

COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC

The Alloway Township Board of Education will keep the community informed of the status of the schools through advertised public meetings, press releases and such other means as may be appropriate.

The public information program of the board and the district shall be directed by the superintendent, who shall arrange to keep the public informed regarding the policies, administrative operations, objectives, and successes or failures of the schools and shall provide interpretation and explanation of the schools' plans and programs.

The district's budget; its audit; its annual goals and its progress toward achievement of them; its special education plans; its basic skills improvement plan; its bilingual/ESL program; student progress toward achievement of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards; and any other information shall be communicated to the public as required by law.

The board's meetings and records shall be a matter of public information except as such meetings and records pertain to individual personnel and other classified matters.

Annually, the school district shall disseminate a report card of each school, which shall contain statistical information specified by the Department of Education, to all staff and parents. The school district shall also make the report card available to the media.

The homepage of each school and the district website will include the grade received from the Commissioner of Education on the effort of each school and the district to implement policies and programs consistent with the laws on harassment, intimidation or bullying. The superintendent or designee shall oversee the postings. The grade shall be posted with 10 days of its receipt. In addition, the district shall provide a link to the twice-yearly report prepared by the superintendent detailing the number and nature of violence vandalism, and harassment, intimidation or bullying reports in the schools.

Avoiding Excessive Expenditures when Communicating with the Public

District publications will be produced and distributed in a cost-efficient manner, for example:

- A. The use of expensive materials or production techniques where lower cost methods are available, such as the use of multi-color glossy publications instead of suitable, less expensive alternatives, is prohibited;
- B. Distribution of pictures of school board members is prohibited within 90 days of any district election; and
- C. Excessive public relations activities that are not part of the instructional program are prohibited.

Any publications distributed by the board of education via mass mailings or other means to the district community at large within 60 days before any election in which any Board Member is seeking any elective office or any election relating to district operations held in the district must be submitted to the executive county superintendent for review prior to distribution to ensure that the public funds are being expended in a reasonable and cost-effective manner.

Public relations activities, such as booths at statewide conferences, marketing activities and celebrations for opening schools and community events and TV productions that are not part of the instructional program or do not provide, in a cost-effective way, information about district or board operations to the public, that are excessive in nature are prohibited.

All activities involving promotional efforts to advance a particular position on school elections or any

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referendums are prohibited.

Nothing herein shall preclude the board of education from accepting donations or volunteer services from community members, local private education foundations and local business owners to conduct or assist in public relations services. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- A. Providing district flyers, newsletters or other materials containing district related information of public concern to local businesses, public meeting places or other local organizations to display or make available for dissemination;
- B. Making district related information of public concern available to local newspapers to publish related articles; and,
- C. Utilizing volunteered services of local community members, district employees, members of parent organizations or local business with expertise in related areas such as printing, advertising, publishing or journalism.

Use of Social Networking Sites (Social Media) to Communicate with the Public

The board of education recognizes that social media is a means of communication that may be beneficial in the dissemination of important district information. Therefore, the board authorizes the superintendent or his/her designee to establish a social media account for the district such as, but not limited to Twitter®, Facebook® or other similar sites in order to open lines of communication with the public when practicable.

Under normal circumstances, this social media account shall be used to convey important emergency information or information that may require distribution in as many formats as possible and shall contain only official district information.

Pictures of students including students with educational disabilities shall not be disseminated in any way unless permission is granted by parents/guardians. Photographs of children placed in the district by the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) shall not be published without permission of the division case worker.

Any such social media account shall be under the direct auspices of the superintendent of schools and/or his/her designee, who shall be responsibility for the content of any communications posted therein. Under no circumstances shall this social media account be used or posted on by any individual staff member, student or board member. Any password(s) and username(s) associated with this social media account(s) shall be secured to prevent unauthorized access.

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Readopted:	

Key Words

Communicating With the Public, Public Information Program, Press Releases

Legal References:	<u>N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.</u>	<u>Open Public Meetings Act</u>
	<u>N.J.S.A. 18A:7E-2</u> through -5	School report card program

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<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A: 17-46	Act of Violence; report by the school employee; notice of action taken; annual report
<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 47:1A-1 <u>et seq.</u>	Examination and copies of public records (<u>Open Public Records Act</u>)
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:8-3.1(a)3	Curriculum and instruction
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:23A-5.2	Public relations and professional services
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:23A-8.1 <u>et seq.</u>	Budget Submission, support documentation, website publication
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:23A-9.5	Commissioner to ensure achievement of the CCCS
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:30-3.1	Comprehensive review of public school districts

Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, Pub.L. 114-95, 20 U.S.C.A. 6301 et seq.

Possible

<u>Cross References:</u> *1000/1010	Concepts and roles in community relations; goals and objectives
*1120	Board of education meetings
*2240	Research, evaluation and planning
*3570	District records and reports
*5124	Reporting to parents/guardians
*6142.2	English as a second language; bilingual/bicultural
*6142.6	Basic skills
*6142.10	Technology
*6171.1	Remedial instruction
*6171.3	At-risk and Title 1
*6171.4	Special education
*6300	Evaluation of the instructional program

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.