

MEDIA RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Board of Education encourages that the district actively engage in all forms of media for the purpose of educating and engaging the public in its work. The Board and Superintendent will make every reasonable effort to cooperate with the media by providing accurate information about district operations, to the extent permissible by statute and regulation.

The Board President is designated as the spokesperson for the Board when the Board is making a statement on an issue. No other member of the Board individually will speak for, or in the name of, the Board unless by explicit direction of the Board. Board members should emphasize to the media when asked to speak as a Board member that they can only speak as private citizens unless they have been empowered by the Board to speak for it.

The Superintendent of Schools and/or designee are designated as the sole spokespersons for the district.

All media inquiries should be directed to the Superintendent of Schools. School district staff are not authorized to contact media, solicit interviews/coverage, or respond to media inquiries in their capacity as school district staff, unless expressly directed by the Superintendent of Schools.

All media inquiries regarding students, such as student interviews or photos, on school grounds must be directed to the respective School Principal and Superintendent of Schools for review and clearance.

All district communications, to include official district website, blogs and social media, should adhere to professional standards for quality and content. Postings will adhere to the standards set in the district's "acceptable use of computers" policy.

If a Board Member and/or the Superintendent choose to maintain a personal blog, website or social media presence, these individuals must ensure that it is clear that the postings do not represent the Board or district. Any communication by a Board Member and/or the Superintendent of Schools in his/her individual capacity must be clearly articulated to be in the individual's personal capacity, and not as an officer or employee of the District (as applicable), in order to avoid any public perception that such communication is made on behalf of the District in an official capacity. (e.g., I am writing in my personal capacity and not on behalf the Board of Education/South Orangetown Central School District).

Cross-ref: 4526, Computer Use in Instruction
5695, Students and Personal Electronic Devices
6470, Staff Use of Computerized Info Resources
6471, Website Publishing Policy
8630, Computer Resources and Data Management
8636, Social Media

Ref: Arts and Cultural Affairs Law §61.09

Adoption: June 17, 2010
Revised & Readopted: October 18, 2012
Revised & Readopted: June 16, 2022

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Authorized Spokespersons

Per Board Policy 1130 (Media Relations), The Board of Education President is the authorized spokesperson for the School Board and the Superintendent of Schools and/or designee are the sole authorized spokespersons for the School District.

All media inquiries should be directed to the Superintendent of Schools. School district staff are not authorized to contact media, solicit interviews/coverage or respond to media inquiries in their capacity as school district employees.

All media inquiries regarding students, such as student interviews or photos, on school grounds must be directed to the respective School Principal and Superintendent of Schools. The School Principal must confirm that prospective student interviewees have photo consent on file and students must be accompanied by an administrator for the duration of all media interviews/photo shoots on school grounds.

General Media Engagement

The South Orangetown Central School District understands the importance of assisting the media in providing coverage of the School District, including classroom instruction, student and staff achievement, extracurricular activities, recognition events and athletics programs. Our goal is to disseminate information as widely, uniformly and fairly as possible using normally accepted media standards. To this end, the best attempt will be made to fill reasonable requests by recognized media outlets (i.e., media entities that cover the South Orangetown Central School District and other local school districts on a regular and substantial basis).

It is not always possible to accommodate all media/interview requests. Only those media requests directly pertaining to School District activities, events and programs will be considered.

Interviews will only be considered only for those media members on a specific assignment for a specific media outlet that meets the following criteria:

- Originating radio and television personnel involved in a recorded or live television or radio broadcast of a School District or school-authorized event
- Daily newspapers, wire services and regional and national publications
- Non-originating radio and television personnel
- Officially recognized student publications and digital media outlets
- Non-daily newspapers and other print publications

Other determining factors may include:

- Distribution/size of publication: free, subscription, sale on newsstands, website traffic, etc.
- Length of existence of the publication, amount of original copy generated, number of full-time employees of the publication and the journalistic experience of the reporter(s)

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Web-based media from sites affiliated with established, regionally and nationally recognized news-gathering organizations are eligible for story coverage. Interviews will not be granted to operators of personal social media pages/accounts, nor unedited sites that are not affiliated with an established news-gathering organization and/or sites whose sole entity is user-generated message boards that allow the posting of anonymous comments.

Non-affiliated bloggers, podcast staff and freelance photographers will not be granted access to students, staff, faculty or administrators.

All other interview requests may be considered on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the South Orangetown Central School District Communications Office and/or Superintendent of Schools.

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