

POLICY 2.04

5-F I recommend the Board approve the proposed revisions to Policy 2.04, entitled "Public Information."

[Contact: Nat Harrington, 434-8228.]

◆ **Development**

- This revision updates and clarifies responsibilities and procedures of schools and departments for dissemination of information about the District to the public, including the press; noticing public meetings; responding to media inquiries; initiating media contact; handling serious incidents; and campus visits.

CONSENT ITEM

PROPOSED REVISED POLICY 2.04

PUBLIC INFORMATION

- 1 1. The Board is committed to a policy of public information which is based on the
2 ~~conviction~~belief that the public schools of the ~~d~~District belong ~~in every sense~~ to the
3 people who created them by consent and who support them by taxation.
4 ~~¶~~Consistent with legal requirements, the Board will make every effort to enhance
5 public knowledge and understanding of and encourage public participation in the
6 ~~d~~District's goals and programs. The Board, therefore, ~~establishes~~maintains this
7 public information policy, which will be carried out through the efforts of the Board,
8 the Superintendent and the Office of Public Affairs, to:
9
- 10 a. keep the citizens of the ~~d~~District regularly and thoroughly informed through
11 ~~all~~reasonably available channels of communication on the ~~policies, programs,~~
12 ~~problems and planning programs, needs, and objectives of public education of~~
13 in the ~~s~~School ~~d~~District in accordance with Fla. Stat. § 230.23(15). This ~~policy~~
14 ~~will be carried out through the efforts of the Board, the Superintendent and the~~
15 ~~information office;~~ and
16
- 17 b. invite and foster the advice and counsel of the people within the ~~s~~School
18 ~~d~~District at all reasonable times and especially, as provided in Policy 1.03, at
19 public hearings and all regular, special, and workshop meetings of the Board;
20 which are open to the public under Florida's Sunshine Law.
21
- 22 2. It is the responsibility of each school, ~~and department,~~ and advisory committee to
23 facilitate the dissemination of information by keeping the Public Information Affairs
24 office informed of ~~all newsworthy events within their area of authority and of all~~
25 requests by media representatives for information, of all newsworthy events within
26 their area of authority.
27
- 28 3. **Public Meetings and Notices**
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- 30 a. Pursuant to Art. I, § 24(b), Fla. Const. and § 286.011, all meetings of any
31 collegial public body of the School District, at which official acts are to be taken
32 or at which public business of such body is to be transacted or discussed,
33 shall be open and noticed to the public, except with respect to meetings or

34 hearings exempted from the open-meetings requirements pursuant the state
35 constitution or general law as interpreted by Florida courts and the Florida
36 Attorney General.

- 37
38 b. In addition to the notices of District public meetings and hearings given
39 pursuant to the Sunshine Law or the Administrative Procedure Act, any
40 personnel responsible for scheduling such meetings should ensure that the
41 Public Affairs webmaster is informed of each public meeting or hearing for
42 listing on the Public Affairs web site at
43 <http://www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us/publicaffairs/Board%20Mtgs-Workshops.htm>.

44
45 **4. Responsibility for Media Relations**

- 46
47 a. School sites.-- Consistent with the requirements of School Board Policy 2.041
48 on public records requests, the school principal has primary responsibility for
49 responding to inquiries from news media on behalf of a school center and for
50 encouraging media coverage of newsworthy events at the school center. The
51 District's Office of Public Affairs is a resource to be used as needed in this
52 area.

- 53
54 b. District Administration.-- As to public information, District administrators have
55 the same responsibility for their areas of supervision as principals have for
56 schools. At the beginning of each school year, each administrator should
57 provide direction to staff members about how they should handle media
58 inquiries pursuant to the provisions in this Policy.

59
60 **5. Initiating Media Coverage.-- Schools may initiate requests for media coverage of**
61 **newsworthy activities either on their own or through the Office of Public Affairs. If**
62 **information is sent directly to the media, the Office of Public Affairs should also be**
63 **informed.**

64
65 **6. Responding to Media Inquiries.-- To facilitate external and internal**
66 **communications, administrators are asked to respond, consistent with policy 2.041,**
67 **in a forthright manner to inquiries from news reporters and to keep the public affairs**
68 **office informed of all but routine inquiries. Administrators are reminded not to**
69 **divulge confidential information.**

71 a. **Principals.**-- Principals should report (by TAO, e-mail, fax, or telephone) all
72 media contacts to the Public Affairs office and the appropriate area
73 superintendent. The Public Affairs office will make such information available
74 to the Superintendent's Office.

75
76 b. **District Administrators.**-- District administrators should report (by TAO, e-
77 mail, fax, or telephone) all media contacts to the Public Affairs office, and
78 either the Chief Academic Officer or Chief Operating Officer. The Public Affairs
79 office will inform the Superintendent's Office.

80
81 7. **Reporting Serious Incidents.**-- In the event of a serious incident which might
82 cause inquiries at the District level (for example, student disruption serious assault
83 on a student or staff member, bus accident, or fire at a school facility), an
84 administrator should immediately inform the Superintendent's Office, the Chief
85 Public Information Officer/designee, and the appropriate Area Administrator or
86 Chief Academic Officer or Chief Operating Officer. If necessary, the administrator
87 may contact one of these offices and ask that the contacted office pass the
88 message to the other two.

89
90 8. **Requesting Assistance from the Public Affairs Office.**-- As a general rule,
91 administrators should deal directly with news media inquiries, subject to Policy
92 2.041, about items within the administrator's area of responsibility. However, if
93 news reporters come to a school to cover a situation and the principal needs
94 assistance with the media while the principal and staff are resolving the situation,
95 the principal should request assistance from the Public Affairs office. The Chief
96 Public Information Officer/designee will come to the school to assist the principal.

97
98 9. **Campus Visits.**-- To help protect the safety of students, the principal and staff
99 must know who is visiting the campus and the purpose of the visit. Persons
100 seeking to visit a school campus, including news media representatives, shall
101 request permission from the principal by telephone or in person and shall report to
102 the main office upon arriving on campus, prior to any contact with students, staff, or
103 volunteers.

104
105 a. The principal may exercise reasonable discretion to grant or deny permission
106 to visitors to enter the school or property or to remain on the grounds,
107 pursuant to the authority vested in principals to supervise the operation and

Legal Signoff:

The Legal Services Department has reviewed proposed Policy 2.04 and finds it legally sufficient for development by the Board.

Attorney

Date