

ROSEVILLE AREA SCHOOLS
Independent School District No. 623

Policy 536 – School-Sponsored Student Publications and Activities

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect students' rights to free speech in production of school-sponsored media and activities while at the same time balancing the school district's role in supervising student publications and the operation of public schools.

2.0 General Statement of Policy

2.1 The school district may exercise editorial control over the style and content of student expression in school-sponsored publications and activities.

2.2 Expressions and representations made by students in school-sponsored publications and activities are not expressions of official school district policy. Faculty advisors shall supervise student writers to ensure compliance with the law and school district policies.

2.3 Students who believe their right to free expression has been unreasonably restricted in a school-sponsored media or activity may seek review of the decision by the building principal. The principal shall issue a decision no later than three (3) school days after review is requested.

2.3.1 Students producing school-sponsored media and activities shall be under the supervision of a faculty advisor and the school principal. School-sponsored media and activities shall be subject to the guidelines set forth below.

2.3.2 School-sponsored media may be distributed at reasonable times and locations.

3.0 Guidelines

3.1 Except as provided in 3.2 below, a student journalist has the right to exercise freedom of speech and freedom of the press in school-sponsored media regardless of whether the school-sponsored media receives financial support from the school or district, uses school equipment or facilities in its production, or is produced as part of a class or course in which the student journalist is enrolled. Freedom of speech includes freedom to express political viewpoints. Consistent with 3.2 below, a student journalist has the right to determine the news, opinion, feature,

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and advertising content of school-sponsored media. The school district must not discipline a student journalist for exercising rights or freedoms under this paragraph or the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

- 3.2 Student expression in school-sponsored media, a yearbook, or school-sponsored activity is prohibited when the material:
 - 3.2.1 is obscene to minors;
 - 3.2.2 is defamatory;
 - 3.2.3 is profane, harassing, threatening, or intimidating;
 - 3.2.4 constitutes an unwarranted invasion of privacy;
 - 3.2.5 violates federal or state law;
 - 3.2.6 causes a material and substantial disruption of school activities;
 - 3.2.7 is directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action on school premises or the violation of lawful school policies or rules, including a policy adopted in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.03 or 121A.031;
 - 3.2.8 advertises or promotes any product or service not permitted for minors by law;
 - 3.2.9 expresses or advocates sexual, racial, or religious harassment or violence or prejudice; or
 - 3.2.10 is distributed or displayed in violation of time, place, and manner regulations.
- 3.3 The school district must not retaliate or take adverse employment action against a student media adviser for supporting a student journalist exercising rights or freedoms under 3.1 above or the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.
- 3.4 Notwithstanding the rights or freedoms of this Article or the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, nothing in this Article inhibits a student media adviser from teaching professional standards of English and journalism to student journalists.

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These professional standards may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 3.4.1 assuring that participants learn whatever lessons the activity is designed to teach;
- 3.4.2 assuring that readers or listeners are not exposed to material that may be inappropriate for their level of maturity;
- 3.4.3 assuring that the views of the individual speaker are not erroneously attributed to the school;
- 3.4.4 assuring that the school is not associated with any position other than neutrality on matters of political controversy;
- 3.4.5 assuring that the sponsored student speech cannot reasonably be perceived to advocate conduct otherwise inconsistent with the shared values of a civilized social order;
- 3.4.6 assuring that the school is not associated with expression that is, for example, ungrammatical, poorly written, inadequately researched, biased or prejudiced, vulgar or profane, or unsuitable for immature audiences.

4.0 Posting

The school district must adopt a student journalist policy consistent with Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.80 and post it on the district website.

Adopted: