



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

GUIDELINES FOR PRODUCING AND PUBLISHING STUDENT PUBLICATIONS (PRINT AND ELECTRONIC VERSIONS)

5151

Procedure No.

October 29, 2018

Date

- I. **PURPOSE:** To establish guidelines for producing and publishing student publications.
- II. **BACKGROUND:** The Board of Education encourages student participation in the development of student publications, with the support and assistance of a school-approved sponsor. Likewise, students, publications advisors and faculty, staff and administration must know and practice professional standards of ethical and responsible journalism in an arena of mutual respect for all.
- III. **DEFINITION:** Student publications include, but are not limited to, school yearbooks, newspapers, literary magazines, journals, or other material produced by students (print and electronic versions).
- IV. **PROCEDURES:**

- A. The following guidelines for student publications are established for the Prince George's County Public Schools:
 1. Libelous, obscene, profane, or purposely disruptive statements, or similarly inappropriate material, will not appear in publications.
 2. Publications will not publish commercial advertising for alcohol, tobacco, weapons, controlled dangerous substances, drug paraphernalia, sexually-related goods and services, or services which would require parental consent if offered by or referred to students by the school system.
 3. Publications will not include words, initials, acronyms, phrases, expressions, or other, similarly printed messages which may suggest matters described as being prohibited in guideline number 1 above.
 4. Publications staff and their advisors retain the right to choose content and to determine the priority of stories for publication. In the event of a dispute, the advisor(s) determination shall prevail, unless overturned following the appeal process described below.

Unresolved questions regarding the determination by a publication advisor(s) may be submitted to the school's Publication Review Committee.

5. Publications will strive to present information in an objective manner. As much as possible, writers will be encouraged to



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- research those views, policies, or actions that are being reported. Publications staff will use fairness, impartiality, accuracy, truthfulness, and responsibility in presenting ideas to its readers.
6. In sponsoring a school publication, sponsors are expected to adhere to the following principles:
 - a. Strive to develop qualities of positive leadership and sound judgment in each publication's staff members;
 - b. Respect the integrity and personality of the individual school and its community;
 - c. Demonstrate positive interpersonal communication skills;
 - d. Encourage the highest standards of conduct and journalistic achievement;
 - e. Promote ethical relationships between students, staff, and community members;
 - f. Encourage the respect for the values of each member of the educational community; and
 - g. Demonstrate a mastery of and interest in the principles and techniques of quality journalism.
 7. Material submitted for publication by members of the student body may be used, copied and disseminated for educational purposes by PGCPS.
 8. All pages or portions of pages for which a fee is charged or payment is received shall be identified either as "Paid Advertisement" or "This Page is Paid for by (name of organization or individuals whose photographs or names are depicted therein)."
- B. The following procedures are established for implementation of publications guidelines:
1. Each school must establish a Publications Review Committee to ensure a final review and compliance with the guidelines for student publications. Membership includes:



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- a. building principal or designee;
 - b. library media specialist; and
 - c. one other member of the faculty, appointed by the principal at the commencement of each school year, who does not provide any assistance in the editing process of a school publication.
2. A decision made by the student publication advisor regarding content of the publication may be reviewed, upon request. The procedure for conducting a review is as follows:
- a. A request for review of the decision made by a school publication advisor shall be made by the proposed contributor no later than the school day following notification of rejection to publish proposed material.
 - b. Requests for review must be submitted in writing by the proposed contributor to the publication advisor who will share it with the Publications Review Committee.
 - c. The Publications Review Committee shall meet within one (1) week following the request for review and shall issue a written ruling of their decision on the day of the meeting.
 - d. The written ruling should merely denote the identity of the person requesting the ruling, a statement of the reason for the original rejection by the publication advisor, and a statement of the decision made during the review. For example:

(Proposed Contributor) requested a review of (advisor's) decision not to publish (identify the material in question) because (specify reason for rejection). We concur with (advisor's) decision – or – We see nothing offensive in the material and overrule (advisor's) decision.
3. A student who believes he/she has been aggrieved by the decision of the Publications Review Committee may appeal that decision to the Instructional Director or other central office designee. The procedure for requesting an appeal is as follows:



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- a. The student must request the appeal no later than three (3) school days following the decision of the Publications Review Committee.
- b. The request for appeal must be made in writing, either postmarked or hand delivered on the appropriate date to the Instructional Director or other central office designee.
- c. The request must include the written response of the school's Publications Review Committee and must identify the student's reason for seeking an appeal.
- d. The Instructional Director or other central office designee may rule on the appeal independently or may convene a meeting to gather additional information. If a meeting is convened, the student/s shall be provided with notice and an opportunity to attend.
- e. The Instructional Director or other central office designee shall provide a written decision of the appeal within two (2) weeks after it is filed.

V. **MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE:**

Schools will maintain a copy of each appeal request in a secure file located in the main office. The folder should be titled "Publishing Student Publications". There must be a folder for each school year.

VI. **RELATED PROCEDURES:** None.

VII. **MAINTENANCE AND UPDATE OF THESE PROCEDURES:** These procedures originate with the Secondary Reading/English Language Arts Office within the Division of Teaching and Learning and will be updated as needed.

VIII. **CANCELLATIONS AND SUPERSEDURES:** This Administrative Procedure cancels and supersedes Administrative Procedure 5151, dated February 1, 2005.

IX. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** October 29, 2018