SCHOOL RELATED STUDENT PUBLICATIONS
(School Publications Code)

1. Purpose

As stated in Board policy, school-sponsored student publications are a public forum for students as well as an educational activity through which students can gain experience in reporting, writing, editing and understanding responsible journalism. Content of school publications should reflect all areas of student interest, including topics about which there may be dissent or controversy, subject to the provisions of this Code, Board policy and state law.

2. Responsibilities of Student Journalists

In addition to the responsibilities set forth in the accompanying Board policy, students who work on official student publications will:

a. Rewrite materials, as required by the faculty advisors to improve composition, sentence structure, grammar, spelling and punctuation.

b. Check and verify all facts and verify the accuracy of all quotations.

c. In the case of editorials or letters to the editor concerning controversial issues, provide space for rebuttal comments and opinions.

If the Board determines that advertising is allowed in the publication, the student editor will determine the content of any advertisements, subject to applicable standards provided by this Code, Board policy and state law.

3. Responsibilities of Publication Advisors

In addition to the responsibilities set forth in the accompanying Board policy, the publication advisor will exercise general supervision over all activities to create a proper learning environment, to improve student writing and reporting skills, and to impart an awareness of the responsibilities and professional standards of a journalist.

4. Prohibited Materials

a. Students may not publish or distribute material that is obscene. "Obscene" means:

(1) The average person applying contemporary school community standards would find that the publication, taken as a whole, appeals to a minor's prurient interest.

(2) The publication depicts or describes in a patently offensive way sexual conduct such as sexual acts (normal or perverted, actual or simulated), masturbation, excretory functions, or lewd exhibition of genitals.

(3) The work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.

b. Students may not publish expression that is libelous, slanderous or defamatory under
state law. "Libelous" is defined as a false and unprivileged statement about a person that injures or would be expected to injure the individual's reputation in the community.

c. Students may not publish expression that is false as to any person who is not a public figure or involved in a matter of public concern.

If the allegedly libeled individual is a "public figure," the person must show that the false statement was published with actual malice, as the terms are defined in law.

d. Students may not publish expression that creates a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts, violation of lawful school regulations, or material and substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school, that violates the rights of others to privacy, or that threatens violence to property or persons.

Undifferentiated fear or apprehension of disturbance is not enough; school administrators must be able to show substantial facts that reasonably support a forecast of likely disruption. Material that stimulates heated discussion or debate does not constitute the type of disruption, which is prohibited.

5. **Time, Place and Manner Restrictions**

The principal will coordinate with the publications advisor concerning the time, place and manner of distributing school-sponsored publications to reduce any conflict with school instructional time and/or reduce any disruption of the orderly operation of the school, which might be caused by the distribution of school-sponsored publications.

Distribution of student publications may be prohibited in the classrooms and at times that would be disruptive to other school activities. Distribution may also be limited to one central location within the school. Any distribution must be accomplished in a manner that does not compel or coerce acceptance of the publications by other students.

6. **Procedures for Resolving Differences**

Student editors will work first with the publications advisor to resolve any differences. If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, the student editors and/or the publications advisor may work with the principal to resolve any problems. Whenever a matter comes before the principal for resolution, an immediate, informal meeting will be held. At this meeting, the student(s) involved, the publications advisor, and such other persons as the principal deems necessary to adequately consider the issues may be present. All persons involved shall have the opportunity to present their views; however, they shall not have the right to representation by legal counsel or third persons or to call or cross-examine witnesses. If the matter is not resolved in the informal meeting, the principal will decide and provide written notice of his decision to all parties during the next school day. If the decision has been that all or any part of the materials is prohibited, the notice shall specify the standard, which has been violated.

The principal's decision may be appealed to the Superintendent. The appeal must be made in writing and given to the Superintendent by the close of the day following the principal's decision. The Superintendent shall respond in writing within two school days. An adverse decision by the Superintendent may be appealed thereafter to the Board of Education if a written request, specifying the student's position, is received by the Board Secretary within two school days. In the event the Superintendent or the Board desires to meet with the
student(s), the publications advisor, and principal in considering the appeal, the student(s) may be accompanied at the meeting by their parents. The Board shall decide the matter within three school days. The decision of the Board shall be final, subject to judicial review.

7. **Legal Advice**

a. If, in the opinion of the student editor, student editorial staff or faculty advisor, material proposed for publication may be "obscene," "libelous," or "cause a substantial disruption of school activities," the legal opinion of the school district's attorney should be sought if authorized by the principal.

b. Legal fees charged in connection with this consultation will be paid by the District.

c. The final decision of whether the material is to be published will be left to the student editor.

Adopted November 2, 1988
Revised June 1, 1994