

STUDENTS

Policy 2910
(Regulation 2910)

Activities and Athletics

Student Publications

The Board of Education encourages student production and distribution of publications which can provide opportunities for practical journalistic experience and for the written expression of differing opinions. The Board of Education recognizes that freedom of speech and press bring corresponding responsibilities, therefore, in its inherent authority based on Missouri Public School Law, it designates the school principal as the Board's representative. The principal, through appointment of a faculty advisor, shall provide guidance to students in appropriate methods for preparing and producing publications.

The building principal/designee may delay or stop distribution of any materials proposed for printing or that have been printed which may be reasonably forecast to cause substantial and material disruption or obstruction of any lawful mission, process, or function of the school.

Activities and Athletics**Student Publications****Purposes Of Student Publications**

The publications fulfill a vital role within the school community in providing a means by which students, faculty, administrators, and community can communicate with other students, faculty, administrators and community members. The publications serve as a forum for the constructive expression of ideas, opinions, plans for innovation, events, etc., in a factually informative, interpretive, and entertaining manner, thereby providing primarily the students but also the faculty and administrators with an instrument of constructive leadership for influencing the school and community.

Student publications offer students an opportunity for practical and legitimate journalistic experience in terms of writing, editing, organizing, administering, financing and budgeting, etc. Assuming a position of leadership on the student publication signifies the student's acceptance of responsibility. The acceptance of this responsibility also provides the student with the opportunity to develop the potential which he/she possesses.

Standards

In fulfilling their roles as participants in the community media, students must demonstrate their maturity and dependability, and must show that they are capable of analyzing problems and making sound judgments. The following statement is adapted and modified from the Canons of Journalism by the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

1. Responsibility - The welfare and the best interests of school and community members must be the guideline for the publication of all material.
2. Freedom - With every freedom of speech and of the press there is a corresponding responsibility. No freedom, not even that of speech and of the press, is absolute. Student publications must be free to print what has been responsibly considered, researched and written. The staffs must demonstrate objectivity, but at the same time must be free to express viewpoints after presenting all sides of an issue. This policy should not rule out articles marked as news analysis advocating a particular point of view.
3. Accuracy - Thorough research of all materials -- news, editorials, features and sports -- will be conducted and the facts presented in an objective, balanced and truthful manner. The facts will be verified; the reporter will present them in the proper perspective; and the publications will print only that which is based on fact after careful research and investigation.

4. Fairness - Student publications will not make unjust or undue attacks on any individual group or person, and will provide an open forum for any viewpoints which are opposed to those of the publication.
5. Decency - Material published -- language, pictures and artwork -- will not be offensive, obscene, pornographic or injurious to any person or group.

Objectives and Responsibilities of the Publication Staff

In student publications, staff members must assume the following responsibilities:

1. To make a concerted effort as a staff to learn and to apply correct journalistic techniques of writing, editing, advertising and to seek the aid of professional journalists and responsible adults when and where necessary.
2. To assume obligations of a journalist in being responsible, honest, sensitive, fair, impartial, decent and dedicated to the necessity of a free and responsible press.
3. To be open-minded and representative of all feeling and ideas within the community, not only their own.
4. To plan each issue of the paper in order to provide a balance of informational, interpretive and entertaining material (all factually based); to give consideration to the importance, significance and value of each article and to the possible effect each article will have on the general welfare of the readers.
5. To research and verify all story ideas and related material and to refuse to publish any material until it has been verified as truthful and accurate.
6. To set priorities for material covered in the newspaper based on the importance, significance and interest of the material to the majority of the readers.
7. To develop a keen sense of observation and awareness about school, student and community activities and to report these accurately.
8. To establish a schedule of deadlines and to meet those deadlines as professionals.
9. To correct promptly all errors of fact for which the newspaper is responsible.
10. To develop faculty and administrative confidences and to keep those confidences.
11. To be supportive of the total school community and its activities and personnel. (Supportive - defined as praise, comment, or constructive criticism based on the offering of alternative suggestions and plans. It also involves the inclusion of names in the news in order to promote a sense of personal involvement on the part of the readers.)

12. To encourage intelligent thought and action from the readers.

Coverage of Material

News stories in student publications will be objective - free from opinion and bias. Stories will be based on facts obtained through thorough research and investigation. An emphasis will be placed on previewing upcoming events and activities to create interest. Newsworthy occurrences will receive attention in coverage articles. The stories will be presented on the pages of the paper in such a way that undue attention will not be given to articles of lesser value, interest or significance.

