

### **Individual Trustee Communication Protocols**

Board Trustees and the Superintendent shall engage in professional public communications to respect and ensure an unobstructed process of whole-Board deliberation and policy approval. This includes:

1. Suspending decision-making and public comment until proper analysis of data and whole-Board discussion is concluded and a vote is cast.
2. Supporting the integrity of final Board decisions and supporting the implementation of those policy decisions while retaining the right to publicly share one's own reasons for voting against a particular policy or program.
  - a. If a Trustee is speaking as an individual they should use agreed upon disclaimers prior to sharing.
3. Board Trustees will avoid reference to confidential information about employees, students, or other matters in e-mail communications, because of the risk of improper disclosure. Board Trustees will comply with the same standards as school employees with regard to confidential information including FERPA and HIPPA law.
4. Providing appropriate deference when approached by the public. For example, Board Trustees approached with inquiries about District issues should defer without comment to the Superintendent or their designee, who will speak for the District.
5. Inquiries regarding Board practices or actions, should be deferred without comment to the Board President who will confer with the whole Board on such matters during a regular Board meeting, and when directed by the whole Board, respond on their behalf.

### **Handling Complaints**

The Clark County School District promotes a culture that is welcoming and open, defined by mutual respect and shared responsibility, and treats parents, staff, students, and citizens with respect and dignity. The district is committed to resolving concerns and complaints about school and district programs, policies, procedures, actions, and decisions of employees in an effective, efficient, and timely manner by initiating the complaint with the person(s) who is the closest level of authority able to resolve the matter.

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*Board of School Trustees*

**CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

While speakers may offer objective criticism of operations and programs, the board will not hear personal complaints concerning district personnel nor against any person connected with the school system. To do so could expose the board to a charge of being party to slander and would prejudice any necessity to act as the final review of administrative recommendations regarding the matter.

1. If a complaint is received from parents, students, or community members the Trustee shall refer that person to the Board liaison.
2. If a complaint is received from a staff member the Trustee shall refer the staff to their association representative and to the complaint process which can be explained by the association representative and/or the Human Resource department.
3. If the Trustee would like follow-up on the handling of the complaint, the Trustee can request such follow-up through the Board Liaison who will confer with the administrator handling the complaint and update the Trustees on the outcome. However, confidential information pertaining to staff and students shall not be disclosed.

**Use of Email and Social Media**

Use of electronic mail (e-mail), social media posting, social media messaging, and text messaging, by Trustees will conform to the same standards of judgment, propriety, and ethics as other forms of school board-related communication. Trustees will comply with the following guidelines when using e-mail and social media in the conduct of Board responsibilities:

1. The Board will not use e-mail, communications via social media, or other electronic communications as a substitute for deliberations or voting at Board meetings or for other communications or business properly confined to Board meetings. "Deliberation" is defined as the receipt or exchange of information or opinion relating to a decision, but shall not include informal or impromptu discussions of a general nature which do not specifically relate to a matter then pending before the public agency for decision.

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2. Trustees will not use social media or post during public Board meetings. To comply to the intent of the Open Public Meeting Law, Trustees are obligated to deliberate in public and are not legally allowed to engage in chain communication between other Trustees to negotiate or influence voting decisions or hide what are intended to be public. To avoid breaking Open Meeting Law, Trustees should not use any messaging platforms such as texting or reading messages received during the meetings to negotiate or influence decisions.
3. E-mail, e-mail attachments and social media posts received or prepared for use on Board business or containing information relating to Board business (regardless of whether sent or received on a school owned computer or personally owned computer) are generally regarded as public records, which may be inspected by any person upon request, unless otherwise made confidential by law.
4. Individual postings made to social media sites should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect on the Trustee, the full Board, and the District. Opinions expressed by Trustees on a social networking website have the potential to be disseminated far beyond the Trustee's desire or intention and typically undermine the public perception of fitness of the individual to serve students' interest.
5. Individual Board member postings are an act of the individual and are not an act of the Board. Trustees should realize that communications, social posting, media remarks, or media releases that do not reflect the decisions by the whole Board are not sanctioned by the whole Board and are disparaging toward Board members Trustees or district personnel run counter to this policy. This is necessary to let the public know that the individual Trustee was not speaking on behalf of the Board.
6. Trustees should use their own best judgment for their own individual communications. The Board President is primarily responsible for engaging the Progressive Responses protocols if they believe communications are incongruous to descriptions in this policy, although any Trustee can use these protocols to address communication they believe run counter to this policy. Responses to communication that is incongruous to this policy should result in the Board President or other Board members Trustees engaging the Progressive Response policy. If unsuccessful, the policy supports considering the use informal censure of the Trustee as a last resort.

**President as Spokesperson for Board Decisions**

1. Trustees shall refrain from speaking individually to the media or posting public comment on social media regarding Board or District matters that are under policy or program deliberation, and prior to a decision and vote by the Board.
2. When responding to media inquiries regarding inquiries on decisions made by the Board, individual Trustees shall defer responses regarding the full Board to the Board President, who shall confer with the Executive officers and upon their approval prepare a statement speaking on their behalf. The written statement shall include the vote count and the reasons behind the dissenting votes. This does not prevent individual Trustees from speaking individually about their own vote on an issue after it has been decided. When doing so, Trustees are encouraged to speak to the media with support through established media best practices.
3. The Board President represents the Board to outside parties in announcing Board-stated positions and in stating decisions and interpretations within the area delegated to her or him. The Chairperson may delegate this authority but remains accountable for its use.
4. The Board President shall remind Trustees to refrain from speaking individually regarding Board or District matters that are under policy or program deliberation, and prior to a discussion and vote by the Board. This could be viewed as chain communication to influence the public and other Trustees to vote with an individual Trustee and thus infract Open Public Meeting Law.
5. The Board President shall only speak on behalf of the whole Board when directed to do so by a vote of the Executive Officers. The Board President shall not speak on behalf of the Board on issues that have not be voted upon or have not been discussed. The Board President's personal opinions shall not be represented as the position of the whole Board. Individual opinion from the Board President should be clearly designated as such.