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EXPLANATION: PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM

MSBA has expanded this policy to address district communications more thoroughly. MSBA recommends that districts have a communications policy in place and develop related procedures to address all aspects of the district's external communications in greater detail.

This policy was revised primarily to designate official spokespersons for the district and remind Board members and employees that they must be aware of their message any time they interact with a parent/guardian, community member or the press.

Each district should have a communications plan, which is a written procedure detailing the methods of communicating with the public. MSBA has not attempted to create a model procedure since such procedures would be very specific to each district. In general, a communications plan or procedure would include, but not be limited to:

1. The name and contact information for each person authorized to speak on behalf of the district. The district may wish to designate different contact people for different matters. For example, the athletic director might be the contact person for information about the district's sports program.
2. Instructions to employees about how to respond to the media, including how to direct media representatives to the appropriate person in the district.
3. Rules for the types of communications permitted by staff members.
4. Expectations regarding the frequency of communications with parents/guardians and community members.
5. Sources for information about the district's programs.
6. Rules for the use of district and school names, mascots or other logos.

For examples of school district communications plans, contact Brent Ghan, MSBA's chief communications officer, at ghan@msbanet.org.

MSBA has further revised this policy to move references to specific laws requiring communication with the public and the press to KB-AP. Such laws are being passed with greater frequency, and listing specific public information requirements in the administrative procedure will assist the administrative staff in meeting the district's legal obligations without

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requiring regular revision and adoption of the policy. Administrative procedure KB-AP is not a comprehensive communications plan because it only addresses legal compliance.

MSBA recommends that copies of this document be routed to the following areas because the content is of particular importance to them. The titles on this list may not match those used by the district. Please forward copies to the district equivalent of the title indicated.

	Board Secretary		Business Office		Coaches/Sponsors
	Facility Maintenance		Food Service		Gifted
	Human Resources		Principals		Library/Media Center
	Health Services		Counselor		Special Education
	Transportation	X	Public Info/Communications		Technology

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PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM

Open communication with the district's students, parents/guardians, patrons, employees and the public in general is essential for the school district to operate effectively. The FIELD(DistrictCommonName) Board of Education places high importance on conveying information concerning the district's goals, achievements, activities and operations to these groups.

The district will make a systematic effort to communicate with the public using newsletters, student handbooks, local media and the district's website a variety of communication channels. The Board of Education authorizes the expenditure of funds for the purpose of preparing and distributing information to the general public. Employees and Board members will maintain an effective working relationship with the news media.

Spokespersons

The superintendent, Board president or designee will serve as official spokespersons for the district. All employees and Board members will direct requests for official statements about district business from the public or members of the media to the district's spokespersons. Board members should emphasize to the media and members of the public that they may only speak as individual Board members unless empowered by the Board to speak on its behalf.

Communications Plan

The Board directs the superintendent or designee to develop and disseminate written guidelines to further the goals of this policy, including a communications plan that aligns with relevant Board policies and administrative procedures and addresses:

1. Guidelines for employees communicating with the media.
2. Communicating during emergency situations.
3. Use of the district's website and social media.
4. Sharing information within the district.
5. Sharing information with the public.

Effective Communications

The district recognizes that Board members and employees have regular contact with students, parents/guardians and the public in general. When interacting with the public, all district employees and Board members are responsible for communicating accurate information about district policies and programs and promoting effective school-home-community partnerships.

In all communications, the Board and its employees will:

1. Disseminate accurate and timely information about district policies, programs, procedures, achievements, decisions and critical issues.
2. Eliminate rumors and misinformation.
3. Observe confidentiality and other restrictions imposed by law and Board policy.
4. Promote a climate of trust.

Specific Information

The district will provide parents/guardians and members of the public information as required by law. Board policies and related documents, including current versions of district handbooks, will be posted on the district's website. School ~~building~~ and district report cards may be posted on the district's website and will be distributed to the public as determined by the superintendent or designee. The district will post notice of Board meetings and make copies of these notices available to representatives of the news media upon request. Other public information will be available in the district's buildings or administrative offices for viewing by the public during the office's normal business hours, as required by law and in accordance with policy BDDL.

~~The district will utilize the local radio, newspapers and other media to publicize the district's legal obligations as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and by other applicable law. Notice of district meetings will be made to representatives of the news media, if requested.~~

~~The superintendent or designee may adopt administrative procedures to further the goals of this policy.~~ The superintendent or designee will develop a communication system for the exchange of information between the district and staff, students, parents/guardians and others when school or school activities are canceled. Notice of the closing and reopening of school or cancellation of activities will be publicized through local media, the district's website and other district information dissemination options.

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Note: The reader is encouraged to check the index located at the beginning of this section for other pertinent policies and to review administrative procedures and/or forms for related information.

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Adopted: **FIELD**(AdoptDate)

Revised:

Cross Refs: BDDL, Release of Information
CH, Policy Implementation and Dissemination
DCB, Political Campaigns
EBC, Emergency Drills
EFB, Free and Reduced-Cost **Price** Food Services
EHB, Technology Usage
GBH, Staff-Student Relations
IGBC, Parent/Family Involvement in Instruction and Other Programs
IL, Assessment Program
JHA, Student Insurance
JO, Student Records

Legal Refs: §§ 160.522, **.570**, ~~162.11208~~, 167.645, RSMo.
~~5 C.S.R. 30-4.040, 50-340.200~~
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 - 1417
7 C.F.R. §§ 200.12, 245.5
34 C.F.R. Part 300
The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504
Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101 - 12213

FIELD(DistrictLocationLine)