

School-Related Student Publications

School-sponsored publications are a public forum for students as well as an educational activity through which students can gain experience in reporting, writing, editing and understanding responsible journalism. Because the Board recognizes creative student expression as an educational benefit of the school experience, it encourages freedom of comment, both oral and written, in a school setting with a degree of order in which proper learning can take place.

The Board encourages students to express their views in school-sponsored publications and to observe rules for responsible journalism. This means expression which is false or obscene, libelous, slanderous or defamatory under state law; presents a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts, violation of school rules or material and substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school; violates the privacy rights of others; or threatens violence to property or persons shall not be permitted.

Student editors of school-sponsored publications shall be responsible for determining the news, opinion and advertising content of their publications subject to the limitations of this policy and state law. The publications advisor within each school shall be responsible for supervising the production of school-sponsored publications and for teaching and encouraging free and responsible expression and professional standards of journalism.

The sponsors of student publications have the responsibility to review the contents before publication and to assist students in improving their skills and modes of expression and to recognize material that is in poor taste, misleading, false, ill advised, prejudiced and even libelous. Any staff member who exercises editorial control over the style and content of student speech must be able to articulate an educational reason for doing so that is consistent with this policy.

All school-sponsored publications shall contain a disclaimer that expression made by students in the exercise of freedom of speech or freedom of the press is not an expression of Board policy. The school district and employees are provided immunity from civil or criminal penalties for any expression made or published by students.

The superintendent shall develop, for approval by the Board, a written official school publications code which shall include:

1. A statement of the purposes of official school publications.
2. Responsibilities of official school publications' advisors and student editors.
3. A list of prohibited materials.
4. Reasonable provisions for the time, place and manner of distributing school-sponsored student publications within the school district's jurisdiction.

5. Procedures for resolving differences.

The publications code shall be distributed to all students and teachers at the beginning of each school year.

Adopted September 28, 1994

Revised to conform with practice: date of manual adoption

LEGAL REFS.: C.R.S. 22-1-120 (*rights of free expression for public school students*)

C.R.S. 22-1-123(5)(e) (*state law does not prevent a student who is working under the supervision of a journalism teacher or sponsor from preparing or participating in a survey, analysis or evaluation without obtaining written parental consent as long as participation is not prohibited by federal law*)

C.R.S. 22-32-110(1)(r) (*power to exclude materials that are immoral or pernicious*)

CROSS REF.: JLDAC, Screening/Testing of Students

[Revised July 2011]