



# Public & Media Communication Guidelines

## MESD Board - 2025-2026

### Board Contacts

- Board Chair, Katrina Doughty: [kdoughty@mesd.k12.or.us](mailto:kdoughty@mesd.k12.or.us)
- Vice Chair, Amanda Squiemphen-Yazzie: [asquiemph@mesd.k12.or.us](mailto:asquiemph@mesd.k12.or.us)
- Superintendent, Paul Coakley: [pcoakley@mesd.k12.or.us](mailto:pcoakley@mesd.k12.or.us)
- Director of Strategic Communications and Public Affairs, Marifer Sager: [msager@mesd.k12.or.us](mailto:msager@mesd.k12.or.us)

### Purpose

The MESD Board is committed to ensuring that our community and agency have **accurate, timely, and consistent information** regarding Board actions, deliberations, policies, and strategies. These guidelines support that goal by outlining communication protocols for Board members.

### Media and Press Inquiries:

1. The Board Chair shall be the official spokesperson for the Board to the media and press on issues of media concern.
2. If a Board member receives an inquiry from a member of the media concerning Board action, deliberation, policy or strategy, the Board member shall indicate that they cannot comment because the Board Chair is the official spokesperson on behalf of the Board.
3. If a Board member receives an inquiry from a media representative concerning MESD agency programming or services, the Board member shall indicate they cannot comment and refer the media member to the MESD Director of Strategic Communications who is the official spokesperson for the agency.



4. The Board member who received the media inquiry shall notify the Superintendent, Director of Communications and Public Affairs , and the Board Chair as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours after the inquiry.
5. The Board member receiving the press inquiry shall also provide contact information for the correct spokesperson to the individuals from the media outlets.
6. The Board Chair shall work with the Director of Communications to develop a strategy around media inquiries.
7. Depending on the inquiry, the Board Chair or the full Board may need to engage Board Committees and or agency staff before responding.
8. Individual Board members shall not share personal opinions as the opinion of the entire Board.
9. Individual board members may submit media publications, engage in media interviews, and identify viewpoints as personal opinions rather than the opinion of the Board. Board members shall notify and provide a copy of the submission or topic of the interview to the Superintendent, Director of Communications, and Board Chair before providing interviews with TV, radio stations, and publications.

## Public/Community Engagement

### Email

1. When the Board receives an email communication from a community member or the general public, the Board Chair will respond or delegate that responsibility to another Board member.
2. A “footnote” statement will be added to the bottom of the Board Chair’s email with the following information: “The Board Chair responds to emails sent to the Board. School Board members only deliberate when gathered as a quorum as outlined in the Public Meeting Law. To assure that Board conversations and deliberations do not occur via



email, the Board Chair will respond on behalf of the Board. All Board members receive communications from the community and responses given by the Board Chair.”

3. All Board members will be included in responses made by the Board Chair. Following the communication from the Board Chair, other Board members may also respond if they wish. The entire Board should be included in communications sent to the public.

When a single Board member receives an email communication from the public, they may respond to that patron only as an individual and not on behalf of the Board. The Board member may elect to forward the email and their response to the Board Chair or entire Board if they wish.

4. Board responses to community communications (emails, letters) should occur within 48 hours after receiving the communication. The Board Chair will delegate if they are unable to meet this timeframe.
5. To ensure we are not violating any open meeting law violations, Board members should never use “reply all” or engage in back-and-forth exchanges of viewpoints in emails or text messages to Board members during meetings.

## Phone

If a single Board member is contacted by phone, they may respond to that patron only as an individual and not on behalf of the Board.

Should a Board member be contacted by phone by an MESD staff member, they may respond to that staff member only as an individual and not on behalf of the Board.

## Meetings

Board members are encouraged to meet with community members. If an individual requests a meeting with a Board member, they may have that meeting at their convenience, but only as an individual and not on behalf of the Board unless authorized by the Board Chair.

## MESD Internal Communications

### Email

When the Board receives a written or electronic communication from a staff member or members, the Board Chair will redirect the request to the Superintendent.



## **Communicating with the Superintendent or the Board Secretary**

Board members should respond to communications from the Superintendent or the Board Secretary within 48 hours upon receiving the email, text, or phone call.

## **Meetings**

Board members are encouraged to contact the Board Secretary and Superintendent to schedule meetings with staff members. MESD will provide the board with a calendar of program/site visits for the 2025-2026 school year. No more than three board members shall attend at a time to avoid quorum. If a staff member requests a meeting with a Board member, they should redirect the request to the Superintendent for follow up.

## **Complaints and Grievances**

Concerning complaints or grievances from staff members, the Board shall refer to MESD's Policy GMB-AR which outlines the complaint procedure. When in doubt, the Board member who receives the complaint or grievance shall contact the Superintendent.

**NOTE:** In all the instances where it reads: that board members can engage as "individual and not on behalf of the Board unless authorized by the Board." Need to be specified to the party.

## **Other Communications - Social Media**

### **Social Media Postings**

If a Board member publishes content regarding MESD actions on their own Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or other social media they should be aware that this makes their profile automatically a "public profile". If Board members have questions about content or positioning, they should contact the Director of Strategic Communications before posting via MESD email.

Public profile guidelines:

- You can not express personal opinions in any matter (you can do this, on your personal profile)
- Don't block users or delete comments just because they criticize you.
- Have a social media policy, make it public, and follow it.



- If you limit what your followers can post, the limits should be reasonable and viewpoint-neutral, and enforced consistently.
- If you moderate speech on your account, don't forget due process.

### Sample Response to Inquiries to Single Board Members

Thank you for your inquiry, I'm happy to speak to you as a Board member; however, comments on behalf of the Board are made by the Board Chair.

The Board Chair's contact info is Renee Anderson: [kdoughty@mesd.k12.or.us](mailto:kdoughty@mesd.k12.or.us)

### Review and Acknowledgment

This agreement will be reviewed annually at the Board's organizational meeting and signed by each member.

**Board Member Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Board Member Name (Printed):** \_\_\_\_\_