

**POLICY 2.04**

**5-G** 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 sSchool ~~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 Fla. Const. Art. I, § 24(b) and Fla. Stat. § 286.011, all meetings of  
31 any collegial public body of the School District, at which official acts are to be  
32 taken or at which public business of such body is to be transacted or  
33 discussed, shall be open and noticed to the public, except with respect to

34 meetings or hearings exempted from the open-meetings requirements  
35 pursuant the state constitution or general law as interpreted by Florida courts  
36 and the Florida 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 Office of Public Affairs and the Public Affairs webmaster are informed of each  
42 public meeting or hearing for 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 Office of Public Affairs and the appropriate area  
73 superintendent. The Office of Public Affairs will make such information  
74 available 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 Office of Public Affairs, and  
78 either the Chief Academic Officer or Chief Operating Officer. The Office of  
79 Public Affairs will inform the Superintendent's Office.

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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 resolving the situation, the principal should request  
95 assistance from the Office of Public Affairs, so that the Chief Public Information  
96 Officer/designee can arrange to 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. Any person  
100 seeking to visit a school campus, including news media representatives, shall be  
101 required to request permission from the principal by telephone or in person and  
102 shall report to the main office upon arriving on campus, prior to any contact with  
103 students, staff, or 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

108 management of the schools and property under Fla. Stat. § 231.085(1) and  
109 Board Policy 1.014.

110  
111 b. The principal or designated staff member should accompany media  
112 representatives or other visitors about the campus.

113  
114 c. To assist in keeping the public informed, principals will cooperate with  
115 reasonable requests from the news media. However, requests for campus  
116 visits by the media may be denied if the principal/designee reasonably  
117 believes the request would result in interruption of the orderly operation of the  
118 school or unnecessarily interfere with instruction or other school activities.

119  
120 d. Further, any person not subject to the rules of a school who creates a  
121 disturbance on the property or grounds of any school or commits any act that  
122 interrupts the orderly conduct of a school or any activity thereof, shall be guilty  
123 of a misdemeanor of the second degree as provided by Fla. Stat. § 231.07.  
124 The principal/designee is authorized to request the police to arrest and/or  
125 remove such persons from school grounds or school activities.

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127 STATUTORY AUTHORITY: §§ 230.22(1), (2); 230.23(16)(22); 230.23005(5), FS-Fla.  
128 Stat.

129 LAWS IMPLEMENTED: §§ 230.22(1); 230.23 (16), (17)(15); 230.23005(5);  
130 231.07; 231.085, FS-Fla. Stat.

131 HISTORY: New: 6/12/74, Revised: 6/2/76; 7/21/82;  / / 2002

Legal Signoff:

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

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Attorney

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Date