

# Public Relations Publicity Guide

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How to help us help you share your news!



Lee's Summit  
R-7 Schools

# Hello!

## We're the Public Relations Department.

Our team has an important charge: to facilitate strong communication practices that build engagement, collaboration and confidence within our school community. Part of our job is to provide communication support to staff members, particularly when it comes to showcasing the many ways LSR7 embodies its mission to prepare each student for success in life.



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# Communication Platforms

The Public Relations Department manages several platforms as a tool to share district news.

## School Messenger

Used by district administrators for mass district/school communications via phone call, email and text about district information, including Inclement Weather.

## Summit Up Podcast

The district's podcast uplifts and centers stories of LSR7 students and staff. It's available for anyone on Apple, Spotify or the district's Youtube.



## Our Schools

We produce a glossy magazine and deliver it to all residences in the Lee's Summit R-7 School District five times a year.



## Social Media

Follow us on Twitter (@LSR7), Instagram (@LeesSummitR7), Facebook, Youtube and LinkedIn (Lee's Summit R-7 School District).



## Digital Newsletters

The district has dedicated weekly e-newsletters to provide regular updates for our parents, staff and community.

- **Messenger** is LSR7's weekly staff e-newsletter. (Distributed Thursdays)
- **R-7 News** is e-mailed on Thursdays to more than 38,000 subscribers, including parents, staff and community members. Special issues are occasionally released, including after Board of Education meetings. (Distributed Thursdays)
- **R-7 Advocacy** is sent to subscribers interested in legislative issues impacting our schools. (Distributed periodically during the legislative session)

## Digital Flyers

We partner with Peachjar's [flyer management system](#) to send district-approved flyers directly to parents' email once a week. All staff can use this platform to promote internal district events for free.

## Media Partners

The LSR7 Public Relations Department submits press releases and pitches to KC-metro media, who can share our news with a larger audience.

# Requesting Public Relations Support

This LSR7 Publicity Guide is designed to help you submit information and photographs for publicity purposes. Submissions can include student and staff celebrations or awards, upcoming events or learning opportunities, notable classroom activities and more!

## Examples

- **Student accolades** - recognition for winning regional/state/national achievements, community celebrations, etc.
- **Staff accolades** - recognition for regional/state/national achievements, being chosen to present at conferences, etc
- **Project-based learning** that deeply engages students and involves guest speakers or community involvement.
- **Highly engaging classroom activity** that showcases a direct correlation to CSIP goals.

**Assistant Director of Public Relations Talia Evans** manages content and media relations for the district, and is the first point of contact for content submissions.

## How to Submit

1. **Fill out the PR Department Submissions Form at [LSR7.org/SubmissionsForm](https://www.lsr7.org/SubmissionsForm) so that our team can process your information.**

Make it clear whether you are submitting a future-facing item/event you are hoping to promote or requesting coverage of an event, celebration or story that has already occurred. If you have photos or video to accompany your submission, please email to **communications@lsr7.net**. It's helpful if you can submit future events at least seven days in advance.

2. **Provide first and last name of all clearly identifiable students if you are submitting photos or videos.**

This helps us check whether a parent has opted their child out of publicity opportunities.

3. **We'll be in touch!**

# Content & Audience

Our communication platforms reach thousands of people across our school community. Here are some questions we ask within the PR Department to determine what stories and celebrations are best shared with a districtwide audience. The answers to these questions help us decide where best to place your content, whether it would constitute a strong pitch to the media and/or if it would be a good fit for a Peachjar flyer communication.

*Does the item directly exemplify the district's mission, priorities and goals?*

*Is the item truly original and unique or tell a story?*

*Are multiple schools/programs/grades involved?*

*Is the event accessible district-wide and would it draw district-wide appeal?*

*Is there high quality media to share or an opportunity to collect some?*

*Does the item inform our district-wide community about something new?*

*Does the item have a direct impact or call to action for a significant population of LSR7 families?*

*Will community members/leaders be involved?*

*Can the impact of the news/event be described succinctly (short paragraph)?*

## Submitting Photos

- Send no more than four photographs total, selecting your favorites before emailing them to communications@lsr7.net.
- Look for photographs that are high resolution, if possible.
- Select photos that show the faces of people (avoid backs of heads, photos from far away). Stand close to your subjects (5 to 10 feet or less) whenever possible.
- **Identifying people in photos:** Please identify the people within the photos from left to right and by rows (if in a group) by first and last name.
- **Check "Internet" or "Media" permissions:** All photos shared on any district-affiliated channels should not include students who have been opted out of district publicity. We ask for full names of students in submitted photos to assist with this vetting process and appreciate any time school staff are able to help us check permissions. Please check in with your school leader to see how your building keeps track of students who have opted out of publicity.

**Learn more about this process on page 8.**

# Using Peachjar Flyer System

Lee's Summit R-7 Schools partners with a platform called Peachjar to distribute flyers to parents about activities and events in our schools and community which may benefit students. Parents receive flyers electronically in weekly, visually-appealing emails. LSR7 does not distribute paper flyers to send home with students.

Both community organizations and staff members may submit flyers through the platform. Submitted flyers are automatically sent to the Public Relations Department for approval. Please review our Community Flyer Distribution Guidelines. All flyers that meet district guidelines are emailed as a visually engaging image to all LSR7 parents who have their email address(es) on file with the district every Tuesday at 3 p.m. Flyers are also posted to flyerboards located on each school website.

## ***Community Organizations Using Peachjar***

Community organizations may register with Peachjar as an "Enrichment or Community Organization" and upload flyers for distribution to desired school(s). Peachjar charges a fee for this service, which is typically much less than the cost to copy and deliver paper flyers to each school.

