

The news media can be an important means of communicating information about the school system to the community. Consistent with policy 1360, Official School Spokesperson, the board chair and superintendent and their designees are authorized to provide information to the news media on behalf of the school system.

The superintendent shall establish an effective working relationship with the news media. The news media should be notified whenever necessary to relay information to the public, such as when there are emergency school closings. The superintendent also is expected to identify opportunities to educate the news media regarding the goals of the Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) and school system, especially as they relate to student success and the educational program. The superintendent also should inform the news media of the results of the school system’s efforts to improve student achievement.

The school system will respond to news media requests for public records in compliance with policy 5070/7350, Public Records – Retention, Release, and Disposition.

Policy 5020, Visitors to the Schools, applies to news media. News media are expected to cooperate with school system officials in their efforts to provide a safe and orderly learning environment in which disruptions to instructional time are minimized. The principal or superintendent or their designees may require news media to leave or prevent news media from entering school grounds if the news media's presence interferes with these efforts.

Legal References: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g; G.S. 115C-47, -109.3, -319 to -321, -402; 132-1 to -9

Cross References: Official School Spokesperson (policy 1360), Board Meeting News Coverage (policy 1425), Visitors to the Schools (policy 5020), Emergency Closings (policy 5050), Public Records – Retention, Release, and Disposition (policy 5070/7350)

Adopted: February 8, 2016

Replaces: Policy 2.04.40, Public Relations (as applicable)

Revised: September 14, 2020 (Legal references only); July 25, 2023