

## **BUSINESS AND GENERAL SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **SUBJECT: Media Relations**

#### **1. Support**

- a. The Riverside County Board of Education and Riverside County Superintendent of Schools recognize that the media significantly influences the public's understanding of school/program issues and can greatly assist Riverside County Office of Education in communicating with the community about school/program needs.
- b. The County Board of Education and County Superintendent of Schools respect the public's right to information and recognize that the media has a legitimate interest in the schools/programs and a responsibility to provide the community with news.
- c. Media representatives are welcome at all Riverside County Board of Education meetings and other open meetings and shall receive meeting announcements and agendas upon request.

#### **2. Registration**

Like all other visitors, media representatives must register in the school/program office and comply with other reasonable conditions for visiting school facilities when coming on campus during school/program hours. School officials, to minimize interference or disruptions to the educational program or activities or a given classroom or school, can order the media to leave campus if their presence would interfere with the peaceful conduct of school activities.

#### **3. Release of Information**

- a. The Riverside County Superintendent of Schools or designee shall coordinate the release of information concerning the Riverside County Office of Education and its programs.
- b. The site administrator or designee of each school/program shall provide the media with information relating to school/program, including information about student awards, school/program accomplishments and events of special interest.
- c. Riverside County Office of Education employees are encouraged to cooperate with members of the press, radio and television. Employees shall not express their own viewpoints when speaking with any media representative on behalf of the Riverside County Office of Education. They should not express viewpoints on behalf of Riverside County Office of Education until they have ascertained Riverside County Office of Education official position on the matters involved.

- d. The Riverside County Office of Education will not impose restrictions on students' rights to speak freely with reporters so long as interviews do not interfere with the educational program or activities of a given classroom or school. Riverside County Office of Education personnel cannot require reporters to obtain written parental consent before interviewing students. It is recommended that parents who do not want their children to speak to reporters give their children specific instructions not to communicate with journalists.

#### **4. Crisis Situations**

During crisis situations, all media inquiries shall be routed to the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools or designee, who shall:

- a. Prepare an official statement responding to the particular situation.
- b. Update the official statement as events unfold.
- c. Keep staff and students well informed.

#### **5. Private or Confidential Information**

The Riverside County Office of Education shall not release information which is private or confidential as identified by law, policy or regulation.

#### Legal Reference

##### EDUCATION CODE

- 32210 Willful disturbance of public school or meeting
- 32211 Threatened disruption or interference with classes
- 35144 Special meetings
- 35145 Public meetings
- 35145.5 Agenda: Public Participation
- 35146 Closed sessions
- 35172 Promotional activities

##### PENAL CODE

- 627.2 Necessity of registration by outsider