

Policy 2115	Remote Participation in Board Meetings Policy
Approval Date:	May 2020
Category:	Students
Governance Accountability:	Board of Directors, Leadership
Audience:	Employees, Students, Families, Board of Directors

The Pine Lake Preparatory School Board acknowledges that it is subject to the North Carolina Open Meetings Law, N.C.G.S. § 143-318.9 et seq. The Board also recognizes the importance of Board member participation and commitment. In addition, the Board understands “the public policy of North Carolina that the hearings, deliberation and actions” of the board be “conducted openly.” N.C.G.S § 143-318.9. Accordingly, all Board meetings, unless otherwise exempted by law, must be accessible to members of the public.

There are circumstances where individual Board members may not be able to be physically present, thus requiring these members to participate electronically. There are other circumstances where the entire Board may have to conduct the Board meeting electronically, or remotely. In all such circumstances, procedures must be in place to ensure the integrity of the meeting, the validity of any action taken, and the public’s ability to participate. This Policy is intended to provide the necessary requirements and procedures for remote participation, whether by members of the Board, or by the public.

A. Authority for Remote Participation

1. Remote participation is available at all regular, special, and emergency meetings. It is not to be used at any quasi-judicial hearing unless authorized by law or agreed to by the participants. In addition, the public, and other, non-Board members, may be excluded from remote participation and attendance if authorized by law.
2. A Board member, with permission of the Board chair, may participate in a meeting remotely if he or she is physically unable to attend for any of the following reasons:

- a. personal illness, disability, order of quarantine or isolation, or government-issued “stay-at-home” mandate;
 - b. out-of-town travel;
 - c. unforeseen lack of child-care;
 - d. family member illness or emergency;
 - e. weather conditions;
 - f. military service;
 - g. employment obligations;
 - h. a scheduling conflict;
 - i. a state or local declaration of a state of emergency that makes in-person attendance at a meeting a violation of an order to reduce social contact or to stay at home for reasons of public health; or
 - j. any other reason approved by the Board chair.
3. The entire Board may call a meeting, to be held electronically, in the following circumstances:
 - a. there needs to be an emergency meeting for which it is impractical for the members to come together due to time constraints; or
 - b. there exist natural emergencies or disasters which prevent the coming together of the Board members, such as weather, health emergencies requiring quarantine or isolation, or where the government has issued “stay-at-home” or “shelter-in-place” orders.

B. Conditions and Requirements of Remote Meetings

1. Acceptable means of remote participation include telephone, video conferencing, and any other electronic means that allow all participants to be present together at the same time, and to be clearly audible to each other. Electronic methods such as text messaging, instant messaging, and email are not permissible methods of conducting a meeting because members are not able to simultaneously speak with and listen to each other.
2. Any Board member participating remotely will be counted towards a quorum and be allowed to vote. All votes will be oral, either by voice vote, or by roll call.

3. All participants must be able to hear each other.
4. Any member who chooses to leave the meeting before adjournment must announce his or her departure.

C. Notice to the Public When the Board Intends to Meet Electronically

1. The Board will provide notice in accordance with requirements of the General Statutes of any meeting to be conducted remotely.
2. The Board will provide sufficient information to allow the public to call in or otherwise access the meeting electronically.
3. The Board will ensure there is no fee or cost imposed upon members of the public in order for them to access the meeting.

D. Closed Sessions

1. The Board will ensure that its members can meet in closed session where necessary to comply with the Open Meetings Law. The Board may establish separate access from that available for the open session.
2. Board members participating remotely must assure the Board that they are participating alone, and that no other person is able to hear, see, or otherwise participate in the closed session.

Adopted: