

Instruction

Publications

Student publications are important elements of the instructional program and contribute directly to the accomplishment of the school's goals. The Board of Education encourages the development of school sponsored student publications such as newspapers, annuals, and magazines because they offer an educational activity through which students gain experience in reporting, writing, editing, and understanding responsible journalism. Such publications also provide an opportunity for students to express their views and a means of communicating both within and beyond the school community.

All student publications will comply with the rules of responsible journalism. Libelous statements, unfounded charges and accusations, obscenity, false statements, materials advocating racial or religious prejudice, hatred, violence, the breaking of laws and school policies and/or regulations, or materials designed to disrupt the educational process will not be permitted. Expressions of personal opinion must be clearly identified as such, and bear the name of the author. Opportunity for the expression of opinions differing from those of the student publishers must be provided.

In addition, student newspapers and/or publications which are paid for by the District and/or produced under the direction of a teacher as part of the school curriculum are not considered a public forum. In such cases, the Board reserves the right to edit or delete such student speech which is determined to be inconsistent with the District's basic educational mission.

The Board recognizes that students have rights to free expression in student publications. Consequently, student speech shall be limited in officially sponsored student publications only if there is a legitimate pedagogical reason to do so. The administration shall develop regulations to provide guidance on such legitimate pedagogical reasons.

Legal Reference: *Eisner v Stamford Board of Education*, 440 F. 2d 803 (2nd Cir 1971)
Trachtman v Anker, 563 F. 2d 512 (2nd Cir. 1977) cert. denied, 435 U.S. 925 (1978)
Hazelwood School District v. Ruhlmeir, 484 U.S. 260, 108 S Ct 562 (1988)
Bethel School District v. Fraser, 478 US 675 (1986)
Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community Dist., 393 US 503, (1969)

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Student Publications

Purposes of Official Student Newspaper

1. To exist as an instructional device for the teaching of writing and other journalistic skills;
2. To provide a forum for opinions of students, school staff, and members of the community; and
3. To serve the entire school by reporting school activities.

Rights of Student Journalists

1. To print factual articles dealing with topics of interest to the student writers; and
2. To print, on the editorial page, opinions on any topic, whether school related or not, which students feel are of interest to themselves or to the readers.

Responsibilities of Student Journalists

1. To submit copy that conforms to good journalistic writing style;
2. To rewrite stories, as required by the teacher, to improve journalistic structure, sentence structure, grammar, spelling and punctuation;
3. To check facts and verify quotes;
4. In the case of editorials on controversial issues, to provide space for rebuttals, in the same issue if possible, but otherwise no later than the following issue; and
5. Subject to the specific limitations in these guidelines, to determine the contents of official student newspapers.

Material Not Permitted in Official School Newspapers

1. Material which is libelous or which violates the rights of privacy;
2. Profanity, hereby defined as the language which would not be used in *The Hartford Courant* or *The New York Times*;

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Student Publications

Material Not Permitted in Official School Newspapers (continued)

3. Material which criticizes or demeans any race, religion, sex or ethnic group;
4. Ads for cigarettes, liquor, or any other product not conducive to good health;
5. Any material, the publication of which would cause substantial disruption of the school. Substantial disruption is hereby defined as the threat of physical violence in the school or nearby community and/or the disruption of the school's educational program; and
6. Endorsements of political candidates or ballot measures, whether such endorsements are made via editorial, articles, letter or photograph cartoon. The newspaper may, however, publish "fact sheet" types of articles on candidates and ballot measures, provided such articles do not endorse any person or position, and provided equal space is provided for all candidates for a particular office or both sides of a ballot measure.

Determination of Appropriateness

The teacher/advisor shall have the primary responsibility of reviewing each article prior to its publication to determine if it satisfies all the conditions of these guidelines. The school Principal or his/her designated representative other than the teacher/advisor may also review copy prior to its publication. However, such copy must be returned to the student editors within 72 hours after it is submitted for review. No copy may be censored except for reasons specifically listed in Board policy and these guidelines. Nothing in these guidelines is intended to allow censoring of any article merely because it is controversial or because it criticizes a particular school, a school procedure, or the school system itself.

Resolution of Differences

In the event of disagreement as to whether an article should be printed, each school shall have a Publications Board, which shall meet within 48 hours to submit its opinion. The Publications Board shall consist of the Principal or his/her designated representative; a teacher not directly involved; representative(s) from the student council, the PTA/PTO and other members as mutually agreed upon. If the Publications Board cannot solve the dispute, then an appeal shall be made to the Superintendent who shall seek advice from the Board's legal counsel in making his/her decision. The Superintendent shall act on the appeal within 48 hours.

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Student Publications (continued)

Legal Reference: *Eisner v. Stamford Board of Education*, 440 F.2d 803 (2nd Cir 1971)

Trachtman v. Anker, 563 F.2d 518 (2nd Cir 1977), cert. denied, 354 U.S.
 925 (1978)

Hazelwood School District v. Ruhlmeir, 484 U.S. 260, 108 S Ct 562
 (1988)

Bethel School District v. Fraser, 478 US 675 (1986)

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