

Student Publications

Freedom of Expression

The right of public school students to freedom of speech is guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the Commonwealth.

Students shall have the right to express themselves unless the expression materially and substantially interferes with the educational process, threatens serious harm to the school or community, encourages unlawful activity or interferes with another individual's rights.

Current Student Publications

Student publications are those published, funded or otherwise formally sponsored by the District. Current student publications include, but are not limited to the following:

Conestoga High School

- *The Spoke* (newspaper and website)
- *Pioneer* (yearbook)
- *Illuminations* (literary magazine)
- *Frame & Canvas* (magazine)

Tredyffrin/Easttown Middle School

- *The Bulldog*

Hillside Elementary School:

- *Student Scoop*

Publications Adviser

All publications shall have a Publications Adviser recommended by the Building Principal and Superintendent and approved by the School Board. The roles and responsibilities of the Publications Adviser are set forth in Attachment A.

Journalistic Guidelines

School newspapers and publications including but not limited to student yearbooks, student literary magazines, and student websites must conform to the following guidelines:

1. Students have a right and are as free as editors of other newspapers and journalistic publications to report the news and to editorialize within the provisions of items (4) and (5) below.
2. School officials shall supervise student newspapers and other student publications published with school equipment, remove obscene or libelous material and edit other material that would cause a substantial disruption or interference with school activities. A finding of 'substantial' disruption must be based on more than a mere desire to avoid the discomfort and unpleasantness that always accompany an unpopular viewpoint. The District Solicitor or other appropriate legal representative will provide advice and information to school officials regarding the applicable legal standards to follow under specific circumstances.
3. School officials may not censor or restrict material simply because it is critical of the school or its administration.
4. Material for the school newspaper must be submitted for prior review to the designated Publications Adviser to ensure compliance with item (2) above. A decision regarding editing of material based on this review will be made in as timely a manner as possible given the applicable publication deadlines but in any event within 5 school days from the date when the material was received.
5. Students who are not members of the newspaper staff shall have access to its pages and may submit material that complies with the criteria of this regulation in addition to any criteria developed and distributed to all students by the Publications Adviser.

Distribution of Student Publications

School officials may set forth the time and place of distribution of materials so that distribution will not materially or substantially interfere with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school.

A proper time and place set for distribution is one that would give the students the opportunity to reach fellow students.

The place of the activity may be restricted to permit the normal flow of traffic within the school and at exterior doors.

Roles and Responsibilities of Publications Advisers:

General Description: A major goal of all school publications is to create student produced work and showcase student talent on a regular basis. Participation by students in student publications is intended to facilitate critical and other higher-level thinking skills and promote citizenship education. Publication staff members will learn how to produce a publication for mass distribution.

General Description of the Adviser: The Adviser supervises and coordinates a student publication. The Adviser reports to the Principal.

Specific Responsibilities Include:

Publication Staff Management

- Selects Publication staff and informs the principal.
- Meets frequently with editors to guide content selection and coordinate the production of issues.
- Supervises the editorial board so as to provide advice and assistance in the planning of activities and the decision making of the editorial board.

Publication

- Selects a publisher and works to ensure a quality product.
- Counsels publication staff on content and exercises authority to keep content from being libelous, obscene or causing a substantial disruption or interference with school activities.
- Provides guidance with layout, picture/artwork selection, writing styles, proofreading, and website design.
- Establishes procedures to ensure that publication content is accurate and appropriate.
- Reviews all articles for publication and supplies appropriate feedback to the author.
- Respects personal privacy and maintains the confidentiality of privileged information.
- Ensures that legally protected confidential student information is not improperly disclosed.
- Establishes and publicizes guidelines for submission of material by non-staff members.

Publication Staff and Adviser Development

- Participates in continuous study and research and/or attends relevant and appropriate conferences.
- Participates in publication staff meetings and activities involving the publication staff.
- Educates the publication staff about ethics, effective journalism techniques, and appropriate publication content.

School and Community Relations

- Strives to establish cooperative relations with parents and community residents.
- Communicates frequently with the principal.
- Reports information that promotes understanding and adds to the greater good of all school communities.
- Participates in national, state, and/or regional activities that advance district goals.

Budgeting and Financing

- Oversees budgeting and financing through proper building procedures and the use of student activity accounts.

Professionalism

- Models professionalism and contributes to a positive learning environment.
- Understands and counsels students on the importance of accuracy, clarity, ethics, and balance.
- Communicates high expectations and upholds the student code of conduct.
- Assesses student progress and assigns student grades.
- Performs other appropriate tasks and assumes such other responsibilities in connection with the adviser ship as assigned by the Principal or Superintendent.