

**SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Springfield, New Jersey 07081**

**POLICY: DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS TO SCHOOL**

The preparation, publication and distribution of newspapers, magazines and other literature are an exercise of freedom of the press. The freedom to express one's opinion goes hand-in-hand with the responsibility for the published statement. Literature that students or school personnel wish to distribute on school property is not only their responsibility, but also that of the school authorities. State policy calls for reasonable guidelines setting forth the times and places for distribution of materials in school, and for defining fair standards for their content, to be jointly determined by representatives of all groups in the school community, with ultimate responsibility for determining the suitability of materials resting with the local Board of Education. "Suitability" may not be defined as approval or agreement with the literature in question, but refers to a reasonable judgment intended to protect students and the entire school community from irresponsible publications, such as those aimed at creating hostility or violence, "hard-core" pornography, or materials of a libelous nature. Once the school system has established such guidelines, students and school personnel may distribute publications that meet the conditions of those guidelines on school property. Distribution of publications next to school property is subject to the same rules governing other citizens' rights to distribute literature on public property (distributors may not block pedestrian traffic at entrances to buildings). New Jersey school law is quite specific on one other point; distribution of partisan political literature supporting or opposing candidates or public questions in any general, municipal or school election is prohibited on school property.

All school personnel should exercise good judgment in deciding the kind of literature they wish to release to parents and the general public.

All school personnel should discuss with their immediate superiors the purpose for the preparation and distribution of literature.

Because of the various sizes, locations, grades, exits, etc., of the several schools in the system, the Principal of each school is charged with drawing up guidelines for the orderly distribution of materials for his/her school.

The Superintendent shall be kept informed of student or school personnel's desire to prepare, publicize and distribute materials of a controversial nature.

**Legal References:**

N.J.S.A. 18A:42-4 Distribution of literature as to candidacy, bond issues, or other public questions to be submitted at election; prohibited

**Cross References:**

Adopted: August 20, 2007