

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

The Board believes in the consultative process of decision-making and consults broadly with all stakeholder groups within the community whenever possible. All regular Board meetings are open to the public, except for meetings where circumstances justify a meeting in private, as provided in the School Act. The Board supports the public's right to information regarding the education of students and the spending of educational dollars as part of our accountability to our ratepayers and parents. The Board distributes its Annual Education Results Report to all interested groups and the media. The Board also publicizes the Division's student achievement test and diploma exam results.

The Board has an obligation to keep the electorate accurately informed about Division activities. One mechanism for achieving this objective is the use of print, radio and television media.

The Board strives to foster quality relationships with the media and to establish a climate of communication that is open, ethical, credible and professional. It is the desire of the Board that Board meetings receive accurate and ample coverage by the news media. Trustees welcome the attendance of news media at Board meetings in order that items of business and the decisions of the meeting are reported to the public.

Specifically,

1. No person shall be excluded from a regular Board meeting except for disruptive behavior, or except under those circumstances that justify a meeting in private.
2. Delegations to the Board are welcome.
3. The Board will widely distribute within the Catholic Community our Three Year Education Plan and our Annual Education Results Report.
4. Information releases, which accurately communicate the Board's business to the public, may only be issued by persons authorized by the Board as per Policy 5 – Role of the Board Chair.
5. The Superintendent shall approve all information released to the media from central office.
6. All school-based media releases must be cleared through the Superintendent prior to release.
7. In all cases of media communications, the provisions of the FOIP Act and Board policy must be respected.

8. All media releases or other forms of communication regarding any Division operation, including school issued communications, must be accurate, complete and timely.
9. The Board Chair or Superintendent will plan and implement all major media announcements and news conferences.
10. Representatives of the media may be permitted into the schools for legitimate reporting and promotional purposes. This is at the discretion of the Superintendent or designate. Particular care must be exercised in protecting the rights of students when media are present. Appropriate Division and school release forms in accordance with FOIP are to be completed.
11. In the event of emergency or crisis interactions, the Superintendent or designate shall determine what information shall be given to the media, and by whom.
12. In the event of a critical incident at a school site, all media communications are to be directed to the Superintendent until such time as a site-based media spokesperson contact is established. In such cases, direct on-site communication by students and staff with the media is to be coordinated through the media spokesperson and are otherwise discouraged.
13. The news media shall be provided copies of the agenda for regular Board meetings no later than two working days in advance of the day of the meeting.
14. Suitable accommodation for the news media shall be provided at all regular Board meetings.
15. It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent or designate to notify the news media, as soon as possible, of any change in the regular time or place of a Board meeting, and to provide the media with notice of any important additions to the agenda that are not on the printed copy available to the media.

Legal Reference: Section 27, 60, 61, 70, 113, School Act
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Policy 5 – Role of the Board Chair