

Board Policy

Code No. 502.3R1

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION REGULATION

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS CODE

Students may produce official school publications under the supervision of a faculty advisor and the building administrator according to the provisions of this code.

A. Official School Publications Defined

An "official school publication" is written and non-written material produced and/or performed by students in curricular and co-curricular activities sponsored by the school district and distributed to students either free or for a fee.

B. Expression in an Official School Publication

1. No student shall express, publish, perform, or distribute in an official school publication material which is:
 - a. Obscene;
 - b. Libelous;
 - c. Slanderous;
 - d. Encourages students to:
 - 1) Commit unlawful acts;
 - 2) Violate school rules;
 - 3) Cause the material and substantial disruption of the orderly and efficient operation of the school or school activity;
 - 4) Disrupt or interfere with the education program;
 - 5) Interrupt the maintenance of a disciplined atmosphere; or
 - 6) Infringe on the rights of others.
2. Official school publications shall be produced under the supervision of a faculty advisor, and should be reviewed by the principal or designee prior to final production and distribution.

C. Responsibilities of Students

1. Students writing or editing official school publications shall assign and edit the news, editorial, and feature contents of the official school publications subject to the limitations of the student publication code and the law.
2. Students shall strive to achieve professional standards of accuracy, fairness, objectivity, and thoroughness in each and every aspect of official school publications.
3. Students shall strive to achieve professional standards of grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling, for clarity and accuracy of official school publications.
4. Students who violate this code may be subject to disciplinary measures.

D. Responsibilities of Faculty Advisors and the Administration

Faculty advisors shall supervise student writers to maintain professional standards of English and journalism and to comply with the law, including, but not limited to, the restrictions against unlawful speech. The production of official school publications shall be guided by the law, ethical standards adopted by professional associations of societies of journalism, and the educational mission. There shall be no prior restraint of materials prepared for official school publications except when they would violate this code.

The Superintendent or designee shall distribute this code to students and their parents.

E. Liability

Any student expression, including student expression in an official school publication, shall not be deemed to be an expression of the school district. The school district, the Board of Directors, and the school district employees or officials are not liable in any civil or criminal action for any student expression made or published by students, unless the school district employees or officials have interfered with or altered the content of the student expression. The liability, if any, is only to the extent of interference or alteration of the speech or expression.

F. Appeal Procedure

1. Students who believe they have been unreasonably restricted in their exercise of expression in an official student publication shall seek review of the decision through the student grievance procedure, under Board policy 502.4, Student Complaints and Grievances.
2. Students who believe they have been aggrieved by a student-produced official student publication shall file their complaint through the student grievance procedure under Board policy, 502.4, Student Complaints and Grievances.
3. Persons, other than students, who believe they have been aggrieved by a student-produced official student publication shall file their complaint through the citizen grievance procedure, under 213.1R1.

G. Time, place and manner restrictions on official school publications

1. Official student publications may be distributed in a reasonable manner, on or off school premises.
2. Distribution in a reasonable manner shall not encourage students to:
 - a. Commit unlawful acts;
 - b. Violate school rules;
 - c. Cause the material and substantial disruption of the orderly and efficient operation of the school or school activity;
 - d. Disrupt or interfere with the educational program;
 - e. Interrupt the maintenance of a disciplined atmosphere; or
 - f. Infringe on the rights of others.

Bettendorf Community School District
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