

# Communication Guidelines

2014/15 School Year







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# Introduction

Poplar Bluff Schools began a formal public relations operation during the 2012/13 school year with the creation of a full-time post responsible for coordinating all district-wide communications.

It is important to note that public relations is not a one-person job in a school system of our size - the largest in Southeast Missouri. As employees in the public sector, we all share the responsibility for being PR-minded and working together to keep our patrons informed.

In this handbook, our public relations protocol will be outlined so that faculty and staff can become more familiar with our various communication tools, and help facilitate our efforts to keep the public aware of all the great happenings in our school district!

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## What's News?

Each school maintains a duty to send announcements out to parents and students to keep them informed about pertinent dates; update changes in handbooks; etc. If you feel that a bigger picture news item taking place is a positive reflection of our school system as a whole or the item would make for a good human interest/feature story that warrants more in depth coverage, please contact the Communications Coordinator while adhering to the best practices outlined under Advanced Notification. The Communications Coordinator reserves the judgment to determine what medium to use in order to reach the desired audience based on data routinely analyzed on website traffic, Facebook insights, Constant Contact unique views and releases the media picks up. Here are a few examples of district-wide news items:

- PBJHS was featured on CNN for their anti-bullying efforts: [www.poplarbluffschools.net/admin/anti-bullying/](http://www.poplarbluffschools.net/admin/anti-bullying/)
- A student received her associate degree via the College Now program before graduating high school: [www.poplarbluffschools.net/schools/pbhs/college-now/](http://www.poplarbluffschools.net/schools/pbhs/college-now/)
- A high school student used his Charlie Classics reading contest winnings to donate books to the school library: [www.poplarbluffschools.net/schools/pbhs/book\\_donation/](http://www.poplarbluffschools.net/schools/pbhs/book_donation/)

# Advanced Notification

With the exception of breaking news, the rule of thumb is to provide **at least** one week advanced notification from the event/activity in order to be considered for coverage.

The Daily American Republic, for instance, holds its newsroom staff meeting to plan out the following week's coverage on Thursday mornings. R-I Central Office personnel also submit the following week's agenda to the superintendent's office on Thursdays. Please be respectful of the planning it takes for a reporter or a photographer to cover an event/activity.

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## Media Advisory

In order for a reporter or photographer to determine the news value of your event/activity, s/he must be provided all the necessary details. When submitting a request for news coverage, please be sure to answer the following questions, which will be referred to throughout the handbook as the four W's:

- **What** event/activity is taking place?
- **Who** is involved in the event/activity?
- **When** is the event/activity taking place?
- **Where** is the event/activity taking place?

**Media Advisory Example>>**

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## **National speaker to conclude Anti-Bullying Week**

**What:** To kick off Anti-Bullying Week at Poplar Bluff Schools, the city of Poplar Bluff will issue an official proclamation. The short school week will end with multiple assemblies at both Poplar Bluff Junior and Senior High led by one of the stars of the critically acclaimed documentary “Bully,” and a leader of the Stand for the Silent movement taking shape at schools across the country. The “Human Heroes” chapter of the national student-led organization was established at Junior and Senior High at the beginning of this school year. To learn more about the recent progress of our anti-bullying efforts, visit: <http://www.poplarbluffschools.net/admin/anti-bullying/>

**Who:** Kirk Smalley of Oklahoma, whose 11-year-old son Ty Field committed suicide in 2010 because of bullying, will speak to our Junior and Senior High students, along with a group being bussed over from Twin Rivers, totaling about 400 attendees each session. In addition, Mayor Ed DeGaris will issue a proclamation on behalf of the city.

**When:** Smalley will speak to high schoolers at 7:30 and 9 a.m., and to Junior High students at 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. Thursday, March 28. The proclamation will be presented to the student presidents of our SFTS chapters at 9:30 a.m. Monday, March 25.

**Where:** Smalley will deliver his speech to high schoolers at Kay Porter Theater and later in the Junior High gym. DeGaris and possibly other public officials will meet with law enforcement officers, school leaders and students at the PBHS central office in B-Building.

**Media Advisory Template>>**

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# Poplar Bluff Public Schools

*Achieving excellence through learning: Every child, every hour, every day.*

*For more information, please contact:*

Contact Person

Job Title

School Name/District Office

Email Address

Telephone Number

[www.poplarbluffschoools.net](http://www.poplarbluffschoools.net)

FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY – Date

## Headline

What:

Who:

When:

Where:

---30---

# eMule


The eMule is the official email newsletter of the school district designed to highlight the most recent activities, events and accomplishments across campus. Typically sent out on Mondays when school is in session, the newsletter reaches thousands of parents, students, alumni, school employees, business leaders, legislators and various other supporters of our school system. If you are not already signed up, simply click on The eMule logo at the bottom of our school homepage, and enter your email address. To have your news item featured in The eMule, please follow these rules:

- All information submitted to The eMule should be less than 100 words, including the write-up and photo cutline or caption (see Write-Up). Information submitted that is longer than 100 words may be returned for editing or edited by the Communications Coordinator. Longer write-ups ought to be posted on your school web page first (see Website), and then will be linked out from the e-newsletter after a couple paragraphs.
- All information to be considered for inclusion in any given edition must be submitted to the Communications Coordinator via email by the close of the workday on the Friday of the previous week.

## Write-Up

Your write-up must always answer the four W's. The cutline should list who is in the photo by their first and last name from left to right (in cases where there are more than several people, a summary such as what grade the students are in or what organization they represent will suffice). A brief headline should follow the proper noun rules of capitalization (see Style Guide: Things).

**First camp for Pom Squad a success**



**KFV: seg plan.**  
**The public: deliv along; Digit: vide; KZIL: Digit; On TV: KAT; lapto**  
**The release plan.**  
**On TV: ran s; rang**  
**KFV: about plan**

The Poplar Bluff High School Pom Squad earned several ribbons for showmanship, team leadership and varying levels of technicality during the National Cheer & Dance Association camp June 10-13 at Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau.

Among the accolades, the Pom Squad brought home an award for most improved performance, the spirit stick and a silver plaque for team dance routine. A total of seven squads from Missouri competed.

"As their coach, I was extremely proud of their work ethic and their dedication to the team," said Varsity Pom Squad Coach Cindy Robertson, a fourth grade teacher at Eugene Field Elementary. "We are looking forward to a new school year and supporting the Mules in every way we can!"

Continue

**Lake Road's goat**



After reading the children's story "Beatrice's Goat," about an impoverished Ugandan girl whose life is transformed by the gift of a goat, Lake Road Elementary School third graders raised funds to purchase a goat for a family in need in Africa. The family will sell the goat's milk to buy school supplies and food.

