No. 9520
SECTION: BYLAWS OF THE BOARD
TITLE: USE OF EMAIL COMMUNICATION

ADOPTED: 6/19/12
READOPTED: 1/29/14;11/15/16;4/16/19;
6/20/23
REVISED:

OXFORD AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

1. Purpose: School Board members participate in many forms of communication with their constituents, district staff, faculty, administration, students, and others. The purpose of this Administrative Regulation is to provide guidelines and suggestions for Board members' use of electronic communication.

   The Board recognizes that email allows for communication of information and the exchange of ideas outside the scope of public meetings, but it should not be used as a substitute for deliberations and decision-making before the public.

   The following guidelines are established for email communication between Board members and between Board members and the public:

2. Email address and account:

   Board members are encouraged to establish an email account that is maintained separately from their personal email account that would be linked to the District assigned email address, which account will serve separate personal email from email arising from or related to District business.

3. Email between Board Members:

   Board members shall not use email as a substitute for deliberations at Board meetings or for other communications or business properly confined to Board meetings.

   The use of email by Board members must conform to the same standards of judgment, propriety, and ethics as other forms of board-related communication. Board members must be aware that email and email attachments received or prepared for use in board meetings or containing information relating to board business might be public records under the Right to Know Law.

   Board members should avoid reference to confidential information about employees, students, and other matters in email communications because of the risk of improper disclosure. Board members should comply with the same standards as school employees with regard to confidential information.

4. The following should be considered when emailing the information to Board members:

   To ensure compliance with the intent of the Sunshine Act, recipients or a message should not forward it to other Board members to encourage deliberation or to seek their position on an issue.

   Decisions should be made only by the Board. Duly assembled as a group at a public meeting, after receipt of relevant information.

5. When an informational email is received, Board members:

   Shall not "reply" or "reply to all" with a stated position

   Shall not "reply to all" seeking clarification or information

   However an individual Board member may request clarifying information from the sender via one on one communication (i.e., email, phone, letter or face to face). If necessary, the sender can then transmit clarifying or additional information to the group thereafter.

6. Email between Board Members and the public:

   It is important to acknowledge email communication from members of the public.

   In general, it is the Board president's responsibility to acknowledge emails that are sent to the entire Board by members of the public. The Board president may, as necessary, delegate the responsibility for responding to another Board member. The Board president or designee will copy all Board members with the email acknowledgement.

7. When responding to email received from a member of the public:

   The following or something similar should be included in the email response:

   "Thank you for your comments. Please know that you are always welcome to speak to the Board at any public meeting."

   If the Board president or designee is forwarding the email to all Board members, the president or designee should also include the following in the email response:

   "I am passing your email to the Board members for their information."

   If the issue raised is related to personnel, the following should be included in the email response:

   "Thank you for your comment. This is a personnel issue, which may involve privacy and other legal concern. I have forwarded your email to the Board president and the Superintendent for consideration and action as appropriate."

   If an individual Board member determines that an additional response is necessary to some matter other than a personnel issue:

   The response should only be sent to the original sender (other Board members are not copied).

   The following should be included in the email response:

   "I am one member of the Board. Board members may act only as a group at a public meeting when making decisions for the District. My comments in no way speak for or commit the Board to any specific action."