

A. Release of Information**1. General**

The Office of Public Information is responsible, at the direction of the Superintendent, for disseminating information about the ACPS. All information published by staff in the Central Office for general distribution to the public or to the news media is prepared in cooperation with the Office of Public Information.

The Office of Public Information maintains contact with the news media, the staff of the school system, and the citizens of the county, and provides accurate and current information about the school system. All official media releases must be authorized by the Superintendent or his/her designee and shall be issued in the name of the Superintendent.

The Superintendent or Public Information Officer or designee will communicate information pertaining to the Allegany County Public School system on social media sites. Opinions expressed by other users do not reflect the positions of ACPS, and ACPS reserves the right to remove any content posted.

Principals shall work directly with the Office of Public Information about procedures and practices for releasing information. Principals are requested to send copies of school-produced newsletters, handbooks, and other documents not intended for media distribution to the Office of Public Information.

2. Contact with News Media or Other Organizations

News media representatives are encouraged to make contacts with the Office of Public Information. Responses will be handled directly by the Office of Public Information or the Office of the Superintendent.

Persons representing the news media should make contact with school based staff through the principal. The principal will, in turn, document the information requested by the news media and inform the Office of Public Information. The principal and/or in conjunction with the Office of Public Information, shall issue accurate information regarding the school, its operations, and its programs, in conformity with Board of Education Policies.

3. Emergency Situations

The ACPS regards school safety as its first priority. ACPS work closely with all applicable public law enforcement and emergency agencies. The school system has developed comprehensive procedures that cover a wide variety of emergencies that serve as a guide to employees and students, public safety partners, and the general public.

When an emergency occurs in a school or office (fire, accident, assault, etc.) the principal or director immediately informs the Superintendent or his/her designee. The Superintendent's office notifies the public information officer who works with the principal

or director or their designee in coordinating the release of information to the news media and the public.

When an emergency occurs, it is critical that accurate information is provided to the public. A parent may obtain important information and directions by one or all of the following:

- a. Visiting the Allegany County Public Schools Website: www.acpsmd.org
- b. Visiting the Allegany County Public Schools Television ACETV (Atlantic Broadband Channel 97)
- c. Accessing news from a local radio station or other electronic news media
- d. Receiving messages (email, telephone, text message) from the ACPS current Parent/Community electronic notification system
- e. Visiting the ACPS social media sites

The Public Information Office shall, with the cooperation and approval of the Superintendent or his/her designee, update the news media as accurate information becomes available.

For the safety of students, employees, parents, and the general public, parents should refrain from approaching a school in an emergency situation until a joint statement is released by the incident command and the Office of the Superintendent.

In emergency situations, no school system employee except the Superintendent or his/her designee or the Public Information Specialist is authorized to give information to news media representatives. Strict adherence to this procedure will help to assure accurate and authoritative reporting.

B. Articles, Written Statements, or Other Publication by ACPS Staff

Employees of the Allegany County Public Schools are encouraged to submit articles to professional magazines or other periodicals for publication. However, staff members should not represent a policy, procedure, or practice as being that of ACPS unless the article has been approved by the Superintendent.

Board Reviewed 12/10/13	Superintendent Approved 12/10/13
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