

COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC

The Governing Board recognizes the district's responsibility to keep the public informed regarding the goals, programs, achievements, and needs of the schools and district and to be responsive to the concerns and interests expressed by members of the community.

(cf. 1000 - Concepts and Roles)

The Superintendent or designee shall establish strategies for effective two-way communications between the district and the public and shall consult with the Board regarding the role of Board members as advocates for the district's students, programs, and policies.

(cf. 9000 - Role of the Board)

The Superintendent or designee shall distribute communications protocols and procedures to the Board and staff, which include, but are not limited to, identification of spokesperson(s) authorized to speak to the media on behalf of the district, job descriptions that identify the responsibilities of the public information officer and other staff members related to communications with the public, strategies for coordinating communications activities, legal requirements pertaining to confidentiality as well as the public's right to access records, and the importance of presenting a consistent, unified message on district issues.

(cf. 1112 - Media Relations)

(cf. 1340 - Access to District Records)

(cf. 3580 - District Records)

(cf. 5125 - Student Records)

(cf. 5125.1 - Release of Directory Information)

(cf. 9005 - Governance Standards)

(cf. 9010 - Public Statements)

(cf. 9011 - Disclosure of Confidential/Privileged Information)

The Superintendent or designee shall utilize a variety of communications methods in order to provide the public with adequate access to information. Such methods may include, but not be limited to, district and school newsletters, mailings, the district and school web sites, direct email communications, recorded telephone messages for parent/guardian information, school accountability report cards, community forums and public events, notices sent home with students, and news releases and meetings with editorial boards.

(cf. 0510 - School Accountability Report Card)

(cf. 1113 - District and School Web Sites)

(cf. 5145.6 - Parental Notifications)

COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC (Continued)

In developing communications strategies, the Superintendent or designee shall take into account the needs of all members of the public, including those whose primary language is not English and those who are visually or hearing impaired or have other special needs.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that staff are responsive to requests by parents/guardians or members of the public for information or assistance and may provide staff with professional development in their "customer service" role as needed.

(cf. 4131, 4231, 4331 - Staff Development)

The Superintendent or designee shall provide multiple opportunities for members of the public to give input on district and school issues and operations. Community members are encouraged to participate on district and school committees, provide input at Board meetings, submit suggestions to district staff, use the district's complaint procedures as appropriate, and become involved in school activities.

(cf. 1220 - Citizen Advisory Committees)

(cf. 1230 - School-Connected Organizations)

(cf. 1240 - Volunteer Assistance)

(cf. 1260 - Educational Foundation)

(cf. 1312.1 - Complaints Concerning District Employees)

(cf. 1312.2 - Complaints Concerning Instructional Materials)

(cf. 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures)

(cf. 1312.4 - Williams Uniform Complaint Procedures)

(cf. 6020 - Parent Involvement)

(cf. 9322 - Agenda/Meeting Materials)

(cf. 9323 - Meeting Conduct)

Prohibition Against Mass Mailings at Public Expense

No newsletter or other mass mailing, as defined in Government Code 82041.5 and 2 CCR 18901, shall be sent by the district at public expense if such material aggrandizes one or more Board members. The name, signature, or photograph of a Board member may be included in such materials only as permitted by 2 CCR 18901. (Government Code 82041.5, 89001; 2 CCR 18901)

Comprehensive Communications Plan

The Superintendent or designee shall develop a written communications plan which establishes priorities for proactive community outreach to build support for district programs and issues. The plan shall also incorporate strategies for effective communications during an emergency or other situation that may arise.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC (Continued)

(cf. 0450 - Comprehensive Safety Plan)
(cf. 1160 - Political Processes)
(cf. 1330 - Use of School Facilities)
(cf. 3516 - Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Plan)

The plan shall identify specific communications goals aligned with the district's vision and goals for student learning. For each communications goal, the plan shall identify key messages, individuals or groups that can help the district achieve its goal, strategies tailored for communicating with each target audience, timelines, persons responsible for each activity, and budget implications.

(cf. 0000 - Vision)
(cf. 0200 - Goals for the School District)

As appropriate for each issue, target audiences may include parents/guardians, the media, local governmental agencies, businesses, community organizations and civic groups, postsecondary institutions, health care professionals, child care providers, senior citizens, community leaders, state or federal legislators or agencies, and/or other segments of the public.

(cf. 1020 - Youth Services)
(cf. 1400 - Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies and the Schools)
(cf. 1700 - Relations Between Private Industry and the Schools)

The Superintendent or designee shall annually evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the district's communications plan and recommend to the Board whether the goals and key issues identified in the plan need to be revised to meet changing circumstances or priorities.

(cf. 0500 - Accountability)

Legal Reference: (see next page)

COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC (Continued)

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

35145.5 Board meetings, public participation

35172 Promotional activities

38130-38138 Civic Center Act

GOVERNMENT CODE

54957.5 Meeting agendas and materials

82041.5 Mass mailing

89001 Newsletter or mass mailing

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 2

18901 Mass mailings sent at public expense

Management Resources:

CSBA PUBLICATIONS

Mass Mailings at Public Expense, Legal Advisory, January 2007

911: A Manual for Schools and the Media During a Campus Crisis, 2001

Political Activities of School Districts: Legal Issues, rev. 2001

Maximizing School Board Governance: Community Leadership, 1996

WEB SITES

CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>

California School Public Relations Association: <http://www.calspra.org>

Fair Political Practices Commission: <http://www.fppc.ca.gov>

Policy

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VACAVILLE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Vacaville, California