

## **BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS EMAIL PROTOCOL**

The Board welcomes communications from parents, students, employees, residents, and other stakeholders. The Board also recognizes its district role in governing the District and the Administration's district role in operating the District. An overview of the roles and authority of the Board, individual Board Members, and the Administration is provided on the District's website.

Additionally, in communicating Board Members must be aware of application of the Right to Know Law, Sunshine Act, applicable Board Policies (including Policy 906) and state laws, and issues of confidentiality, including FERPA, employee confidentiality issues, and Attorney-Client privilege. The purpose of this E-mail Protocol is to set forth a workable framework for Board Members to use in addressing e-mails sent to them.

### **I. GENERAL GUIDANCE**

1. Individual Board Members do not have authority to speak on behalf of or bind the Board or the District in responding to an e-mail. Individual Board Members may only speak on their own behalf in responding to an inquiry from the public.
2. Board Members should use their official School District e-mail accounts to communicate with stakeholders in order to assist in complying with the Right to Know Law. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if a Board Member uses a personal e-mail address, cell phone, social media account, or other method to communicate, that form or method may also be subject to the Right to Know Law.
3. Board Members should avoid discussing matters via "reply all" or otherwise over e-mails involving a majority of the Board so as to avoid violating the Sunshine Act.
4. Complaints with respect to Board Policy; District procedures, programs, operations, facilities, and personnel should be addressed according to Policy 906 and its accompanying attachment.
5. For purpose of this E-mail Protocol, a "school district concern" shall mean an e-mail inquiring about or addressing an operational issue, such as questions about District procedures, programs, curriculum, activities, facilities, personnel, or other operational or administrative concern under applicable law, regulation, or policy. A "school board concern" shall mean an e-mail inquiring about or addressing a governance issue, question about Board Policy or procedures, or other right or duty of the Board under applicable law, regulation, or policy.

### **II. E-MAIL RESPONSE PROTOCOL**

In the event that a school Board member receives an email from the general public, an employee, or a student regarding a school district concern or school board concern, the School Board Member shall adhere to the following procedure:

1. If deemed necessary by the individual Board Member that follow-up is appropriate, the School Board Member will acknowledge receipt of the email to the sender and notify the sender that the School District Administration, the Superintendent, or the School Board, as applicable, will provide an appropriate response. If multiple Board Members are included on one e-mail from a member of the public, the Board Member holding the highest office shall send the acknowledgement. If no officer is included in the e-mail, longest tenured Board Member shall send the acknowledgement.
2. The School Board Member will forward the email to the Superintendent if deemed necessary by the individual board member. In the event the email raises issues of School Board Concern, the Superintendent may forward the email to the entire Board, the President, or the appropriate committee. In the event the email raises issues of School District Concern, the Superintendent will determine the proper School District employee who will provide a response to the member of the public in the event that the school district concern.
3. Board Members have a duty to preserve confidential information of the District. In the event an individual or group communicating with a Board Members has threatened or is pursuing litigation against the District or has

otherwise presented themselves in any manner to be litigious, Board Members must seek the advice of the Solicitor prior to engaging in communications with such individuals or groups. Attorney-client privilege and confidential information of the District shall be strictly protected in all e-mails or communications.

4. School Board Members and all Administrators or employees shall preserve the confidentiality of students and employees under applicable law.

#### **IV. RESERVED POWERS**

This Email Protocol is not intended to limit, restrict, or in any other way affect the rights, obligations, powers, or authority of the School Board. Instead, this Email Protocol is intended to establish a procedure for the Board and Administration as a single deliberative body to address school district concerns presented to an individual Board Member via email. The school Board reserves all rights, powers, and authority under existing law, which shall not be limited by this Email Protocol.

#### **V. REVISIONS TO EMAIL PROTOCOL**

The School Board and the School District Administration may wish to consider revisions to this email protocol. Revisions to the email protocol shall be approved by a majority vote of the School Board at a public Meeting.