



Responsible Office: Office of Communications & Community Engagement

BOARD POLICY 1160

COMMUNICATIONS, COMMUNITY RELATIONS, AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

PURPOSE

The Board of Trustees (“Board”), which acts as an agent of the people of Washoe County, recognizes the need of a planned, systematic and effective two-way process of communication with all employees, parents/guardians, students and the community. In discharging this obligation, all techniques and media shall be selectively utilized to communicate information relating to the plans, programs, challenges and operations of the Washoe County School District (“District”). In addition, plans shall be implemented to actively engage the District’s internal and external audiences, and whenever appropriate, to involve them in the decision-making process and to seek their input.

POLICY

1. Governing Principles
 - a. The Board, Superintendent, and District faculty and staff shall make every effort to promote an authentic spirit of cooperation between the District, other local governments, and the community and encourage the sharing of responsibility for the quality of education. Each District employee has a responsibility for improving communications between the schools and the community.
2. Governing Practices
 - a. An atmosphere shall be maintained which makes two-way communication between the Board, administration, faculty and staff, parents/guardians, students, and the community a vital force in the continuing improvement of the District. Definite steps shall be taken to maintain effective and authentic communications within the District, fostering an atmosphere of mutual purpose.
 - b. Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees encourages attendance by all members of the community at meetings of the Board of Trustees and their committees. Opportunities for public comment shall be available at all such publicly posted meetings. The District complies with Nevada’s Open Meeting Law, to include public posting of such meetings.

- c. Family Engagement. The Board encourages parents/guardians to become actively involved in the Board's work, to monitor progress in implementing the District's strategic plan, and to improve communications with parents/guardians. The District supports the establishment of parent-teacher groups at each school to promote family engagement in school activities.
- d. Students. The Board values the input of students throughout the District and encourages student involvement. Structures will be implemented and maintained to integrate and solicit the opinions and advice of students in order to strengthen the learning environment.
- e. Community Engagement. The District shall maintain channels of communication so that all segments of the community are informed of policies, programs, and goals of the District. To achieve these goals, working with and supported by District staff, principals will be encouraged to assume a leadership role in coordinating community groups to make their schools the center of neighborhood life. In concert, the District shall endeavor to involve the total community in all facets of the District's operations.
 - i. A continuing effort shall be made to obtain input from the community about the District, its schools and programs. The District values constructive suggestions regarding its operations, policies and procedures. Some of the ways this input will be obtained include, but are not limited to, town hall meetings, surveys, and social media.
 - ii. Because business and industry rely upon the public schools to prepare young people for responsible positions in the business community, the District shall maintain communication and cooperation with representatives of the business and industry communities. This includes, but is not limited to, the District's high school signature academies and various internship and work experience opportunities.
 - iii. The Board, central administration, and individual schools shall maintain a cooperative working relationship with service agencies in the community committed to the welfare of young people to ensure that individual needs of students are met. The District is committed to partnering with those agencies to reach and provide service to the underserved populations in Washoe County.
- f. Access to Programs, Services, and Activities

- i. The District shall take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with applicants, participants, and members of the public with limited English proficiency and/or disabilities are as effective as communications with others.
 - ii. The District shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination unless the District can demonstrate that making the modifications would present an undue financial burden and/or fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.
- g. To ensure a unified and consistent public identity, the District shall establish and maintain an official logo to be used on all communications representing the Board and/or the District, to include print, television, electronic, and internet applications. Logo use and graphic standards shall be maintained and made available to staff on the District's website.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. Through this policy the District seeks to:
 - a. Increase community support and political capital.
 - b. Ensure access to the programs, activities and services of the district to all members of the community.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES & ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

1. This policy reflects the goals of the District's Strategic Plan and aligns/complies with the governing documents of the District, to include:
 - a. Board Policy 1140, Distribution and Display of Information and Materials to Students and Staff, and the accompanying Administrative Regulation
 - b. Board Policy 1310, Political Activity in Schools, and the accompanying Administrative Regulation
 - c. Board Policy 1505, Visitors to District Property, and the accompanying Administrative Regulation
 - d. Board Policy 5200, Family Engagement
 - e. Board Policy 5310, Student Voice
 - f. Board Policy 7120, Community Use of School Facilities, and the accompanying Administrative Regulation

REVIEW AND REPORTING

1. This document shall be reviewed as part of the bi-annual review and reporting process, following each regular session of the Nevada Legislature. The Board of Trustees shall receive notification of any required changes to the policy as well as an audit of the accompanying governing documents.
2. Administrative regulations, and/or other associated documents, will be developed as necessary to implement this policy.
3. An annual strategic communications and community engagement plan shall be reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision	Modification
5/21/2008	1.0	Adopted
7/29/2014	2.0	Revised:
9/13/2016	3.0	Revised: removed Student Advisory Board reference; include accessibility language
5/22/2018	4.0	Revised: to include reference to use of the District logo