



## Board Communications with Media February 6, 2024

### **Existing Policies & Procedures:**

The following excerpts from board policy and divisional procedures already address some guidelines for board communication:

#### **Policy #3: Role of the Board:**

##### **3.3 Community Leadership**

The Board will be visible within the community.

##### **3.5 Accountability to the Community**

The Board is responsible for providing the opportunity to our communities to be involved in our schools in all appropriate ways.

The Board is responsible for telling our schools' and division's story to the public.

Board members are active with community organizations and agencies that can contribute toward building support for public education.

#### **Policy #7: Board Operations:**

##### **7.1 Board Organization**

It is the Board as a body that speaks for the Division and Board practice recognizes that it is the Board, not individual Board members, who have authority. There are roles and responsibilities for individual Board members derived from the roles and responsibilities of the Board as a whole group.

##### **7.2 Role of the Chair**

The Chairperson is elected by the Trustees to lead the processes of the Board. The Board recognizes that the Chairperson is not the head of the division. The Chairperson is typically the official spokesperson of the Board, signs all legal documents on behalf of the Board, and chairs most of the meetings of the Board.

##### **7.8 Commitment to Respect the Decisions of the Board**

v. Recognize that the Chairperson is the official spokesperson of the Board, unless that responsibility has been delegated by the Board.

#### **Policy #8: Board Member Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest**

##### **8.3 Trustees must not attempt to exercise individual authority over the organization:**

(ii) Trustees' interaction with public, press or other entities must recognize the same limitation and the inability of any Board trustee to speak for the Board except to repeat explicitly stated Board decisions.

#### **Policy #15: Community Engagement**

**15.3** Keeping the public informed of the Board's and division challenges, deliberations, policies, and actions by encouraging the public and media to attend meetings either in person or through electronic means, with the exception of in-camera meetings. All supporting documentation of regular board meetings will be provided to the public no later than the start time of each regular board meeting.

**15.4** Designating a Board spokesperson who will endeavour to be current on all matters of Board governance and policy. In most cases this will be the Board Chair or the Chair's designate.

**15.5** The Superintendent or his/her designate will act as the primary spokesperson for operational or administrative matters.

### **Procedure KD-Public Information Program:**

The division recognizes the school system is only as strong as the informed support of the people within the Sunrise School Division.

It will provide information to the public by:

- (a) declaring all regular Board meetings to be open to the public, except where legal, personnel, land acquisitions or negotiation matters are under discussion;
- (b) issuing news releases on matters of policy, program, and fiscal concerns which it believes are important for public knowledge;
- (c) posting approved minutes on the website;
- (d) striving to keep employee groups, parents, community members and the general public informed on the policies, programs, and plans of the division.; and
- (e) periodically issuing the division's "Board Highlighter" newsletter.

### **Procedure KDD-Media Relations:**

Every effort will be made to assist the press and other communications media to obtain complete and accurate information about the programs, activities and plans of the Sunrise School Division.

To ensure media coverage is coordinated with a common effort and purpose, the following procedures will be followed when providing official information to the news media:

1. The Superintendent (or designate) and the Board Chair (or designate) will be the official spokespersons for the division.
2. News releases that are divisionwide, of a sensitive nature, or pertain to Board policy will be handled by the Superintendent who is responsible for the coordination of information to the media.
3. Promotion of school programs and activities at one school are the responsibility of the Principal of that particular school; and must be in accordance with the procedure Employee Use of Social Media (GBEE).

Every possible effort will be made to obtain coverage of school/school division activities that will create and maintain a dignified and responsible image for the division.

### **Procedure KDD-R-Media Relations:**

#### News Releases

The Board will encourage sound relations with the press and other communications media. The Superintendent will plan for periodic releases to the press and other communications media to provide information to the community concerning divisional programs and plans. News media representatives will be welcome to attend all regular meetings of the Board.

Any news releases written about or on behalf of the division should be approved by the Superintendent (or designate) or the Chair (or designate) before being released to the news media.

News releases regarding a particular school should be read and approved by the Principal of that school.

### **Recommendation for Written Submissions to Media Sources:**

Written articles for Board consideration be provided to the Board Chair and Superintendent for proofreading and editing prior to being added to a Board agenda for approval. Authorship can be attributed to the trustee who wrote the article but must include "on behalf of the Board" in the author line. A motion to submit an article must pass at the Board table prior to any sharing of the document outside the Board.

An article that has been proofread and edited by the Board Chair and the Superintendent will appear as an item for action in the Board Business section of the Regular agenda. The article and a proposed motion will accompany the item on the agenda and will require an affirmative vote in order to be submitted to media sources.