

**Electronic Mail Communications**

The Bethany Board of Education (Board) believes that Board members electronically connected to other Board members is an efficient and convenient way to communicate. The main goal of electronic mail (e-mail) is to expedite the passage of information. E-mail gives Board members quick access to one another. Communication among Board members via e-mail should conform to the same standards as other forms of communication (i.e., committee meetings, etc.) as directed by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). When used properly, e-mail is an effective communications tool and can provide a formal record.

All Board members are encouraged to access e-mail. It will be the responsibility of individual Board members who use e-mail to provide hardware, hook-up, and pay all consumable expenses associated with e-mail usage.

**Guidelines for Board E-Mail Usage**

The FOIA mandates that all meetings of public bodies be open to the public. It is the policy of the Board that e-mail shall not be used in such a manner as to deprive the public of the rights given to it under the FOIA. For this purpose, this Bylaw sets forth guidelines for the uses intended to be made of e-mail by Board members when communicating with other Board members.

1. E-mail, like other written forms of communication relating to the conduct of the public business, is subject to the FOIA and subject to disclosure.
2. Board members shall not use e-mail as a substitute for deliberations at public Board meetings, and/or shall not discuss policy matters or vote informally on any issues.
3. E-mail should be used to pass along factual information.
4. Security of e-mail communication cannot be assured. Board members shall not reveal their passwords to others in the network or to anyone outside of it. If any Board member has reason to believe a password has been lost or stolen, or that e-mail is being accessed by someone without authorization, the Board member shall notify the Superintendent, who will notify the District's IT Director.
5. Personnel issues and other sensitive subjects should never be discussed online. The confidentiality of employee data, student data, and other sensitive subjects must always be maintained.

Any usage contrary to the aforementioned shall be reported immediately to the Superintendent and may result in the suspension and/or revocation of system access.

Legal References:      Connecticut General Statutes § 1-200  
                                 Connecticut General Statutes § 1-210  
                                 Connecticut General Statutes § 1-211  
                                 The Freedom of Information Act

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