

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Meetings**

#### **Electronic Mail Communications**

The Board of Education believes that Board members electronically connected to other Board members is an efficient and convenient way to communicate. The main goal of electronic mail (e-mail) is to expedite the passage of information. E-mail gives Board members quick access to one another. Communication among Board members via e-mail should conform to the same standards as other forms of communication, (i.e., committee meetings, etc.) as directed by the Freedom of Information Act. When used properly, e-mail is an effective communications tool and can provide a formal record of such communication. Board of Education members using the Weston email systems are subject to Policy 4118.4(a) to the extent applicable.

#### **Guidelines for Board E-Mail Usage**

The Freedom of Information Act mandates that all meetings of public bodies such as school boards be open to the public. It is the policy of the Board of Education that e-mail shall not be used in such a manner as to deprive the public of the rights given to it under the Freedom of Information Act. For this purpose, this bylaw sets forth guidelines for the uses intended to be made of e-mail by Board members when communicating with other Board members.

1. E-mail, like other written forms of communication relating to the conduct of the public business is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and subject to disclosure.
2. Board members shall not use e-mail as a substitute for deliberations at public Board meetings, and/or shall not discuss policy matters or vote informally in any issues.
3. E-mail should be used to convey factual information.
4. Personnel issues and other sensitive subjects should never be discussed on-line. The confidentiality of employee data, pupil data, and other sensitive subjects must always be maintained.

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### **Retention Guidelines (continued)**

A message sent or received by e-mail in the conduct of public business as a Board member is a public record.

- Transitory messages, including copies posted to several persons and casual and routine communications similar to telephone conversations. No retention requirement. Public officials and employees receiving such communications may delete them immediately without obtaining the approval of the Office of the Public Record Administration and State Archives.
- Public records with less than Permanent retention period. Follow retention period for equivalent hard copy records as specified in an approved retention schedule. The record must be in hard copy or electronic format which can be retrieved and interpreted for the legal retention period. When there is a doubt about the retrievability of an electronic record over the life span of that record, the record should be printed out.
- Public records with a Permanent or Permanent/Archival retention period. Retention may be in the form of a hard-copy printout or microfilm that meets microfilm standards issued in GL96-2. The information must be eye readable without interpretation.

Legal reference: Connecticut General Statutes  
Connecticut Office of Public Records  
The Freedom of Information Act

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WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Weston, Connecticut