



CENTRAL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Media Press Release and Story Protocols

All media inquiries regarding district matters should be referred to Sonja Dosti, Communications and Public Relations Officer, so responses can be coordinated with the appropriate administrators to ensure a unified response.

- As district spokesperson, responds to media inquiries and requests media coverage.
- Serves as the liaison between district personnel and the media.

Getting News Coverage:

- When you believe you have a positive news story to share with the public, **do not contact media yourself**, contact your direct supervisor, Cabinet-level supervisor, and the Communications & PR Officer at least two weeks in advance of the event you want to publicize.
- Reporters will want to know: Who, What, Why, When and Where.
- The Communications and PR Officer will work with you to gather information and determine how the news media should be contacted and what information should be conveyed.
- **Please do not contact reporters directly.** The Communications and PR Officer is the only district employee authorized to distribute press releases or requests for media coverage.

Is Your Event Newsworthy? If you can answer “yes” to most of the following questions, the answer is YES!

- Is it a first? If it is the first time something has happened, it's news.
- Does it involve new technology? (i.e. computers, scientific technology, kids with technology, etc.).
- Does your event pass the “est” test? Is it the biggest, smallest, latest, fastest or anything else that ends in “est”?
- Will your event show students in action? Events with good photo opportunities are more appealing to the media.
- Will your event show great facial expressions on students? If it will, it will be more appealing to the media.
- Does your event correspond with a national or international holiday, event or cause? Reporters may be interested in doing a story about how a national event or cause is being observed at the local level.
- Does your event involve anyone of local or national prominence? Events with local or national celebrities are more likely to attract media attention.
- Is your event a new approach to an old topic? (For example holding "Pinked Out" athletic events for breast cancer awareness)
- Will your story tug on the heartstrings of viewers or readers?
- The general rule is if your event or story seems interesting or unique to you, it may be interesting to reporters (think human interest stories.)

If Your Event is Newsworthy based on answering “yes” to most of the previous questions, please e-mail your direct supervisor, Cabinet-level supervisor, and Sonja Dosti the information below for approval to go to the media:

Include the following **bullet points of pertinent information** in the body of the e-mail (not as an attachment):

- **DATE & TIME:** when event takes place
- **LOCATION:** School site, room #, or off-site address
- **WHO:** Students, teachers, or staff
- **EVENT:** i.e. athletic event, academic event, special occasion
- **EVENT POINT PERSON:** Name of Principal/VP/GIA/Coach/teacher, etc.
- Provide a **narrative, in paragraph form, describing the event and why the media should cover it.**
- When submitting all of this info, **please have 2 sets of eyes from your department check for correct spelling of the event, names of people, and location, as well as the correct date and time.** There’s nothing more embarrassing for you, us, and our district than to have incorrect information and spelling!!

If the Media Call You:

- If a member of the media calls, be courteous and professional and try to refer him/her to the Communications & PR Officer as soon as possible. How the call is handled may be the reporter's first impression of Central Unified and what you say may be reported in the news.
- You do not have to answer questions on the spot. Take the reporter's name, the name of his media outlet, phone number, and inform him that Sonja Dosti will call as soon as possible.
- You can also refer all media inquiries to Sonja who can be reached at 559-274-4700 x63119 or sdosti@centralusd.k12.ca.us

If the Media Show Up:

- If the media wishes to attend a school event or function, they are asked to make arrangements in advance with the Communications and PR Officer who will coordinate the arrangements with the school site.
- If a member of the media arrives at a school site unannounced, contact the Communication & PR Officer immediately and a determination will be made as to whether it is advisable to allow media access to your site at that time.
- Although Central Unified encourages site administrators to make every effort to accommodate the reasonable requests of legitimate news media for access to schools, school officials do have the authority to deny access when they believe the media's presence may be disruptive or interfere with classes or other school activities.

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