## ***Staff Using Peachjar***

All staff members promoting school and district events are able to use Peachjar for free. Staff interested in using Peachjar should email [communications@lsr7.net](mailto:communications@lsr7.net) to get uploading access. You'll receive a welcome email that will walk you through the platform. (It's very simple and includes flyer templates for you to customize easily.) Directions can also be found in the PR section of the Staff Page.

## ***Staff Discounts***

Lee's Summit R-7 Schools supports community groups or businesses that offer discounts designed for R-7 employees by distributing materials directly to its employees electronically via Peachjar. LSR7 staff will receive discounts and staff opportunities periodically through Peachjar emails sent to your work email. You do not need to sign up for these emails.

## District Peachjar Guidelines

The district will evaluate the educational value of the materials or advertisements, the age or maturity of students in the intended audience, and whether the materials or advertisements support the mission and vision of the district.

Flyers from outside community organizations (groups located in Jackson County, Cass County, Kansas City, Mo.) that may be approved include:

- Information from non-school sponsored youth sports and recreation activities offered in our community.
- Information from municipal, government agencies in our community that are not political in nature.
- Community organizations providing educational or enrichment services that may directly benefit students.

The Lee's Summit R-7 School District reserves the right to deny requests that contain unacceptable content, are seen as a conflict of interest or are in conflict with the district's mission and values.

Flyer content should never contain content that is obscene to minors; libelous or pervasively indecent or vulgar. Content should not advertise any product or service not permitted to minors by law, or constitute insulting or fighting words, the very expression of which injures or harasses other people (e.g., threats of violence, defamation of character or of a person's race, religion or ethnic origin).

Lee's Summit R-7 Schools does not endorse any particular group that distributes literature through Peachjar.

Visit [LSR7.org/PeachJar](https://www.lsr7.org/PeachJar) to access your school's flyers or to submit flyers.

## POLICIES & BEST PRACTICES

# Sharing Content on School Channels/ Social Media

### *Student Directory Information (No Photo/Bio List)*

At the beginning of each school year, a process is conducted to determine students who cannot have images and/or directory information released. This includes photographs, videos, and/or biographical information (i.e., name, grade, etc). These students are marked accordingly in PowerSchool under "Registration."

It is the responsibility of all school personnel to be aware of students who do not have permission to be published, and to adhere to not sharing their directory information in the aforementioned communication expectations. As a reminder, students in the fostering system are not automatically "no photo" students. The foster parents are responsible for notifying the school in order for them to be a "no photo" student.

### *Best Practices*

- Never post photos or videos that contain students if those students are on the district's "opt-out" list for directory information and/or if a student does not have "permission to publish to Internet" or "permission to publish to Media." Your front office staff can access this information.
- If a student has permission to publish to the Internet, then a parent has given the green light for that student's picture without their name or their work with their **first name and last initial** to be shared online or on social media.
- If a student has permission for publication in the media, then the parent has given the green light for a student's picture, individual picture, school work and **first and last name** to appear in school websites, press releases and in the media.
- No photos should be posted if it would violate FERPA or identify a student as a special needs student.
- As a reminder, Board policy prohibits staff from sharing photos of students on personal social media without supervisor permission. However, it is OK to reshare photos that have been initially posted on a school or classroom or otherwise district-approved social media account on personal social media.

### **Board Policy GBH - Excerpt**

Employees shall not post identifiable images or videos of students or students' families to personal social media sites without supervisor permission.



## **POLICIES & BEST PRACTICES**

# **Interacting with Media**

### **Board Policy KB - Excerpt**

#### *Spokespersons*

The superintendent, Board president or designee will serve as official spokespersons for the district. All employees and Board members will direct requests for official statements about district business from the public or members of the media to the district's spokespersons. Board members should emphasize to the media and members of the public that they may only speak as individual Board members unless empowered by the Board to speak on its behalf.

### ***Speaking to Media***

The LSR7 School District seeks to cooperate with the media in a timely, courteous manner at all times. When you are contacted by the media (whether friendly or unfriendly requests), please immediately contact your supervisor, as well as Executive Director of Public Relations Katy Bergen via e-mail (Katy.Bergen@lsr7.net), 816.986.1094 (work) or 816.401.1853 (cell). Reporters should refer all media requests about school or district business to Katy Bergen.

### ***Pitching to Media***

The LSR7 Public Relations Department tracks all media coverage and keeps records of our media coverage. We are also here to coordinate interviews, inform coverage and support you with preparing for interactions with the media.

We submit press releases and pitches to the media to share the positive stories of our students and staff with our larger community. Here are some examples of media outreach during the 2021-22 school year that turned into news stories featuring our school communities:

KCUR - [Spotlight on LSR7's Nutrition Services](#)

KSHB - [Unique story of LSN's Kelly Lepert and his class project](#)

Kansas City Star - [Feature on LSR7 Robotics](#)

Lee's Summit Tribune - [Spotlight on Sharon Owensby's national award](#)

If you are specifically interested in pitching a story, celebration or event to our media partners, please indicate so on the PR Submission Form.

**POLICIES & BEST PRACTICES****All LSR7 Staff are PR Ambassadors****Board Policy KB - Excerpt***Effective Communications*

The district recognizes that Board members and employees have regular contact with students, parents/guardians and the public in general. When interacting with the public, all district employees and Board members are responsible for communicating accurate information about district policies and programs and promoting effective school-home-community partnerships. District employees will not be disciplined for speech that is protected by law.

In all communications, the Board and its employees will:

- Disseminate accurate and timely information about district policies, programs, procedures, achievements, decisions and critical issues.
- Eliminate rumors and misinformation.
- Observe confidentiality and other restrictions imposed by law and Board policy.
- Promote a climate of trust.

**Thank you for sharing your stories with us!**