

# **MEDIA RELATIONS**

## **FOR SCHOOL OFFICIALS**

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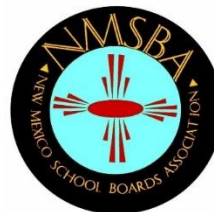
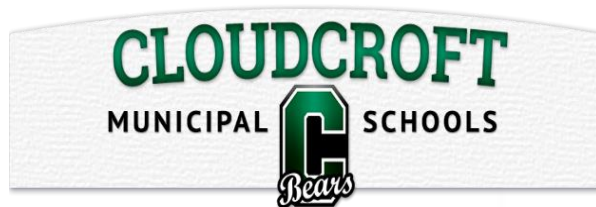
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# WHY YOU NEED TRAINING?

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*Reason #6093 – video*

# THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE?

Consider how your opinions of the media might impact your perspective...

**What's your impression of media interviews?**



Howard Stern – radio personality



Barbara Walters  
TV personality



James Lipton  
Talk show host



Bill O'Reilly  
TV personality

# WHO IS THE MEDIA?

## Our Media:

### PRINT

Las Cruces Sun-News  
El Paso Times  
Roswell Daily Record  
Albuquerque Journal  
Santa Fe New Mexican  
Rio Grande Sun  
Las Vegas Optic  
Silver City Daily Press  
Cibola Beacon

### TV

ABC  
CBS  
CNN  
FOX  
NBC  
PBS

### ANYONE WITH CELLPHONE

*(Parents, grandparents, siblings, cousins,  
rustlers, cut throats, murderers, bounty  
hunters, desperados, mugs, pugs, thugs, nitwits,  
halfwits, dimwits, vipers, snipers, con men, Indian  
agents, Mexican bandits, muggers, buggerers,  
bushwhackers, hornswogglers, horse thieves, train robbers,  
bank robbers and Methodists!)*

### NON-TRADITIONAL MEDIA



You



Pinterest



# WHAT IS NEWS?

## WHAT INTERESTS THE MEDIA?

- ✓ *Good news, bad news and more news.*
- ✓ **SCANDAL**

## WHAT IS NEWS?

- Our kids
- A “first”
- A trend
- Test scores
- School grades
- Team events/scores
- Good teachers / Bad teachers
- Stupidity



“

Objective journalism and an opinion column are about as similar as The Bible and Playboy magazine.”

-Walter Cronkite

# WHAT IS NEWSWORTHY?

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*Super goes crazy – video*

# WHY TALK TO MEDIA?

## Provides a communication channel to public

- *Public **OPINION** depends on what public hears*
- *To build and maintain public **SUPPORT***

## Get message to more people quickly

- *Including **INTERNAL** audience*
- *Goal is to **EDUCATE** = possible **CHANGE** opinions*
- *Protect the District from additional liability*
- *Protect the reputation of the District*

## Bottom line

- *By engaging media early and truthfully, we tell **OUR** story and **OWN** the message*

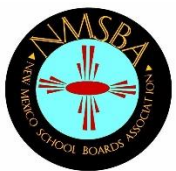
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*Bad news isn't wine. It doesn't improve with age.*

*-Gen. Colin Powell (Ret.)*

# MEDIA RELATIONS

- Our story is important – “I am New Mexico Public schools.”
- You must “Feed the Beast.”
- Don’t be afraid to say, “I don’t know.”
- Be gracious – critics aren’t shy, but be like **Fonzi**.
- **Joe Friday approach** – “Just the facts, ma’am.”
- Educate your audience, not your peers
- Freddy Mercury knew it - *Body language*
- All mics are **HOT!**
- Be humble – “I was wrong!”
- **Keep It Simple ... Stupid.**
- **Stay in your lane!**



# INTERVIEW FORMAT

Understand the format of the interview:

- **Face-to-Face Sit-Down Interview**

Edited or live?

- **Press Conference**

Seated, standing or media roundtable?

- **Ambush Interview**

Reporter and cameraman suddenly appear and start asking questions

***HINT: Don't be afraid to ask the reporter questions about the format of the interview.***



# INTERVIEW FORMAT

## Interview types:

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### On-the-record

Consider everything you say as “on-the-record.” Never say anything you don’t want to see printed or broadcast.

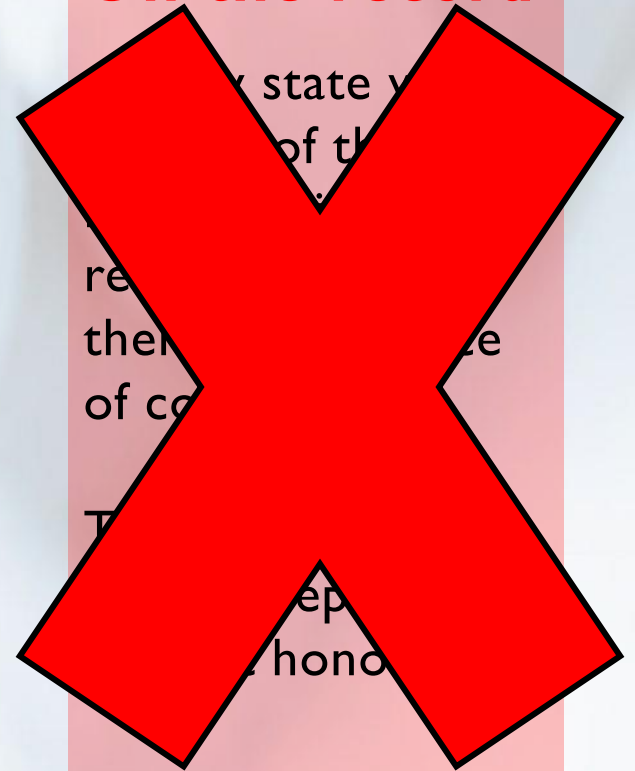
The quote is attributed to your name.

