Superintendent of Schools
Kurt S. Browning

School Board
Allen Altman
Cynthia Armstrong
Alison Crumbley
Joanne Hurley
Steve Luikart

Communications & Government Relations Director
Linda E. Cobbe
Communications & Government Relations

Office of Communications & Government Relations

Contact List

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Communications & Government Relations

The Office of Communications & Government Relations is responsible for:

- Media relations
- Government relations – monitoring legislative process
- Writing speeches, fact sheets, and articles
- Responding to public records requests
- Managing advertising programs
- Web services
- Graphic design services
- Photography services
- Video production
- District-wide E-mail messages
- District social media sites: Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram
- Assuring compliance with graphic standards (logo)
- Parent notification system
- Coordination of volunteer programs
- Translation and interpreting services

Communications & Government Relations is housed on the first floor of building 8 in the District Office Complex, with media production located in building 3 north.
Department Services

Media Relations

The Communications & Government Relations staff offers story ideas to the media and responds to media requests. Staff members are available to help with:

- Writing press releases
- Press conferences, news briefings, and special events
- Pitching story ideas to print and broadcast media
- Crisis communications & government relations
- Supporting school and district staff with media interviews
- School to home communication

Please submit stories electronically using the Good News/Upcoming Events form posted on the Communications & Government Relations page on the district website. Complete the form, making sure you include the school's physical address, and then hit Send.

Crisis Communications

Communications staff also provides principals and site administrators with guidance during crisis situations. Staff will help write parent letters or SchoolConnects scripts alerting parents of situations that have occurred at a school, and provides advice about how widely to disseminate such messages and letters, as well as the appropriate timing for sending out SchoolConnects calls.

Web Site and Social Media

The Communications & Government Relations Department designs and maintains the district Web site and assists schools and other departments with design and maintenance of their sites. The department also maintains the district's Facebook page and Twitter account. The District Website Coordinator designs standard themes, provides and maintains a CMS platform for school and staff websites, assists with the creation of site policy and procedures, and assists schools with web tools such as Twitter and Facebook.

District Graphics Specialist

The District Graphics Specialist works with schools and departments to design logos, letterhead, posters, brochures, event programs, annual reports, and PowerPoint presentations; and serves as a consultant for preparing digital files and print ordering. Contact Debbie Smith at (813) 794-2449, (ext. 42449), or e-mail her at dbsmith@pasco.k12.fl.us.
Production Lab

The Production Lab staff work with schools and departments to assist them with die-cuts, laminating, posters, buttons, mounting and framing of photos/posters, and duplicating of CD's/DVD's. Contact Donna Hunt at (813) 794-2461, (ext. 42461) or e-mail her at dhunt@pasco.k12.fl.us

Government Relations

The department monitors education-related legislation and the state budget process. Staff works with the district lobbyist to identify bills to follow and to share the district's position on pending legislation with our legislative delegation. Staff also works with members of district offices on bills that are related to their areas of interest.
Media Tips

Here are a few pointers that may help you when responding to media inquiries. Reporters should be referred to the director of Communications & Government Relations for facilitation of news coverage or for comments on news articles or stories. Any time anyone talks to a reporter, they should advise Linda Cobbe by email or by calling the Communications & Government Relations Department. If a reporter is interested in doing a story based on a press release sent out by the Communications & Government Relations Department, it is not necessary to refer him or her to the director to get access to your school or department.

What to do when talking to a reporter

Always be respectful.

Start by asking a few questions:
- What is the story about?
- Have you spoken with anybody else?
- What is your deadline?

Often, clarifying questions can define the information a reporter is seeking and save time for both you and the reporter.

Never say “no comment.” If you are being asked a line of questions you do not feel prepared to answer, tell the reporter that you need to call him/her back. This will give you time to prepare your answers or call Communications & Government Relations for assistance. We can always call a reporter back on your behalf.

Tips for a successful interview

Prepare ahead of time: Think about what you want to say and the key information that should be shared. Try writing down one to three key phrases and practicing them.

Relax. Use positive body language and slow down.

For television:
- Keep your answers short, clear, and to the point. Once you have answered the question, **stop talking.** Do not be afraid of long pauses.
- State and repeat the most important information: Reporters are looking for a 5-10 second sound bite or quote. For example, “The safety of our students is the most important thing to us.” Be clear and concise in your message. Often, reporters will ask you at the end of the interview, “Is there anything else you want to add?” Use the opportunity to repeat the key phrase you stated earlier in the interview.
- When appropriate, feel free to state a core message about your school or the district.
- Do not be intimidated: If a reporter repeats a question, repeat your answer. **Do not repeat negative words that a reporter may say when asking a question.** The audience will rarely hear the question asked, only the response.
Sharing student/employee information

We do not discuss publicly the specifics of any student discipline situation. We do discuss standard district protocol and stress that protocol is being followed. For situations involving law enforcement, we refer any questions regarding the investigation or officer actions to them.

In describing a student involved in a situation, use their gender, age, and grade, but no other identifying information.

*The student injured in the bus accident is a 14-year-old female 9th grader from Jones High School.*

For questions about student privacy, contact our office. If we don’t know the answer, we will consult with an attorney.

As with student discipline situations, we do not discuss personnel issues while an investigation is ongoing. Unless we know the outcome of the investigation, we only will discuss school district protocol and procedures. If a situation involves law enforcement, we refer any questions regarding ongoing investigations to the appropriate agency.

Media access to schools

You control whether the media comes into your building or not. If a reporter, photographer, or cameraman shows up uninvited on your campus you have every right to direct them to leave. They do, however, have the right to be on public sidewalks or roadways. If a reporter is on the public right-of-way interviewing parents and/or students, and you believe he or she is causing a safety hazard, call your school resource officer or Lt. J.R. Law (42617) and ask for someone to approach the news crew to request that they discontinue their interviews.

Remember: We are available to help in these situations.
Style Guide

Each year, our offices and schools produce hundreds of publications such as newsletters, brochures, reports, grant proposals, and manuals. Often, rules of style differ from department to department and school to school, which can be confusing to the public. These style tips are intended to help everyone who contributes to the publishing process and to improve the quality, clarity, and consistency of school district publications.

What to Call the School District

The school district’s official name is District School Board of Pasco County and should be on all school and department letterhead and other publications. The name should be treated as a singular noun because it reflects one collective district. District may be used in subsequent references, but it should be lowercase. The term Pasco County Schools is acceptable when referring to the district more casually.

The District School Board of Pasco County serves 67,000 students.
The district will graduate 3,000 students next year.

More information is in the “Official Names” section.

Using the District Logo

It is important to use the district logo on all materials. Research shows that consistent use of a symbol that represents an organization builds recognition for that organization. The use of the district logo across all media also identifies the source of information and services to the public.

When creating a publication, always be sure you are using an unmodified copy of the logo and that you do not hide any part of the logo behind boxes, lines, text, or pictures. The District logo and Kurt S. Browning, Superintendent of Schools should be included on ALL official publications, communications and invitations.

Pasco County Schools’ logo must be legible and attractive when reproduced on a variety of media, from newsprint to high-resolution computer screens. As a result, several variations of the logo have been approved for use in these differing circumstances. For a complete package of approved district logo graphics, visit this link: http://www.pasco.k12.fl.us/communications/guide/logos or contact Debbie Smith, District Graphics Specialist at 42449.
School Board

The official name is the District School Board of Pasco County, Florida, but Pasco County School Board is acceptable. Do not capitalize if not giving the complete name.

The District School Board of Pasco County will meet tonight.
The school board approved new curriculum materials.

When listing board member names, list the chair first, then the vice-chair, followed by the other members in alphabetical order. School board members are:

Steve Luikart, Chairman
Joanne Hurley, Vice-chairman
Allen Altman
Cynthia Armstrong
Alison Crumbley

If you are listing the board members on a publication that will be used for more than one year, we recommend that you list them all in alphabetical order without noting who is chairman and who is vice-chairman.

Capitalization

Basic rule: When in doubt, don’t capitalize.

Official names

Capitalize the school system's official name, District School Board of Pasco County. Variations of the name such as the Pasco public school system, Pasco County public schools, or Pasco school district are acceptable, but each word should not be capitalized.

The District School Board of Pasco County serves children in grades pre-kindergarten through 12th grade.
The Pasco County public school system has 67,000 students.
Pasco County public schools have guidance counselors.

Capitalize the full name, District School Board of Pasco County or Pasco County School Board.
The Pasco County School Board meets generally every second and fourth Tuesday of each month.

Lowercase school board or board if used without the Pasco County designation.
The school board will meet at 6 p.m. to discuss the new school.

Capitalize a school's full name, but lowercase elementary schools, middle schools, etc., if two or more schools are mentioned.
The meeting will be held at Gulf High School.
Pine View and Charles S. Rushe middle schools are located in Land O’ Lakes.
Governmental bodies

Capitalize the full name of governmental departments, agencies, and offices. Lowercase state if used in place of Florida.

- The grants are funded by the Florida Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education.
- The grants were funded by the state Department of Education.

Lowercase state of, city of, town of, etc.

- The city of Port Richey and the school board reached an agreement on the softball fields.

Capitalize legislature when it is preceded by the name of a state, or when the state name is dropped but the reference is specifically to that state’s legislature.

- The Florida Legislature passed several laws concerning public education.
- The Legislature is expected pass stiffer graduation requirements for Florida schools.

Lowercase legislature for all plural references and when used generically.

- The Florida and Georgia legislatures passed similar bills.
- No legislature has ratified the amendment.
Titles

Capitalize formal titles when they are used immediately before an individual’s name.

Superintendent Kurt S. Browning  
Communications & Government Relations Director Linda Cobbe  
Learning Community Executive Director Beth Brown

Lowercase titles when they are used after an individual’s name.

Kurt S. Browning, superintendent  
Linda Cobbe, Communications & Government Relations director

Lowercase occupational descriptions, even when used immediately before a name.

physics teacher Robert Smith

Academic degrees

Lowercase and use an apostrophe for bachelor’s degree, specialist’s degree, master’s in psychology, etc.

Use abbreviations such as B.A., B.S., M.A., M.S., M.Ed., Ph.D., Ed.D. with a person’s name.

Dr. John Mann or John Mann, Ed.D. — use Dr. or Ed.D., but not both.

Committees

Capitalize committee when part of a formal name.

School Advisory Committee members include district employees and community members.

Generic committee names should not be capitalized.

The superintendent will appoint an advisory committee.

Departments

Lowercase academic department names, except for words that are proper names. Capitalize all other department names.

the history department  Communications & Government Relations  
the English department  Student Services & Support Programs

Courses

Uppercase full names of courses. Lowercase generic course names, except for proper nouns.

Algebra I, AP Spanish, Beginning Journalism  
Ms. Jones teaches math.
**Nationalities and races**

Capitalize proper names of nationalities, races, and ethnicities.

- American
- African
- Hispanic
- Asian
- African-American
- Jewish
- Caucasian
- Eskimo

Lowercase *white, black, etc.*

**Contact Information**

Materials should have a contact name, e-mail address and/or telephone number.

**Proofreading**

Before you go to press or hit “Send” on your e-mail, make sure that you have at least one other person proofread your document. Everyone should also have their computer settings arranged to automatically use the Spell Check or Spelling and Grammar functions in Word and in their email.