Pictured [from left] are fundraiser participants: Tim Williams, Matt Wilkerson, Hayley Webb, Quinton Radake, Demareus Winters and Elizabeth Lee.



# Mule Tracks

Mule Tracks is a district-wide calendar that runs along the sidebar of The eMule designated to promote school events, activities and fundraisers intended for the public to participate in. To submit an event for Mule Tracks, please email to the Communications Coordinator a brief headline of the event and a sentence (not a flyer) answering the four W's, and include any necessary contact information. Be sure to submit your item within a month of the event by the close of the workday on the Friday prior to the Monday newsletter in which you desire your info to be considered for inclusion.

**Mule Tracks**

**Lau for Learning**  
The Committee for our Kids' Future will host a fundraising event from 6-8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 25, at the Gamma HealthCare Conference Center. Dinner will be provided by Las Margaritas.

**4th Grade Living Museum**  
An exhibit of the annual Famous Missourians Living Museum will take place from 9:30-10:30 a.m. Friday, Feb. 28, at Oak Grove Elementary School.

**Kindergarten enrollment**  
Enrollment in the Kindergarten Center will run from Monday through Thursday, March 3-6. Click [here](#) for more information.

**Frozen Yogurt**  
The 5th & 5th Grade Center will host a fundraiser from 5-8 p.m. Thursday, March 6, at and 9:00-10:00 a.m. Friday, March 7. Twenty percent of sales will go to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

**School Board Forum**  
Hosted by the Missouri National Education Association and the Missouri State Teachers Association, a School Board Forum for candidates of the upcoming election will begin at 6 p.m. Monday, March 31, at the Kay Porter Theater. Incumbents Alana Robertson and Steve

**Mule Tracks**

**FFA Plant Sale**  
Future Farmers of America will hold their annual plant sale from 7:15 a.m.-3:30 p.m. April 28-May 16 at PBHS. For more information, email FFA Advisor Kathryn Clark at [kathrync Clark@pb.k12.mo.us](mailto:kathrync Clark@pb.k12.mo.us).


**Foundation Golf Tourney**  
The 15th Annual Golf Tournament will take place at noon Friday, May 2, at Ozark Ridge Golf Course. Click [here](#) if you are interested in sponsorship opportunities or participating in the four-person scramble. Proceeds from the event help fund the Poplar Bluff Public School Foundation scholarship program and other educational opportunities.

**Guys and Dolls**  
Guys and Dolls, the PBJHS spring musical, is slated to take place at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, May 9-10, in the Kay Porter Theater.

**ECC Screenings**  
Early Childhood Center screening appointments are currently being scheduled for Tuesday through Thursday, May 13-15. For more information, call 573-785-6803.

**Spring Concert**  
The fifth and sixth grade Honor Choir will hold its annual Spring Concert at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 13, at the 5th &

**Extra, Extra:**




**On Tuesday, Aug. 20, KAIT8** ran a [photo release](#) about music teacher Kristy Weaver throwing the ceremonial first pitch during a Cardinals game. Word is Weaver pitched a strike!

**KFVS12** also ran the [release](#) about Weaver's statewide honor, later mentioning it during the evening news report.

**On Thursday, Aug. 22, the DAR** ran an article headlined: R-I fiscal year ends \$4.3M in black.

**On Friday, Aug. 23, KAIT8** [reported](#) about the library's new hot spot designated for PBJHS students.


**WSIL3** also highlighted the school's new partnership with the public library during the news station's "Class Notes" [segment](#).



# Extra Extra

The Extra Extra section runs along the sidebar of The eMule and is designed to recap the previous week (Monday through Sunday) in external media coverage of the school system, as well as thank our partners in the press for keeping the public informed. In submitting a news item for the Extra Extra section, write a brief sentence that includes the date of publication, the name of the news organization and what the news item is about. Include a link if the news item is available online. Submit the information via email to the Communications Coordinator by the preceding Sunday for consideration of inclusion in Monday's edition of The eMule.

**Extra, Extra:**



**On Monday, Oct. 21, the Southeast Missourian** included [information](#) about our Digital Transformation in its monthly Business Today magazine.

**On Tuesday, Oct. 22, KFVS12** [recognized](#) two of our elementary teachers for running in the Chicago Marathon to raise awareness for autism.

The **DAR** published a photo from our FBLA and DECA students at PBHS attending Cardinals Career Day in St. Louis.

**On Wednesday, Oct. 23, KFVS12** [recognized](#) our September Athletes of the Month, as determined by the Mules Booster Club.

**On Thursday, Oct. 24, KFVS12** [recognized](#) our September Athletes of the Month, as determined by the Mules Booster Club.

# Releases

Press/photo releases of news items are sent out to our media list for potential publication or are meant to garner more in depth coverage from the news organization(s). This is the ultimate goal of all of our communication efforts and marks the conclusion of a press campaign. Press releases are written in AP style (see Style Guide) and include a lead paragraph designed to summarize the article/draw the reader in; a nut `graph that defines what the article is about/why the reader should care; a quote from an educator/student/or industry expert; and any other relevant or unique information about the subject. Please type all releases in a Word document and email it as an attachment in a reasonably timely manner from the event/activity to the Communications Coordinator for possible edits.

As opposed to a press release, a photo release does not include quotes and centers solely around a photo cutline. The purpose of distinguishing the two is strictly to help establish your objective when writing. When submitting a photo release, please email to the Communications Coordinator **one to three** of the photos that best represent the activity/event that has taken place (see Photography 101). Please describe what is taking place in the photo(s) by writing a paragraph or two that answers the four W's.



**Press Release Example>>**

## **Poplar Bluff Public Schools**

*Achieving excellence through learning: Every child, every hour, every day.*

*For more information, please contact:*

Tim Krakowiak

Communications/Marketing Coordinator

Poplar Bluff R-I School District

[timkrakowiak@pb.k12.mo.us](mailto:timkrakowiak@pb.k12.mo.us)

573.785.1021 Ext. 137

[www.poplarbluffschoools.net/news-bureau/](http://www.poplarbluffschoools.net/news-bureau/)

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Chartwells gives PBHS cafeteria \$100k facelift**

POPLAR BLUFF, Mo. (Sept. 5, 2013) - Chartwells School Dining Services has invested \$100,000 at Poplar Bluff High School, transforming the Student Center into the company's flagship cafeteria in the region, according to executives.