The primary function of features or special-interest articles is informational and entertainment. A special emphasis will be placed on in-depth coverage of material deemed to be of significant interest to the readers.

Sports articles will provide accurate description and records of athletic activities. Individual athletes will not be revered as stars or heroes, but proper credit for outstanding records, honors or performances will be given when due. The sports section of the paper will carry advance information to create interest in upcoming events as well as coverage articles for events. Material on the page will be varied to appeal to all readers, not just athletes and their avid fans. Proper coverage will be given to all teams and athletic activities, male and female, varsity and sub-varsity.

Responsibility for Handling Materials to be Published

Unchallenged Material

1. Writer directed to submit article and/or picture to page editor to whom reporter is immediately responsible; or unsolicited article submitted to an editor in that area.
2. Material reviewed by page editor responsible to determine if it meets standards for publications.
3. Materials reviewed by Editor-in-Chief.
4. Material reviewed by Faculty Advisor.
5. Material published.

Challenged Material

1. Editorial Level

If material submitted to a page editor is rejected, the writer, after a conference with the editor, may appeal to the Editorial Board. If the Editorial Board rejects the material, the

writer may appeal to the faculty advisor. The faculty advisor, after hearing both sides, considering all factors and giving guidance and counsel, shall submit in writing his/her recommendations and resolutions. The Editorial Board may by a two-thirds vote reject the proposal of the faculty advisor and not publish the material. The statement of the final action taken by the Editorial Board will be signed by all parties.

2. Editor-in-Chief Level

If material presented by a page editor is rejected by an editor-in-chief, the writer after a conference with the editor-in-chief may appeal to the Editorial Board. If the Editorial Board rejects the material, the writer may appeal to the faculty advisor. The faculty advisor, after hearing both sides, considering all factors and giving guidance and counsel, shall submit in writing his/her recommendations and resolutions. The Editorial Board may by a two-thirds vote reject the proposal of the faculty advisor and not publish the material. A statement of the final action taken by the Editorial Board will be signed by all parties.

3. Faculty Advisor Level

Material found unobjectionable by the Editorial Board but questioned by the faculty advisor shall be discussed by both parties. If the difference cannot be resolved, the material shall be presented to the building principal for review and guidance.

Material still found unobjectionable by the Editorial Board but questioned by the faculty advisor and/or building principal shall be presented at a joint meeting of the Editorial Board and the advisor. The faculty advisor must give specific reasons for his/her objections and give guidance to the group. The student writer shall be afforded an opportunity to present his/her viewpoint. If the Editorial board by a two-thirds vote still finds the material unobjectionable it may be printed. A quorum will be considered present when two thirds of the Editorial Board attend a meeting, and two thirds of those present must agree.

A brief statement summarizing the dialogue held and signed by all parties shall be presented to the building principal. The building principal shall forward the statement and copies of the article to the Superintendent and the Board of Education for their information. The signed statement shall signify that the Editorial Board fully understand the reservations of the faculty advisor and/or building principal and has chosen to exercise its option under the Board Policy.

4. Building Principal Level

The building principal/designee may delay or stop distribution of any materials proposed for printing or that have been printed which may be reasonably forecast to cause substantial and material disruption or obstruction of any lawful mission, process or function of the school.

The building principal/designee must forward a copy of the material to the Superintendent and a statement of reasons for delay or stoppage. The Superintendent shall schedule a hearing with all parties immediately to determine if the delay or stoppage was warranted.

Editorial Page Policy

An Editorial Board (composed of the editor-in-chief, chairman, the managing editor, news editor(s), editorial editor(s), feature editor(s), sports editor(s), photography editor(s), business manager, production manager, art editor and the head advertising manager) determines the content of the editorial page. Editorial ideas are presented to the Editorial Board for consideration. Editorials in the school publication will only be printed after all sides of an issue are considered and researched. The staff should consult with their advisor before printing issues which have a controversial connotation. The principal may also be consulted at the staff's discretion. There are basically four types of editorials that appear in the student publication:

