

Media Relations – Tips for Success

1. Truly, you are the spokesperson for the Board and the District. (Unless you're district is large enough to hire a P. R. person!)
2. Form positive relationships with journalists from all media organizations that cover your district. (Some will even agree to call you and review their article prior to going to press.)
3. As much as possible, be available to take journalists calls.
4. Reporters are not your friends! They have a job to do and the goal is to sell newspapers. Never say anything off the record that you can't say on the record.
5. Realize early that people really do believe everything they read in the newspaper!
6. Be consistent. Tell exactly the same information in the same way to every reporter. Take some time to make an outline of the points you wish to convey.
7. Be proactive - get out there first with student achievement. Make sure that you're all about kids and their success.
8. If the news is not so good, remember that how you tell it is very important. Tell the public what they want to know, but in the way that you want them to know it.
9. Honesty above all - if not, your credibility is worth zero! Don't make up answers!
10. Protect your students, your staff, the Board, and yourself.
11. As often as possible, as much as possible, write your own press releases. Issue "good news" stories at least once every two weeks. This makes bad news pale in comparison to all the good that's going on. There is no guarantee that your press release will be printed as is - usually it's not the case. But, you may be better off than leaving it to chance.
12. Provide copies of your newsletter, calendars, board agendas, etc. to the press.
13. Remain an integral piece of the journalistic process by correcting, criticizing, and praising the press. Let them know that they won't get away with misquoting you - you'll call them on it.
14. Promote other Superintendents and they'll do the same for you.