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held on Tuesday, Aug. 27, at the Student Center to celebrate the upgrade. Changes include the reconfiguration of the serving area for improved flow and enhanced food display, the addition of the Casa Amigos station featuring Mexican menu items, better lighting and a new paint scheme.

"This is non-tax money and not reserves," explained Paul Stolle, Chartwells resident district manager. "It's a gift from Chartwells because of our longstanding relationship."

In appreciation of the 25-year partnership with the R-I school system, Chartwells included the renovation in its bid proposal approved by the Board of Education during the monthly meeting in March.

---MORE---

Chartwells Regional Vice President Bruce Norman stated that the cafeteria would serve as a “showcase” for other Southeast Missouri schools considering doing business with the food service program.

A sector of the Charlotte, N.C.-based Compass Group, Chartwells provides dining services for over 550 public and private schools nationwide.

###

*Cutline:* Dignitaries from left [not in uniforms] are Steve Sells, school board president; Paul Stolle, food services director; Chris Hon, superintendent; senior Sarah Hicks, student council president; Steve Halter, Greater Poplar Bluff Area Chamber of Commerce president; Scott Murphy, Chartwells district manager; and Bruce Norman, Chartwells regional vice president. In the maroon are the employees in charge of the cafeteria.

For the story online, please visit:

<http://www.poplarbluffschoools.net/admin/100k-facelift/>

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*The Poplar Bluff R-I Public School District is comprised of approximately 5,200 students, 400 professional staff and 300 support staff, and has an operational budget in excess of \$45 million. Our goal, in partnership with parents and community, is to educate all students to their potential, and to inspire them to be lifelong learners who possess the skills and knowledge necessary to be productive members in our changing world.*

CONNECT WITH US:

 Poplar Bluff Public Schools: <http://www.poplarbluffschoools.net>

 The eMule weekly newsletter: <http://goo.gl/8DTMB>

 The Digital Transformation: <http://transform.poplarbluffschoools.net>

 Find Us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pbschools>

 Follow Us on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/pbschools>



**Photo**



**Release Example>>**

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## **Earth Month sponsored activities at O’Neal**

POPLAR BLUFF, Mo. (May 7, 2014) - O’Neal Elementary School was granted \$250 from the Butler County Soil and Water Conservation District, in collaboration with the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, to participate in various activities for Earth Month.

Ashley Robertson’s fourth grade library students partook in an edible soil exercise on Thursday, April 24, using sweets to represent the different horizons: bedrock, subsoil and topsoil. NRCS Soil Conservation Technician Terry Frazier and SWCD Program Specialist Cathy Mansbridge facilitated the activity.

###

*Cutline 1:* Ian Martinez digs his mixture of M&M’s, Oreos and chocolate pudding, if his “topsoil” mustache is any indicator.

*Cutline 2:* Luxstin White retrieves a welcomed gummy worm from her dessert concoction.

For the story online, please visit: <http://www.poplarbluffschoools.net/schools/oneal/earth-month/>

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**Press/Photo Release Template>>**

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## **Poplar Bluff Public Schools**

*Achieving excellence through learning: Every child, every hour, every day.*

*For more information, please contact:*

Contact Person

Job Title

School Name/District Office

Email Address

Telephone Number

[www.poplarbluffschoools.net](http://www.poplarbluffschoools.net)

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Headline**

CITY, State. (Date) –

If there is more than one page use:

---MORE---

###

(separates conclusion of article from outline)

*Cutline:* (Photo caption).

---30---

(indicates Press Release is finished)

Boilerplate:



*The Poplar Bluff R-I Public School District is comprised of approximately 5,200 students, 400 professional staff and 300 support staff, and has an operational budget in excess of \$45 million. Our goal, in partnership with parents and community, is to educate all students to their potential, and to inspire them to be lifelong learners who possess the skills and knowledge necessary to be productive members in our changing world.*

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 The eMule weekly newsletter: <http://goo.gl/8DTMB>

 The Digital Transformation: <http://transform.poplarbluffschoools.net>

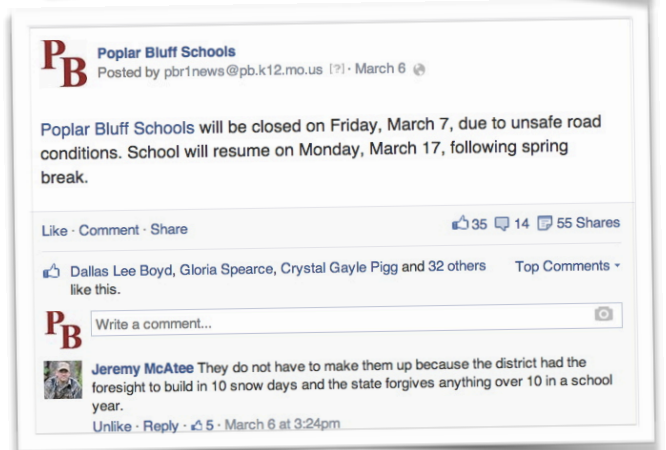
 Find Us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pbschools>

 Follow Us on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/pbschools>

# Social Media

Each school/organization is invited to start up a single Facebook and/or Twitter account with a school building designee/group member appointed to manage the social network. So the district always maintains control over access, schools that create/have created accounts are required to add the Communications Coordinator as a Facebook page manager as well as submit via email Twitter login and password information to the Communications Coordinator. It is then the Communications Coordinator's responsibility to keep this data on file in an event that changes happen (i.e. the creator of the page retires). We do not want to find ourselves in a situation in which we have inaccessible social media accounts floating around the Internet, creating confusion for our brand. Please remember, official social networks of a school are the property of the district, they are not meant to serve as personal pages.

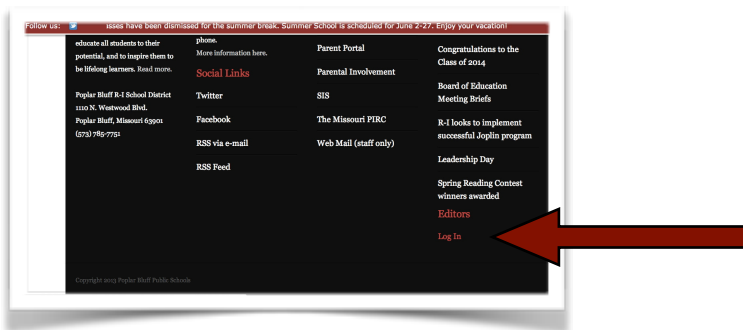
**Tip:** Don't forget to tag @pbschools on Twitter and @Poplar Bluff Schools on Facebook, so we can retweet/share your status!



