

105 PUBLIC RELATIONS, SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS AND SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Alexandria Public Schools maintains regular and ongoing communications throughout the learning community.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Alexandria Public Schools is committed to partnering with its many publics – community, families, students and employees. The school district will coordinate and share regular and ongoing communications through a variety of means, including print, electronic, voice and visual. The district will identify spokespersons to facilitate communications and share information with the media at the district, site and program levels.

III. INFORMATION SHARING

A. Coordination of Communications

The district will coordinate information sharing at the district, school site and education program levels through the communications department. The department will develop information processes for sharing with the public. All news releases will be forwarded to the media and key contacts in the district by the communication department. The communications and marketing supervisor will oversee district communications and public relations.

B. Regular Communications

Each school site and program will provide regular communications to its publics by sharing information about their activities, happenings, curriculum, testing and goals. The communications will occur in a variety of means that could include mailings, newsletters, electronic services and local media. The site or program administrator is responsible for coordinating the information sharing.

The primary source of regular communications will be electronic with recognition that the district, school site or education program levels will be responsible to ensure that families, community members and employees who do not have access to electronic sources will receive the shared communications.

The primary source of district communications will be the district's website (www.alexschools.org).

C. Communication Standards

The superintendent, in collaboration with the administration, will establish communication standards for employees, recognizing the primary means of communications will be electronic. These standards will include effective internal and external use of electronic mail.

D. State of the School District Report

The school district will also provide regular communications with the entire community that will include an annual report on the state of the school district. The report will meet the requirements of the Minnesota Department of Education, noting:

- District goals
- Procedures for evaluating goals
- Results of progress on school district goals and other school district assessment information
- Reports on ongoing student and program evaluations conducted each year in the school district
- Other legal information
- Other pertinent information

IV. SPOKESPEOPLE AND KEY CONTACTS FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

The superintendent or his/her designee is responsible for coordinating the information sharing.

Each school site or program will have spokespeople who will serve as the key contact for the media. All media contacts with the school district shall be coordinated through the identified spokesperson. District staff shall receive approval from the spokesperson prior to sharing school district information with the media. The approval may be given to a staff member to maintain direct media connections when appropriate (i.e. sports season, ongoing activity).

The reasons for an identified school district spokesperson are to:

- Help in preparing the staff person for visiting with the media source
- Ensuring data privacy and data sensitive materials are not violated
- Simplify the connection between media and the school district

The spokesperson for each school site and program are as follows:

- Districtwide: Superintendent or his/her designee
- Building Site: Principal
- Early Education Program: Director or his/her designee
- Co-Curricular: Activities Director
- Community Education: Director of Community Education

Crisis or Emergency Situation:

The school district will identify one spokesperson to address all media when a crisis or an emergency situation occurs within the district. The superintendent will designate the district spokesperson. The school district will identify specific times and locations of necessary news conferences and/or briefings when necessary.

When clarification is required on a media contact, all questions should be referred to the superintendent's office.

V. COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

District administrators will work with the district's communications director to assist in sharing information with the school district's publics. The communications director also will assist in providing training and in-service to the staff as necessary.

VI. SCHOOL AND PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS

- A. Each school site and program will have a formal organization available for school/program community involvement. The purpose of these organizations is to provide an opportunity for the school/program and community to:
- Share information
 - Dialogue and discuss pertinent topics
 - Advise school leadership on challenges facing the school/program
- B. All the organizations will meet on a regular basis with dates to be shared in a school's/program's communications. All organizations will maintain an open membership and will be coordinated by the school building/program administrator.
- C. Fundraising or Sponsoring Events by School Organizations: All school/program organizations that support schools or programs through fundraising activities or

sponsored events must be sanctioned by the school district as per Policy 911 - School Organizations and Booster Clubs.

- D. The school district will also have a formal organization to gain insights and information regarding the district's programs, actions and challenges. These meetings will be held on a regular basis and published in the district newsletter. The membership for this organization will have representation from each school building and are open to the public. The meetings will be coordinated by the superintendent or his/her designee.
- E. Each building and program will also have opportunities for community involvement in the school district. Volunteer efforts can be specific or ongoing projects with the intent to enhance the educational effectiveness of a specific school or program. The coordination of the volunteer program will be determined by the building or program administrator.

Cross References:

Policy 911 (School Organizations and Booster Clubs)

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Alexandria, Minnesota