

South Burlington School Board Guidelines
Social Media Communications
Original Adopted: February 1, 2017
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Many School Board members are active users of social media including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Front Porch Forum, and other blogs and websites. Social Media can be a positive tool for fostering community engagement but must be used wisely, in compliance with open meeting laws and South Burlington School District Policy B2 Board Members' Code of Conduct and in a manner that reflects positively on the District and the School Board as a whole.

In its simplest form School Board members can utilize social media sites to promote dates and agenda topics of upcoming meetings and community forums to garner broader attendance.

The Board currently maintains a Facebook page that is used sparingly for School Board communications with the community. Primarily the Board uses the page to direct community members to other District resources, such as the District website, and to remind community members about meetings or events that may be of interest to them. Occasionally the Board uses the page to direct community members to documents or analyses that were used to inform Board discussions or to answer questions that arise before votes regarding District matters such as the annual budget. The Board has made no commitment to maintain this page regularly or indefinitely but rather uses it as a tool when the Board feels it would be helpful to the community. The page does not serve as an official record of meetings, nor does it replace the Board-approved calendar for regular meetings that appears on the District website.

Front Porch Forum allows for the Chair to hold a "special account" allowing him/her to post to all neighborhoods in the District. To date there is no formal expectation regarding the use of this forum.

In order to avoid giving preferential access to any particular group of individuals and to allow Board members to prioritize the core work of the District, the Board has determined that for the time being it will not regularly monitor or communicate through any social media site established by members of the public.

The School Board's current communication practices with the public, in addition to warned meetings and hearings, include:

- Posting of meeting minutes, meeting schedules, and agendas on the District web site.
- Accepting and responding to School Board group and individual emails.
- Posting of links to RETN recordings of meetings and events to the District website.
- Authoring semi-regular columns in the *Other Paper*.

In using social media or websites to communicate about District business, a School Board member should:

1. When posting on any social media other than the official School Board Facebook page, clarify that you are communicating as an individual member of the School Board or as a private individual, and not an official spokesperson of the District.
2. When posting on the School Board Facebook page, post only information that has previously been shared by the District with the public or information that has been approved by the Board for distribution through the page.
3. Not deliberate District business with a quorum of the School Board.
4. Direct complaints or concerns presented online to the appropriate administrator.
5. Not post content that indicates that you have already formed an opinion on pending matters unless that opinion has already been stated in a public meeting.
6. Post only content that the District has already released to the public.
7. When attempting to restate what happened at a previous School Board meeting, clarify that the posting is not an official record of the meeting and share information only from the open portions of the meeting.
8. Not attempt to interpret or clarify previous comments made by or opinions of other School Board members or District employees on their behalf.
9. Conduct yourself online in a manner that reflects well on the District.
10. Not post anonymously about District business.
11. Retain electronic records of posts and content. When a School Board member posts about School Board business, his/her posts should be retained along with subsequent comments on the same post by members of the public.