

## PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAMS

The District supports an effective communications program as a necessary component of a public school system's organization and functioning. Therefore, the Board, both through its own performance and by its support of the Superintendent and the Principal in this regard, commits itself to the development, operation and maintenance of an effective communications program reflective of the District and each of its schools.

To this end, the Board undertakes:

- To use all available means of communication in informing the public about policies, programs, planning and school system problems.
- To encourage, assist and support the news media in inquiring, researching and reporting public information about the school system.
- To conduct all of its business in public meetings, except for those matters which, by Board Procedural Bylaws, are to be dealt with in closed meetings.
- To invite and encourage local citizens' advice and comments whenever possible, and particularly during regular public Board meetings, at special Board meetings and other Board public sessions declared for particular purposes, and via occasional advisory committees which include community representation.
- To identify and sustain financial and personnel resources adequate to permit the Superintendent's Office and schools to organize and maintain a public information program commensurate with Board policy and expectations.

### A. Guidelines

These guidelines have been developed by the Board to clarify responsibilities, procedures and expectations for the District's public information program.

- 1.00 It will be the responsibility of each Trustee, administrator or other employee, to exercise care when answering questions about the public schools. Individuals should answer a question only when they have complete understanding about a point or issue. If the employee is not well versed, he/she should refer the questioner to a superior or other appropriate District official.
- 1.01 Trustees and employees making statements about the operation of the District or a school are responsible for the accuracy and correctness of the information disseminated, and for complying with District policies and regulations.
- 1.02 Minutes of public Board meetings, the final District budget, the auditor's annual report, matters identified in the Public Disclosures Act, and reports on items other than those excluded from public Board meetings by Procedural Bylaws, are public records available to the general public and to representatives of the public media.

- 1.03
  - a) The Board Chair, or in the absence of the Chair, the Board Vice Chair, will be the representative of the Board to the public media on Board matters of a political nature.
  - b) The Superintendent, or designate will represent the Board and the District generally.
  - c) Each of the Assistant Superintendents and the Secretary Treasurer may represent the District in areas consistent with their assigned duties and responsibilities.
  - d) The Principal of each school will be the official spokesperson for the activities and instructional program of that particular school.
- 1.04 When the Board Chair, Superintendent, any District department or any school personnel speak for the District or any component part, it will be the individual's responsibility to exercise caution and care that all statements made are true and accurate and in harmony with District policies, rules and regulations.
- 1.05 It will be the responsibility of every Trustee and employee to endeavour by all activities and private statements, to create a feeling of goodwill and confidence in the District and its schools on the part of all parents and other members of the public.
- 1.06 The Board encourages a policy of sound relations with the press and other public media in the community and surrounding area. The Superintendent will plan for periodic releases to the communications media which will provide information to the community concerning its schools and various phases of the school programs.
- 1.07 The Superintendent's office will prepare meetings and agendas and copies of Board minutes for the bona fide media representatives, for employee groups, and for other agencies or organizations identified in Board policy. Copies of public meeting agendas and support materials, and of minutes prepared for Board use also will be available to the public at the District Education Office in accordance with Board policy.

## B. Components

The District undertakes to develop and support an effective communications program which:

### 1.00 At the District level

- a) encourages a better understanding of the goals, needs, and accomplishments of the total educational program
- b) provides a planned, systematic, two-way process including the Board and Superintendent, District's employees and the community
- c) includes the use of a variety of media such as meetings, letters, circulars, publications, brochures, personal contacts.
- d) provides the communications channels necessary for resolving grievances and eliminating misunderstandings

1.01 At the school level

- a) encourages informal, as well as formal methods of communications
- b) includes the use of a variety of media such as meetings, publications and personal contacts
- c) supplements and otherwise supports the general communications program of the District