

Dover-Eyota Public Schools Policy 298

Adopted: 5/14/07,
Minor changes
11/13

298 SCHOOL BOARD USE OF ELECTRONIC MAIL

I. PURPOSE

The school board recognizes that electronic communications between, by or among its members are classified as government data and must be collected, created, received, maintained and disseminated in accordance with state and federal law. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to ensure that the electronic communications of school board members are compliant with applicable law.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. The use of electronic communications by members of the school board shall conform to the same standards of judgment, propriety and ethics as other forms of school board related communications.
- B. Because electronic communications by, between or to school board members may be subject to the Open Meeting Law as well as data privacy laws, copies of all electronic communications of school board members should be transmitted to the school district data compliance officer (Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent) to maintain and administer in accordance with state and federal law.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Electronic communications" are the transmittal of a communication between two or more computers or electronic devices, whether or not the message is converted to hard copy format, whether or not the message is viewed upon receipt or stored for later retrieval and whether or not the transmittal is through a local, school district or global computer network. Electronic communications include, but are not limited to, e-mail messaging, text messaging, the use of Internet Web forums and Internet chat rooms.
- B. "Meeting" means a gathering of at least a quorum or more members of the school board, or quorum of a committee or subcommittee of school board members, at which members discuss, and/or decide, as a group, issues relating to the official business of the school board. The term does not include a chance or social gathering.
- C. "Quorum" means the majority of the voting members of the school board.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. School board members shall not use e-mail or other electronic communications as a substitute for deliberations at school board meetings or for other communications or business properly confined to school board meetings.
- B. School board members shall be aware that e-mail, e-mail attachments and other electronic communications received or prepared for use in school board business, or containing information relating to school board business, may be regarded as public data which may be inspected by any person upon request, unless otherwise classified as private or confidential data.
- C. School board members shall avoid reference to private or confidential information about employees, students or other school district matters in any written or electronic communications. Communications which must contain private or confidential information shall be made and maintained in accordance with Dover-Eyota School District Policy 515 – Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records.
- D. School board members who engage in electronic communications relating to school district matters are required to transmit a copy of any and all such communications to the school district data compliance official. These copies shall be printed and maintained in the school district office in the same fashion as any other school board records.
- E. Written or electronic communications of school board members shall be made available to the public for inspection, subject to the redaction of private and/or confidential data, to the extent required by law.

V. REVIEW OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

- A. The school district data practices compliance official shall review all electronic communications provided by school board members for compliance with the Open Meeting Law and data privacy restrictions.
- B. The school district data practices compliance official shall investigate any instance where a concern is raised that an electronic communication involving a school board member potentially violates the Open Meeting Law or data privacy laws based upon either a review of the documents provided to the data practices compliance official or the receipt of an independent complaint. The investigation may be conducted by school district officials or by a third party designated by the school district.
- C. The data practices compliance official shall advise the school board chair of the pending investigation as well as the results of the investigation. The school board chair may take immediate steps to address possible concerns as to violations of this policy pending completion of an investigation.
- D. The investigation will be completed as soon as practicable. The data practices compliance official shall make a written report to the school board chair upon completion of the investigation. If the complaint or concern involves the school board chair, the report may be filed directly with the school board vice chair. The report shall include a determination of whether the allegations have been substantiated as factual and whether they appear to be violations of this policy.
- E. Upon receipt of a report, the school board will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, censure or removal from the school board.

VI. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY AND TRAINING

- A. This policy shall be given to each school board member at the time each board member takes office.
- B. The school district will provide school board members with training as to their obligations under the Open Meeting law and data privacy laws.

Cross References: Dover-Eyota Public Schools Policy 205 (Open Meetings and Closed Meetings)
Dover-Eyota Public Schools Policy 204 (School Board Meeting Minutes)
Dover-Eyota Public Schools Policy 207 (Public Hearings)
Dover-Eyota Public Schools Policy 209 (Code of Ethics)
Dover-Eyota Public Schools Policy 213 (School Board Committees)
Dover-Eyota Public Schools Policy 406 (Public and Private Personnel Data)
Dover-Eyota Public Schools Policy 515 (Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records)
Dover-Eyota Public Schools Policy 524 (Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy)