

VENTURA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

SUPERINTENDENT POLICY NO. 3523

ADOPTED: 11/8/96

CLASSIFICATION: General Administrative Policies

REVISED: 11/14/05

SUBJECT: Media Relations

The Ventura County Office of Education has an interest in healthy public discourse on issues of importance and in providing a consistent message to the public concerning education issues. The Superintendent respects an individual's First Amendment right to engage in public discourse and free speech. The Superintendent is the official spokesperson for the office. Published messages from individuals who are identified as staff of the Ventura County Office of Education may be misconstrued as that of the Superintendent. This Policy and its accompanying Administrative Regulation are intended to reduce the potential to confuse the public about positions of the Ventura County Office of Education.

The Superintendent recognizes that the media significantly influences the public's understanding of school/program issues and can greatly assist VCOE in communicating with the community about school/program needs. The Superintendent desires to reasonably accommodate media requests for information and to provide accurate, reliable and timely information. Media representatives are welcome at all Ventura County Board of Education meetings and other open meetings and shall receive meeting announcements and agendas upon request.

The Superintendent respects the public's right to information and recognizes that the media has a legitimate interest in the schools/programs and a responsibility to provide the community with news.

In order to help develop strong relations with the media, the Superintendent shall develop a proactive media communications plan. This plan may include, but not be limited to, information related to programs and needs, student awards, school accomplishments and events of special interest.

The Superintendent ensures that VCOE responds to news media inquiries in a timely, honest, and cooperative way and works to increase public awareness about VCOE by promoting media coverage through news releases, "story pitches" events and other strategies.

The Superintendent is designated as the liaison with the news media. The Superintendent has expertise in media relations and weighs each contact to determine the best way to provide information. VCOE managers and administrators (Associate Superintendents, Directors, Principals) may be called on to act as spokespersons because they have the needed information, knowledge, experience, expertise or perspective. The Superintendent will work with designated spokespersons to prepare for media interviews as needed. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall provide training on effective media relations to all designated spokespersons.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

32210	Willful disturbance of public school or meeting
32211	Threatened disruption or interference with classes
35144	Special meetings
35145	Public meetings
35145.5	Agenda: Public Participation
35146	Closed sessions
35172	Promotional activities

PENAL CODE

627.2	Necessity of registration by outsider
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