

REGULATION

MENDHAM TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

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PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM

R 9120 PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM

A. Standards of Presentation

1. Material released in the district's public information program should:
 - a. Be factual, topical, newsworthy, and consistent with the educational goals adopted by the Board of Education;
 - b. Represent the activities at all grade levels, subject areas, and schools and not favor one school population or activity over another;
 - c. Strive to interpret the educational program to the lay public and avoid the use of professional terminology; and
 - d. Present an integrated district-wide picture of district-wide programs rather than fragmented information.
2. Information regarding an individual pupil, other than information classified as directory information in Policy No. 8330, shall be released only with the express written permission of the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or the adult pupil. Pupil "information" includes verbal and photographic material, whether or not the pupil depicted is individually identified. Directory information regarding an individual pupil may be released only if the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or the adult pupil has not prohibited its release in accordance with Policy No. 8330.

B. Preparation of Information for Public Distribution

1. Information will be released in a systematic manner to avoid confusion and misunderstanding.
2. Information planned for general public consumption should first be reviewed by interested district employees.
3. News bulletins issued by individual schools or departments within the district must identify the issuing school or department as a part of the school district. Thus all letterheads, bulletins, and publications must carry the full name of the Mendham Township Board of Education.



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4. The Principal of each school should prepare a bulletin or news item of interest in his/her building. A copy of the item will be sent to the Superintendent for clearance before the bulletin or item may be released to the press.
5. The office of the Superintendent will prepare and disseminate:
 - a. An annual calendar of Board, district, and school events open to the public;
 - b. A district newsletter;
 - c. Information about the proposed budget, in accordance with Policy No. 6230;
 - d. News releases about Board activities and district-wide activities.
6. The Principal of each school will prepare and disseminate the following public information publications.
 - a. A pupil handbook will be given to each pupil enrolled in the school or to the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s). The handbook will include, as appropriate to the grade levels in the school:
 - (1) The organization of the school;
 - (2) Rules for pupil conduct;
 - (3) Pupil rights and responsibilities;
 - (4) Information about school operations, health services, attendance, emergency closings, and the like;
 - (5) Descriptions of pupil activities and programs;
 - (6) The pupil grievance procedure; and
 - (7) Academic requirements.



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- b. A calendar of school events will be distributed to all pupils, parent(s) or legal guardian(s), and staff members.
- c. As appropriate to the grade levels of the school, a listing of course offerings and requirements will be distributed to all parents or legal guardians and pupils.
- d. Programs for specific performances and athletic contests will be distributed to attendees and participants.

C. Release of Information to the Press

- 1. In accordance with Policy No. 9120, information determined by the Board to be of particular community impact and interest will be released to the press only by the Board.
- 2. Information regarding Board actions of lesser importance may be released to the press by the Superintendent.
- 3. Information regarding the activities of the schools and of individuals in the schools may be released to the press on the approval of the Superintendent.
- 4. All inquiries from members of the press will be referred to the Superintendent for response. A staff member who is requested to give an interview to a member of the press shall so inform the Superintendent who may request to be present at the interview.
- 5. In the event of an unusual development in the school district that arouses substantial public interest, the Superintendent will accommodate the needs of the press by establishing a temporary press center.
 - a. A room will be prepared, as close to the main office as feasible, and equipped with a telephone, computer, access to copying equipment, paper, and other equipment and supplies as may reasonably facilitate the tasks of reporters and photographers.
 - b. Members of the press will be directed to gather in the pressroom, where they will hear and may question the district's spokesperson.



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- c. All information about the unusual development will be relayed through the designated district spokesperson, who should be given direct access to the information and people necessary to the gathering of accurate data.
- d. School officials who are asked to give statements to the press regarding the development should seek the assistance of the Superintendent in drafting their statements.

D. Displays

- 1. Displays of the accomplishments of district pupils and the results of educational programs may be placed in locations that afford a high level of public visibility, such as in local commercial establishments, municipal offices, health facilities, libraries, and banks.
- 2. Any display must be approved in advance by the school Principal.
- 3. The staff member planning the display must request and receive in writing the permission of the facility in which the display will be placed. The request will clearly indicate the duration of the display, the time when it will be installed, and any particular accommodations that are necessary to the display.
- 4. A letter of appreciation shall be sent to the facility after the display is removed.

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