

## Administrative Procedure 119

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### ISSUES MANAGEMENT

#### Background

It is important to anticipate emerging issues that have the potential to impact upon the school system and to be able to manage them in a responsible and pro-active manner. Issues that are left unresolved have the potential to be damaging to the division and affect the relationships between those groups that make up the school community.

#### Procedures

1. When an issue has arisen within the system, the Superintendent and the Principal will consult in order to determine whether the issue is at the school, system or community level.
2. When appropriate, issues may be communicated by the Superintendent to the Principals and Principals' Association to allow for collegial support.
3. When Principals are called on for background information they should respond directly to the Superintendent.
4. If the issue is judged to be a school-level issue, such as a serious accident, field trip incident, discipline, etc., the following shall apply:
  - 4.1 The Superintendent shall inform the Board chair and trustees about the issue.
  - 4.2 The Principal, in consultation with the Superintendent, shall decide who will be the most appropriate spokesperson to the media. There shall only be one spokesperson for the school.
  - 4.3 The Principal shall be responsible for internal communication to all staff, students and parents about the issue.
  - 4.4 Each school shall have a communications plan and articulate this plan to parents and the community via the school councils. School councils, if requested by the Principal, may assist in developing action plans to deal with issues.
  - 4.5 The Superintendent shall coordinate the release of information to the public through the media, including the preparation of news releases. In some cases, a media coordinator may be necessary to be on site and to assist with the media.
5. System-level issues such as significant changes to programs and services, diminishing financial resources, shall be dealt with in the following manner:

- 5.1 The Superintendent shall inform the Board chair about the issue immediately and they shall jointly decide who is the most appropriate spokesperson to the media.
  - 5.2 The Superintendent shall be responsible for:
    - 5.2.1 Informing any external stakeholder that may be impacted (i.e. business, industry).
    - 5.2.2 Informing all central office staff and Principals of the issue and how the school system is responding.
    - 5.2.3 Issuing a news release, if deemed appropriate, and keeping the media informed about the issue and the school system's response.
    - 5.2.4 Providing factual information to the media and referring all requests for comment to the designated spokesperson.
    - 5.2.5 Issuing a prepared statement for use by telephone answerers in response to requests from the public.
  - 5.3 The Principals will be responsible for informing staff, students and parents about the issue, as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent.
  - 5.4 The Board chair will be responsible for informing Board members about the issue and keeping them informed as the situation develops.
6. Community-level issues such as violence outside of schools, accidents on school grounds, behavior of students off school property, shall be dealt with in the following manner:
    - 6.1 The normal channels of communication shall be used in notifying the Superintendent when staff become aware of situations.
    - 6.2 School personnel, in consultation with their Principal, should be encouraged to cooperate with members of the community to address the issue and may assist in the communication.
7. When dealing with the media, the following shall apply:
    - 7.1 One spokesperson will represent the Board when dealing with the media.
    - 7.2 Schools will attempt to maintain liaison with media representatives in their community.
    - 7.3 Schools will emphasize to media their obligation to protect the rights/identities of students and parents in order to avoid slander and misinformation.
    - 7.4 The Board and senior administration may choose to host open public/media information sessions and every attempt will be made to represent all viewpoints (e.g., panel discussions).