

STUDENT PRESS

- 1.0 A free and open exchange of ideas and opportunity for public debate on controversial issues are fundamental and necessary parts of a democracy. The student press is a valuable tool for teaching students to participate in the exchange of ideas and public debate freely and responsibly. Therefore, it is the policy of the District to encourage freedom of expression in the student press and not to restrict publication of material in the student press except as provided by state or federal law or this policy.
 - 1.1 For purposes of this policy, “student press” shall mean any publication written substantially by students in the District, made generally available throughout a school in the District, and which is published primarily at the District's expense. It includes school newspapers and yearbooks.
 - 1.2 “School-sponsored student publications” are to provide experience in reporting, writing, editing, and understanding English and responsible journalism.
 - 1.3 School-sponsored publications that are part of the curriculum for which grades are assigned and academic credit is given serve as vehicles for teaching students the highest standards of writing and journalism.
 - 1.4 School newspapers have the additional purpose of disseminating school related information among members of the school community. Content of the school publications should reflect areas of student interest, be open and thought provoking and presented in a fair and balanced manner.
- 2.0 The student press shall not publish or distribute any material:
 - 2.1 which is obscene;
 - 2.2 which is libelous, slanderous, or defamatory under state law;
 - 2.3 which is false as to any person who is not a public figure or involved in a matter of public concern;
 - 2.4 which creates a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts, the violation of lawful school regulations, or the material and substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school; or,
 - 2.5 which violates the rights of others to privacy.
- 3.0 An advisor/teacher of school-sponsored student publications shall:
 - 3.1 supervise the production of the publication, including general supervision over all activities to create a proper learning environment;
 - 3.2 establish writing, photography, and display advertising assignments for the students;
 - 3.3 appoint and remove students from staff positions;
 - 3.4 direct and control the learning experience that the publication is intended to provide;
 - 3.5 exercise editorial control over the publication consistent with legitimate, pedagogical expectations;
 - 3.6 teach and encourage free and responsible expression and professional standards for English and journalism, including the ability to address difficult issues with judgment, maturity, and sensitivity to the school community audience;
 - 3.7 maintain open and proactive communications with the building principal or designee regarding topics which may bring inquiry from parents, community, staff or students; and,

- 3.8 implement a method of regular review and revision of his/her responsibilities as the advisor/teacher to ensure that all school-sponsored publications are in compliance with this policy.
- 4.0 Student editors of school-sponsored student publications shall be responsible for determining news, opinions, and advertising content of their publications subject to the terms of this policy, state and federal law.
- 5.0 This policy shall become the publications code for each school in the District, except that each school shall add provisions which include the time, place, and manner of publication of school-sponsored publications which are reasonable for that school. In each school such provisions shall be developed by the staffs of all publications, the faculty advisor/teacher of each school-sponsored publication, and appropriate building personnel. Faculty advisors/teachers and building administrators shall develop and follow procedures to ensure that the publications code in each school is communicated to students and teachers at the beginning of each school year.
- 6.0 Any materials proposed for publication shall be presented in advance to the faculty advisor/teacher and to the school administrator with oversight responsibility for school-sponsored publications. If the advisor/teacher or school administrator concludes that such materials are contrary to the standards set forth in Section 2.0 or contrary to assignments made or approved by the advisor/teacher, the school administrator and/or the advisor/teacher shall meet with the student editors to discuss alternatives to address the staff members' concerns. If the editor(s) and staff member(s) do not arrive at a mutually-satisfactory solution, the editor(s) and staff member(s) shall promptly present the matter to the principal of the school involved for his/her resolution. The principal will conduct a hearing on the dispute within two (2) school days. At the hearing, the students involved, the publication advisor/teacher, and other persons as the principal deems appropriate may be present. All parties shall have the opportunity to present their views. They shall not have the right to representation by legal counsel or to cross-examine witnesses. Thereafter, the principal shall notify all parties, in writing, of the decision. If the decision is that all or part of the materials are inappropriate, the notice shall indicate the standard which has been violated. The written notice of the decision made by the principal shall be provided within five (5) school days following conclusion of the hearing.

If the decision of the principal is not acceptable to either of the parties involved, the decision may be appealed to the superintendent or his/her designee within five (5) school days following receipt of the principal's decision. In case of such an appeal, a decision should be made and written notification provided to the parties within five (5) school days following receipt by the superintendent or his/her designee of appeal notice and the principal's decision, or, in the discretion of the superintendent or his/her designee, within five (5) school days following a meeting with the relevant parties to discuss the merits of the appeal. The superintendent's decision shall not be subject to further appeal.

- 7.0 For the purpose of this policy, all school-sponsored publications shall contain a disclaimer that states expression made by students in those publications is not an expression of Superintendent or Board policy and may not reflect the opinions of school employees or officials.

LEGAL REFERENCE:
22-1-120, C.R.S.