

STUDENTS

5131.82(a)

SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS

Official school publications refer to materials produced by students for publication. For the purpose of this policy “school publications” also includes a school Internet website and school and student literary magazines. School publications are designed to serve as vehicles for instruction and also as a means of communication.

A school publication can best function when a full opportunity is provided for students to inquire, questions, and exchange ideas. Articles may reflect all areas of student interest, including topics about which there may be dissent and controversy. It is the intent of the Board of Education that students be provided with avenues for the research of ideas and causes of interest to them, and students should be allowed to express their opinions. Controversial subjects should be presented with an opportunity for students to express a variety of published viewpoints.

I. Purpose of Official Student Publications

- A. To exist as an instructional device for the teaching of writing and other journalistic skills.
- B. To serve the entire school by reporting school activities, issues and other areas of interest.
- C. To provide a forum for the opinion of students, school staff, parents, and the school community.

II. Students’ Rights to Exercise Freedom of Speech and the Press

A. Students’ Rights, Responsibilities, and Restrictions

- 1) Students of the public schools shall have the right to exercise freedom of speech and the press including, but not limited to, the right of expression in official publications, whether or not such publications or other means of expression are supported financially by the school or by use of school facilities, except for expression which shall be prohibited because it is obscene, libelous, or slanderous.
- 2) Also prohibited shall be material which so incites students as to create a clear and present danger, the commission of unlawful acts, or the violation of lawful school regulations, or the substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school. “Substantial disruption” is defined as the threat of physical violence or damage to persons or property on school premises or in the community, or the disruption of the school’s educational program.

SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS – (continued)

3) Materials not permitted in official school publications also include the following:

- a) Materials which violate the right of privacy.
- b) Use of profanity.
- c) Materials which advocate the breaking of the law.
- d) Advertising for cigarettes, liquor, or any other products or services not permitted by law to be sold to persons under the age of 18.
- e) Official school publications may endorse political candidates or ballot measures within an editorial article. A student publication may present opposing political positions and candidates through article, letter, photograph or cartoon, so long as all major issues and candidates are given an opportunity for equal space and content.

B. Journalism Advisors

- 1) Student editors of official school publications shall be responsible for assigning and editing the content of their publications subject to the limitations of this policy. However, it shall be the responsibility of the advisor(s) of student publications within each school to supervise the production of the student publication and the production staff, to maintain professional standards of English and journalism.
- 2) The advisor shall be designated by the Superintendent or designee.

C. Prior Restraint

There shall be no prior restraint of material prepared for official school publications except insofar as it violates this policy. School officials shall have the burden of showing justification without undue delay prior to any limitation of student expression.

D. Prior Review

- 1) The School principal or administrative designee other than the advisor may also review journalistic copy prior to its publication, if so requested; however, such copy must be returned to the publication advisor within a reasonable time after it is submitted for review.
- 2) The school principal or administrative designee may make recommendations in the interest of teaching journalist skills, but may not censor nor restrain publication except in accordance with this policy.

