

SCHOOL-RELATED STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Page 1 of 3

The Board of Education encourages students to express their views in school-sponsored publications and to observe rules for responsible journalism. This means expression which is false or obscene, libelous, slanderous or defamatory under state law; presents a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts, violation of school rules or materials and substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school; violates the privacy rights of others, or threatens violence to property or persons shall not be permitted.

The policy affirms the importance of school-sponsored student publications as a forum for free expression, including topics about which there may be dissent and controversy.

Definition of School-Sponsored Student Publications

The term *school-sponsored publications* means any materials written and published substantially by students, officially recognized by the school and made available to the student body either free or for a fee.

Responsibilities of Advisor

An advisor of a school-sponsored student publication will:

1. Supervise the production of the publication, including general supervision over all activities to create a proper learning environment;
2. Teach and encourage free, responsible expression and professional standards for English and journalism, including a balanced presentation of ideas and issues; and
3. Maintain good communications with the building principal regarding topics which may bring inquiry from staff, community, parents or students.

If participation in a school-sponsored publication is part of a school class or activity for which grades or school credits are given, an advisor shall also have the authority to:

1. Establish or limit writing assignments for the students;
2. Appoint and remove students from staff positions; and
3. Direct and control the learning experience that the publication is intended to provide.

SCHOOL-RELATED STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Page 2 of 3

Responsibilities of Students

Student editors of school-sponsored student publications shall be responsible for determining the news, editorial opinions and advertising content of their publications subject to the directions given by their advisor and the restrictions found below. Students who work on official student publications will:

1. Rewrite material, as required by the faculty advisors, to improve sentence structure, grammar, spelling and punctuation;
2. Check and verify all facts and verify the accuracy of all quotations; and
3. In the case of editorials or letters to the editor concerning controversial issues, provide space for rebuttal comments and opinions.

Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted to authorize the publication or distribution by students of the following:

1. Expression which is obscene;
2. Expression which is libelous, slanderous or defamatory under state law;
3. Expression which is false and not protected by laws relating to freedom of expression; and
4. Expression which creates a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts, the violation of lawful school regulations, the material and substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school or which violates the rights of others to privacy.

Time, Place and Manner Restrictions

The principal will coordinate with the publications' advisor as to the time, place and manner of distributing school-sponsored publications to reduce any conflict with school instructional time and/or reduce any disruption of the orderly operation of the school which might be caused by the

SCHOOL-RELATED STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Page 3 of 3

distribution of school-sponsored publications.

Liability

No expression made by a student in the exercise of freedom of speech or freedom of the press shall be deemed to be an expression of school policy; and no school district or employee or parent or legal guardian or official of such school district shall be held liable in any civil or criminal action for the expression made or published by a student.

Disclaimer

It is recommended that all school-sponsored student publications contain the following statement:

"The statements and opinions expressed in this publication are not the statements and opinions of the Aurora Public Schools District 28J, (Name of School), nor of the employees, faculty or administration. All statements and opinions in this publication are entirely those of the students involved."

Distribution of Policy

This policy shall be posted, distributed or otherwise made available to all students and staff members in schools that have school-sponsored publications at the beginning of each school year.

LEGAL REFS.: C.R.S. 22-1-120
 C.R.S. 22-1-122 (5)(e)
 C.R.S. 22-32-110(1)(r)