

SALEM SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Salem, Connecticut

BY LAWS OF THE BOARD

MEETINGS - ELECTRONIC MAIL COMMUNICATIONS

The Board of Education 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. When used properly, e-mail is an effective communications tool and can provide a formal record.

Guidelines for Board E-Mail Usage

The Freedom of Information Act mandates that all meetings of public bodies such as school Boards be open to the public. It is the policy of the Board of Education that email shall not be used in such a manner as to deprive the public of the rights given to it under the Freedom of Information Act. 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 Freedom of Information Act and subject to disclosure.
2. Board members shall not use e-mail as a substitute for deliberations at public Board meetings, and shall not vote informally on any issues.
3. 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, he/she shall notify the Superintendent, who will notify the district's technology specialist.
4. Personnel issues and other sensitive subjects should never be discussed on-line. 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.

## Accessing E-Mail

Each Board member will be responsible for providing off-site hook-up and for paying all consumable expenses associated with e-mail usage. In the event a Board member elects not to access e-mail, a hard copy of all e-mail directed to "Board" will be placed in the Board packet delivered via courier, and will also be accessible in the Board of Education Office.

## Records Retention and Deletion

With regards to the length of time that electronic records (including e-mail) should be retained, the Connecticut State Librarian has developed retention guidelines. The records retention schedule, as revised from time to time, is available through the State Library/Public Records Administrator and its website. (<http://www.ctstatelibrary.org>) Records are not subject to destruction unless permitted by these retention guidelines. (Policy #9327.1 details record retention.)

(cf. 9327.1/ 41183.5/ 4218.5 Record Retention)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes: The Freedom of Information Act. 1-200 Definitions. 1-210 Access to public records. Exempt records. 1-211 Disclosure of computer-stored public records.

Policy Adopted: December 11, 2006

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Revised Policy 1<sup>st</sup> Reading: May 7, 2007

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