

School Board

Exhibit - Guidance for Board Member Communications Among Board Members and on Social Media

The School Board is authorized to discuss District business only at a properly noticed Board meeting (Open Meetings Act, 5 ILCS 120/). Other than during a Board meeting, a majority or more of a Board-quorum may not engage in contemporaneous interactive communication, whether in person or electronically, to discuss District business. The same restriction applies to a majority or more of a quorum of a Board committee. Electronic communications include, but are not limited to, telephone, e-mail, text messaging, FaceTime and Instant Messaging. This Guidance covers issues arising from Board policy 2:140, *Communications To and From the Board*.

Communications Between or Among Board Members and/or the Superintendent Outside of a Properly Noticed Board Meeting

1. The Superintendent or designee is permitted to email information to Board members. For example, the Superintendent may email Board meeting agendas and supporting information to Board members. When responding to a single Board member's request, the Superintendent should copy all other Board members and include a *do not reply/forward* alert to the group, such as: **“BOARD MEMBER ALERT: This email is in response to a request. Do not reply or forward to the group but only to the sender.”**
2. Board members are permitted to discuss any matter which does not pertain to District business with each other, whether in person or electronically, regardless of the number of members participating in the discussion. For example, they may discuss league sports, work, or current events.
3. Board members are permitted to provide information to each other, whether in person or electronically, that is non-deliberative and non-substantive. Examples of this type of communication include scheduling meetings and confirming receipt of information.
4. A Board member is not permitted to discuss District business with more than one other Board member at a time, whether in person or electronically. Stated another way, a Board member may discuss District business in person or electronically with only one other Board member at a time. However, if two Board members constitute a majority of a quorum of a Board committee, they may not discuss committee business. Additionally, a Board member should not facilitate interactive communication by discussing District business through a series of close-in-time communications in person or electronically with a majority of a quorum of Board or committee members.
5. A Board member should include a *do not reply/forward* alert when emailing a message concerning District business to more than one other Board member. The following is an example of such an alert: **“BOARD MEMBER ALERT: This email is not for interactive discussion purposes. The recipient should not reply to it or forward it to any other individual.”**
6. Board members should not forward in writing or electronically communications received from one Board member to another Board member, except as permitted in 3. and 4. above.

Communications of Board Members, including on Social Media, Including Online Platform as well as Other Media Such as Blogs and Personal Web Sites

1. School Board members should not deliberate Board business on social media. Board members should not make statements whether on social media or otherwise that make it appear that he/she has already formed an opinion on District matters not yet decided by the Board.
2. Board member complaints or concerns, or those of other persons, should not be presented initially online. Instead, they should be presented to the appropriate administrator for investigation and response, if appropriate.
3. Board members should share only content that the Board or the Superintendent has already released to the public, unless otherwise authorized by the Board or the Superintendent.
4. When a Board member is posting through the use of Board-issued devices, or using School District Internet access on a personal device, he/she is subject to the Board's acceptable use policy.
5. Board members should always conduct themselves online or otherwise in a manner that reflects well of the Board and the School District and avoid sharing information that has not been verified and made public by the Board or the Superintendent or is otherwise rumor or misleading.
6. Board members must honestly represent their identity and make it clear that he/she is speaking as an individual Board member and not as an official Board spokesperson. Board members should be mindful that their comments will reflect back to the Board and the District and should adhere to Board norms for communications and Board Member Code of Conduct.

Reviewed: February 11, 2013, February 10, 2020, April 23, 2020
Revisions adopted: February 25, 2014; December 8, 2014, May 11, 2020