

**MEDIA RELATIONS**

The Board of Education respects the public's right to information and recognizes that the media significantly influence the community's understanding of school programs.

Media representatives are welcome at all Board meetings and shall receive meeting agendas upon request in accordance with Board policy.

*(cf. 9322 - Agenda/Meeting Materials)*

The board encourages school site administrators and district administrators to make every effort to accommodate the reasonable requests of legitimate news media for access to our campuses as long as that access does not disrupt the peaceful conduct of educational activities. In addition, many students (e.g., youth with disabilities, Juvenile Court wards) have specific confidentiality rights that must be considered and appropriate protocols followed before news media may be granted access to interview, photograph, or videotape these minors.

*(cf. 1250 - Visitors/Outsiders)*

*(cf. 3515.2 - Disruptions)*

Staff may provide the media with student directory information, including, but not limited to, the name of a student, school of attendance, grade level, honors, and activities, unless the student's parent/guardian has submitted a written request that such information not be disclosed. The district shall not release information that is private or confidential as required by law, Board policy or administrative regulation. No other access to student records or personally identifiable student information may be provided without written parent/guardian permission.

*(cf. 1340 - Access to District Records)*

*(cf. 4119.23/4219.23/4319.23 - Unauthorized Release of Confidential/Privileged Information)*

*(cf. 5125 - Student Records)*

*(cf. 5125.1 - Release of Directory Information)*

*(cf. 9010 - Public Statements)*

*(cf. 9321.1 - Closed Session Actions and Reports)*

**Interviewing and Photographing Students**

The district shall not impose restraints on students' right to speak freely with media representatives at those times which do not disrupt a student's educational program. However, interviews of students may not create substantial disorder or impinge on the rights of others. Therefore, in order to minimize possible disruption, media representatives who wish to interview students and staff at school are strongly encouraged to make prior arrangements with the Communications Director. The Communications Director will arrange interview times to not disrupt educational activities. At their discretion, parents/guardians may instruct their children not to communicate with media representatives.

## **MEDIA RELATIONS** (continued)

*(cf. 5145.2 - Freedom of Speech/Expression)*

In order to protect the privacy and safety of students, a media representative who wishes to photograph students on school grounds should first make arrangements with the Principal or Communications Director.

When interviewing or photographing a special education student, he/she shall not be identified as a special education student without prior, written parent/guardian permission.

### **Media Communications Plan**

In order to help develop strong relations with the media, the Superintendent or designee shall develop a proactive media communications plan. This plan may include, but not be limited to, information related to district programs and needs, student awards, school accomplishments and events of special interest.

*(cf. 0510 - School Accountability Report Card)*

*(cf. 1100 - Communication with the Public)*

*(cf. 1160 - Political Processes)*

The plan shall specify the district's and/or site's primary media contact to whom all media inquiries shall be routed. Spokespersons designated to speak to the media on behalf of the district include the Board President, Superintendent and Communications Director. Other Board members and staff may be asked by the Superintendent or designee to speak to the media on a case-by-case basis, depending on their expertise on an issue.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide training on effective media relations to all designated spokespersons.

*(cf. 9240 - Board Development)*

### **Crisis Communications Plan**

During a disturbance or crisis situation, the first priority of school staff is to assure the safety of students and staff. However, the Board recognizes the need to provide timely and accurate information to parents/guardians and the community during a crisis. The Board also recognizes that the media have an important role to play in relaying this information to the public. In order to help ensure that the media and district work together effectively, the Superintendent or designee shall develop a crisis communications plan to identify communication strategies to be taken in the event of a crisis.

*(cf. 0450 - Comprehensive Safety Plan)*

*(cf. 3516 - Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plan)*

**MEDIA RELATIONS** (continued)

The crisis communications plan may include but not be limited to identification of a media center location, development of both internal and external notification systems, and strategies for press conference logistics.

The Superintendent or designee shall include local law enforcement and media representatives in the crisis planning process.

*Legal Reference:*

EDUCATION CODE

32210-32212 *Willful disturbance of public school or meeting*

35144 *Special meetings*

35145 *Public meetings*

35160 *Authority of governing boards*

35172 *Promotional activities*

EVIDENCE CODE

1070 *Refusal to disclose news source*

PENAL CODE

627-627.10 *Access to school premises*

COURT DECISIONS

*Lopez v. Tulare Joint Union High School District, (1995) 34 Cal.App.4th 1302*

ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS

95 *Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 509 (1996)*

*Management Resources:*

CSBA PUBLICATIONS

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

WEB SITES

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

Policy

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**VACAVILLE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Vacaville, California