

Purpose

To prescribe how the Board and individual Board members communicate with the public and employees.

Definitions

Social Media – Any online or internet-based platform that allows interactive communication between persons or entities on social networks, blogs, websites, application software, internet forums, wikis, and the like.

Policy Statement

The Board believes that open communication is essential for the effective operation of the school system. The Board will ensure that its members have knowledge of the communications directed to it from the public and the employees. Both the Board and individual Board members have a responsibility to communicate effectively and honestly with the public. Individual Board members have no authority except when participating in a legally convened meeting of the Board or vested in special authority by Board action.

Board Communication with the Public

All written communication received by the system addressed to the Board will be delivered to the President and distributed to all Board members. The President of the Board will acknowledge appropriate communication and inform all Board members.

All communications, either written or oral, received by any Board member concerning personnel, students, or other school related matters, shall either be immediately disregarded or referred to the superintendent.

The Board delegates authority to speak on behalf of the Board to the Board President, and whenever possible, questions from the press should be referred to and handled by the President after consultation with the Superintendent.

When communicating to the public, Board members should adhere to the following standards:

- A. Board members are expected to maintain civility and decorum at all times, including when interacting online.
- B. When posting items on social media or speaking to the press, a Board member must clarify that the Board member is speaking as an individual and not as an official Board spokesperson.
- C. To avoid potential violations of the Open Meetings Act, Board members should not deliberate Board business on social media, or other media platforms.
- D. Board members shall not disclose information regarding quasi-judicial matters pending before the Board.
- E. Board members shall not disseminate content generated by the Board or the school system that the Board or the school system has not already released to the public.
- F. Board members shall avoid posting information that has not been verified and/or made public by the Board or the school system.
- G. Information considered confidential by law, or confidential information discussed in administrative or closed session, shall not be disclosed by Board members.

Board Communication to Employees

Board communications, policies, and directives shall be communicated to the superintendent. The superintendent will take action as appropriate to keep employees informed of the Board's communications, policies, and directives.

Employee Communication to the Board

All official communications or reports to the Board or to any subcommittees from principals, directors, supervisors, teachers or other staff members will be submitted to the Board through the superintendent who may require other employees to assist in the dissemination of information to the Board.

Communication from employees to the Board and individual Board members regarding policy, practice, and procedure is encouraged.

Communication from employees to the Board or individual Board members concerning any other issue is permitted unless such communication involves issues, which may require a Board member's recusal from any appeal to the Board. Inappropriate communications include but are not limited to matters, which involve specific employee, and student matters that may come to the Board on appeal.

Board members and employees are both responsible for identifying inappropriate communication. Board members and employees are responsible for restricting communications with employees to permissible topics and terminating inappropriate communication.

Visit to Schools

Board members are encouraged to visit schools. Individual Board members interested in visiting schools, classrooms, or offices will make arrangements for visitations through the superintendent and/or the school principal. Upon arrival, Board members are required to register their presence in the main office in accordance with the procedures required for all visitors. Such visits will be regarded as expressions of interest in school affairs and not as visits for supervisory or administrative purposes.

Social Interaction

It is expected that when Board members and staff meet at social events and other functions, they may informally discuss educational issues of mutual interest, except that such discussions may not involve a quorum of the Board. Nothing in this policy limits social interaction between employees and Board members.

Legal Reference			
Policy History	Adopted	Policy History	Revised – May 10, 2005, 1 st Reading June 14, 2005, 2 nd Reading May 14, 2013, 1 st Reading June 11, 2013, 2 nd Reading July 10, 2014, 1 st Reading August 12, 2014, 2 nd Reading May 9, 2017, 1 st Reading June 13, 2017, 2 nd Reading February 8, 2022, 1 st Reading March 8, 2022, 2 nd Reading