

SCHOOL DISTRICT PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Berlin Central School District Board of Education establishes that every effort shall be made by the District to take advantage of opportunities to publicize school activities and events. The purpose of such efforts shall be to further public understanding of and acceptance of the District's educational program.

Feature articles dealing with special phases of the school program, accomplishments of members of the school community, and ongoing plans for the school district dealing with curriculum, finance, building needs, and other areas of general interest shall be prepared and disseminated to the public at large.

The Superintendent of Schools shall establish procedures to govern day- to-day interactions between the school systems, or components of the school system, and the news media.

1. News Releases

Information for release to the news media shall be provided by the Superintendent of Schools. Generally, information will be in the form of a written press release. News releases concerning programs, activities, or events pertaining to the District as a whole, or to those in more than one school building, shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent or a designee. Principals may publish information relating to activities and programs in their individual buildings through available channels and without prior clearance from the Superintendent of Schools.

2. Simultaneous Release of Information to All Media

Except when circumstances make it impossible, information shall be released to all representatives of the media simultaneously. An exception may be made in the case of print media, because the press require a longer time to publish. Unless an individual reporter or other media representative makes a request for specific information about one or more particular programs, exclusive releases of information shall be avoided.

3. Principal's Authority Regarding Media Events

The principal of each of the District's schools is hereby authorized to grant permission for media activities to take place in her/his school. The school principal may, in his / her discretion, permit photographers, television cameras, writers, and reporters, whether from a specific media outlet or publication or a freelancer, to photograph school activities, sports events, and individual students, provided that the presence of these media personnel will not unduly disrupt the education of students. Where the propriety or suitability of a requested activity is questionable, the building principal shall contact the Superintendent for clarification, guidance, and direction.

4. Photographing or Identifying Individual Students

A representative of the media who wishes to photograph a particular student or to identify particular students shall, in addition to receiving permission to be present on school property, obtain permission of the student's parent or guardian, as well.

5. Coverage of Athletic Events at School

A representative of the media who wishes to cover a school athletic event shall contact the school's principal prior to the event. In such cases, there shall be no fee charged to the media representative for attending the event. In addition, no special permission shall be required from parents or guardians before photographs and articles referring to or identifying students may be published or broadcast.

6. Student Representative to the Media

Any student who wishes to act as an official representative of a District school to the media shall first obtain the permission of her/his building principal and the Superintendent. The student shall inform the principal of the information to be provided during the presentation. The principal or the superintendent may prohibit the student from speaking on behalf of the school if, in their judgment, it is not in the best interest of the school, the school district, or the student to do so. The principal shall not be held responsible for any opinion that is expressed publicly by a student.