

Protocols for Board/Superintendent Communication

As a team, the Board and Superintendent, we recognize the importance of clear, transparent and timely communication. In accordance with Michigan School Code [380.1229](#) and Benzie [Board Policy 4601](#), the Board of Education employs the superintendent as the chief executive officer and is responsible for the “development, supervision, and operation of the school program and facilities.” We recognize that the superintendent is the only employee of the district who reports to seven board members. It is expected the superintendent provide necessary information to the board as requested following the outlined protocol:

Data to Support Communication Protocol:

On May 23, 2021 at a Board and superintendent-facilitated retreat, the Board and superintendent outlined communication priorities and protocols. In general the Board expressed concern around the amount of time the superintendent attends to communication. The below plan highlights and codifies agreed-upon communications commitments:

Superintendent to Board of Education

The superintendent is committing to the following communication protocols:

1. No surprises (if some issue/item surfaces, the superintendent will make every effort to inform the Board)
 - a. Urgent items include but are not limited to student safety, lockdowns, and media requests.
 - b. Recognizing some items are unpredictable the Board will provide the superintendent grace.
2. Monthly board meetings
3. Weekly written updates
4. Email communications in a timely manner when items of importance arise
5. Text messages or phone calls on urgent items
6. Responses to board member's questions (response to all members)
7. All media calls filtered through the superintendent's office (if press calls a board member, a note is sent to President/Superintendent then out to all board members. The Board reserves the right to identify a spokesperson)
8. Planning meetings and/or agendas with Board President's input and approval
9. If a concern arises around communication protocols, the superintendent will work with the board member and/or president
10. Clear is kind. If a board member has a question or concern with superintendent communication a direct conversation will ensue.
11. When needed, a face to face meeting with individual board members.

Monitoring of Success:

Monthly check in (informally) with board members. If necessary, standing board agenda item to review progress and success of communication protocols.

Board of Education Members to Superintendent

Board of Education members are committing to the following communication protocols:

1. No surprises (if some issue/item surfaces, the board members will call, email, or text the superintendent)
2. Communication will be directed to the superintendent and if information is requested, the superintendent will engage support staff
3. A reasonable amount of time will be given to process questions and responses (depending on the question and request, 1-3 business days). Every effort will be made to process the request as soon as possible.
4. Only board items acted upon and passed with a majority of the board reflect the work of Benzie and provide staff with board direction. Dialogue and discussion that occur during board of education meeting time should not be considered the will of the board.
5. On board matters, the Board President (or designated spokesperson) serves as the spokesperson for the board.
6. Board members agree that they represent constituents and refer any questions/concerns they hear to the superintendent to address and provide follow up. Moreover, board members will adhere to the communication chain and protocol. Concerns are best resolved: teacher, principal, and then superintendent.
7. Committed to maintaining fidelity to fellow board members, Benzie board policies and governance team standards will be followed when communicating with constituents, staff and media.
8. Board members who have questions regarding committee meetings will speak directly with the chair of said committee. If further questions arise, the superintendent will be contacted.

Board Roles- [Policy 2101](#)

Board Code of Ethics- [Policy 2302](#)

Monitoring of success:

Monthly check in (informally) with board members and superintendent. If necessary, standing board agenda items to review progress and success of communication protocols.

TIMELINE (Annual Renewal)