

ALGONQUIN AND LAKESHORE CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

POLICY STATEMENT

Public Committee/Board Meetings and Public Relations

Regular Meetings of the Board and Standing Committee Meetings are open to the press and public.

Board members or members of Committees may move to go into closed sessions following regular meetings in order to debate matters of a highly sensitive, confidential or political nature, such matters as affecting security, allocation of resources, wages, salary negotiations and personnel matters. Open debate on such matters might well jeopardize fruitful discussion and cause unnecessary embarrassment or injustice to individuals or groups.

Agendas for Standing Committee meetings should be prepared with this flexibility in mind. Final decisions on these matters, however, must be made public as soon as possible.

Approved: January 27, 2004

ALGONQUIN AND LAKESHORE CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

POLICY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Public Committee/Board Meetings and Public Relations

1. The Chair of the Board and the Chairs of the Standing Committees should consult as often as considered necessary to develop a coherent and responsible communication procedure with the press and the public.
2. The times and dates of Regular Meetings of the Board and the Standing Committees are to be advertised prominently. The press and public should receive specific invitations to attend special presentations or listen to debate on matters with wide public interest and involvement.
3. After each Regular Meeting of the Board or Standing Committee, the respective Chair may wish to speak informally with the press and public to elaborate further on matters already debated. All Chairs are responsible for the consequences of voicing personal opinions on any matter subsequent to its consideration by the Board of Trustees.
4. Where press releases involve important statements of policy and procedure with supporting data and rationale, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Board for immediate action. With the assistance of the Director of Education, the Chair will prepare any necessary reports for release.
5. The Chair of the Board and the Director of Education (or their respective delegates) are free to communicate at any time directly with the press or public on any matter as they see fit, especially where an immediate reply is desirable, keeping in mind that their views, even if prefaced as personal opinion, will probably be regarded by the public as a fair reflection of the spirit and view that the Board holds or would hold if confronted with the issue.
6. Acknowledgment of all communications to the Board which is normally carried out over the signature of the Director of Education should be made, with a suitable reply if possible at the time, without delay. This may involve consultation with the Chair of the Board. Where a reply is dependent on a Board decision, the matter should be handled by the Board at the earliest Regular Board Meeting or, if urgency dictates, a Special Meeting of the Board called at the discretion of the Chair. All correspondence should adhere to the general rules of sympathy, courtesy, understanding and explanation.
7. Open forums should be used to explain positions on important matters directly affecting students, parents, staff or related groups. It may be appropriate from time to time for a Committee or the Board to send an advance copy of the material to be presented at such forums, to interested parties.
8. Presentation of position papers to fact-seeking public bodies/holding public hearings, should be undertaken when the interests and welfare of the school system are directly involved.

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