104 Board of Education – Meetings

Revised: September 21, 2001
Revised: September 28, 2004
Revised: October 24, 2007 (References to Board of Trustees changed to Board of Education)
Revised: June 23, 2010

Policy

The *School Act* states that a Board must meet as often as is necessary to transact its business and must establish procedures governing the conduct of its meetings. A written copy of those procedures must be available to the public.

The Board shall conduct regular or special meetings at which all formal and legal business of the Board will be conducted. Regular meetings, scheduled in advance by the Board, shall be held monthly during the school year, usually on the third or fourth Tuesday of the month. An additional special meeting may be held at any time with the consent of all Trustees present at a properly called meeting of the Board, or if all Trustees holding office waive notice. Meetings will be held in July and August at the call of the Chair of the Board for urgent business only.

On the written request of a majority of Trustees, the Chair or the Secretary Treasurer may call special meetings on dates other than those of regularly scheduled meetings. All Trustees must be provided written notice no less than 24-hours in advance of the special meeting. No business other than that for which the meeting was called shall be conducted at such a special meeting.

Individual Trustees or groups of Trustees may also meet at working sessions, seminars, discussions with members of the public or staff, or as committees. Such gatherings and meetings are not considered meetings of the Board, and no official action of the Board may be taken on such occasions.

Trustee Seminars will be scheduled each month during the school year. Seminars will be of an informal discussion session with the Superintendent of Schools and the Board Chair setting the dates and agenda in consultation with Trustees. No minutes will be taken.

The Board shall adopt administrative procedures for conduct of its regular, special, and standing committee meetings.

Administrative Procedures

General Operating Procedures for Board Meetings

Written Notice

Written notice of all meetings shall be posted at the entrance to the Board Room at the Administrative Offices. Except for meetings called with less than 24 hours notice, the notice shall be posted at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

Time and Place of Meetings

Regular meetings of the Board shall be held in the Board Room and shall begin at 7:00 p.m., unless otherwise decided by the Board. No regular or special meeting, nor combination thereof, shall remain in session longer than three (3) hours, except by resolution of the Board.

Meeting Agendas

The Secretary Treasurer in consultation with the Board Chair and Vice-Chair and the Superintendent of Schools shall prepare an agenda for each Board meeting. The Secretary Treasurer shall endeavour to provide the agenda and supporting materials to each Trustee 96 hours in advance of the meeting and no later than 24 hours prior to each regular meeting. Delivery of an agenda shall constitute notice of meeting. The agenda package shall be made available to the public either on-line or by pick-up at the Board office once the package has been delivered to Trustees.

Trustees who wish to have items included on the Public Board agenda may make a Notice of Motion at the Public Board meeting or may request the addition of the item to the Board Chairperson or Secretary Treasurer at least one (1) week in advance of the meeting.

Order of Business for Regular Meetings

The order in which the Board transacts its business at regular meetings shall be substantially as follows:

Call to Order
Adoption of Agenda
Approval of Minutes
Public Comment Period
Action Items
Information and Proposals
Field Trips
Superintendent's Report
Trustee Reports
Future Meetings
Public Question and Comment Period
Adjournment.

A change to the order of business may be proposed by any Trustee and shall require consent of those present without debate.

Quorum

A quorum for all Public, Special and In-Camera Board meetings shall be a majority of Trustees holding office at that time. At the appointed time for commencement of a meeting, the Chair shall ascertain that a quorum is present before proceeding to the business of the meeting. No business of the Board shall be conducted unless a quorum is present.

Public Comment Period

After approval of the minutes, the Board will provide a ten (10) minute public comment period restricted to items on the Board agenda. Speakers will be allocated a maximum of two (2) minutes each. The Board will not respond to comments made during comment period. Members of the public wishing to discuss their concerns with Trustees should contact them after the meeting, by telephone or e-mail.

Rules of Order at Regular Meetings

It is the intention of the Board that its meetings be conducted in a dignified and efficient manner. Rules of order will be applied as a means of assisting the conduct of Board business without providing undue formality or hindering useful discussion.

Except where otherwise provided in the *School Act* or in Board policy, the procedures included in *Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised)* shall govern the conduct of meetings. The Secretary Treasurer will serve as parliamentarian, providing procedural advice to the Board.

Time Limits on Speech

Trustees speaking at a Board meeting shall adhere to the following rules:

a) A Trustee may ask questions of clarification about the matter under consideration. Questions of clarification will not be counted in the time allotted for speaking to the question;
b) A Trustee may speak to a question, or may speak in reply, for a maximum of three (3) minutes;
c) After all other Trustees have had an opportunity to speak, Trustees may speak to a question, or may speak in reply for a second time for a further three (3) minutes;
d) Trustees may only speak for a third time with the permission of the Chair of the meeting.

