

UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY
Policy Number: 2004
Policy Name: Board Member Communications
Date Last Approved: August 1, 2024

By this policy, the Utah State Board of Education, “the Board,” respecting First Amendment rights, establishes the following internal rules and procedures for Board members’ communication and expected decorum. Board members may speak, write, debate, listen, challenge, and learn while maintaining civility and mutual respect.

1. External Advocacy
 - a. A member’s communications as described in Board Bylaws Article V Subsections (4)(a) and (b) shall not, as determined by Board Leadership:
 - i. Place the Board at risk of legal liability;
 - ii. Defame Board staff or individuals;
 - iii. Promote inaccurate information;
 - iv. Place Board staff or individuals at risk for harm; or
 - v. Incite or encourage violence.
2. Additional Board Member Ethical Responsibilities
 - a. A member shall comply with the Board’s Acceptable Use Policy regarding use of USBE electronic devices.
 - b. A member should not communicate anything that violates R277-217 Educator Standards or Title 67 Chapter 16 Utah Public Officers’ and Employees Ethics Act.
 - c. A member should hold themselves to a higher standard than the general public in areas of conduct and ethics, including in their communications generally and in their use of social media.
3. Board and Member Communications
 - a. When a constituent communication does not identify a member’s district, Board staff will provide an informational response;
 - b. When a communication identifies a member’s district, the applicable member is encouraged to respond;
 - c. A member may not share pre-meeting materials with the public until such time that the document or its contents are made public through the established process;
 - d. A member may not share or forward to anyone outside of the Board or Board staff, communications in draft form until the Board makes the communications or contents public; and

- e. A member is encouraged to respond in a timely manner to communications from constituents and:
 - i. may utilize Board staff to assist with constituent communications; and
 - ii. If 25 or more emails regarding the same topic are received, rely upon an informational reply sent by Board staff, approved by Board Leadership.
- 4. Outgoing Correspondence from Board Leadership
 - a. The entire Board shall be copied on correspondence sent to elected public officials that communicates an official Board position when signed by or sent under the name of all members of Board leadership.
 - b. The entire Board shall be copied on correspondence sent to a district superintendent or charter school director when signed by or sent under the name of all members of Board leadership.
- 5. Official Communications Sent Pursuant to Section 53G-7-224:
 - a. Except as provided in Subsection (6)(d), if the Board or Board leadership seeks to send an official communication to school employees as described in Section 53G-7-224, before sending the official communication to school employees, Board leadership shall blind carbon copy a draft copy to all Board members at least 72 hours in advance of sending the official communication to school employees.
 - b. During the 72 hours described in Subsection (6)(a), a Board member may provide feedback individually to Board leadership for Board leadership consideration.
 - c. If Board leadership amends the draft communication, the updated draft shall be sent to Board members before sending the official communication to school employees.
 - d. If an official communication with school employees is related to an emergency, Board leadership may send the official communication to school employees if Board leadership sends a copy of the communication to all members of the full Board by email before sending.