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## EXPLANATION: PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM

MSBA has updated this policy to reflect the changes brought about through the new "whistleblower" law. While there is still some uncertainty surrounding this law, it nonetheless prohibits public employers (school districts) from disciplining public employees (district employees) for commenting on "matters concerning district operations." These comments could be made in person, in writing, via social media and so forth.

The district should contact MSBA's legal department or the district's own legal team before attempting to discipline any employee for speech.

*MSBA recommends that copies of this document be routed to the following areas because the content is of particular importance to them. The titles on this list may not match those used by the district. Please forward copies to the district equivalent of the title indicated.*

X	Board Secretary		Business Office		Coaches/Sponsors
	Facility Maintenance		Food Service		Gifted
X	Human Resources	X	Principals		Library/Media Center
	Health Services		Counselor		Special Education
	Transportation		Public Info/Communications		Technology

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## PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM

Open communication with the district's students, parents/guardians, employees and the public is essential for the school district to operate effectively. The Raytown C-2 School District Board of Education places high importance on conveying information concerning the district's goals, achievements, activities and operations to these groups.

The district will make a systematic effort to communicate with the public using a variety of communication channels. The Board of Education authorizes the expenditure of funds for the purpose of preparing and distributing information to the general public. Employees and Board members will maintain an effective working relationship with the news media.

### Spokespersons

The superintendent, Board president or designee will serve as official spokespersons for the district. All employees and Board members will direct requests for official statements about district business from the public or members of the media to the district's spokespersons. Board members should emphasize to the media and members of the public that they may only speak as individual Board members unless empowered by the Board to speak on its behalf.

### Communications Plan

The Board directs the superintendent or designee to develop and disseminate written guidelines to further the goals of this policy, including a communications plan that aligns with relevant Board policies and administrative procedures and addresses:

1. Guidelines for employees communicating with the media.
2. Communicating during emergency situations.
3. Use of the district's website and social media.
4. Sharing information within the district.
5. Sharing information with the public.

### Effective Communications

The district recognizes that Board members and employees have regular contact with students, parents/guardians and the public in general. When interacting with the public, all district employees and Board members are responsible for communicating accurate information about district policies and programs and promoting effective school-home-community partnerships. **District employees will not be disciplined for speech that is protected by law.**

In all communications, the Board and its employees will:

1. Disseminate accurate and timely information about district policies, programs, procedures, achievements, decisions and critical issues.
2. Eliminate rumors and misinformation.
3. Observe confidentiality and other restrictions imposed by law and Board policy.
4. Promote a climate of trust.

**Specific Information**

The district will provide parents/guardians and members of the public information as required by law. Board policies and related documents, including current versions of district handbooks, will be posted on the district's website. School and district report cards may be posted on the district's website and will be distributed to the public as determined by the superintendent or designee. The district will post notice of Board meetings and make copies of these notices available to representatives of the news media upon request. Other public information will be available in the district's buildings or administrative offices for viewing by the public during the office's normal business hours, as required by law and in accordance with policy BDDL.

The superintendent or designee will develop a communication system for the exchange of information between the district and staff, students, parents/guardians and others when school or school activities are canceled. Notice of the closing and reopening of school or cancellation of activities will be publicized through local media, the district's website and other district information dissemination options.

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***Note: The reader is encouraged to check the index located at the beginning of this section for other pertinent policies and to review administrative procedures and/or forms for related information.***

Adopted: 02/12/2007, eff. 07/01/2007

Revised: 02/09/2015;

Cross Refs: BDDL, Release of Information  
CH, Policy Implementation and Dissemination

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DCB, Political Campaigns  
DIE, Audits  
EBC, Emergency Drills  
EFB, Free and Reduced-Price Food Service  
EHB, Technology Usage  
GBH, Staff-Student Relations  
IGAEB, Teaching about Human Sexuality  
IGBB, Programs for Gifted Students  
IGBC, Parent/ and Family Involvement in Instruction and Other Programs and  
Engagement  
IL, Assessment Program  
JHA, Student Insurance  
JO, Student Records

Legal Refs: §§ 105.055, 160.522, .570, 161.670, 162.208, 167.645, RSMo.  
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 - 1417  
7 C.F.R. §§ 200.12, 245.5  
34 C.F.R. Part 300  
The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504  
Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101 - 12213

Raytown C-2 School District, Raytown, Missouri