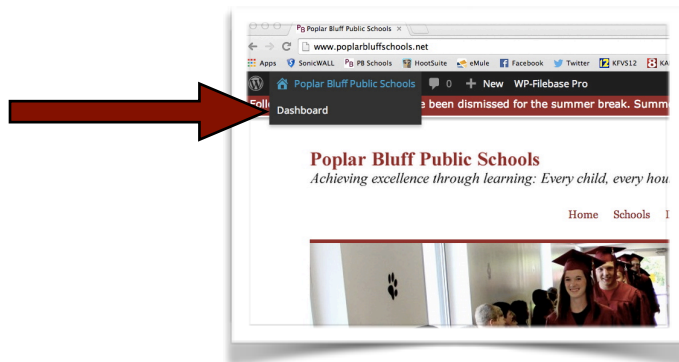
# Website

Each school has its own page on our district website, [www.poplarbluffschools.net](http://www.poplarbluffschools.net), and every building principal or his/her designee (i.e. the computer lab instructor) has been granted a WordPress login and the ability to post. When there is enough of a need because of turnover to train new website contributors (typically annually), our webmaster holds a workshop in the Administrative Building computer lab. Below are the steps on how to make a website post (Note - this section pertains to editors only):

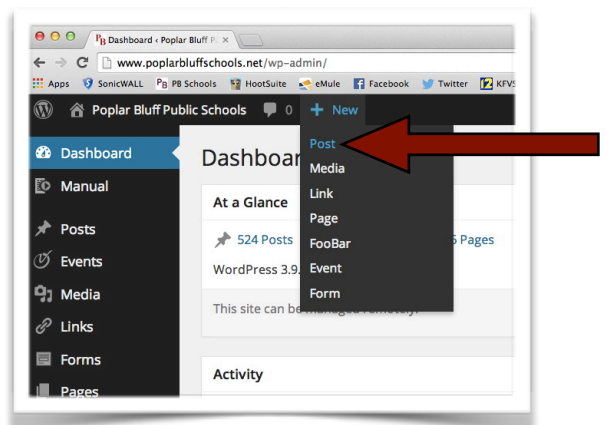
➤ Click 'Log In' on the bottom right corner of our school homepage under 'Editors.'



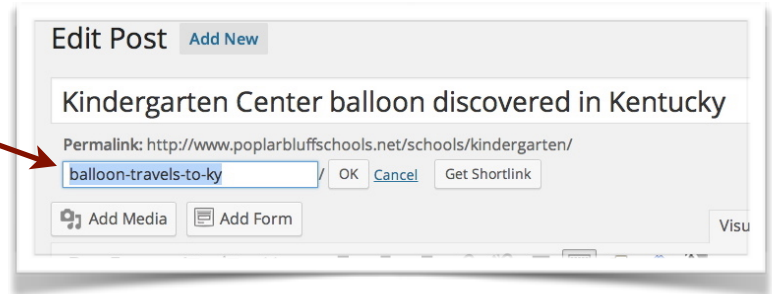
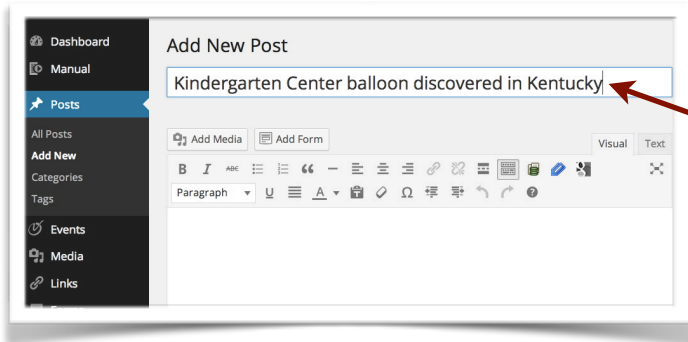
➤ Click 'Dashboard' in the drop bar menu by hovering the mouse over the image of the house next to 'Poplar Bluff Public Schools' in the top left corner of the page.



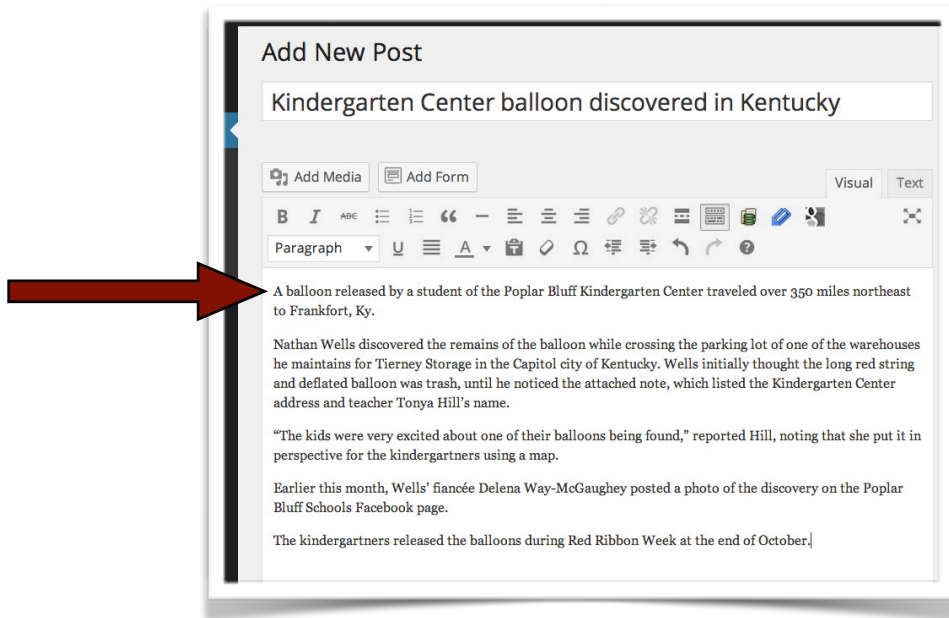
➤ Click 'Post' in the drop bar menu by hovering over the word 'New' at the top of the page.



