

BYLAWS OF THE BOARD

Electronic Mail (e-mail) Communication Among Board Members

To offer access to diverse and unique educational resources and to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication, Internet service and e-mail is provided for board of education members in accordance with the provisions of board policy and regulations 6300: Integrated Communications Network.

The Okemos Board of Education recognizes that the use of electronic mail (e-mail) among board members must not violate the state's Open Meetings Act. E-mail communication among board members shall not be used to circumvent public discussion. A majority of board members or a board committee shall not exchange e-mail on topics that require public discussion.

While e-mail communication between two board members does not violate the Open Meetings Act, individual board members will avoid electronic communications that would constitute the board deliberating outside of a board meeting held in public. These include sequential e-mail communications (one board member sends a message to a second board member, who adds his or her thoughts and relays the message to a third member), real-time chat or instant messaging, or copying e-mails to other board members to exchange opinions, since such communication could be interpreted as a meeting or "round robin" discussion.

Under no circumstance shall board members use e-mail to discuss among themselves board business that is only to be discussed in an open meeting of the board, is part of an executive session, or could be considered an invasion of privacy if the message were to be monitored by another party.

There should be no expectation of privacy for any messages sent by e-mail. Messages that have been deleted may still be accessible on the hard drive, if the space has not been occupied by other messages. Messages, deleted or otherwise, may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act unless an exemption would apply.

The members of the Okemos Board of Education may utilize the district's e-mail system through individual accounts to communicate with the public, subject to limitations contained in the Campaign Finance Act. Further, board members shall use the district's technology only for facilitating learning and enhancing educational information exchange consistent with the goals of the district. Use of the systems for private business, product advertisement, political lobbying, unauthorized entry into other computer systems, or for making any financial commitments is strictly prohibited.

The Okemos Board of Education further recognizes that e-mail communications via the district's e-mail system or using district e-mail addresses are subject to Freedom of Information Act requests.

Board members will comply with the district's policies and regulations concerning the access and use of the district's media and technology, including federal copyright laws.

Legal References: MCLA 15.231/15.261, Open Meetings Act, as amended
47 USC, Section 254 (h) and (i)
47 Code of Federal Regulations Part 5
Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000

See Also: Board Policy 6300: Integrated Communications
Network

Policy

Adopted: 11-07-05

Amended: 04-09-12

Reviewed: