



Policy Section: **Trusteeship and the Board**

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Policy Name: **Electronic Meetings**

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Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board that electronic meetings will be utilized as an enabling tool for all aspects of business operations of the system, and that:

1. Meetings of the Board or a committee of the Board, utilizing electronic means be held when and where such meetings are organized consistent with the guidelines and procedures set out within this policy;
2. Trustees, staff, and public participating in these meetings are governed and regulated according to the procedures and parameters set forth within the guidelines and procedures set out within this policy as well as the operational By-laws of the Board, and any regulations of the Ministry of Education;
3. The equipment necessary to enable meetings to take place is operated and controlled in the manner set forth within the guidelines and procedures set out within this policy;
4. Electronic meetings are encouraged to facilitate the educational operations of the Board.

Rationale

The Keewatin-Patricia District School Board has a significant geographical area to serve. Trustees may use technology to provide opportunities for fulfilling their commitment to the Board in carrying out their responsibilities. Members of the public must have access to meetings of the Board to encourage community awareness of Board activities. Pupil representatives have a dual commitment to not only the Board,

Cross Reference
Ontario Regulation: 286/06
Videoconference Users' Guide
Policies:
203, Student Trustee
802, School Viability and Closure

Date Adopted: 24/02/1998
Dates Reviewed: 09/11/2004; 08/02/2005;
08/11/2005; 06/06/2007;
10/11/2009; 08/11/2011, 08/10/2013
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but also, their academic studies and electronic meetings enable and encourage participation.

Electronic meetings must be designed to enable participation in meetings and work of the Board. Their design must conform to the requirements of the Ministry of Education O. Reg. 268/06.

Guidelines

1. Attendance – Trustees

- a) A member of a District School Board who participates in a meeting through electronic means in accordance with the Board policy and O. Reg. 268/06, shall be deemed to be present at the meeting for the purpose of every Act.
- b) Trustees who elect to participate through electronic means must participate under the Procedural Guidelines as set out in Appendix A.
- c) On the request of any Board member, or pupil representative, to participate in a meeting of the Board, or a meeting of a committee of the Board, including a Committee of the Whole Board, through electronic means, the Board shall subject to guideline *1.c.i*, and provide the appropriate technology ensuring that two-way communication is available between all participants of the meeting
 - i) The Board may refuse to provide a member with electronic means of participation where to do so is necessary to ensure compliance with sections *1.d* or *1.e* (O. Reg 268/06, S. e (3)).
- d) At every meeting of the Board or Committee of the Whole Board, the following persons shall be physically present in the meeting room of the board: (O. Reg 268/06, S. 5 (2))
 - i) The Chair of the Board or Committee of the Whole (or their designate)
 - ii) At least one additional member of the Board
 - iii) The Director of Education (or their designate)

- e) At every Board committee meeting, except a Committee of the Whole Board, the following persons shall be physically present in the meeting room of the committee: (*O. Reg 268/06, S. 5 (2)*)
- i) The Chair of the Committee (or their designate)
 - ii) The Director of Education (or their designate)
- f) From time to time, by motion of the Board, meetings of the Board, or Committee of the Whole, or Committee of the Whole In-Camera, may be scheduled as face-to-face meetings. A face-to-face meeting is defined as a meeting where members are strongly encouraged to attend in person at the designated meeting room.
- g) Conditions for access to electronic meetings are governed by:
- i) purpose of the meeting
 - ii) composition of participants in the meeting

All scheduled Board meetings and Committee of the Whole Board are accessible via electronic means for all participants at designated sites.

Exceptions to this include:

- iii) Trustees may access scheduled Board and Committee of the Whole meetings electronically from places other than the designated sites when they are accessing the meeting from a location outside the jurisdiction of the Board, or within the jurisdiction of the Board under exceptional circumstances, with the approval of the Chair of the meeting.
 - iv) The public may not access the Committee of the Whole In-Camera as per the Education Act.
- h) Committee of the Whole meetings will be accessed electronically as per this policy, but Trustees may attend in person at the designated meeting room.
- i) Board meetings which are scheduled face-to-face may be accessed electronically as per this policy, but Trustees are encouraged to attend in person at the designated meeting room.

j) Trustees are responsible for ensuring they are physically present in the meeting room of the Board as required by the Education Act S.229 (1) (2) which states:

i) 229. (1)

“Despite section 208.1, but subject to subsection (2), a member of a board shall be physically present in the meeting room of the board for at least three regular meetings of the board in each 12-month period beginning December 1, 1997, c. 31, s. 112.”

ii) 229. (2)

“Despite section 208.1, for the period beginning when a member of a board is elected or appointed to fill a vacancy and ending on the following November 30, the member shall be physically present in the meeting room of the board for at least one regular meeting of the board for each period of four full calendar months that occurs during the period of beginning with the election or appointment and ending on the following November 30. 1997, c. 31, s. 112.”