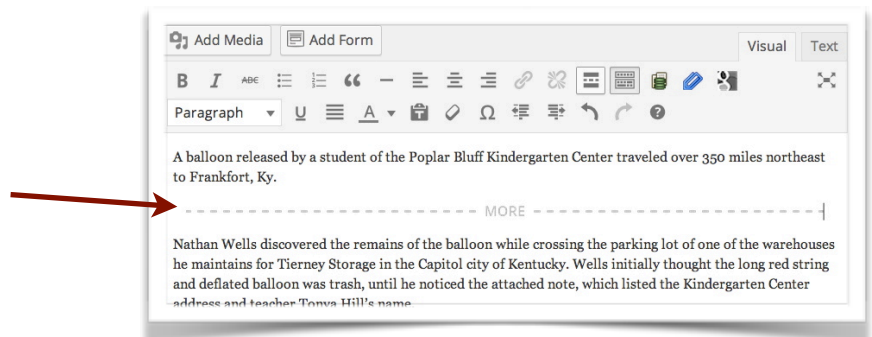
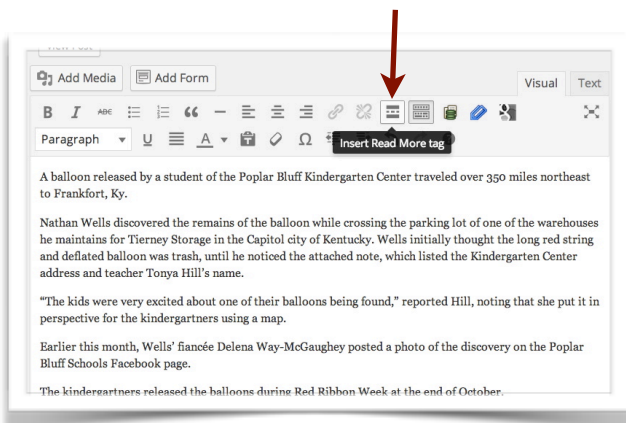
Give the article a headline using the proper noun rules in the top box where it says 'Enter title here.' WordPress will automatically form a 'permalink' from your headline, but check it to make sure it is not too long.



Write your article in the large text box.

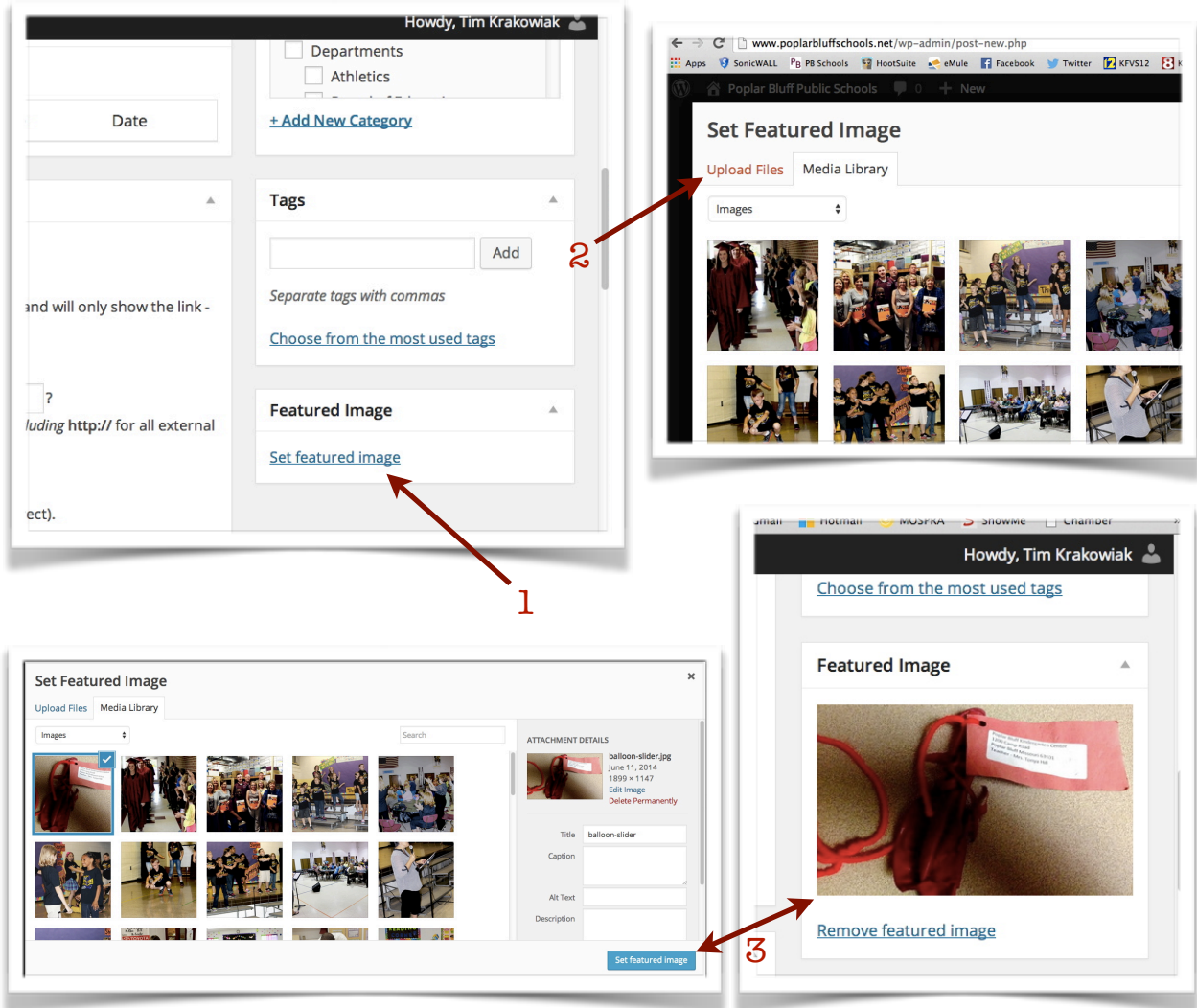


Use the 'More' button to define when to break the article on the homepage. One sentence is usually plenty. Make sure it's enough information to stand alone.





