

Office of Strategic Communication: NEWS MEDIA INFORMATION

The Office of Strategic Communication (OSC) for Dayton Public Schools will be coordinate in nature. Specifically, the director retains responsibility for and direct authority over the public information of the entire district as authorized and instructed by the superintendent; however, recognizing the complexities involved in disseminating information in a system of this size, specific responsibilities will be assigned, as the need arises, to those units best equipped to handle them.

PROCEDURES

The principal is the designated media contact for the individual school. All media inquiries to the Office of Strategic Communication pertaining to a specific school will be coordinated through the appropriate principal. CONVERSELY, the principal is expected to coordinate requests for media coverage through the director. Principals should be adequately prepared to discuss their schools' policies and programs when called upon to do so. Principals are not, however, expected to address matters pertaining to Board or central administration policies or procedures. If such inquiries are made during an interview, a principal should not hesitate to send the reporter back to the communication director for further referral.

MEDIA IN THE SCHOOLS

Media need access to the schools in several situations.

1. A publicity request is initiated by the OSC as a result of something special going on in a school. These are the easiest to set up because the request for media coverage has usually come either from the principal or a member of the school staff and is agreeable to all concerned.
2. A request is initiated by a media representative to enter the school as a result of an independent school-related story on which the reporter is working. In this case, the principal will be notified by the OSC:
 - A. that a reporter wants to come into the school;
 - B. who the reporter wants to talk to and
 - C. for what reason.

At that time, we will attempt to work out a schedule agreeable to all concerned.

(NOTE: On this type of inquiry, if you have not received prior notification from the OSC, you may refer the inquiry to that office, or, you may proceed with the interview if you wish. In order for the OSC to assist you in the aftermath of the story, it is imperative that you inform the OSC of the results of your interview.)

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Such inquiries as described in #2 above can often be the most difficult to set up for several reasons:

- A. The nature of the reporter's story might not be an aspect of your school you want discussed.
- B. We are often asked to help a reporter meet a deadline that conflicts with the school schedule.

When these types of inquiries are made, it is well to remember that the school system is a public institution and it is inherent in the responsibilities of school administrators to cooperate with those who want to know what is going on in the schools. Good media relations are important to the successful operation of our schools and to you as a school administrator. Sometimes your own personal reaction to a media person is as important to the outcome of the story as is the material gathered for the published item.

It is also important to remember that if we want the media to come into the schools when we want them there, it is our responsibility to cooperate with them when they want to be there.

In setting up inquiries of this kind, however, four guidelines will be followed:

- A. Classes should not be interrupted for general interview purposes unless you or a teacher feels the interview would promote the classroom discussion.
- B. Media representatives may sit in on, or film footage in, classrooms if it is agreeable to you and the teacher(s) involved.

- C. Media representatives can have access to students and teachers for interview purposes during the lunch periods and after school hours on school property.
 - D. Media representatives should be expected to observe all the rules and regulations you have set up for public visitors, including signing in and out at the principal's office.
3. The third situation in which the media needs access to the schools is during crisis situations. In such a situation, it is imperative to disseminate accurate, objective information. All such information should come directly from you in order to assure that rumors do not get started. Your public information responsibilities in a crisis situation are threefold:
- A. Contact Safety and Security (x7000) immediately, then the Office of Strategic Communication (x3054) so the rumor control process can begin and emergency personnel dispatched.
 - B. Have your staff refer crisis-related calls to Safety and Security. Media inquiries must be referred to the OSC.
 - C. If a media representative arrives at the school without prior notification from the OSC, DO give them the facts, but notify the OSC immediately. Note the reporter's name and media so a follow-up can be made by the OSC if necessary.

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D. Be prepared with the facts so you can answer questions on the scene:

WHO (no names, please... "Student", "Teacher", etc.)

WHAT (a brief description of what happened)

WHERE

WHEN

WHY (What occasioned the disruption, if you know it)

WHAT IS BEING DONE NOW (explain what steps have been taken to alleviate the situation)

FOLLOW UP

If you feel that as a result of media contact, you have been misquoted or misrepresented, please contact the Office of Strategic Communication immediately.

Appropriate steps will be taken to set the record straight, both internally and externally.

Feel free to contact the Office of Strategic Communication for advice and consultation anytime.

QUESTIONS

All questions on public information policies and procedures should be directed to the Office of Strategic Communication.

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