



Responsible Office: Office of the Board of Trustees & Superintendent

BOARD POLICY 9052

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS FOR THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

PURPOSE

The Board commits itself and its members to ethical, professional, and lawful conduct, regarding communication and interaction with the media, the public, other Trustees, and with Washoe County School District ("District") staff. Trustees shall adhere to the following protocols when functioning as an elected Trustee and when engaging in communications regarding District business.

POLICY

1. As an elected Trustee for the District, mutual respect for each other as elected officials and the work of our employees is a priority. Trustees shall adhere to the following guidelines when visiting individual schools or school/District employees.
 - a. Respect fellow Trustees by not visiting schools outside of the Trustee's District. If a Trustee is invited by the principal or school personnel, he/she should attempt to communicate with the fellow Trustee.
 - b. Trustees shall respect the work that the administrative, licensed and support staff must complete on a daily basis in order to increase student achievement and meet the goals identified in the Strategic Goals. Trustees shall call before visiting a school in their District. If the principal or administrative staff is not available, Trustees shall ask to schedule a time for a visit.
 - c. If the principal or administrative team members are not available or say that this is not a good time, Trustees shall respect their decision and ask to schedule a better time. Trustees shall abstain from self-monitoring District operations and contact the Superintendent or his/her designee to address concerns or complaints.
 - d. If a Trustee is in a building, he/she shall be respectful of staffs' time and work. Trustees shall refrain from extended conversation that may be preventing staff from engaging in their work. If a lengthy conversation is needed, Trustees shall set up a time with the Superintendent for a meeting or phone call to address specific concerns or issues.

- e. Trustees should be aware of comments or behaviors that could result in harassment complaints or potential lawsuits. When dealing with employees, appropriate language and behavior shall be used by Trustees. Opportunities for training in personnel harassment shall be provided to Trustees by the District.
 - f. Trustees shall not share information that is in the planning stages with school staff. Trustees shall not divulge confidential information with anyone.
 - g. If Trustees have ideas that can help with attaining Strategic Goals or improving work in the District, they shall discuss them with the Superintendent and refrain from sharing them with other District employees.
 - h. Trustees shall refrain from network posts, video streaming, and posting pictures of students, opinions regarding issues still under Board deliberation, or other statements that may be socially or politically sensitive and are typically received as coming from the District and the full Board.
 - i. In the case of school visitation or visitation of a faculty or staff, Board members:
 - i. Shall only visit school sites during school hours after making an appointment in advance with the school Principal. In most cases, the school should be given 24-hour notice prior to a visit during school hours.
 - ii. May visit school sites to attend any and all before- or after-school events and performances at their discretion.
 - iii. Shall make an appointment in advance to meet with District staff.
 - iv. Who believe an emergency warrants a more immediate meeting or visit shall first clear the visit with the Superintendent.
 - v. Who are parents/guardians of a student attending a school shall not be restricted by these guidelines, but shall follow school processes required by all other community members regarding school appointments and visits. The Board member shall endeavor to represent themselves only in their parental role for such visits and meetings and not as a Board member.
2. The Board President is generally the spokesperson for the Board regarding decisions made by the Board and can also determine who is best to speak for the Board in any given situation. The Superintendent is the primary spokesperson for the District. All Board members are encouraged to assist with District

communication in the community and the Trustees agree that public presentations will accurately and fairly reflect Board decisions and process.

3. Board members shall respect relationships with other members of the Board by:
 - a. Recognizing the integrity of predecessors and associates and the merit of their work.
 - b. Refusing to make statements or promises regarding voting on any matter that should properly come before the Board as a whole.
 - c. Respecting the right of others to their opinions and, while striving for consensus, supporting the majority rule principle.
4. If any Board member testifies before any public or legislative body he/she will first state the Board's position before their own. Trustees shall inform the Superintendent of any contacts made with Legislators if regarding any District issue. Regarding legislation on which the Board has not taken a position, the Superintendent will keep the Board informed of the District's response. Board members will inform colleagues and the Superintendent of their testimony at legislative hearings.
5. Board members shall meet responsibilities to the community by engaging in proactive and on-going dialogue with the community. This shall be achieved by:
 - a. Structured and intentional coordination of Board members to serve on or attend meetings and events held by external stakeholders throughout the District.
 - b. Expansion of community committee service should be planned during a Board work session at least annually. Board members shall report briefly on relevant and significant issues raised by external entities during a scheduled time at each Board meeting.
 - c. Seeking to involve the community in the schools and the educational process.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. Through its governing policies, Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Core Beliefs, the Board of Trustees strives to eliminate the achievement gap by ensuring every student is challenged academically.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES & ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

1. This policy reflects the goals of the District's Strategic Plan and aligns and complies with the governing documents of the District, to include:
 - a. Board Policy 9050, Board of Trustees' Governing Mission
 - b. Board Policy 9051, Board Conduct, Ethics and Operational Protocols

REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision	Modification
10/25/2016	1.0	Adopted as new policy