

Policy Title:

Freedom of Expression

Code No. **502.4**

It is the goal of the district to protect the educational environment for all students to help ensure it is free from substantial disruption or infringement upon their rights. Student expression should be appropriate to help ensure that the students learn and meet the goals of the school activity and that the potential audience is not exposed to material that may be harmful or inappropriate for their level of maturity.

While students will generally be allowed to express their viewpoints and opinions, in certain qualifying circumstances, student speech may require administrative regulation to help ensure the safety and welfare of the school community. The district may regulate speech that: causes or is reasonably anticipated to cause a material and substantial disruption to the education environment; infringes upon the rights of others; is obscene or lewd; is school sponsored; and/or promotes illegal activity. The administration, when making this judgment, will consider whether the activity in which the expression was made is school-sponsored and whether review or prohibition of the students' speech furthers an educational purpose. The expression must be done in a reasonable time, place, and manner that is not disruptive to the orderly and efficient operation of the school district.

Students who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary measures. Employees are responsible for ensuring students' expression is in keeping with this policy. It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent or designee to develop administrative regulations regarding this policy.

Student expression in official school publications, including material produced in the journalism, newspaper, yearbook, or writing classes and distributed to the student body either free or for a fee, are not subject to any prior restraint by school employees or officials except when the material violates this policy. A faculty advisor shall supervise student writers to maintain professional standards of English and journalism and to comply with the restrictions against unlawful speech. The superintendent or designee shall be responsible for developing a student publication code.

Any expression made by students, including student expression in official school publications, is not an expression of official school policy. The school district, the board and the employees or officials are not liable in any civil or criminal action for any student expression made or published by students unless the employees or officials have interfered with or altered the content of the student speech or expression, and in such case the liability, if any, is only to the extent of the interference or alteration of the speech or expression.

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