



POLICY 2.04

5-O I recommend that the Board approve development of the proposed **revised** Policy 2.04, entitled "Public Information."

[Contact: Nat Harrington, PX 48227.]

Development

CONSENT ITEM

- 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

