

Tip Sheet
Governor's Press Conference
Colorado State Capitol, Old Supreme Court Chamber
February 19, 2010

These tips are intended to help you prepare for a successful press conference.
Each student attending should receive a copy.

Rules & Etiquette:

1. Dress in business attire: slacks with collared shirts and skirts with non-revealing tops; no jeans.
2. Turn off cell phones.
3. No food or drinks are allowed in the Old Supreme Court Chamber.
4. Stand when the governor enters the room.
5. Photographers are free to move around the chambers during the conference, but avoid getting between the governor and the student to whom he is speaking.
6. You should be familiar with education issues and other hot topics as well as whether the governor has dealt with those issues prior to the press conference.
7. Raise your hand to ask a question. When the governor calls on you, stand up, tell him your name and what school you are from, and then ask your question. Speak loudly so everyone can hear your question. Once your question is asked you may sit down so you can take notes.
8. Only students may ask questions.

Posing Questions at a Press Conference *(from Poynter.org)*

1. Prepare your questions in advance.
2. Ask open-ended questions. Questions that start with how, why or what, or encourage an explanation have a better chance to provoke a complete response.
3. One question at a time. Don't combine two or more questions.
4. Listen to all questions and their answers. You may not get the chance to ask your question and may have to write from the answers given to other reporters.

Press Conference Writing Tips

Questions reporters ask at a press conference are often more important than the prepared statement the speaker makes. Those answers are an important part of the story.

The following are pieces of information that every press conference story should answer:

1. The person who conducted the interview.
2. The reason for the press conference and background.
3. Highlights of the news, including responses to the questions.
4. Location.

The answers are incorporated into the story but without reference to the question. So, "When asked about ..." or "In response to a question ..." should be avoided.

Source: Carole Rich, University of Alaska, Anchorage

What to Bring

1. Your prepared questions. Outside research should be limited to becoming familiar with issues so you can prepare your questions; we want everyone to write with the same information – that gathered at the press conference.
2. Laptop computer with power cord and power strip. It is acceptable to write stories by hand if you prefer.
3. CD to burn your story to. If you don't bring a CD, please write by hand.
4. Note paper and pens/pencils.
5. Still camera
6. Video equipment as well as microphones for video teams. Lighting in the Old Supreme Court Chambers will be behind the governor so you may want to bring lights.