

SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMS:  
NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS

GBBA  
(REGULATION)

NEWS MEDIA  
PROCEDURES

The Board supports the rights of citizens to have access to information that affects school programs and services for children in the District. The District encourages positive relations with news reporters and other communications representatives. Dissemination of timely, accurate, and newsworthy information to the community through the news media is the primary responsibility of the Public Relations Department, working in cooperation with school administrators and other departmental supervisors.

District administrators and other personnel shall endeavor to create a positive, courteous relationship with members of the news media and maintain open communications on matters of a routine nature; however, the Board expects the welfare of students to be the guiding principle in all contacts with the news media. Maintaining a safe, orderly educational environment on the campus and in the classroom must be the most important consideration when working with the news media at the school level.

The Public Relations Department shall coordinate news coverage of the District. The department is responsible for overseeing official communications between the school system and the news media by initiating story ideas as well as facilitating requests for news coverage from media representatives and District personnel.

NEWS AND MEDIA  
ACCESS TO  
DISTRICT  
SCHOOLS AND  
FACILITIES

The Public Relations Department provides assistance and training to school administrators regarding effective relations with the news media. The Superintendent or his/her designee or the Public Relations Director serves as the primary spokesperson for the District on all matters of District-wide interest. The principal is the primary spokesperson regarding issues related to his or her individual school.

All news conferences and public events in which news coverage is requested must be coordinated by or through the Public Relations Department. District personnel should submit story ideas to the Public Relations Department as early as possible prior to the desired coverage date.

News reporters and other communications reporters must initiate their requests to interview, film, videotape, and/or photograph students and/or District personnel on District property through the Public Relations Department. Although schools are public buildings, the principal is responsible for maintaining discipline and the safety of all persons in the school. The principal may, therefore, develop procedures restricting the actions of news

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media personnel if those actions interfere with the orderly educational process. Likewise, District departments have a right to conduct business in a professional atmosphere and departmental administrators may limit access to news media representatives, cameras, and other equipment within the department until the Public Relations Department is notified.

The Public Relations Department will contact the school administrator prior to a media visit. If media appear on campus without notifying the Public Relations Department, the school administrator should notify the Public Relations Department and the appropriate District office. No media representatives will be allowed in the school without approval of the principal and notification of the Superintendent and the Public Relations Department. Principals and other administrators, however, are encouraged to assist with any reasonable request for media access and cooperate to the fullest extent possible.

Once contacted by the Public Relations Department, the school administrator or department head may request on-site assistance from the Public Relations Department before allowing access to media representatives. School administrators are encouraged to seek the advice of the Public Relations Department and the Superintendent on addressing media requests; however, the decision regarding media access to the campus rests with the principal. Maintaining a safe, orderly educational environment on the campus and in the classroom is the most important consideration when working with the news media at the school level, and the building administrator's judgment in this regard will be the primary factor in determining the extent to which the news media will be allowed access to District facilities.

In accordance with the Education Code 37.105, Unauthorized Persons: Refusal of Entry, Ejection, Identification, and 37.107, Trespass on School Grounds, schools may refuse access to media representatives on school property if their presence or behavior would be disruptive to the school environment.

NEWS AND MEDIA  
ACCESS IN CRISIS  
AND/OR  
EMERGENCY  
SITUATIONS

In handling crisis situations on campus, building administrators should first contact emergency medical services personnel (if the situation is life-threatening). Following that, the general order of notification, depending upon the circumstances surrounding the situation, is first, the SISD Police Department, then the appropriate Assistant Superintendent. The Assistant Superintendent will then contact the Director of Public Relations.

Interviewing, filming, or videotaping on District property may not occur without prior approval from the building administrator or

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department head and the Public Relations Department.

NEWS AND MEDIA  
INTERVIEWS AND  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
(FILM AND  
VIDEOTAPE)

Filming, videotaping, and photographing children in classrooms, on campus, or in school-sponsored events is allowed for non-instructional purposes provided there is a signed parental consent form or release form for each child who participates in such activities. The media form is available on the Public Relations Department Web page.

Signed parental consent forms must be in the school files and accessible upon request. General images of children in which not one student is identifiable do not require parental permission forms. In addition, the filming, videotaping, and photographing of children for classroom instructional purposes or for a purpose related to a co-curricular or extracurricular activity do not require parental permission forms. These provisions are in accordance with the Education Code 26.009, Consent Required for Certain Activities. [See also EHA, FM, FNG].