School/Community Relations

Staff share the responsibility of supporting student achievement by communicating and interpreting the mission, its policies, programs, goals and objectives to the people of the community.

The Community Relations Department will develop annually a written community relations plan that is based on sound, up-to-date research and effective practices. The plan will develop and enhance the credibility and image of the school district, its schools and the staff. The objectives of the community relations plan are:

A. To maintain an effective two-way communication system between the district and its various publics which assures:
   1. The dissemination of accurate, timely information about school district policies, programs, regulations, achievements, decisions, critical issues;
   2. Interpretation of decisions and actions;
   3. Elimination of rumors and misinformation;
   4. Programs and practices designed to provide an open climate which will elicit ideas, suggestions, reactions from the community and employees alike;
   5. Develop an effective working relationship with the news media.

B. To maintain a community relations department which will coordinate the district’s effective communication efforts.
   To develop and maintain an organizational environment where all district staff members are aware that they share the responsibility for communication of school policies, programs and activities to parents, members of the educational and other communities.
   To maintain a written plan of communication of policies and guidelines which will be available to employees and to the public upon request.

C. To promote public understanding of local educational issues by:
   1. Coordinating or preparing answers to public inquiries concerning district operations;
   2. Initiating and/or assisting in the evaluation of public response to various district activities and proposals and advising the board, superintendent and district staff of such information;
   3. Maintaining editorial supervision of materials produced which are intended for public dissemination;
   4. Serving as a resource and liaison to residents and community organizations, the Tacoma Council of PTA, parent involvement groups and other district committees.
The Community Relations Department will provide direction and support to schools and departments as they develop and maintain an on-going two-way communication plan.

Principals are encouraged to initiate media coverage of their school programs and activities. The superintendent shall authorize the release of information when the topic being covered involves more than one building. These guidelines should be followed:

1. Media representatives should be kept fully informed on all aspects of the program so that any reporting shall be done on the basis of a complete and accurate overview.
2. Students should be informed that they have the right to deny an interview or photograph. A release form signed by a parent shall be secured before allowing an individual to photograph and conduct an interview that would “single out” any special education student or identify a student whose parents have signed a form to withhold directory information.
3. During regular school hours, all media representatives must report to the building office for identification and authorization before going to any part of the building or contacting any individual.
4. Staff members who contact the media as private citizens should in no way represent that he/she is speaking for the district, schools or administration by avoiding the use of title or position. Staff members should make it clear that they are speaking as a private citizen.

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