

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

Background

The Division believes every staff and Board member has a role to play in ensuring accurate information is shared with parents and communities about Battle River School Division's (BRSD) activities, programs and decisions.

Procedures

1. General Expectations for all staff and board members

- 1.1 All Board and staff members will adhere to Labour Relations laws, FOIP legislation, applicable Professional and/or BRSD Codes of Conduct, BRSD Social Media guidelines and confidentiality agreements when speaking publicly.
- 1.2 Before responding to any information or inquiries received, all Board and staff members must check the background facts and ensure information they are receiving and subsequently sending out is accurate.
- 1.3 All communication with the public regarding specific issues shall be based on the position of the Board of Trustees.
- 1.4 If the Board of Trustees has not discussed the issue or developed a position, individual Board members or staff are not to speculate on what the Board's position might be.

2. Specific Responsibilities

2.1 Board Chair

- 2.1.1 Reference Board [Policy #6](#): Role of the Board Chair.

2.2 Superintendent of Schools

- 2.2.1 Is the official spokesperson for BRSD on issues that are within their realm of responsibility. This includes operational or school-based issues and personnel issues.
- 2.2.2 The Superintendent, in cooperation with the Board Chair and the Communications Officer, will act as a spokesperson when there is a need for crisis communication on any issue.
- 2.2.3 The Superintendent may designate a spokesperson on an issue.

2.3 Communications Officer

- 2.3.1 Manages the day-to-day messaging for the school division as a whole, sharing updates and information about activities and projects.
- 2.3.2 Answers general questions and inquiries from media or community members.
- 2.3.3 Will refer public inquiries to the Superintendent of Schools in a crisis or controversial situation.

2.4 Division Leaders

- 2.4.1 May be designated by the Superintendent of Schools to speak on any issue that is within their field of expertise, such as transportation, finance, technology, the condition of a building, etc.
- 2.4.2 Will refer public inquiries to the Superintendent of Schools or Communications Officer in a crisis or controversial situation.

2.5 Principals

- 2.5.1 Will refer public inquiries to the Communications Officer and/or Superintendent of Schools in a crisis or controversial situation.
- 2.5.2 Share information with families on issues related to their school community, seeking support and assistance from the Superintendent of Schools and Communications Officer as required.
- 2.5.3 Are encouraged to develop positive relationships with their local media representatives, keep local media informed about scheduled school activities and welcome media to attend school events.
- 2.5.4 Are the point of contact for local media outlets that are attending school functions or activities
- 2.5.5 Ensure that media are well informed about FOIP requirements and ensure media comply.

2.6 BRSD Staff

- 2.6.1 Teachers are the front-line contact for parents and are the best source of information on how students are doing, the purpose of classroom projects, goals and outcomes of a course, etc.
- 2.6.2 All media inquiries received by staff are to be referred to their supervisor. Staff without authority, outlined in 2.2 and 2.4 to 2.6, will not act as spokespersons for BRSD on any issue.
- 2.6.3 If staff have questions or require clarification of this, or any, procedure, they should consult with their direct supervisor.

3. Safety Issues

In the event there is a safety issue at a school, such as power/water outage, etc., school administration is expected to immediately inform the Superintendent of Schools who, in consultation with the Secretary-Treasurer and/or appropriate department heads, will support schools in their response.

4. Crisis Communication

- 4.1 If an incident or threat occurs at a school, or in the local area and potentially impacts the school, school administration is expected to inform the Superintendent of Schools. The Division uses a protocol known as “Hour Zero” to support effective crisis response.
- 4.2 In the event that a crisis communication plan is required, in order to provide information to parents or the broader community, the plan will be developed jointly by the Superintendent of Schools or designate, school administration, and communications officer.

Related: Policy #6: Role of the Board Chair