



YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Policy #215.0, Electronic Participation in Board, Advisory and Board Committee Meetings

WORKING DOCUMENT

Executive Summary

The Electronic Participation in Board, Advisory and Board Committee Meetings policy outlines participation in Board, Advisory and Board Committee meetings via teleconference or other electronic means by voting and non-voting members.

What has Changed?

Major changes to the document:

Reason for review: Four-year cyclical review.

Who is affected by these changes and what is the impact on current practice?

Implementation timelines: Immediate.

Lead Superintendent(s)/Subject Matter Expert(s): Director of Education

Stakeholder Groups with Responsibilities under this Policy

- Board of Trustees
- Committee Chair or Designates
- Director of Education
- Senior Staff members who oversee Board, Advisory and Board Committee meetings

Relationship to Board Priorities

The Electronic Participation in Board, Advisory and Board Committee Meetings policy demonstrates the Board's commitment to high standards of practice in all Board operations. Ensuring that members are able to participate in discussions when they are unable to attend a meeting in person allows the business of the Board to move forward while enhancing confidence in public education and contributing to the well-being of meeting participants.

Timelines and Next Steps

This policy was scheduled for first review at the December 13, 2022 Policy and By-Law Standing Committee meeting.

Providing Feedback

Questions about this policy and/or procedure should be raised with your principal, manager or supervisor. If additional clarification is required, principals, managers and supervisors may contact the lead superintendent and/or subject matter expert through Trustee Services.

In accordance with Board Policy #285.0, [Board Policies, Procedures and Supporting Documents](#), the Board welcomes all comments and suggestions on Board policy.

Input is an important component of the review process. If you feel a policy and/or procedure needs to be revised, feedback may be submitted through the school council or by submitting the on-line form. In your response please;

- outline clearly the specific section(s) of the policy and/or procedure in which you are not comfortable,
- suggest specific alternate wording to reflect your position, and
- identify the reason(s) for your concern(s).

Specific recommendations or questions about the review process should be submitted using the on- line form or sent to the Policy Officers via email at policy.committee@yrdsb.ca, or via telephone at 905-727-0022 extension 2570 or in hard copy at [The Education Centre – Aurora](#).

Legislative Context

[Education Act](#)

It is the expectation of the York Region District School Board that all employees, students and persons invited to or visiting Board property, or partaking/volunteering in Board or school-sponsored events and activities, will respect the policies and procedures of the Board.



Policy #215.0 Electronic Participation in Board, Advisory and Board Committee Meetings

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1. Policy Statement

The York Region District School Board believes that in-person and electronic participation in Board, Advisory and Board Committee meetings by voting and non-voting members is essential to moving forward the business of the Board. To ensure quorum, electronic participation in Board, Advisory and Committee meetings will be facilitated by staff when voting and non-voting members are unable to attend in person.

2. Application

This policy applies to trustees, student trustees, staff members and community members who attend or provide support at Board, Advisory and Board Committee meetings.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- a) making every reasonable effort to attend or participate in Board, Advisory and Board Committee Meetings, of which they are members, to ensure quorum;
- b) providing notice to the Director of Education, via Trustee Services, if they intend to participate electronically at least 48 hours prior to the Board or Committee meeting;
- c) ensuring that any trustee or student trustee who wishes to participate in Board, Advisory or Board Committee meetings by audio conference or other electronic means is permitted to do so;
- d) adhering to the [York Region District School Board Operational By-Law](#) when participating in meetings by audio conference or other electronic means;
- e) requiring, at a minimum, the physical presence of the following individuals at any Board Meeting or Committee of the Whole Meeting, unless all schools of the York Region District School Board are closed as described in section 7 of Regulation 463/97:
 - the Chair of the Board or their designate,
 - at least one additional trustee, and
 - the Director of Education or their designate;
- f) requiring, at a minimum, the physical presence of the following individuals at any Board Committee (composed only of trustees) Meeting, unless all schools of the York Region District School Board are closed as described in section 7 of Regulation 463/97:
 - the Committee Chair or their designate, and

- the Director of Education or their designate;
- g) determining other offsite locations to invite participation in Board, Advisory or Board Committee meetings by members of the public, when required;
- h) ensuring that the meeting room of the Board, Advisory or Board Committee shall be open to permit physical attendance by members of the public at every meeting of the Board, Advisory or Board Committee unless the meeting is closed to the public in accordance with the Education Act or Ontario Regulation 463/97 and ensuring that members of the public may also have access to those meetings by electronic means;
- i) ensuring that student trustees do not participate in any Board, Advisory or Committee meeting that is closed to the public in accordance with Section 207 (2) (b) of the Education Act; and
- j) if declaring a conflict of interest, withdrawing from the private meeting for the entire discussion of the matter that was declared a conflict.

