

**Irma Cervantes Lancaster**

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Board of Education

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BCSD Media Relations Protocols

The Bakersfield City School District recognizes the responsibility of the news media to provide accurate and timely information to the community concerning issues and events that occur in our schools. We recognize the benefits of maintaining a good working relationship between the District and the media, such as communicating messages to the masses at no cost and keeping the District and its programs top-of-mind with stakeholders.

While we are committed to cooperating with the news media requests for access to our schools and students, we are also obligated to protect the privacy of students and employees. To help facilitate media requests, schools should use the following protocols for media relations.

Media access to schools

According to California law, school officials may restrict media access to school campuses in the same manner as access by the general public. While no state laws bar the media from school grounds outright, school districts may limit access to school property. In June 1996, the California Attorney General's office issued an advisory opinion giving school administrators the authority to deny media access to school grounds only if their presence "would interfere with peaceful conduct of the activities of the school." (A.G. Op. No. 95-509, Ed Code 32211).

Any and all news media related calls or visits must be reported to Irma Cervantes in the Communications office at 661-631-4619 or cervantesi@bcسد.com. The following are some general guidelines for news media access on campus:

1. If media show up unannounced and are taking video and/or are interviewing parents on sidewalk and/or parking lot, they have a right to be there and cannot be asked to leave as this is considered public property. However, please check to see which media outlet is present and call the Communications office to report. Please do not approach, as we would not want you to unexpectedly end up on camera unprepared.
2. If media enters your office asking for access to the campus or an interview, please take down the media outlet name and the reason for their request and call the Communications office with that information.
3. Once access is approved by the Communications office, always require reporters to sign in at the front office upon arrival at a campus and to wear a badge so that others on the site can immediately identify them as such. Be sure a staff member accompanies the

reporter while on the school campus. A reporter may be denied admission to a classroom or any other location at the school if it would interrupt student learning.

4. Schools can prohibit student interviews only if they would disrupt educational activities. Districts cannot require prior parental permission for kids to speak to the media, as they have a constitutional right to free speech. Although, parents can instruct their child not to communicate with the media as a matter of parental discretion on or off school property.
5. Teachers and staff have First Amendment Free Speech rights, but an administrator can require that staff be interviewed outside of the educational day and on that individual's own time.
6. The media has the right to cover school events held off-campus that are open to the public, and does not need parent or school staff permission to interview, photograph or take video of students participating in such events.

Media Inquiries

Any news media inquiry should be directed to Irma Cervantes in the Communications Office at 661-631-4619 or cervantesi@bcisd.com.

Events that would generate media interest or attendance should first be submitted for approval to the Communications office at least thirty days in advance. The Office of Communications will work with principals in the coordinating of any media coverage for events.

Designated Spokespeople

Irma Cervantes
Public Information and Communications Manager

Doc Ervin
Superintendent

Mark Luque
Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services

Steve McClain
Assistant Superintendent, Business Services

Diane Cox
Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources

District Administrators, School Principals, and other staff as approved by an Administrator on a case by case basis.