1. **The unsigned staff position:** These editorials will deal with issues which the Editorial Board considers to be of importance to the school community and on which members of the Board reach a majority consensus after careful consideration and research of both sides of the issue. The purpose and content of each editorial or column will be stated in the article. Any editorial board member representing the minority opinion in these instances will be given space in which to express his/her view if he/she wishes. In instances of extremely controversial issues, unsigned editorials must represent the unanimous opinion of the Editorial Board. If a unanimous decision is not reached, both sides of the issue shall be printed under by-lines. Unsigned articles shall be designated as representative or staff opinion in the masthead of each issue.
2. **By-line editorials:** These editorials deal with issues the Editorial Board considers to be of importance, but on which they do not wish to take a staff position. These editorials may also represent issues on which members of the student body, not regularly affiliated with the student publication staff, wish to express an opinion after researching the issue, perhaps in response to an unsigned editorial.
3. **Letters to the Editor:** Letters to the editor shall be accepted from any reader so long as those letters are signed and are in keeping with the policy of the student publication. The staff reserves the right to edit any letter after consulting with the author. The staff may refuse any letters which it feels are malicious, libelous, or irresponsible. Any letter that criticizes an individual or group shall be presented to that individual or member of that group before the letter is published so that the individual or group being attacked may make a response or reply if they so desire. The two letters shall then be published simultaneously. If the writer of any letter to the editor presents a good cause, his name may be withheld. This shall be so designated in the publication by "Name withheld upon request." The name of the writer may be available to legitimate authority for legitimate reasons if the student publication faculty advisor, the editor, and the writer so agree, legal requirements excepted.

4. **Reviews and Critiques:** Periodically, movies, books, plays and musical performances are reviewed or critiqued. This expression of interest in cultural activity is deemed as a legitimate function of the student publication in bringing these things to the readers' attention. All reviews and critiques - favorable and unfavorable - shall be constructive and in keeping with good taste. They shall not be malicious or irresponsibly done.

Pictures and Artwork

Pictures and artwork in the publications shall add to the meaning of a story, shall serve to identify individuals, and shall generally add reader interest to the publication. These pictures shall cover many and varied individuals and activities. The photographs shall not violate the right of privacy and shall present a truthful situation. Cartoons and artwork shall have a definite function within the editorial context of the publication.

Copyright Law

All published materials and reproductions of artwork, etc., must not violate copyright laws.

Advertising and Business Management

Financial Arrangements

The financial operation of student publications must be approved by the building principal in accordance with current district funding practices. At no time are financial arrangements to be entered into without principal or school district approval.

Advertising

1. Allocation of Space

The amount of space allocated to advertising in school publications should not dominate the overall image of the paper. This situation should be examined from time to time by the faculty advisor so as to protect as much editorial space as possible to develop the writing abilities of students. The publication schedule and the size of the individual issues of the school publication shall be a matter of judgment of the faculty advisor and editorial staff.

1. Advertising Rates

Advertising rates per column inch will be sent by each school publication with approval of the faculty advisor.

2. Acceptable Advertising

Advertising shall be accepted from bona fide business firms in operation for a year or more or from new firms of a stable and permanent character.

Any advertising offering employment opportunities promising high earnings, travel or other extravagant claims should be thoroughly investigated.

3. Types Prohibited

- a. No advertising of liquor, tobacco or narcotics shall be accepted.
- b. Advertising soliciting sales of patent medicines, health treatments, salacious literature, joke devices, firearms, lotteries or any other items prohibited by postal laws shall not be accepted.
- c. When students and/or staff pictures are used in advertising, they shall be requested to sign permission slips.
- d. Advertising for motion pictures rated "X" may not be accepted. Pictures rated "R", "G" and "PG" may be advertised.

4. Collections

Advertising contracts between the student publication and the advertiser are binding to both parties as per terms of the contract. In cases where the advertiser does not pay his due bill, the business manager shall send at four (4) week intervals three (3) "reminder" letters. If the bill remains unpaid, the business manager shall make a personal call on the advertiser. If at this time the bill remains unpaid, the advertiser's name and contract shall be turned over to the building principal for action, as is stated in the third reminder sent to the advertiser. If the student publication staff fails to fulfill its contract terms, the contract is automatically canceled at no expense to the advertiser if he/she so desires.

Violations of Standards

If any school publication or publication other than those sponsored by schools is in violation of standards of school publications, the principal/designee shall request the distributor to desist distribution and call for a hearing immediately with parties involved.

Hearing procedures shall follow those in the school district guidelines.