

Bylaw 9010: Public Statements

The Governing Board of Education recognizes the rights responsibility of Board members in their role as community leaders to participate in public discourse on matters of civic or community interest, including those involving the district, and their right to freely express their views and encourages open discussion of issues during the Board meeting. The Board believes that effective Board members have a responsibility to express themselves, whether in agreement or disagreement with the Board majority, in ways that promote the Board's ability to govern the district. However, to ensure communication of a consistent, unified message regarding district matters, issues, Board members are expected to respect the authority of the Board to choose its representatives, to communicate its positions, and to abide by established protocols.

Board Spokesperson

All public statements authorized to be made on behalf of the Governing Board shall be made by the Board president or, if appropriate, by the Superintendent or, with respect to a specific issue or topic, other representative as designated by the Governing Board or Board president.

When speaking for the Governing Board, a spokesperson shall exercise restraint and tact and communicate in a manner that promotes public confidence in the Board's leadership.

Board spokespersons shall not disclose confidential information or information received in closed session except when authorized by a majority of the Governing Board or by law. (Government Code 54963)

Statements by Individual Board Members

When speaking to community groups, the news media, or other members of the public, individual Board members should recognize that their statements may be perceived as reflecting the views and positions of the whole Governing Board. Board members have a responsibility to identify personal when a viewpoints as such and not as the viewpoint of the Board is held by an individual Board member rather than the Board as a whole. For example, a Board member may include a disclaimer on the Board member's personal social media account that the Board member is expressing personal viewpoints and not those of the Board or the district.

~~All public statements authorized to be made on behalf of the Board shall be made by the Board president or, if appropriate, by the Superintendent or other designated representative.~~

Board members who opt to express their opinions on district matters, whether in-person or online, are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful, courteous, and professional manner and to model good behavior for district students and the community.