



## POLICY 2.04

4-O I recommend that the Board adopt the proposed revised Policy 2.04, entitled "Public Information."

[Contact: Nat Harrington, PX 48227.]

### Adoption

### CONSENT ITEM

- The Board approved development of this revised Policy at the development reading on February 25, 2009.
- This revision provides minor changes to this policy by:
  - Renaming the Office of Public Affairs to the Department of Public Affairs.
  - Providing for notices of meetings to be provided to the public and the news media. Please note this provision, adding providing for meeting notices to the media, eliminates the need to maintain the Policy 2.05 (Press Present at Meetings).
  - Updating the department's web link.
- The revised policy also updates statutory references within the policy and the citation.

## POLICY 2.04

### PUBLIC INFORMATION

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3 1. **Policy Statement.** The Board is committed to a policy of public information which is  
4 based on the belief that the public schools of the District belong to the people who  
5 created them by consent and who support them by taxation. Consistent with legal  
6 requirements, the Board will make every effort to enhance public knowledge and  
7 understanding of, and encourage public participation in, the District's goals and  
8 programs. The Board, therefore, maintains this public information Policy, which will  
9 be carried out through the efforts of the Board, the Superintendent, and the  
10 Department Office of Public Affairs, to:
- 11 a. keep the citizens of the District regularly and thoroughly informed through  
12 reasonably available channels of communication on the programs, needs, and  
13 objectives of public education in the School District in accordance with Fla.  
14 Stat. § 1001.42 ~~230.23(15)~~; and
- 15 b. invite and foster the advice and counsel of the people within the School District  
16 at all reasonable times and especially, as provided in Policy 1.03, at public  
17 hearings and all regular, special, and workshop meetings of the Board which  
18 are open to the public under Florida's Sunshine Law.
- 19 2. **Duty to Inform Public Affairs.** It is the responsibility of each school, department,  
20 and advisory committee to facilitate the dissemination of information by keeping the  
21 Department Office of Public Affairs informed of all requests by media  
22 representatives for information; of all newsworthy events within their area of  
23 authority.
- 24 3. **Public Meetings and Notices.**
- 25 a. Pursuant to Fla. Const. Art. I, § 24(b) and Fla. Stat. § 286.011, all meetings of  
26 any collegial public body of the School District, at which official acts are to be  
27 taken or at which public business of such body is to be transacted or  
28 discussed, shall be open and noticed to public and news media, except with  
29 respect to meetings or hearings exempted from the open-meetings  
30 requirements pursuant to the state constitution or general law as interpreted  
31 by Florida courts and the Florida Attorney General.
- 32 b. In addition to the notices of District public meetings and hearings given  
33 pursuant to the Sunshine Law or the Administrative Procedure Act, any  
34 personnel responsible for scheduling such meetings should ensure that the  
35 Department Office of Public Affairs and the Public Affairs webmaster are  
36 informed of each public meeting or hearing for listing on the Department  
37 Office of Public Affairs web site at

38 <http://www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us/publicaffairs/Board%20Mtgs-Workshops.htm>  
39 <http://www.palmbeachschools.org/Board%20Mtgs-Workshops.htm>.

40 4. **Responsibility for Media Relations.**

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

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

52 5. Initiating Media Coverage. -- Schools may initiate requests for media coverage of  
53 newsworthy activities either on their own or through the Office of Public Affairs. If  
54 information is sent directly to the media, the Department Office of Public Affairs  
55 should also be informed.

56 6. Responding to Media Inquiries. -- To facilitate external and internal  
57 communications, administrators are asked to respond, consistent with Policy 2.041,  
58 in a forthright manner to inquiries from news reporters and to keep the Department  
59 Office of Public Affairs informed of all but routine inquiries. Administrators are  
60 reminded not to divulge exempt and confidential information.

61 a. Principals. -- Principals should report (by ~~TAO~~, e-mail, fax, or telephone) all  
62 media contacts to the Department Office of Public Affairs and the appropriate  
63 area superintendent. The Department Office of Public Affairs will make such  
64 information available to the Superintendent's Office.

65 b. District Administrators. -- District administrators should report (by ~~TAO~~, e-mail,  
66 fax, or telephone) all media contacts to the Department Office of Public Affairs,  
67 and either the Chief Academic Officer or Chief Operating Officer. The  
68 Department Office of Public Affairs will inform the Superintendent's Office.

69 7. Reporting Serious Incidents. -- In the event of a serious incident which might cause  
70 inquiries at the District level or by members of the media (for example, student  
71 disruption, serious assault on a student or staff member, bus accident, or fire at a  
72 school facility), an administrator should immediately inform the Superintendent's  
73 Office, the Chief Public Information Officer/designee, and the appropriate Area  
74 Superintendent-Administrator or Chief Academic Officer or Chief Operating Officer.  
75 If necessary, the administrator may contact one of these offices and ask that the

76 contacted office pass the message to the other two.

77 8. Requesting Assistance from the Department Office of Public Affairs. -- As a general  
78 rule, administrators should deal directly with news media inquiries, subject to Policy  
79 2.041, about items within the administrator's area of responsibility. However, if  
80 news reporters come to a school to cover a situation and the principal needs  
81 assistance with the media while resolving the situation, the principal should request  
82 assistance from the Department Office of Public Affairs, so that the Chief Public  
83 Information Officer/designee can arrange to come to the school to assist the  
84 principal.

85 9. Campus Visits. -- To help protect the safety of students, the principal and staff must  
86 know who is visiting the campus and the purpose of the visit. Any person seeking  
87 to visit a school campus, including news media representatives, shall be required  
88 to request permission from the principal by telephone or in person and shall report  
89 to the main office upon arriving on campus, prior to any contact with students, staff,  
90 or volunteers.

91 a. The principal may exercise reasonable discretion to grant or deny permission  
92 to visitors to enter the school or property or to remain on the grounds,  
93 pursuant to the authority vested in principals to supervise the operation and  
94 management of the schools and property under Fla. Stat. § 1001.32(4)  
95 ~~231.085(4)~~ and Board Policy 1.014.

96 b. The principal or designated staff member should accompany media  
97 representatives or other visitors to the appropriate room/area on ~~about the~~  
98 campus.

99 c. To assist in keeping the public informed, principals will cooperate with  
100 reasonable requests from the news media. However, requests for campus  
101 visits by the media may be denied if the principal/designee reasonably  
102 believes the request would result in interruption of the orderly operation of the  
103 school or unnecessarily interfere with instruction or other school activities.

104 d. Further, any person not subject to the rules of a school who creates a  
105 disturbance on the property or grounds of any school or commits any act that  
106 interrupts the orderly conduct of a school or any activity thereof, shall be guilty  
107 of a misdemeanor of the second degree as provided by Fla. Stat. § 1006.145  
108 ~~231.07~~. The principal/designee is authorized to request the police to arrest  
109 and/or remove such persons from school grounds or school activities.

110 STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Fla. Stat. §§ 1001.41(1),(2); 1001.42(25); 1001.43(5);  
111 1006.145 ~~230.22~~; ~~230.23 (22)~~; ~~230.23005~~

112 LAWS IMPLEMENTED: Fla. Stat. §§ 286.011; **1001.41(1)**; **1001.42(17)**; **1001.43 (5)**;  
113 **1006.145**; **1012.28 (2)-(5) & 8**, ~~230.22~~ ~~230.23 (15)~~; ~~230.23005~~ ~~231.07~~; ~~231.085~~

114 HISTORY: 6/12/74; 6/2/76; 7/21/82; 10/14/2002; \_\_\_/\_\_\_2009

Legal Signoff:

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

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Attorney

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Date

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