



Section Seven: Community Partnerships

715 – CONSULTATION WITH PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

Introduction

The Board of Education believes that appropriate consultation with staff, parents and the community is critical to the effective operation of a public school district.

Policy

1. The Board believes that the development of meaningful consultation can best be achieved through a commitment of all partnership groups to focus on the best interests of the students.
2. The Board recognizes that partner groups have an obligation to represent the interests of their members.
3. The Board further recognizes that there are legal obligations through contracts, provincial legislation and policies to consult with those affected by their decisions. Beyond these legal imperatives, the Board believes that the purpose of consultation is to facilitate communication, develop joint ownership, enhance solutions and increase the chances of successful implementation of Board decisions.

4. Definition of Consultation

The Board defines consultation as receiving input and sharing information, which may or may not result in the input being acted upon. Mutual consent is not required or preclude action being taken. Consultation does not mean decision-making, but is a step taken as part of the decision-making process.

5. Principles of Consultation

The Board is committed to the following principles of consultation:

- 5.1 Proactive consultation regarding educational issues is encouraged and invited.
- 5.2 When consultation on an issue is sought, the Board must not have made a judgment on the matter and must be willing to give serious consideration to the information obtained.
- 5.3 Although the Board is mandated to make certain decisions and has a legislative requirement to take action on certain matters, attempts should be made to achieve consensus.



Section Seven: Community Partnerships

“Together We Learn”

- 5.4 The Board must give due consideration to the time required for meaningful consultation.

6. Scope of Consultation

- 6.1 In accordance with the Board's mission statement, opportunity for consultation on issues should be provided when either the Board or a partner deems that input is important.
- 6.2 The scope of consultation may include, but not be limited to, all those matters defined by provincial legislation, policy and contracts. Where feasible, it may also include those issues identified by staff, parents and the community as ones where input is desired.
- 6.3 Consultation on every issue is not practical. Emergency situations may limit the time and scope of consultation.
- 6.4 Although consultation might be sought and acted upon, responsibility for decisions lies with the individual or group mandated through legislation or policy, not the group or individuals consulted.

7. Consultation Process

- 7.1 Consultation with the public should be undertaken when:
- 7.1.1 the public will be significantly affected by the decision;
 - 7.1.2 the decision is significant and high profile;
 - 7.1.3 more information on the implications of the decision is needed;
 - 7.1.4 the decision is value based and/or subjective in nature.
- 7.2 Before the Board engages the consultation process, the following will be defined by the Board:
- 7.2.1 objectives and goals of the consultation;
 - 7.2.2 measures of success for the consultation process;
 - 7.2.3 the issues and stakeholders involved in the consultation process;
 - 7.2.4 the level of involvement by trustees, staff and stakeholders required in the consultation process (e.g. informational, shared planning or delegated authority);
 - 7.2.5 the determination of the level of response required (e.g. written or verbal report);



Section Seven: Community Partnerships

7.2.6 the determination of timelines for the completion of the process.

8. Consultation Opportunities

In addition to the formal consultation provided in the collective agreements, Board policy and the School Act, the Board encourages the following structures to be in place:

- 8.1 annual meetings of the Board with the executive of CUPE Local 3523, Central Okanagan Teachers' Association (COTA), Central Okanagan Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association (COPVPA), Central Okanagan Parent Advisory Council (COPAC) and District Student Council (DSC);
- 8.2 attendance of a Board representative and the Superintendent of Schools or designate at the regular meetings of COPAC;
- 8.3 regular CUPE/management liaison meetings;
- 8.4 regular meetings of the Superintendent, or designate, with representatives of employee groups, COPAC and DSC;
- 8.5 regular meetings of the Superintendent with the administrative team;
- 8.6 establishment of ad hoc committees;
- 8.7 a standing invitation for official representatives of CUPE, COTA, COPVPA, COPAC and DSC to attend public regular and special Board meetings, and be recognized/acknowledged by the Board Chair to contribute during debate on any matter affecting their respective associations;
- 8.8 a standing invitation for official representatives of CUPE, COTA, COPVPA, COPAC and DSC to serve on Board Standing Committees as non-voting members;
- 8.9 an opinion each year from Parent Advisory Councils to the Board with regard to the development of the district's budget and the allocation of staff and resources at an individual school.

Date Agreed: November 13, 2002

Date Amended: December 14, 2005; June 22, 2016;

April 14, 2021

Related Document: School Act Sec. 8.2