### Background

Allows you to provide context to stories while ensuring the proper emphasis is placed on key aspects.

The quote is attributed to a generic title.

### Off-the-record



# WHO WRITES THIS STUFF?

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*Frustrated - Video*



# CONTROLLING THE INTERVIEW

## BRIDGING

**Techniques used to move from the reporter's agenda to your message**

*“No, that's not the case. Our primary focus is on ...”*

**Answer the question honestly, then bridge to your message.**

*“Yes, we did. What's important to remember is ...”*

“

If you have an important point to make, don't try to be subtle or clever. Use a pile driver.”

-Sir Winston Churchill

# *RELAYING THE MESSAGE*

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**Tell your story in  
10 seconds or  
less...**

**10 seconds = 35 words**

“ Sometimes they write what I say and not what I mean.”  
-Baseball player Pedro Guerrero on reporters

# ARLAN'S TIPS FOR SUCCESS

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- **DON'T** – use big, unnecessary words
- **DON'T** – use jargon, acronyms or scientific terms
- **DON'T** – lie or repeat a negative phrase
  
- **DO** – Use active, high-energy, positive words
- **DO** – Homework on subject and reporter
- **DO** – Prepare and practice 3 key messages
- **DO** – Use the “inverted pyramid” to draft answers

WHO – WHAT – WHEN – WHERE – WHY

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

LESSER DETAILS

# MORE OF ARLAN'S TIPS

- Train a media spokesperson
- Don't speculate
- Correct any misinformation
- “No comment” is a comment
- Include your key message
- NOTHING is “off the record”
- Don't answer a question - respond
- **ANSWER + MESSAGE = RESPONSE**



# THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA

On Jan. 15, 2009, Janis Krums used his iPhone to take a photo of US Airways flight 1549 moments after it made an emergency landing in the Hudson River. The image posted to TwitPic went viral, and the site crashed from all of the traffic.

Within 23 minutes, the image was seen by millions of people via Twitter, Facebook, 24-hour news agencies, blogs, websites and other social media sources.



“

*This showed the powerful ‘snowball effect’ of social media.”*

-Noah Everett, TwitPic founder

# NETIQUETTE

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- ✓ Always use the Internet, social media and other online resources in a courteous and respectful manner. *(Hint: It is better to keep quiet and people think you're a fool than "type" it and prove it.)*
- ✓ Recognize a tremendous amount of content online is unverified, outdated or incorrect. *(Hint: You don't drink milk when its past its expiration date, so why would you trust social media information that is years old?)*
- ✓ Only use trusted sources when conducting research via the Internet. *(Hint: If you can't trust social media to give accurate information if a celebrity is dead, why would you trust it as a source of information?)*
- ✓ Remember **don't post anything online you wouldn't want parents, teachers or students to see AND USE AGAINST YOU.** *(Hint: Once something is online, it's out there—and can be shared and spread in ways you never intended.)*

# *CONTROLLING THE INTERVIEW*

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Media Training 101  
Roethlisberger - Video

# *N.M. SCHOOLS IN THE NEWS*

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- ❖ Online Cheating Scandal in N.M. School
- ❖ Teacher, Principal charged in book throwing incident
- ❖ Teacher arrested for having sex with student
- ❖ Teacher accused of taping students' mouths shut
- ❖ District is left shell-shocked over yet another scandal
- ❖ School Sexting Scandal not LOL



# HOW DID THEY REACT TO MEDIA

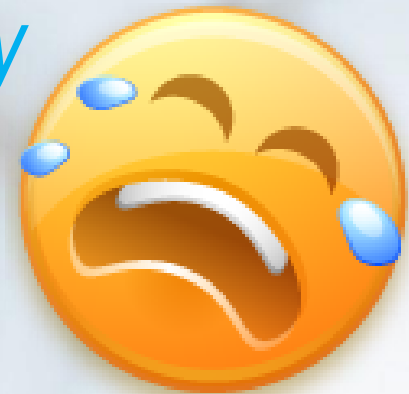
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*“No response until we consult with our attorney.”*

*“No comment at this time.”*

*“We can’t comment due to confidentiality requirements.”*

*“This is the first we have heard of any such claim. We’ll be looking into the matter.”*

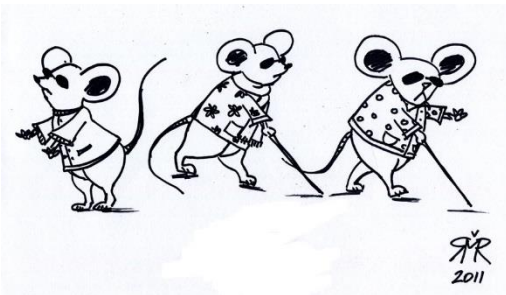


*“We don’t comment on pending litigation.”*

# LEGAL ISSUES? **YOU BET!**

## What **must** we release to Media?

- Everything not specifically exempted from the Inspection of Public Records Act.
- Any information presented to the Board during an Open Meeting.
- Anything required to be disclosed to the union through collective bargaining agreements.



