



Students – Series 3000

Freedom of Expression – 3220

The free expression of student opinion is an important part of education in a democratic society. Students' verbal and written expression of opinion on school premises is to be encouraged so long as it does not substantially disrupt the operation of the school. Students are expressly prohibited from the use of vulgar and/or offensive terms in classroom or assembly settings.

The Superintendent shall develop guidelines assuring that students are able to enjoy free expression of opinion while maintaining orderly conduct of the school.

1. Student Publications

Student publications produced as part of the school's curriculum or with the support of the associated student body fund are intended to serve both as vehicles for instruction and student communication. They are operated and substantively financed by the District.

Material appearing in such publications should reflect all areas of student interest, including topics about which there may be controversy and dissent. Controversial issues may be presented, provided that they are treated in depth and represent a variety of viewpoints. Such materials may not: be libelous, obscene or profane; cause a substantial disruption of the school, invade the privacy of others; demean any race, religion, sex, or ethnic group; or, advocate the violation of the law, or advertise tobacco products, liquor, illicit drugs, or drug paraphernalia.

Rules for determining obscenity should be consistent with those as applied to instructional materials. Obscene material is what the average person, applying contemporary community standards and taking the work as a whole, would find appealing to prurient interests, or that the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct as specifically defined by the applicable state law, or that the work taken as a whole lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

Material shall be considered profane when the language does not meet the standards of professional journalism as evidenced by the daily newspapers commonly distributed in the School District.

The Superintendent shall develop guidelines to implement these standards, and shall establish procedures for the prompt review of any materials which appear not to comply with the standards.

Such guidelines shall recognize the student publications instructor or advisor as the official with primary responsibility for supervising student publications and for ensuring that provisions incorporated into this Policy are met. In addition, such guidelines shall be interpreted as allowing minimum interference by adults in the student publications program. The Board encourages students to assume responsibility for difficult decisions which may at times produce controversy. However, such publication activities must also evidence respect for the sensitivity of others and standards of civility as well as the elements of responsible journalism.

2. Distribution of Materials

Publications or other material written by students may be distributed on school premises in accordance with procedures developed by the Superintendent. Such procedures may impose limits on the time, place, and manner of distribution including prior authorization for the distribution or circulation of substantial quantities of printed material, or the posting of such material on school property.

Students responsible for the distribution of material which leads to a substantial disruption of school activity or otherwise interferes with school operations shall be subject to corrective action or punishment, including suspension or expulsion, consistent with student discipline policies.

Materials may not be distributed on school grounds by non-students and non-employees of the District without prior approval of the building principal.

Cross Reference:

Board Policy 2340 Religious-related Activities and Practices

Board Policy 3241 Corrective Actions or Punishment

Legal References:

WAC 392-400-215 Student rights

Adopted: 03-09-2000