Telephone and Electronic Participation

In accordance with Section 67 (6) of the *School Act,* the Board shall allow Trustees to participate in or attend a meeting of the Board by telephone or other means of communication if all Trustees and other persons participating in or attending the meeting are able to clearly communicate with each other. The Board believes that Trustees must be publicly accessible and accountable to the electorate. Therefore, this form of participation should be used sparingly and only under extenuating circumstances including, but not limited to, illness, family emergency, unavoidable travel, and extreme weather conditions. A Trustee participating in this way will be counted for the purposes of establishing a quorum.

Public Question and Comment Period

A twenty-minute question period will be provided at the end of a regular Board meeting during which attendees may provide comments or ask questions of the Board on business conducted during that meeting or on any matter pertaining to the School District. The Chair may defer a response if a question cannot be answered at that time.

While the Board believes that communication with the public is extremely important, the regular Board meeting is the formally designated means of transacting Board business and is not the appropriate setting for general discussion. The question and comment period is provided as a means for ensuring that residents present in the audience have an opportunity to obtain clarification concerning the meeting's proceedings, ask brief questions, or provide comments on other school district matters.

Residents who have more in-depth concerns or complex issues than cannot be suitably addressed during the comment and question period are encouraged to contact Trustees or staff individually or, if desired, to arrange a formal presentation on the Board agenda. In general, Board policy indicates that questions or concerns are best handled as near the location of the issue as possible. Matters currently under negotiation, litigation, or related to personnel, will not be discussed in public session.

Delegations at Meetings

As a vehicle for affirming its policy of open Board-community relations and the rights of citizens to make their views known to the Board, delegations are welcome to express such views at regular Board meetings or a Standing Committee meeting. Since issues can be considered and deliberated in more detail at the Committee level, whenever possible, the delegation will be requested to appear before the appropriate Standing Committee.

Requests for delegations at a regular Board meeting should be made in writing at least two (2) weeks in advance to either the Board Chair or the Secretary Treasurer. Requests to Standing Committees should be sent to the attention of the Secretary Treasurer at least one (1) week in advance.

A written statement outlining the issues should be presented at the time of the request for an appointment. Each delegation will be requested to name a spokesperson that will present the information to the Board or Standing Committee and act as a contact person to whom the Board may direct a reply at a later date. The delegation will be expected to limit any presentation to ten (10) minutes, followed by questions and comments. The Board will ordinarily take the presentation under advisement and may take action after due deliberation, usually at a subsequent meeting. If circumstances warrant, the Board may receive such delegation "in-camera".

If a delegation has already presented its brief at a Board and/or Standing Committee meeting, its request to appear again before the Board and or Standing Committee may be denied unless the delegation has new information that is significantly different from the information already presented. Such information must be provided in writing to the Secretary Treasurer.

Minutes of Board Meetings

The Secretary Treasurer shall record proceedings of all Board meetings and keep on file the official copy of the minutes as well as necessary associated background materials. The minutes will contain a record of official actions taken and the general nature of the discussions for background purposes only, but will not contain an account of comments or opinions expressed by individual Trustees. Wherever reasonable, Board resolutions should include a complete record of recommendations acted upon or actions intended. A draft summary of motions will be posted on the school district's website within three (3) days of the Board meeting, whenever possible. Minutes of regular meetings will be available on the School District's website after they have

been approved by the Board (after the next Board meeting) or may be viewed at the Board's Administration Office by members of the public by appointment with the Secretary Treasurer. Copies may be obtained for an appropriate fee, in compliance with the *School Act*.

In-Camera Meetings

Meetings of the Board are open to the public unless, in the opinion of the Board, the public interest so requires that persons other than Trustees should be excluded from a meeting. Such matters include those where privacy of employees, students, parents or others need to be respected or matters subject to negotiations (e.g., labour contracts, land sales) or litigation. The Secretary Treasurer or another employee designated by the Board must be present at the time that a decision of the Board is rendered and must record any decision. Minutes of such meetings shall be kept in the same manner as those of a regular meeting, but shall be approved or amended only in an in-camera session. Minutes of in-camera meetings shall be filed separately from those of regular meetings.

The Board will prepare a record containing a general statement as to the nature of the matters discussed and the general nature of the decisions reached at in-camera meetings. The record will be open for inspection by members of the public by appointment with the Secretary Treasurer.

Inaugural Meeting

The inaugural meeting will be scheduled no earlier than the first Monday after December 1st in an election year. Immediately following the swearing-in of Trustees-elect, the Secretary Treasurer or the Secretary Treasurer's designate shall act as temporary Chair to call the meeting to order. After ascertaining that the credentials of those seated at the Board table are in order, the Secretary Treasurer shall call for nominations for the position of Chair of the Board for the ensuing year. If there is more than one (1) nomination, the election shall proceed by secret ballot. When the election has been concluded, the newly elected Chair of the Board shall preside at the inaugural meeting.

The Board shall then conduct such business as is pertinent and urgent, including election of the Vice-Chair of the Board. Provision will also be made for Trustees to indicate committee preferences to the Chair.

Refer to Board *Policy 101: Role and Function* for procedures surrounding the annual election of the Chair and Vice-Chair.