

DISTRIBUTION OR SOLICITATION OF INFORMATION IN SCHOOLS

I. Purpose

Non-profit organizations or governmental agencies that provide opportunities or conduct activities for school-age youth in Talbot County shall be permitted to place approved materials on a designated table (the Limited Public Forum) in schools for students, parents, and teachers to pick up, take home, and review. It is recommended that the table be centrally located in the school (such as in the school lobby) and that copies be limited to 5 copies of each.

The inclusion or distribution of materials from any non-profit or governmental agency participating in the Limited Public Forum shall not constitute an endorsement of the organization or activity, nor be construed as an endorsement of any speech or ideas contained therein.

II. Participating Organizations

Organizations must meet the following qualifications in order to have their materials considered for placement on school information tables or for the elementary and middle school direct distribution days. Organizations must:

1. Be a government agency or possess a valid tax exempt/non-profit status determination letter from the IRS identifying that specific designation of non-profit status;
2. Conduct operations in Talbot County;
3. Follow the content-neutral restrictions set out below.

III. Material Guidelines

- A. All materials must identify the name of the governmental agency or non-profit organization responsible for the material.
- B. The program to be announced must be civic or community oriented and must be primarily focused toward and be a direct benefit to the age group of the students attending the school in which materials are to be placed or distributed.
- C. Personal materials such as student birthday party invitations are not to be distributed by students or school system personnel and are not the responsibility of the school system.
- D. Materials must be submitted with a completed Distribution of Materials Request Form.
- E. Materials are limited to one page maximum (but may include front and back) and shall not be larger than 8.5" x 11".

- F. All materials proposed for placement on school information tables or participation in the school direct distribution, shall contain the following caveat: “The Talbot County Public Schools neither endorses nor sponsors the organization(s) or activity (ies) contained herein. The views contained herein are those of the author and are not necessarily shared by Talbot County Public Schools. The availability of this material is provided as a community service.”
- G. Materials whose purpose is to solicit donations or announce fundraising activities shall only be accepted from school sanctioned organizations, like PTAs, PTOs, or Booster Clubs.
- H. Materials shall not be accepted from organizations that seek to discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, age, national origin, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or disabling condition.
- I. The Superintendent or designee shall have discretion to reject materials if the content could reasonably be predicted to cause material disruption. The Superintendent or designee shall disapprove for distribution material which:
 - 1. contains profane, vulgar, obscene, lewd, or sexually graphic content;
 - 2. encourages criminal behavior or incites violence;
 - 3. contains mature content that is inappropriate for certain ages;
 - 4. is likely to be disruptive to the classroom, or is contrary to sound educational policy;
 - 5. encourages dishonesty or unethical behavior;
 - 6. is defamatory in nature;
 - 7. interferes with a safe, secure, and healthy learning environment;
 - 8. is disrespectful to school staff, teachers, administrators, students, or other groups;
 - 9. contains confidential information protected by law; or
 - 10. is patently in violation of other school regulations or policy.

The above criteria shall be, uniformly and objectively, applied by the Superintendent or designee in the material approval process and TCPS shall not engage in viewpoint discrimination.

IV. School Direct Distribution

A. Qualifying organizations or agencies shall submit a Distribution of Materials Request Form with a copy of the material which they would like to have considered for distribution, together (in the case of non-profits) with a copy of their tax exempt/non-profit status determination letter from IRS (unless it is already on file with TCPS) at least twenty (20) days prior to the take-home dates. The Superintendent or designee shall approve or disapprove the request within ten (10) days. Materials should be submitted to:

Talbot County Public Schools
12 Magnolia Street

Easton, Maryland 21601

B. In the case of governmental agencies and non-profit organizations whose requests for school take-home distributions are approved, the agency or organization shall distribute sufficient copies of the materials to each individual school at least seven (7) days prior to the scheduled distribution date.

C. Schedule

TCPS will provide designated times during each school year for all schools to make informational materials available to the community.

Submitted to Superintendent's office (on or before)	Approved Materials to School (on or before)	Date of Distribution
July 15	August 15	School Designated "Back to School" Nights
September 15	October 10	Parent Conferences
December 1	January 2	Mid January
February 1	February 21	Parent Conferences

Agencies or organizations which do not meet the approval or distribution date cutoffs or do not abide by the required format, exceed the page maximum or who fail to provide sufficient copies to meet the school's full enrollment, may not have their materials included for distribution.

While TCPS shall attempt to distribute all approved materials in a timely fashion according to its announced schedule, TCPS makes no warranty or representation that it will meet the deadline and assumes no liability for the omission of approved materials, or for any damages occasioned by the non-distribution or untimely distribution of the requested materials, as TCPS is merely undertaking a public service and is receiving no monetary consideration.

The above materials distribution regulation shall serve as the exclusive means of public service communication, and no flyers, posters or handbills, etc., shall be posted or distributed on school property, with the exception of Election Day electioneering permitted by law at those schools, which serve as polling places on Election Day.

TALBOT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS REQUEST FORM

The Board of Education, believing that it is beneficial to the students of Talbot County to be aware of cultural, civic, athletic, and other extra-curricular opportunities that exist in the community independent of the school system, wishes to create a Limited Public Forum for eligible non-profit organizations and governmental agencies to share their information with the school community.

For more on the distribution process, reference TCPS Regulation 11.6-AR or contact the Superintendent’s office at (410) 822-0330

Name of Organization: _____

Contact Person: _____

Email: _____ Date Submitted: _____

Phone Number: _____

Distribution Type: ___ School Information Tables
 ___ Direct Distribution*

** Call 410-822-0330 or visit www.talbotschools.org for more information.*

***Distribution of materials to staff members must meet the requirements set forth in Regulation 11.6-AR.*

Locations to distribute:

All Schools___ Elementary Schools___ Middle Schools___ High Schools___

If you wish to only distribute materials to specific schools, list them here.

___ Copy tax exempt/non profit status determination letter is attached ___ TCPS already has a copy

You may submit your completed form, proposed materials, and 501(c) 3 status determination letter (if applicable) through one of the following:

1. Mail your information to: *Talbot County Public Schools*
12 Magnolia St.
Easton, MD 21601
2. Email to cgould@tcps.k12.md.us.
3. Fax to 410-820-4260, Attn: Superintendent’s Office

*****THIS SECTION FOR USE BY TCPS PERSONNEL*****

___ Approved for school information tables ___ Approved for direct distribution

___ Not approved with Reason: _____

Date approval sent to schools: _____