2. Electronic Meetings – Procedure for Meetings of the Board

- a) All Trustees and the pupil representative should have a hard or electronic copy of the Board package, including the agenda, prior to the meeting for reference during an electronic meeting.
- b) All Trustees and the pupil representative should have a copy of the committee’s agenda prior to the committee meeting for reference during an electronic meeting.
- c) The Chair of the Board shall ensure that declarations of conflict of interest are heard by all Trustees and the public in attendance and that those participating by electronic means outside the meeting room of the board have an opportunity to verbally declare any conflict.
- d) Committee of the Whole In-Camera is a meeting closed to the public. The Chair of the Committee of the Whole shall make a reasonable effort by communicating with the site monitor to ensure access to Committee of the Whole In-Camera is not available to the public.



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- e) The Board shall provide electronic means for members of the public to participate in meetings open to the public at sites to be determined by the Board from time to time. Their participation shall be limited to:
 - i) Observing/listening to proceedings of the Board
 - ii) Responding to Board activities and/or providing input during the period of the Board agenda "Observer Comments"
- f) The meeting room of the Board or of a committee of the Board shall be open to permit physical attendance by members of the public. It is understood that this provision does not apply where a meeting is closed to the public in accordance with the Education Act.

3. Exceptions

- a) Where the requirements of sections *1.c* and *1.d* cannot be fulfilled, the meeting is declared canceled, or an alternative face-to-face meeting may be scheduled.

Appendix A – Procedural Guidelines

1. Electronic Means

- a) Electronic means shall include teleconferencing and videoconferencing.
- b) Teleconferencing and videoconferencing will be provided by the Board on telephones, video monitors, or communication centers at designated sites.
- c) During the meeting proceedings, the audio guidelines outlined on page 14 of the Users' Guide will be followed. Where the site is being used by members of the public only, the microphone shall be turned off at all times unless requested by the Chair to be activated.
- d) Operational guidelines will be developed to ensure the meetings have trained site monitors with clearly defined responsibilities.

2. Electronic Meetings

- a) Committee of the Whole In-Camera is closed to the public. The individuals who have been designated by the Director of Education under 3.e to operate and monitor the electronic means will open and close the site electronic means according to:
 - i) The requirements of the Education Act; and
 - ii) Directions of the Chair.
- b) The Board will establish a list of sites where Trustees, the pupil representative, and/or the public can gain access to Board or committee meetings via electronic means. These sites will be the official electronic access points of the Board and where appropriate the public will be notified of the time and place. Additional sites may be added on an as-needed basis.
- c) The individual designated under 3.e has the authority of the Chair to shut off a site thirty (30) minutes after the meeting has commenced if:

- i) No Trustees are accessing the meeting electronically, and
- ii) No members of the public are in attendance.

d) In the event that a Board meeting that is being accessed electronically is encountering interference and/or disruption by electronic participants, the Chair shall warn the participants the first time, advise them a second time that any further disturbance/interference continues, and on further disturbance/interference, direct the site monitor to shut off electronic access.

e) No Trustee or pupil representative will be denied access at any time under section 2.d.

3. Attendance

a) Roll call for all meetings shall be taken verbally and duly recorded to ensure Trustees and the pupil representatives are recognized in attendance.

b) Trustees participating in an electronic meeting shall notify the Chair of their departure (either temporary or permanent) from the meeting before absenting themselves in order to ensure quorum is maintained.

c) Trustees and/or the pupil representatives must request participation by electronic means at least thirty-six (36) hours in advance of the meeting, through the Director of Education.

d) Electronic means will only be available to the public in designated sites other than the designated meeting room of the Board.

e) The Director of Education will designate various individuals to be in attendance at these sites to operate and monitor electronic means.

4. Voting at Electronic Meetings

a) In preparation of Board motions, members must indicate their willingness to let their name stand as mover and seconder. Prior to the vote, the Chair will read each motion and indicate the member who has moved the motion and the member who is seconding it.

- b) The Chair will call the vote for:
 - i) Those in favor of the motion,
 - ii) Those opposed to the motion.

The Chair will make the decision whether the motion was carried or defeated.

- c) The ruling of the Chair may be appealed by any member.
- d) When a ruling is appealed, the Chair will poll the members alphabetically by their last name to verify the decision. It should be noted this is not a recorded vote as per the procedural guidelines of Board meetings.
- e) If subsequent rulings are appealed during the meeting the Chair will poll the members as set out in *4.d* beginning at the second name on the next appeal, the third name on the next appeal, etc. until all members have had the opportunity to vote first.