

Relations with the Media

The media (news, sports, or other specialty organizations) represents public interest in reporting information concerning the Fargo Public Schools, including its schools, staff, students and programs. It is therefore in the interest of both the education community and the citizen-taxpayers of the Fargo Public Schools that there is open communications with the media.

The Superintendent shall develop regulations to ensure that media access to district schools is not unduly disruptive of the educational environment and complies with board policies and district goals.

All representatives of the media shall be given equal access to information about the schools.

Media Liaisons

Except as otherwise stipulated by policy, the Superintendent or designee will be the district liaison with the public media. All contacts and releases concerning district policies and regulations, matters of district-wide interest, or potentially controversial topics will be handled or cleared by the Superintendent or designee.

Staff Media Relations

When authorized by the Superintendent or designee, staff members may respond in their official capacity to questions from the media.

Access

Any request to interview, film, videotape, photograph, or otherwise record students or district personnel on district property shall be submitted to the Superintendent or designee for approval. Requests may be made by telephone or in writing, must include specific details regarding the purpose and scope of the request, and should be submitted a reasonable time in advance, giving the district ample time to assess the request and, in the event that the request is approved, notify relevant staff, students, and parents as deemed necessary.

The district reserves the right to grant or deny any request for access to school(s) from the media. Access will not be denied in an attempt suppress a viewpoint but may be denied for at least the following reasons. Access would:

1. Compromise the safety of students or staff;
2. Disrupt the educational environment, disrupt district operations, and/or impede the ability of staff to perform their duties;
3. Breach confidentiality;
4. Breach state or federal laws/regulations;
5. Be overly demanding on district resources;
6. Provide a platform or perpetuate speech that is harassing, racist, or discriminatory.

In the event that the Superintendent or designee approves an access request, the requesting agency shall receive notice of any restrictions the Superintendent or designee has placed on

access to students or staff and/or videotaping/recording/photographing. Such restrictions shall be developed on a case-by-case basis but shall not be made in an attempt to suppress a viewpoint. The agency shall agree to these restrictions as a condition of access.

Rules Governing Media Access to Schools

If the Superintendent or designee grants the media access to schools, the press is required to register in the school's main office before proceeding to other areas of the school building. Upon check-in, the building principal shall assign an escort to the news media representative(s), who shall remain with the press the duration of their stay on school property.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, media requests to access students and/or staff on school property shall be denied. The Superintendent or designee shall serve as the district spokesperson and shall be available for comment as soon as practicable.

Violations

Violations of school policies/regulations or behavior that is disruptive or that interferes with school operations or emergencies may result in the Superintendent or designee requiring such individuals to leave school property. Refusal to leave school property when asked will be deemed to be a willful disturbance of school operations, and the district will contact law enforcement to assist with removing the violator from school property or the school-sponsored event.

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