# REMEMBER: NEVER RELEASE

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- **Student records protected by FERPA.**
- **Some items in personnel files, i.e. evaluations, opinions, reprimands, etc.**
- **Communication between you and your attorney.**
- **Redaction** is your friend.



# YOU MAY NOT WANT TO ...

**but you must release!**

- Directory information under FERPA.  
*Includes: Name, address, phone number*
- Internal district memos and emails regarding the incident.
- District findings in complaint investigations.  
*(With redactions)*

*Let it go!*



**NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO ...**  
***releasing information is a PR Issue.***

**Public confidence and transparency**

**-VS-**

**Legal obligations to restrict release  
of information**



# BEFORE A CRISIS ...

And someone says the wrong thing!

## DETERMINE

1. **WHO** will speak on behalf of the District?
  - Make sure they know in advance they are the District spokesperson and they are prepared.
  - You only need one spokesperson per crisis.  
*(Recommendation: Not an administrator or a loose cannon!)*
2. **WHEN** should they speak?
  - An initial response is critical.
  - Of course we want it to all go away, but follow up to the public is also critical.



# THIS HAPPENED TO THEM ...

**It could happen to you too!**

## KRQE NEWS 13 REPORTS



An Albuquerque teacher has been placed on administrative leave for allegedly carrying on an inappropriate relationship with a student at a local charter school. Parents have a lot of questions, so KRQE went to administrators this afternoon to try and get some answers."



# LIVE OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL

***AT DISMISSAL!!!***

- A KRQE News 13 reporter spotted the school principal outside Friday afternoon, but she quickly walked away and refused to answer any questions.
- Parents picking up their students at dismissal were interviewed.
- Parents overwhelmingly said that they want to know which teacher is under investigation.
- One said because of the principal's response, he is looking into other schools for his child.



# STOP ... QUIZ TIME!

**WHAT SHOULD  
SHE HAVE SAID?**



- A. **“No. I will not answer any questions from KRQE 13. Your station never gets the story right.”**
- B. **“We’ll be in contact with you after we have had an opportunity to consult with our attorney.”**
- C. **“The teacher and student carried on this relationship off campus, so it is not our responsibility.”**

# CORRECT-A-MUNDO

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**D. “Our School has a policy prohibiting this type of behavior and we take these allegations seriously. We cannot share confidential student or staff information. Our investigation is ongoing, and our school is cooperating with the police. All of our students are safe. Should any parent have a concern about their child’s safety, I encourage them to contact me immediately.”**



# WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

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***You can see it coming, right?***

- The teacher is placed on administrative leave and your law firm assists you in conducting an investigation.
- The investigation reveals a number of lapses in supervision, training and reporting requirements – a report has been provided to the Superintendent and Board labeled “Attorney-Client privileged.”
- KRQE News sends an IRPA request for the report on the investigation.



# MAKE IT STOP ... PLEASE!

- As a result of the investigation, the teacher is **TERMINATED** and the union files a **grievance**.
- Another teacher has a reprimand placed in their file because the relationship was reported to them by students months before ... *and they did not take it seriously or report it.*
- The local newspaper submits an IPRA requesting inspection of **ALL** disciplinary action taken against staff members related to this incident.



# BUT IT DOES NOT STOP!

*Several months later, the School receives:*

- A **tort claim** notice from the attorney representing the parents of the young woman assaulted by the teacher.
- A notice from the Office of Civil Rights that an **investigation** is underway due to the school's failure to investigate this teacher's pattern of **sexual harassment** of female students.
- A **due process** complaint alleging violation of IDEA regarding the same student for failure to provide a FAPE – oops – *did we mention she is a special needs student.*



# GOOD PUBLICITY?

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***Your school has  
just received a  
lot of publicity from  
this incident, but  
not the good kind ...***

**SADLY!**

# BE PREPARED!

Plan **NOW** for future challenges.

- Have a policy in place to **handle** crises ... *and good news.*
- Ensure all staff members **know** the policy.
- Identify and **train** spokespeople for your District when something occurs ... *only one per crisis.*
- Train **ALL** administrators and board on responses.
- Ask your school attorney to **review** your policies and help train spokespeople.



- **Control** is the key to success
- **Messages** are your lifeline
- **Confidence** not cockiness
- **No comment** is a comment
- **Planning** instills public confidence.
- **Shut up** after you've answered

**ABOVE ALL THINGS:**

**STAY IN YOUR LANE!**

***“What kills a skunk is the publicity it gives itself.”***

***Abraham Lincoln***



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