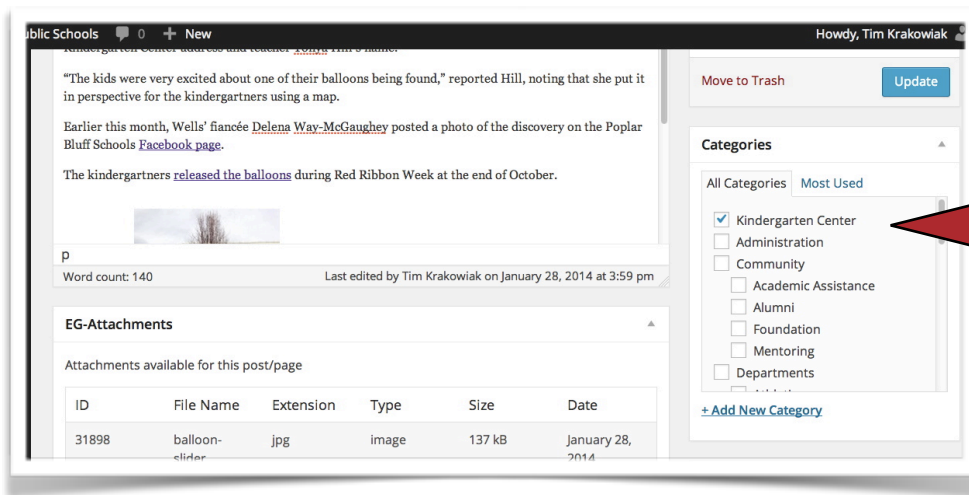
➤ Add a photo by clicking 'Set Featured Image' on the bottom of the right sidebar. Hit 'Upload Files' and drag and drop your photo (must be a horizontal photo that is between 630-960 pixels wide) where prompted. Click 'Set Featured Image.'



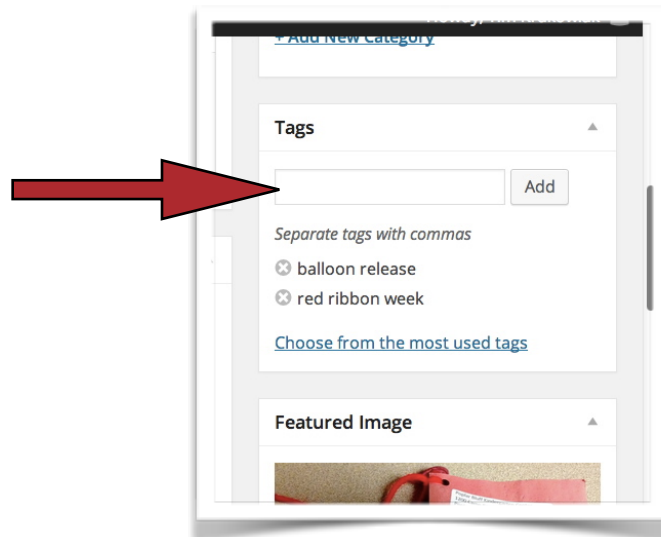
➤ To create an image gallery, click 'Add Media' under the headline box. Click 'Create Gallery' at the top left. Click 'Upload Files' under 'Create Gallery' and drag and drop your files where prompted. Click 'Create A New Gallery' along the bottom left, then click 'Insert Gallery.'

➤ To add a document, click 'Add Media,' click 'Upload Files,' drag and drop your **PDF** and click 'Insert Into Post.' Make sure you have given the file a good name that includes for example the date, your school, department and subject. Don't use spaces, make sure it's not too long, type in lowercase and include the file extension: .pdf

➤ Under the 'Categories' box along the right side, check off the section in which you would like your article to appear on the school website.



Under the 'Tags' box along the side, add a couple keywords to help people find your articles if they were to search for it, or click 'Choose from the most used tags.' Use lowercase text with no punctuation.



When you're done, click 'Save Draft,' then click 'Preview' to see how your item will appear on the website.





✎ Make any necessary adjustments/corrections, and when you're happy with it, click 'Submit for Review.'

If you experience technical issues after you've gone through the above steps, please contact our webmaster Julie Wolpers by emailing [julie.wolpers@gmail.com](mailto:julie.wolpers@gmail.com), or call/text 573-225-1460.

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## Channel 19

Channel 19 is a public access channel on city cable that the school uses in partnership with the University of Missouri Extension to promote community functions. To submit a school-wide event such as enrollment information to be considered for airing, please write a sentence or two in a document answering the four W's and submit an email with the attachment to the Communications Coordinator within a month of the date. To be legible on the television screen, the blurb must be no longer than nine lines at 24 characters per line (including spaces between words).

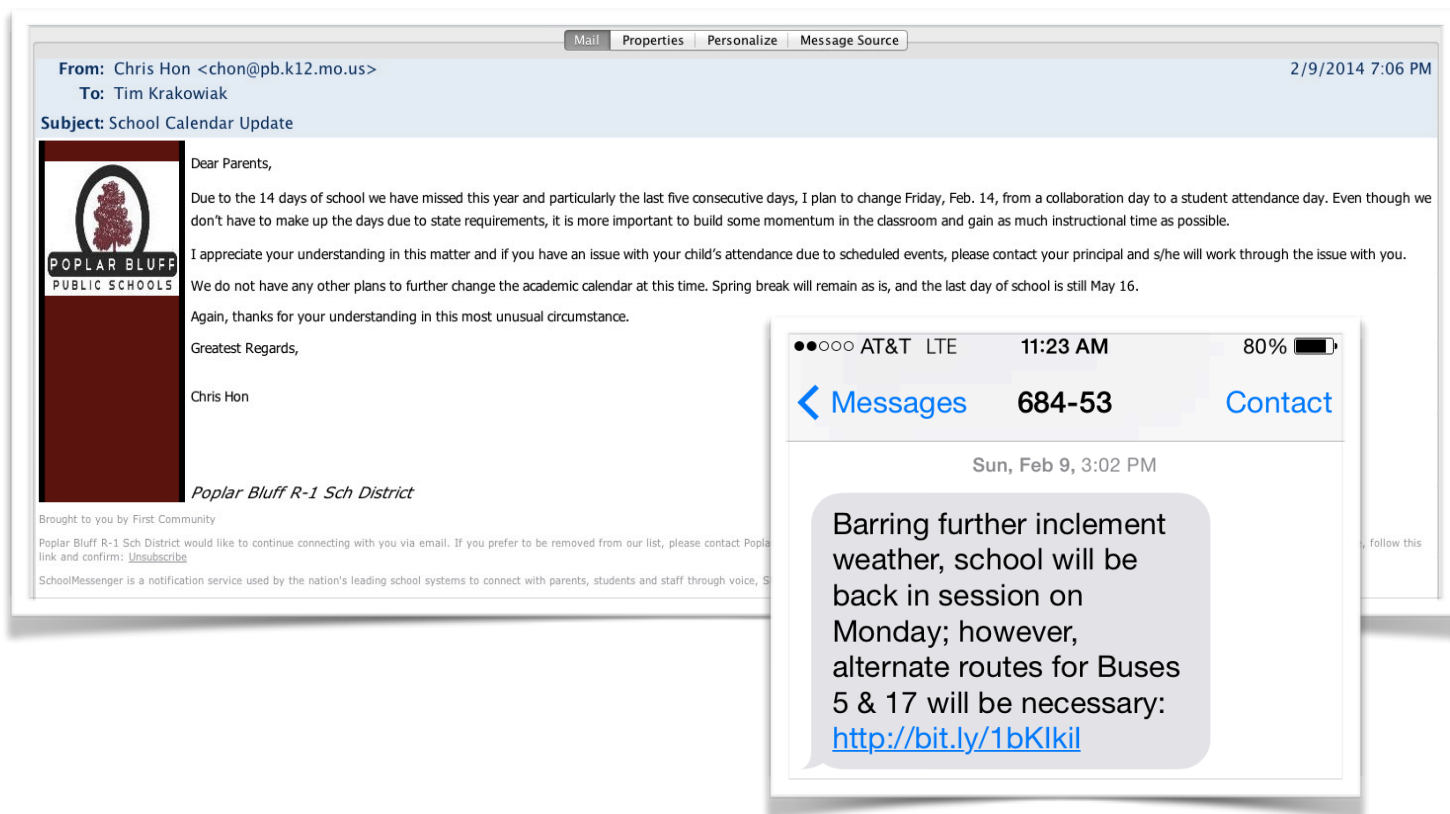


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## School Messenger

SchoolMessenger is a service the school subscribes to in order to communicate with parents via email, phone call and text. Each school principal or his/her designee (i.e. the building secretary) has the ability to utilize the service. Here are the 10 steps:

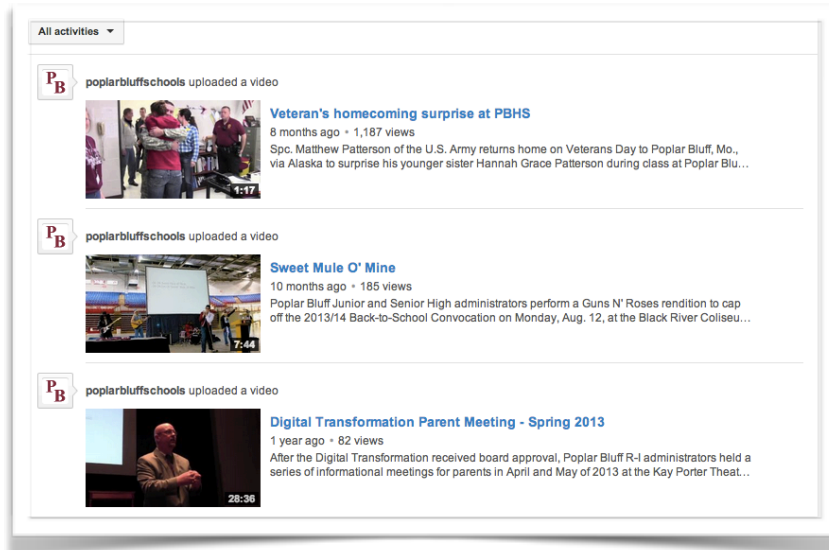
1. Go to <https://asp.schoolmessenger.com/poplarbluff/index.php> and enter your login information.
2. Click 'New Broadcast' on the right in red.
3. Enter a subject for purposes of filing the broadcast.
4. Select broadcast type from the drop bar menu – text only, email only or general – which also includes a voice message.
5. Select recipients, which should only include the parents of students from your school building, not from the entire school district (the superintendent or his/her designee i.e. the Communications Coordinator is responsible for speaking on behalf of the entire district).
6. Add Phone: The length of a typical message should be about **30-45 seconds** long as many answering machines and voicemail systems allow only 60 seconds of recording time.
7. Add Email: Enter a subject that summarizes the purpose of the message. Enter a message in the body. Hit 'Preview Email' to make sure there are no typos.
8. Add SMS: Write a text message. Can only be 160 characters. Be sure to identify the school in your sentence to avoid confusion for parents of students in multiple schools who may be signed up to receive more than one alert.
9. Click 'Continue' once you're satisfied with your message content.
10. Click 'Send Now' or 'Schedule' the broadcast to go out at a later time.



If you have trouble using SchoolMessenger, please contact their 24/7 help desk by calling 888-527-5225.

# YouTube

If you have a district-wide video that you would like to be considered for uploading onto Poplar Bluff Schools' official YouTube, send the file on a flash drive or a CD to the Communications Coordinator via interoffice mail, or email (but please be mindful of the limited space on our server). Subscribe to the R-I channel by visiting: [www.youtube.com/user/poplarbluffschoo](http://www.youtube.com/user/poplarbluffschoo).



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## Digital Billboards

The principals at the schools that have digital billboards (i.e. Senior High) maintain control over the messages promoted along the highways. Please contact the building principal or his/her secretary if you have a special request for your item to be featured.



# Style Guide

The official publishing style for the Poplar Bluff Schools website, eMule and other district publications is the Associated Press style – the same style used in the news business (this better ensures our articles will be picked up). What follows are 10 percent of the rules that cover 90 percent of style questions. For questions not answered below, please refer to The Associated Press Stylebook, if you wish to limit editing/preserve the appearance of your submission. (Note: This section is only intended to serve as a reference).

## People

- Capitalize formal titles where they appear before names (The message was sent to President Vicente Fox).
- Lowercase titles when they follow a name or stand alone (Bashar Assad, the Syrian president, fired his foreign minister).
- Lowercase occupational or descriptive titles before or after a name (The story was written by reporter Donna Farley. The report came from coach Vic Clark).
- Refer to adults in news reports by first name and family name the first time they appear in the story (Michelle Obama) and by family name only on later references (Obama).
- Children 17 or younger are usually referred to by both names on first reference and first name only on later references.
- To avoid confusing two people with the same family name, such as husband and wife or mother and son, use both names on later references. A story mentioning Dick Cheney and Lynne Cheney should usually refer to them as “Dick Cheney” and “Lynne Cheney” even after they are introduced if there’s any chance of confusion. Sometimes a title can be repeated to make the distinction (Dick Cheney could be “former Vice President Cheney” or “the former vice president” on later references). Only rarely, in some feature stories, will you want to refer to adults by given name on later references.
- Do not use courtesy titles (Mr., Mrs., Miss). So, instead of using Mrs. Taylor, you would use Principal Jennifer Taylor or Jennifer Taylor, principal. After that you would just use Taylor to refer back to her.
- Use Dr. in the first reference for someone who is a medical doctor. You may use Dr. for someone who holds another degree (education, chemistry, historian, etc.) if it is clear in the story that the person is not a medical doctor. Example: You would say Dr. Amy Jackson on first reference and then just Jackson after that.
- Abbreviate military and police titles before names according to a standard reference list such as the one in the AP Stylebook. Don’t abbreviate titles when they stand alone or follow a name (Maj. Greg Crites; the general). Exceptions are allowed for widely used initialisms (The Apple CEO was honored at dawn).

