

KERN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

BOARD BYLAWS

MEDIA RELATIONS

The County Board of Education respects the public's right to information and recognizes that the media significantly influence the community's understanding of county educational programs. Media representatives are welcome at all County Board meetings and shall receive meeting agendas upon request in accordance with County Board policy.

In order to develop and maintain positive media relations, the County Board desires to reasonably accommodate media requests for information and to provide accurate, reliable and timely information.

The County Board is committed to protecting the privacy of students and their families. The County Board shall not release information that is private or confidential as required by law or County Board policy. Media requests relating to County Office of Education (COE) employees or to student information, including, but not limited to, the name of a student, school of attendance, grade level, honors, and activities, shall be referred to the Kern County Superintendent of Schools.

Interviewing and Photographing Students

The County Board shall not impose restraints on students' right to speak freely with media representatives when doing so will not disrupt county educational programs. In order to minimize possible disruption, media representatives who wish to interview students at school shall make prior arrangements with the County Superintendent or designee.

In order to protect the privacy and safety of students, a media representative who wishes to photograph, record, or film students on school grounds shall make prior arrangements with the County Superintendent or designee.

At their discretion, parents/guardians may instruct their children not to communicate with media representatives.

Media Communications Plan

In order to help develop strong relations with the media, the County Board shall endeavor to work with the County Superintendent to develop a proactive media communications plan for the COE. This plan may include, but not be limited to, information related to COE programs and needs, student awards, school accomplishments and events of special interest. The plan shall specify the COE's primary media contact to whom all media inquiries regarding issues within the county board of education's purview shall be routed.

The County Board president or his/her designee shall be the designated spokesperson to speak to the media on behalf of the county board. The County Board may designate other board members to speak to the media on a case-by-case basis.

Crisis Communications Plan

During a disturbance or crisis situation, the first priority of the County Board is to ensure the safety of students and COE staff. However, the County Board recognizes the need to provide timely and accurate information to parents/guardians and the community during a crisis. The County Board also recognizes that the media have an important role to play in relaying this information to the public. The County Board shall refer media inquiries during a crisis to the County Superintendent.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

1011 Time and place of meetings

1012 Special meeting

1040-1042 Duties and responsibilities of County Boards

35160 Authority of governing boards

EVIDENCE CODE

1070 Refusal to disclose news source

COURT DECISIONS

Lopez v. Tulare Joint Union High School District, (1995) 34 Cal.App.4th 1302

ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS

79 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 58 (1996)