

WESTERN GATEWAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

This Communications Policy is intended to ensure that communications between Western Gateway Elementary School (“WGES”) Board of Directors, staff, WGES families, and other interested members of the community are handled appropriately and in a manner that best serves WGES.

The WGES Board recognizes that potential problems and conflicts can be avoided by having a clear policy that addresses both internal and external communications. It is also important that the roles and responsibilities of the Board and staff are outlined to facilitate effective communication between and among the Board, staff, families, and other parties. All Board members and staff are expected to be courteous in all communications.

As general guidance, it is important that the Board speaks with one voice or not at all. This does not imply that there has to be unanimity or lack of diversity, but when a vote is taken or a policy developed, each member of the Board acts and supports the decision made, until it is changed by the Board.

Communications between Board Members at Meetings of the Board

Board members should communicate in an open and constructive manner during meetings of the Board and committee meetings. Board members shall not use inappropriate language, body language, or verbal tone during their debate of the issues. Any actions or comments designed to insult, demean, or attack any member of the Board, staff or general public shall be strictly prohibited. Board and committee members shall not discuss or communicate confidential proceedings of the Board outside the meeting, this prohibition includes e-mail, texting, anonymous posting on social media or other internet platforms, and other forms of communication.

WGES Board meetings are public, and Board and WGES staff shall be courteous and welcoming to invited guests and any members of the community who choose to attend Board meetings.

Communications between Board Members Outside of Meetings of the Board

Any Board member may contact the Board Chairperson, or in their absence or unavailability, the Vice-Chairperson, regarding issues of interest or concern to WGES. Board members are to contact the Board Chairperson if they wish to have specific issues discussed by the Board, so that these items can be added to the Board meeting agenda.

The WGES Superintendent will be responsible for drafting and publishing an agenda of items to be discussed at the Board’s regularly-scheduled meetings, in accordance with all applicable Open Meeting requirements. The WGES Superintendent will provide the agenda to the Board’s designated liaison for comment and approval of the agenda, in advance of the statutory publication deadline. Once the agenda has been approved by the Board liaison, it may be posted and published in accordance with the Oklahoma Open Meetings Act.

Communications between WGES Community and Board Members

WGES is appreciates and encourages open communication between the WGES community and the WGES Board. All Board meetings are open to the public, and WGES community members are encouraged to attend if they choose.

If there are any concerns regarding the WGES community, student incidents or issues that took place on school premises or that involve members of the school community, facility safety or maintenance issues, or any other issues that need to be considered and/or addressed at governance meetings, WGES community members are encouraged to reach out to the WGES Board at the email address posted on WGES' website.

Any WGES community member who wishes to address an agenda-related topic at a regularly scheduled business meeting are required to complete a Public Comments Sign-up Form before the Board meeting convenes. These forms will be available in the office and must be submitted to the Superintendent before the meeting convenes. Public comments must pertain to a topic listed on the agenda for the meeting when comments are made.

Communications between WGES Staff and Board Members

WGES is best served through open communication between WGES staff and the WGES Board. The Superintendent will demonstrate accountability and transparency by proactively and timely providing the Board all data and information relevant to the School's mission, without waiting for such information or data to be requested.

Such relevant information that should be proactively provided by the Superintendent includes, but is not limited to, all school testing data; enrollment/disenrollment information; grievances by staff, families, or other members of the WGES community; significant student disciplinary incidents or issues, any incident reports or information about incidents that took place on school premises or that involve members of the school community that may involve press inquiries, notification to WGES' insurance carrier, and/or require no a risk-management response; staff employment decisions (hiring, termination, notable disciplinary matters); facility safety or maintenance issues, and all similar data and information that may help educate Board members as to issues that need to be considered and addressed in governance meetings.

If a Board member needs substantive information or assistance to conduct due diligence regarding the administration of WGES, their primary contact will be the Superintendent. Board members may contact other members of the WGES administrative staff directly, as they deem appropriate.

The Superintendent will communicate with the Board Chairperson and other members of the Board between meetings, if and when issues arise that require immediate attention.

If the Superintendent or member of the WGES staff experiences any issues or problems with a WGES Board member, the Superintendent should immediately alert the Chairperson, unless the Chairperson is the problem, in which case the Superintendent may alert the Vice-Chairperson or another officer.

Communications between WGES Staff and an External Third Party

If the WGES Superintendent or other member of staff is asked to make a presentation to external groups, the staff member must indicate that he or she is not speaking on behalf of WGES, unless they have specifically been authorized to do so by the Board. WGES staff shall be respectful of the Board, its policies, and its decisions in all external communications, even if the WGES staff member disagrees with the Board's decision(s).

To ensure accuracy of WGES materials which are prepared by WGES staff for publication, adoption as a school policy, plan or procedure, grant application, accreditation, reporting to any state or federal entity,

and/or general distribution, and to avoid any conflicting messages or appearance of conflicts, the WGES Superintendent and staff must provide all such draft materials to the Board prior to a regularly-scheduled Board meeting (or emergency Board meeting, if necessary) for review and approval prior to distribution or publication to any third party.

Communications between a Board Member and an External Third Party

If a Board member is asked to make a presentation to external groups, the Board member must indicate that he or she is not speaking on behalf of WGES, unless the Board member has specifically been authorized to do so by the Board. Board Members shall be respectful of the Board, its policies, and its decisions in all external communications, even if the Board member disagrees with the Board's decisions.

To ensure accuracy of materials related to WGES which are prepared by Board members for publication or general distribution, and to avoid any conflicting messages or appearance of conflicts, Board members should generally provide such materials to the Board for review and approval prior to internal or external distribution or publication.

Communications between Board Members/Staff and the Media

In general, the Superintendent and the Board Chairperson or their designee are the only two individuals authorized to speak on behalf of WGES. The primary media contact for WGES will be the Superintendent. When a statement from the Board is required, the Board Chairperson will serve as the spokesperson for WGES. If the Board Chairperson is unavailable, the Chairperson will appoint a liaison to serve as the spokesperson.

Should the media inquiry be regarding a crisis of any sort, Board members and WGES staff will refer all media inquiries to the Board Chairperson and Superintendent, who will work together to respond to the crisis.



**WESTERN GATEWAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
BOARD MEETING PUBLIC COMMENT SIGN-UP FORM**

REMINDER: THIS FORM MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE WGES SUPERINTENDENT BEFORE THE BOARD MEETING BEGINS.

MEETING DATE: _____

NAME: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

HOW ARE YOU INVOLVED IN THE WGES COMMUNITY? PLEASE CIRCLE AT LEAST ONE OPTION BELOW.

STUDENT

PARENT

TEACHER

ADMIN STAFF

COMMUNITY MEMBER

OTHER

WHICH AGENDA ITEM ARE YOU HERE TO ADDRESS?

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES TO KEEP IN MIND:

WGES appreciates and encourages open communication between the WGES community and the WGES Board. All Board meetings are open to the public, and WGES community members are encouraged to attend if they choose.

If there are any concerns regarding the WGES community, student incidents or issues that took place on school premises or that involve members of the school community, facility safety or maintenance issues, or any other issues that need to be considered and/or addressed at governance meetings, WGES community members are encouraged to reach out to the WGES Board at the email address posted on WGES' website.

Any WGES community member who wishes to address an agenda-related topic at a regularly-scheduled business meeting is required to complete a Public Comments Sign-up Form before the Board meeting begins. These forms will be available in the office and must be submitted to the Superintendent before the meeting begins. Public comments must pertain to a topic listed on the agenda for the meeting when comments are made.