135 – SCHOOL BOARD OPERATION

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to explain how the Board of Education operates, including the role of the Trustees, the management of meetings and public participation.

Policy

1. The Board of Education, School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan), is comprised of seven Trustees from the following electoral areas:

- City of Kelowna — 4 Trustees
- Zone 1
  District of Lake Country and
  Regional District of Central Okanagan East Electoral Area — 1 Trustee
- District of West Kelowna — 1 Trustee
- Zone II
  District of Peachland and
  Regional District of Central Okanagan West Electoral Area
  (including Westbank First Nation Reserves #9 and #10) — 1 Trustee

2. Role of the Trustee

2.1 To faithfully perform the duties of their office, abide by the School Act and not allow any private interest to influence their conduct in school matters.

2.2 To attend all meetings of the Board and any Board Committees (on which the Trustee sits).

2.3 To inform the Secretary-Treasurer and the Board or Committee Chair if unable to attend a Board or Committee meeting.

2.4 When possible, to attend workshops, conferences, conventions, and Branch meetings within and out-of-district.

2.5 Having made arrangements with the principal, to visit any school in order to:

- become knowledgeable with respect to its location, size, facilities, programs and services;
- represent the Board at school functions;
- attend productions and special events.

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Each school shall be assigned two liaison Trustees, including one designated as the "prime contact".

3. Officers

3.1 *Chair*
The role of the Chair is to:

3.1.1 preside at all meetings in accordance with Board policy and, in the absence of policy, with *Robert's Rules of Order;*

3.1.2 be an ex-officio member of all standing and ad hoc committees;

3.1.3 provide, on behalf of the Board, appropriate public comment on Board actions when requested to do so (or when, in the Chair's judgment, comment will improve public understanding of Board action);

3.1.4 provide an annual report at the Board's annual meeting, except in an election year when the report shall be provided at the Board meeting prior to the inaugural meeting.

3.2 *Vice-Chair*
The Vice-Chair shall carry out the functions of the Chair in their absence, or when asked to do so by the Chair.

3.3 *Acting Chair*
If both the Chair and Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, the Trustees present shall elect an acting Chair for the meeting, with all of the powers of the Chair for that meeting.

4. Meetings

4.1 Definitions - for purposes of this policy, meetings shall be defined as follows:

Regular meetings Public or incamera meetings of the Board, or a standing committee, scheduled to occur on specific dates and times during the current school year as determined by Board resolution at the inaugural or annual meeting.

Incamera meetings Meetings of the Board, or a standing committee, which are closed to the public in accordance with the criteria in 5.2.

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Special meetings Meetings of the Board, or a standing committee, either public or incamera, which are called in addition to the *regular meetings* to deal with emergency issues or items requiring considerable time for debate.

4.2 The Board and its standing committees shall hold regular, special and incamera meetings as often as is necessary to transact the business of the Board.

4.3 The business of the Board and its standing committees is considered public, unless specifically declared confidential.

4.4 All Board and standard committee meetings shall be governed by Board policy and, in the absence of policy by *Robert's Rules of Order*.

4.5 Trustees shall be notified in writing of all meetings, except in emergencies when time does not permit. In an emergency, when written notification of the meeting is not possible, staff shall make every effort to notify each Trustee by electronic communication or by telephone.

4.6 If Trustees are unable to attend a meeting in person, the Board, or standing committee may permit attendance through teleconferencing or videoconferencing, providing that all Trustees in attendance are able to communicate with one another.

4.7 A standing invitation is extended to all official partner groups to attend regular and special Public Board meetings, and to be recognized/acknowledged by the Board Chair to contribute during debate on any matter affecting their respective associations. Official partner groups are invited to serve on Board Standing Committees as non-voting members.

5. Incamera meetings

5.1 Unless declared otherwise by the Chair, all incamera meetings shall be closed to the public.

5.2 Items to be dealt with at incamera meetings include:

5.2.1 legal matters;
5.2.2 Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act items deemed private;
5.2.3 Board matters relating to safety, security and protection;
5.2.4 personnel matters relating to safety, security and protection;
5.2.5 specific student matters relating to medical, conduct, discipline, suspension, expulsion, safety, security and protection;
5.2.6 personal contracts and collective bargaining matters;

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5.2.7 pre-tender discussions;
5.2.8 acquisition and disposition of real property prior to finalization of the transaction;
5.2.9 matters of a housekeeping, e.g. scheduling of internal function dates, invitations and assignment of Trustee duties;
5.2.10 other matters where the Board deems that the public interest is better served.

Notwithstanding any rule limiting reconsideration of the agenda, a Trustee may make a motion to move an item from the agenda of an incamera meeting to the agenda of a public meeting or the reverse.

5.3 Except for 5.5 below, the proceedings of an incamera meeting from which the public has been excluded, shall not be disclosed (unless a resolution is passed to allow disclosure).

5.4 No attendee shall be allowed to record any portion of an incamera meeting.

5.5 In compliance with the School Act, a general statement of the matters discussed and decisions reached at each meeting from which the public has been excluded shall be provided to the public at no charge. Such general statements shall:

5.5.1 include the name(s) of Trustees who are absent from the meeting and whether such absence is for Board-related business; and be attached, for information, to the agenda of a regular Board meeting following the incamera meeting.

6. Agenda

6.1 The agenda for Board meetings shall be prepared by the Coordinating Committee.

6.2 An item placed on the agenda of an incamera Board meeting by the Coordinating Committee may be referred to the agenda of the next regular Board meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those Trustees in attendance at the incamera Board meeting, or may be referred to the Coordinating Committee for scheduling at a future public Board or standing committee meeting.

6.3 A schedule of all action items which are known to be coming forward on the next regular meeting agenda shall be included with every agenda. This will serve as notice to the community that these items will be discussed at the next meeting.

6.4 If an action item scheduled for consideration at any meeting is tabled or referred to a later meeting before all presenters have been heard, the Board shall make every reasonable effort to hear the remaining presenters at the subsequent meeting.

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6.5 Whenever possible, Trustees wishing to have an action item or a resolution placed on a Board meeting agenda shall submit their request to the Coordinating Committee.

6.6 In the event that a Trustee believes an item requires immediate attention, the Chair of the Board shall allow the item to be added to the agenda, provided that no objection is raised by any Trustee in attendance. If an objection be raised, the item shall be added if its addition is supported by a two-thirds majority vote of those Trustees in attendance.

6.7 In an emergency, the Coordinating Committee may consent to refer an issue requiring action to a committee.

6.8 All public Board and standing committee meeting agendas shall be posted on the district website. A copy of the regular and special public meeting agendas and attachments shall be forwarded to members of the public upon request only.

7. Public Presentations

7.1 If community groups or individuals wish to address the Board on issues appropriate to the functioning of the Board, they should apply two weeks in advance of the meeting to enable the Coordinating Committee to include this on the agenda of a regular or incamera meeting.

7.2 To assist in agenda planning and to enable Trustees to study the issues, a brief written submission must be provided to the Secretary-Treasurer for distribution one week before the meeting. Trustees, by a majority vote, may place on the agenda any presentation dealing with an urgent issue. Copies of written submissions may not be distributed to the general public on school district property. Authors of written submissions shall assume personal responsibility for all statements in the submission to the Board. Written or electronic materials will not be presented on screen at the meeting.

7.3 Each presenter or delegation will usually be limited to ten minutes, followed by questions and comments from Trustees.

8. Public Question Period and/or Comments

8.1 Two periods (up to fifteen minutes each) shall be set aside at each regular meeting for the Board to receive comments and to respond to questions from the public. Each speaker shall be allotted three minutes to speak. The Board may, at the request of the Chair or any Trustee, vote to extend the time allotted to the question/comment period at any meeting.

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8.1.1 At the beginning of each question/comment period, the Chair shall determine how many people wish to present a question(s)/comment(s). If the number is high, one question/comment shall be taken from each person.

8.1.2 The first period shall be scheduled near the beginning of the meeting to provide an opportunity to members of the gallery to ask a question or comment on any Action items on the agenda.

8.1.3 The second period shall be scheduled near the end of the meeting to provide an opportunity to members of the gallery to ask a question or comment on any matter pertaining to public education.

8.2 All questions shall be directed to the Chair, who may refer the question to the appropriate Committee Chair, Trustee, Superintendent of Schools/CEO or Secretary-Treasurer.

8.3 The response to a question will be made immediately, when possible, or deferred until a later date when information becomes available. If a Trustee wishes further debate on an issue, an appropriate opportunity may be scheduled by the Coordinating Committee.

8.4 Although the Board welcomes questions of a general nature during this part of the meeting, this forum is for questions regarding policies or operations.

8.5 Questions regarding personnel or specific students must be raised with the Superintendent of Schools/CEO privately.

8.6 Individuals addressing the Board shall assume personal responsibility for all statements made to the Board.

8.7 The Chair may use discretion to terminate any speaker's privilege or exclude a speaker from the meeting if, after due warning, the speaker persists with conduct or remarks which damage the character or reputation of any employee or member of the public.

8.8 Comments that are critical of either the Board or a Trustee's Board-related action shall be accepted within reasonable limits. The Chair shall use judgment to stop such comments when they are considered to be extreme or would be better discussed in a different forum.

8.9 If the Chair accepts, during a public presentation, comments which are accusatory or highly critical of an individual Trustee's action, that Trustee can choose to respond at the same meeting or at a future meeting.

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8.10 One fifteen minute period shall be set aside at each public standing committee meeting for the Committee to receive comments and to respond to questions from the public on any item on the agenda.

9. Minutes

9.1 The names of Trustees voting against resolutions, or abstaining from voting, or are absent from the vote, shall be recorded in the minutes.

9.2 If a Trustee is absent from a Board or committee meeting due to Board-related business, the reason for absence shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

9.3 Until the Board approves the minutes of a meeting, the minutes shall be marked 'draft'.

9.4 A copy of the draft minutes of regular and special public meetings shall be sent to:

- district supervisory staff;
- school-based administrators;
- official partner groups;
- school parent advisory council presidents;
- media.

9.5 A copy of the draft minutes of incamera meetings shall be sent to:

- all senior staff present;
- other district staff members (at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools/CEO).

9.6 Approved public meeting minutes will be placed on the district website.

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Date Agreed: April 23, 1980;
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Related Document: School Act Parts 4-6, Policies 110, 115, 140