

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Policy 801.2 (previously 1001.2)

Releases to News Media - Internal School News and Board Matters

The Board wishes to make every reasonable effort to provide the public with information about its schools, and to do so quickly, accurately, responsibly, and often.

Therefore, the Communications Officer will systematically seek to report notable school events and programmes. News releases pertaining to matters of educational significance of interest to the district as a whole will be prepared by the Communications Officer, and will be under the general control of the Superintendent of Schools, who will be consulted especially when, in the opinion of the Communications Officer, a particular issue may be sensitive.

News releases about events, personnel, students, and programmes in individual schools are prepared by principals, who are encouraged to release such information as frequently and in as positive a manner as possible. It is expected that principals will share newsworthy stories with the Communications Officer, and that they will check facts and backgrounds with the Communications Officer to ensure that the releases prepared by the schools are accurate and appropriate. If the principal knows or suspects a particular issue is sensitive, he/she should clear releases about that issue with the Superintendent of Schools or designate before making them public.

The Board has approved the submission of a weekly "schools column" to local newspapers, on the understanding that it be exclusive to the newspapers and not duplicated elsewhere. All columns will be approved by the Superintendent of Schools.

News Media and the Board

With regard to Board matters, the Chairperson of the Board shall be the official spokesperson, except as this duty is specifically delegated to the Superintendent of Schools. News releases about Board matters may, at the Board's request, be prepared by the Superintendent of Schools.

At Board meetings, the Board welcomes representatives of the Richmond press, and makes available to them the meeting packages containing all the material provided to the Trustees. On occasions where certain documents, because of their confidential nature, cannot be made available, the Chairperson will so state at the beginning of each Board meeting.