



## **ELECTRONIC USE, AND ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS**

### **Preamble/Rationale**

The Board of Trustees values the use of electronic modes of communication in conducting its business. The use of electronic means facilitates the holding of Board, committee, and committee of the whole meetings. It is also recognized that distance and other considerations may occasionally be an obstacle to a Trustee being physically present at a meeting. In such situations, the Board will allow a Trustee to participate in a meeting by electronic means. To the above ends, individual Trustees will be supplied with necessary equipment, including a Laptop Computer, and will be remunerated for associated expenses incurred.

### **Electronic Means**

Electronic means shall include:

- a) Teleconferencing, or
- b) Videoconferencing

Electronic access to meetings will only be allowed through the use of a secure line. Trustees participating electronically will be called by the Secretary-Treasurer or designate at the beginning of the in-camera session.

### **Consideration/Requirements**

In accordance with subsection 39.7.1 of the *Public Schools Act*, and Manitoba Regulation 201/04:

- Participation through electronic means equals presence at a Board meeting.
- The rules governing the conduct of members under sections 36 to 39.8 of the *Public Schools Act*, Section B of the Policy Manual, and the Procedural By-Law of the Portage la Prairie School Division, must be respected.
- A Trustee must be physically present at a regular meeting at least once every three months. A Trustee may only participate in a meeting by electronic means a maximum of three times per year, unless approved otherwise by Board resolution by at least two thirds of Board members.
- At every meeting of the School Board, the following persons must be present in the meeting room of the Board:
  - a) The Chair of the Board or his or her designate;
  - b) At least one additional member of the Board;
  - c) The Superintendent of the Division or his or her designate;
  - d) The Secretary-Treasurer or his or her designate.

### **Agenda**

The agenda and supporting material are distributed to Trustees electronically at least two working days prior to a meeting. A Trustee participating electronically shall have a copy of the meeting agenda for references during the meeting.



### **Requests to Attend Electronically**

Upon written request to the Chair of the Board or to the Secretary-Treasurer, at least twenty four hours prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Board shall provide electronic means to permit the participation of the Trustees. The Chair of the Board shall, however, have authority to refuse to provide a member with electronic means of participation in a meeting of the Board, where it is deemed impossible to ensure compliance with the terms of this policy.

### **Locations and Set-up**

The electronic means provided for a Trustee's participation must permit the Trustee to hear and be heard by all other participants in the meeting. Trustees participating by electronic means will be responsible for ensuring the required privacy and confidentiality of proceedings.

### **Quorum**

A member of the Board who participates in a meeting through electronic means in accordance with this policy shall be deemed to be present at the meeting, will be so recorded in the attendance for the meeting, and will count toward a quorum for the meeting. Trustees participating in a meeting shall notify the Chair of their departure (either temporary or permanent) from the meeting before absenting themselves, in order to ensure that a quorum is maintained. Should technical difficulties arise, where members affected by the disruption are no longer deemed present at the meeting, the Chair will assess whether a quorum is present.

### **Voting Methods**

The Chair will call the vote of those in favour of a motion and those opposed to the motion, and the votes of participants by electronic means will be made verbally, after giving their name. The Chair will announce whether the motion was carried or defeated. During secret ballots, votes will be accepted by private fax or private electronic mail, under the supervision of the Secretary-Treasurer.

### **In-camera Sections of Meetings**

All provisions in the legislation, divisional procedural By-Law, and policies with regard to closed session (in camera) sections of meetings shall apply.

### **Public Participation**

The Board may provide electronic means for members of the general public to participate in meetings open to the public. Their participation shall be limited to:  
observing/listening to proceedings of the Board;  
responding to Board activities and/or providing input during the approved period of the meeting agenda.

*(Public Schools Act, 29-39)*

*(Manitoba Regulation 201/04)*

See also BCG, BCA, BCH, BCL, BGE