

POLICY #2400

SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The School Act requires a board of education to meet formally to undertake its business. This policy outlines the formal board meetings of the Board of Education of School District No. 36 (Surrey) (“the Board”) and the conduct of all attendees at such meetings.
- 1.2. The Board believes in creating and maintaining relationships with employee groups, educational partners, rightsholders, elected officials from all levels of government, and other interested parties to ensure meaningful opportunities are created for dialogue and policy direction. Informal liaison meetings outlined in this policy will be initiated with a specific group to discuss specific issues pertaining to that group, or forums will be arranged to discuss issues concerning more than one group and/or a larger number of interested parties.
- 1.3. *Procedure 2400.1 School Board Meetings* outlines the process for formal board meetings. *Procedure 2400.2 Liaison Meetings and Trustee In-Service Sessions* outlines the process for liaison meetings, forums, and trustee in-service sessions.

2. MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

- 2.1. Regular meetings of the Board will be held at least once per month, with the exception of July and August. Regular meetings may be held virtually when necessary. Regular board meetings are open to staff, students, and the public. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed (see section 2.3).
- 2.2. In-camera meetings of the Board for the purpose of dealing with personnel, property, legal and other confidential matters shall be held at the call of the chairperson. Board members and officers will be the only attendees at in-camera meetings. Staff may be invited to attend in-camera meetings with the agreement of the chairperson.
- 2.3. Special meetings of the Board may be called by the chairperson as required. Such meetings may, or may not, be “closed” meetings.
- 2.4. In a year when there is a general school election, an inaugural meeting shall be held as per the School Act.

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2.5. The Board may also hold informal meetings to maintain effective relations and for the purpose of information gathering and sharing with staff, employee groups, educational partners, rightsholders, elected officials and other interested parties. Topics for mutual discussion will be at a policy level as routine operational items are handled by administration. No decisions relating to business that would be transacted at a formal meeting of the Board may be made at informal meetings.

a) Liaison with Employee Groups and Educational Partners

With the objective of maintaining effective relationships with employee groups and educational partners and at the same time providing meaningful opportunity for such groups to influence policy and direction in the district, the Board will maintain regular liaison with the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) – Local 728, the Surrey Teachers' Association (STA), the Surrey Principals and Vice-Principals Association (SPVPA), the Exempt Professional Employees Group (EPEG), Surrey District Parents Advisory Council (DPAC), and Student Voice.

b) Liaison with Rightsholders and Elected Officials

With the purpose of providing opportunities to discuss matters of mutual interest for the parties at a policy level, the Board will maintain regular liaison with rightsholders and elected officials from all levels of government. The Board will attend as individual trustees and meetings will be conducted informally to discuss topics with district-wide implications and/or individually with trustee or senior leadership representatives to discuss issues and/or concerns involving the specific group.

c) Forums and Other Liaison Meetings

In addition to specific liaison meetings the Board may initiate forums to provide opportunities for a larger number of affected groups to discuss issues and concerns having district-wide interest and/or issues and concerns affecting more than one group. Consideration will be given to the appropriateness and requirement of attendance when initiating the meeting.

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The Board may from time to time also meet informally with other interested groups or organizations when appropriate.

d) Trustee In-Service Sessions

Trustee in-service sessions will be held as needed. These sessions provide an opportunity for the Board to receive updates from executive committee and to facilitate informal discussion. The Superintendent may invite staff members to attend the sessions and present on services, programs, and educational and business matters to support the Board's ongoing work and deepen its understanding of issues and opportunities.

3. CONDUCT OF ATTENDEES AT BOARD MEETINGS

- 3.1. The Board expects all persons attending meetings of the Board to conduct themselves in a respectful manner. The Board reserves the right to adjourn or terminate a meeting if order is not maintained.
- 3.2. The Board supports and endorses the values and objectives of the Human Rights Code and specifically section 7 of the code which prohibits persons from making or displaying any statement, publication, notice, sign, symbol, emblem or other representation that indicates an intention to discriminate against another person or group or class of persons which is likely to expose a person or group of persons to hatred or contempt, because of the indigenous identity, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or age of that person or group or class of persons.
- 3.3. The Board supports and endorses the values expressed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and specifically the fundamental freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression guaranteed by section 2 of the Charter. These rights and freedoms, however, must be balanced with the Board's commitment to section 7 of the Human Rights Code.
- 3.4. Pursuant to section 70 of the School Act, a person who engages in improper conduct at a board meeting (e.g., disrespectful conduct, conduct which disrupts, interferes, or disquiets the proceedings of the Board) may be expelled from the meeting by the Board chairperson or other member

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presiding at the meeting. Public statements which are contrary to section 7 of the Human Rights Code will not be tolerated and a person who engages in such discriminatory conduct may be subject to expulsion (public statements include both oral statements made in public at a board meeting and written statements displayed and/or distributed to the public at a board meeting, including but not limited to written materials, images and signs on posters and clothing). Signs of any nature, and devices that may disrupt the meeting, are not permitted at Board meetings.

4. DELEGATIONS

- 4.1. Delegations may be received at regular board meetings. If a group or individual wishes to speak as a delegation to the Board, they may submit a request in accordance with *Procedure #2400.1 School Board Meetings*.

5. QUESTION PERIOD

- 5.1. A question period of up to thirty (30) minutes duration may be provided after adjournment of the regular board meeting. The question period is to enable members of the community to ask questions relating to items on the board meeting agenda. Questions for the Board not related to agenda items may be submitted to the Board through the Secretary-Treasurer's Office at sect-office@surreyschools.ca. (See *Procedure #2400.1 School Board Meetings*).
- 5.2. The question period is not to be used as a political forum, or for furthering presentations by delegations, or to deal with matters that should properly be dealt with through other channels.

6. REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

- 6.1. [School Act](#)
- 6.2. [Human Rights Code](#)
- 6.3. [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)
- 6.4. [Procedure #2400.1 School Board Meetings](#)
- 6.5. [Procedure #2400.2 Liaison Meetings and Trustee In-Service Sessions](#)

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7. AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

- 7.1. Superintendent of Schools
- 7.2. Secretary-Treasurer

8. HISTORY

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