

**Superintendent's Regulation
Media Relations**

1130-R

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Approved Upon Superintendent's Initials

02/07/2025
Date

The Board Policy on News Media Relations will help ensure fair and accurate reporting of school news and events, keep the public well informed of District activities, and help foster a positive and responsive relationship between the District.

The following Regulations will govern day-to-day interactions between the media and all school buildings, Central Office, Service Center, and other District facilities.

Media Access to Schools

The Communication Department will serve as the clearinghouse for all District information, coordinating media services and providing information to the news media.

1. School staff will refer all media requests for information and access to schools to the Communications Department.
2. The Chief Communications Officer will review the request, identify details, and contact the appropriate school principal.
3. The school principal is authorized to grant approval for media access to the school provided the coverage does not unduly disrupt the education of the students.
4. Once permission is granted by the principal, the Chief Communications Officer will notify the media in a timely manner.
5. Upon arrival at the school, media representatives should report directly to the main office. The principal or a staff person designated by the principal will accompany the media representative to the activity being covered and provide accurate information.
6. School staff are encouraged to use the Communications Department to promote school activities through the media. Staff members wishing to do their own media relations must get approval from their principal before issuing any information, including press releases. A copy of any press releases distributed to the media should also be sent to the Communications Department.
7. With the principal's approval, the contact person listed on a press release is authorized to serve as designated media contact for that activity. (Media need not call the Communications Department before contacting the contact person.)
8. Schools that send information to the media themselves or through the Communications Department should be prepared to host the media; a news release about a school event is an invitation for the media to visit.
9. In the event that a media request for access to a school is denied, the Communications Department will inform the media of the decision and the reason. The school campus will then be closed to the media. If applicable, the media may be directed to another location.
10. In the event of a school crisis, staff should refer to the District's Emergency Management Manual on file in each principal's office. The Communications Department will provide support with emergency communications.

School Staff

The media may request interviews with school staff. The following procedures will govern the conduct of interviews.

1. When approached by the media for an interview, school staff will inform the principal of the request before being interviewed. The principal will determine whether it is appropriate for the interview to be conducted on school grounds. The principal will also notify the Communications Department of the media request.

2. The principal may deny permission for the interview to be conducted on school grounds if:
 - The interview will unduly disrupt the education of students, or
 - The subject matter of the interview is not related to school business or activities. If permission is denied, school staff must arrange for the interview to be granted off school grounds on their own time. "School grounds" are constituted by the legal boundaries of the school, extending to but not including the sidewalk surrounding the school property.
3. Neither the Board's policy on news media relations nor these regulations authorize District employees to speak publicly on District matters that are not of concern to the general public (e.g., personnel matters, internal office business, complaints about an individual situation, etc.) However, employees, acting as private citizens and on their own time, are free to speak to the media on matters of concern to the general public relating to the District.
4. Staff will direct media representatives to the main office upon their arrival at the school.
5. Questions arising regarding compliance with these regulations should be directed to the District's Legal Counsel.

Students

School officials authorized to release information about students to the media must be familiar with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Copies are on file in each principal's office and on the district's website, www.rcsdk12.org.

1. Parents or guardians who do not want their children to be photographed or videotaped by the media should notify the school by filing a Photo/Video Release form, indicating their wishes. Forms are available at schools or from the Communications Department.
2. Parents or guardians who do not want their children to talk to representatives of the media should convey this to their children. It is the student's responsibility to comply with the wishes of his/her parents.
3. In special circumstances, parents/guardians of preschool or elementary students may want to contact their school principal directly to discuss media contact with their children.
4. Because athletic events and special events after the school day constitute a large part of school-related media coverage, the principal's approval and parental permission are not required for media coverage of such events.

Staff at Central Office, Service Center, and other District Facilities

1. In general, the Superintendent or Chief Communications Officer will serve as the official spokesperson for the District. In some cases, information may be supplied to the media by a spokesperson designated by the Superintendent or Chief Communications Officer.
2. Staff will refer all media requests for information from Central Office departments and other District facilities to the Communications Department. This office will contact the appropriate staff member to respond to each request.
3. Staff will notify the Communications Department of all media requests before providing information to the media.
4. Staff are encouraged to share any material related to school or District business or activities which they prepare for submission to the media with the Communications Department. The department can assist with the preparation and dissemination of material.
5. When a request for District wide data is made, all efforts will be made by the Communications Department to arrange a meeting with media representatives for the purpose of analyzing the data for accurate publication.

6. All requests from the media will be addressed in as timely a manner as possible to accommodate media deadlines.

Note: Regulation March 2, 1995; AMENDED AUGUST 10, 2009