3.2 The Board, Advisory or Board Committee Chair, or designate, is responsible for:

- a) ensuring that all voting members participating in Board, Advisory or Board Committee meetings, including by audio conference or other electronic means;
 - signify their vote or decision to abstain from voting for each motion being considered during the meeting, and
 - indicate their desire to withdraw from the meeting (such withdrawal will be recorded in the minutes as part of the Board's official records);
- b) ensuring that all voting and non-voting members have an opportunity to address a motion before a vote is taken; and
- c) accepting private electronic votes for the election of officers under the supervision of the Director of Education or designate.

3.3 The Director of Education is responsible for:

- a) implementing and operationalizing the Participation in Board, Advisory and Board Committee Meetings policy;
- b) making every reasonable effort to attend or participate in Board, Advisory and Board Committee Meetings;
- c) ensuring that voting and non-voting members have an opportunity to participate (and be deemed present) in Board, Advisory and Board Committee meetings from off-site locations by electronic means that permits voting members and student trustees to hear and be heard by all other participants in the meeting, including non-voting members;
- d) ensuring that the electronic method of participation complies with conflict of interest legislation and the Board's Operational By-Law and that appropriate processes are put in place to ensure the security and confidentiality of meetings closed to the public in accordance with the [Education Act](#); and
- e) ensuring that voting and non-voting members wishing to participate in a Board, Advisory or Board Committee meeting by audio conference or other electronic means notify the senior staff member responsible for the committee.

3.4 Senior staff members who support Board, Advisory and Board Committee meetings are responsible for:

- a) facilitating participation in Board, Advisory or Board Committee meetings by audio conference or other electronic means;
- b) ensuring that all voting and non-voting members participating by audio conference or other electronic means are provided with all meeting materials prior to the discussion;
- c) ensuring that the minutes of the Board, Advisory or Board Committee meetings accurately represent voting or non-voting member participation in the meeting; and
- d) providing support to the Chair of the Board, Advisory or Board Committee meetings, including , but not limited to, distribution of materials, meeting follow-up, interpretation of the York Region District School Board Operational By-Law and election of officers by private vote.

3.5 Committee members are responsible for:

- a) making every reasonable effort to attend or participate in Board, Advisory and Board Committee Meetings of which they are members to ensure quorum;
- b) in exceptional circumstances, participating in Board, Advisory or Board Committee meetings by audio conference or other electronic means, except where participation in person is required by Board motion; and
- c) adhering to the [York Region District School Board Operational By-Law](#) when participating in meetings by audio conference or other electronic means.

4. Definitions

4.1 Board, Advisory and Board Committee Meetings

Board, Advisory and Board Committee meetings examine matters and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees, where applicable, in accordance with the [York Region District School Board Operational By-Law](#). A list of official Board, Advisory and Board Committees is outlined in Section 3:00 of the Operational By-Law.

4.2 Election of Officers by Private Electronic Vote

Voting members participating in Board, Advisory or Board Committee meetings by audio conference or other electronic means may participate in voting for the election of officers by private electronic means such as, but not limited to, fax, telephone or electronic mail, provided they are present for the duration of the discussion and vote(s) for any elected position.

4.3 Voting Members

Voting members may be trustees, staff and/or community members appointed to serve on Board, Advisory and/or Board Committee meetings, as outlined in the York Region District School Board Operational By-Law. Voting members are eligible to vote on matters being considered by the committee.

4.4 Non-Voting Members

Non-voting members may be trustees, staff and/or community members who participate in discussions at Board, Advisory and/or Board Committee meetings, as outlined in the York

Region District School Board Operational By-Law. Non-voting members may participate in discussions, but are not eligible to vote on matters being considered by the committee.

4.5 Quorum

The presence of a simple majority of all voting members constituting a Board, Advisory or Board Committee is necessary to form a quorum for a meeting.

5. Contact

Director's Office

6. History

Approved 1999

Revised 2004

Working Document April 2014

Revised February 2014, November 2022