

USE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR COMMUNICATION

The Board recognizes the value and importance of the use of technology to assist in the sharing of information and communication. It is the intent of the Goffstown School Board to comply with all New Hampshire Right to Know Laws. As of this writing, 8-15-05, the State Right to Know commission has released a comprehensive report dated 10/04 and available at <http://www.nhsba.org/documents/righttoknowstudycommissionreport102904.pdf>. The legislature has yet to finalize the statutes to coordinate the right to know laws with the use of technology.

The following reflect proposed technical changes to RSA 91-A and will serve as our Policy until such time as the legislature passes new legislation.

The definition of a public meeting shall include the following words: whether in person, by means of telephone or electronic equipment, or in any other manner, such that all participating members are able to communicate with each other contemporaneously..." This would appear to cover situations in which board members engage in discussion exchanges that occur at the same time, which would then, under this definition, likely constitute a meeting.

If Board members use technology to communicate wherein they DO NOT communicate simultaneously – such as email-it –this would not be considered a meeting.

If a quorum of the Board participates in an email exchange, such communication shall be fully disclosed at the next meeting prior to any decision on the matter, including a decision not to act.

Communications among less than a quorum of members need not be disclosed.

Sequential communication on the same matter shall be disclosed if the total number of members participating would constitute a quorum if meeting contemporaneously. Such disclosure to be made by those who know, or should know, that the number participating constitutes a quorum.

The board further notes that any communication that takes place outside of meetings shall not be used to circumvent the spirit of RSA 91-A.

As a practical consideration the Board recognizes E-Mail as a useful tool to gather information and communicate with other officials, staff, agencies and the public. School Board members must be alert that any such communication may be subject to NH's Right to Know law. Board members shall take into consideration:

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(Continued)**

All electronic communications are potentially subject to RSA 91-A. Do not put anything in an e-mail you would not want to read in the newspaper.

Keep public and personal communications totally separate. Do not put personal messages in e-mails discussing public business. Do not send or receive personal e-mails on school computers unless you do not care about eventual disclosure.

(The above is taken from the NHSBA FOCUS Vol 2, Number 5, May 2005.)

It is suggested that when communicating with other board members that you do so to less than a quorum (5) at a time and do not reply to all if all includes a quorum number of the board.

The Board is committed to making no decisions or developing consensus on any business that may come before the Board without a duly noticed and convened Board Meeting.

Proposed: 09/06/05

Adopted: 10/03/05