## Places

- Most stylebooks will have a list of cities that are assumed to be understood without having the name of the state (Boston, New York, Los Angeles) or country (London, Cairo) attached. Follow those guidelines with the usual exceptions for common sense if needed (Books that are popular in London, Ontario, might not be popular in London, England).
- Do not abbreviate the names of states when they stand alone. Abbreviate state names of six or more letters only, and only when they are used with a city or country (Roswell, N.M.; Fairfax County, Va.) Never abbreviate Alaska or Hawaii.
- Do not abbreviate such designations as "street" when they stand alone. Only three of these are abbreviated – "street," "avenue" and "boulevard" – and they are only abbreviated when they appear with a numbered address (Smith lives at 300 Westwood Ave.) Do not abbreviate "south" or "north" indicating a part of a road unless it appears with an address (South Eighth Street; 221 S. Eighth St.; 221 Abbey Road).

## Things

- Capitalize proper nouns; lowercase common nouns. Capitalize trademarks (I drank a Pepsi) or use a common noun as a substitute (I sipped a soft drink).
- Use abbreviations on first reference only if they are widely known (CIA agents helped overthrow the prime minister of Iran. The NASCAR dad has replaced the soccer mom as a political cliché). Otherwise spell out the names of agencies on first reference (The U.S. Agency for International Development; USAID). If an abbreviation would be confusing, use a common-noun substitute (The State Law and Order Restoration Council; the council or the junta).
- Generally, don't abbreviate units of measure (pounds, miles, hours, etc.)

## Time

- Use only the day of the week for events within a week of publication (The summit ended Monday. The planners will meet Thursday).
- Use "last" or "next" only if needed for clarity (The summit ended Monday, and the negotiators will meet again next Monday).
- Never abbreviate a day of the week.
- Use "today" to refer to the day of publication or broadcast only. Do not use "yesterday" or "tomorrow" except in direct quotes.
- Use month and day to refer to events happening a week or more before or after publication. Use cardinal numbers, not ordinal numbers, for dates (The summit began July 11. The seminar will be held March 3).
- Don't use the year unless the year is more than a year before or after publication (Martin Luther King was killed April 4, 1968).
- Do not abbreviate a month unless it has a date (January; Jan. 1). Do not abbreviate months of less than six letters (June; June 29, 1941).
- Never use st, rd, nd, et cetera after dates. Dates should look like Oct. 1 not Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Use lowercase "a.m." and "p.m." to indicate morning, afternoon and night. Use "noon" and midnight rather than the unclear "12 a.m." or the redundant

- “12 noon.” Always use figures for time, in this form: 8 a.m., 10:30 p.m., 1:45 a.m.)
- Follow time-date-place order (Martial law was declared at noon Friday in Jesse Hall. Trials of collaborators will begin at 2 p.m. Oct. 14 in Mexico, Mo.)

## Numbers

The basic rule: Spell out numbers under 10. Use figures for 10 and above. This includes all uses of the number unless it is a clear exception (A student who receives an award would get first place not 1<sup>st</sup> place if the placement is under 10. If the number used is over 10, it would be 10<sup>th</sup> place). The main exceptions:

- Spell out any number, except a year, that begins a sentence (Twelve students attended. 1933 was a bad year).
- Use figures for dates, ages, times, addresses and percentages.
- For most numbers of a million or more, use this form, rounded off to no more than two decimal places: 1.45 million, the \$49.1 million budget. If the exact number is important, write it out: He received 1,253,667 votes to 988,401 for his opponent.
- Spell out numbers used as figures of speech (Thanks a million).
- Spell out fractions when they stand alone (use one-half cup of flour). Otherwise write them as mixed fractions (1 ½ cups of flour) or decimals (1.5 liters of water). Generally, use a 0 to precede a decimal smaller than zero (0.75 kilograms). And while you’re at it, convert metric measurements to English ones.

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# Photography 101

Photographing of events/activities is important in telling our schools’ story, especially with our photo-centric website, however, what we do with the photo is of even greater importance. There are many talented photographers in our school system. Each school administrator is encouraged to assign a photographer on staff for when the Communications Coordinator is unavailable to take photos with the district camera during an event/activity. If a professional camera is not an option, smart phone photos suffice for our purposes in terms of resolution.

## **P<sub>B</sub> Follow the light**

- ✓ identify your light source before you take the photo
- ✓ try to control what light you have
- ✓ try to keep light at your back

## **P<sub>B</sub> Composition is key**

- ✓ always be mindful of the background of the photo
- ✓ use the environment to tell a story
- ✓ fill the frame

## **P<sub>B</sub> Use creative angles**

- ✓ get at eye level with your subject, even if that means kneeling down



- ✓step on a ladder to gain a wider perspective
- ✓remember, your subject matter doesn't always have to be perfectly centered

**P<sub>B</sub> Timing is everything**

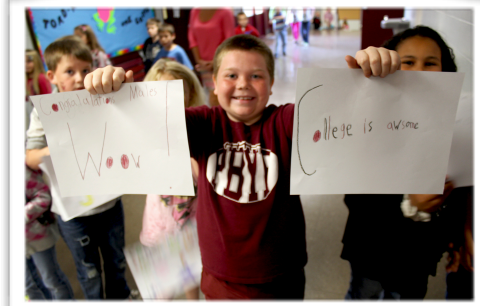
- ✓have your camera set and ready to go
- ✓anticipate what is going to happen, and position yourself accordingly

**P<sub>B</sub> Edit, but don't over edit**

- ✓filters are great
- ✓filters can destroy your photo

**P<sub>B</sub> Take two**

- ✓if it's a posed portrait, always take two shots in case someone blinks



## **Photo Consent**

Parents/guardians have the right to opt out of having photos of their student(s) used for our school public relations purposes, as indicated in the student handbook: [www.poplarbluffschoools.net/photo-consent/](http://www.poplarbluffschoools.net/photo-consent/) Before posting images anywhere of students participating in classroom activities, you must check in with your building secretary to assure s/he is not on the non-consent list.

## **Media Services Handbook**

For school district communications policy information, please visit: [www.poplarbluffschoools.net/departments/media-center/tech-handbook/](http://www.poplarbluffschoools.net/departments/media-center/tech-handbook/)

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For any other questions related to district communication or for media inquiries, please contact Tim Krakowiak, communications coordinator:

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