for the broadcasting, filming, or sound recording of any school event by an outside agency.

The Superintendent or designee shall be the chief communications representative of the school district. The chief communications representative shall be readily available to:

1. provide media representatives with all appropriate and necessary information;
2. suggest or supply feature articles or stories;
3. prepare information to be released to the media;
4. assist school and parent organizations with media relations;
5. meet periodically with media representatives;
6. protect school personnel from any unnecessary demands on their time by media representatives; and
7. provide additional information as appropriate.

The Superintendent or designee must authorize in advance interviews between staff members and media representatives when the staff member is representing or speaking on behalf of the Board of Education or the school district.

A school district staff member not designated by the Superintendent or designee to assist in any of the media responsibilities outlined in this Policy, including speaking to a representative of the media, is not prohibited from doing so on their own behalf as a private citizen provided the staff member does not indicate or imply they represent or are speaking on behalf of the Board of Education or the school district and indicate they are speaking on their own behalf as a private citizen.

A staff member who is acting on their own behalf as a private citizen should be cognizant of their obligations to protect the privacy and confidentiality of pupils, staff, and school operations in accordance with Federal and State laws.

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The Board of Education reserves its right to regulate the exercise of school district staff members' First Amendment rights of the United States Constitution in such situations to the extent that such exercise may interfere with the safe and orderly operation of the schools and the learning environment.

The Superintendent or designee must authorize the release of any image of district personnel or pupils.

Any image of a pupil with a disability shall not be disseminated or used in print or media in any way if they are identified as a pupil with a disability unless permission is granted by the parent(s). Any image of a child placed in the district by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection and Permanency shall not be published without permission of the Department case worker. Where the release of any image may violate the privacy of any pupil the Superintendent or designee must first secure the written permission of the pupil's parent(s).

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