

TO: School Board Members

FROM: Sara Blair, Director of Communications

DATE: November 4, 2024

SUBJECT: Second Reading of Policy 512 – School Sponsored Student Publications and Activities

BACKGROUND:

A review of Policy 512, School Sponsored Student Publications and Activities, has been performed. This was presented as a first reading at the meeting on October 21. To recap, the district’s current policy was reviewed against MSBA’s model policy. Based on that review, a number of changes are being recommended:

- Under Section II, General Statement of Policy, MSBA has recommended that “official student publications” be changed to “school-sponsored media”.
- Under Section III, Definitions, sections on the terms “libelous” and “official school publications” were removed. Definition was provided for “school sponsored media”, “student journalist” and “student media advisor”.
- Under Section IV, Guidelines, information was provided on the new student journalist law. Clearer definition was provided related to student expression in school-sponsored media.
- Section V, Posting, was added based on Minnesota Statute.
- The legal references section was updated.

This policy was also reviewed using the district’s 4-Way Equity Test. This policy protects all students’ rights to free speech in production of official school publications and activities. The policy prohibits student expression in an official school publication or school-sponsored activity when the material expresses or advocates sexual, racial or religious harassment or violence or prejudice. Rigorous standards for academic performance are called for throughout the policy. For example, it states that administrators have editorial control to assure that the school is not associated with expression that is ungrammatical, poorly written, inadequately researched, biased or prejudiced, vulgar or profane, or unsuitable for immature audiences. Further, distribution of materials should be orderly and not disruptive.

RESOLUTION:

This is a second reading. No resolution is needed at this time.