

DISTRICT PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Background

The Vancouver School District serves students, their families and staff by providing educational programming and facilities to support all students in achieving their educational outcomes. Therefore, it is important to provide the District's various audiences and stakeholder groups with dynamic opportunities to engage in decisions by the Board, District office and schools.

Following best practices in public engagement and participation enables the District to be responsive to educational needs of students as well as the societal needs of audiences and stakeholder groups it serves. To enable this, the District employs the Participation Spectrum of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) (see appendix).

Definitions

1. For the purposes of public participation and engagement, key terms are as follows:
 - 1.2 Decision makers: Elected trustees of the Vancouver Board of Education (VBE) and/or Superintendent or delegate(s) and school administration.
 - 1.3 Management: Senior leaders and District management as well as school administrators.
 - 1.4 Audiences and stakeholder groups: Parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in Districts schools, students attending District schools, community members/individual members of the public, school-based and District staff, representatives of stakeholder organizations and associations that participate on Board standing committees, school-based parent advisory committees, District parent advisory committee, etc.
 - 1.5 Organizations/Partners: Community organizations, businesses and potential partners, other public sector organizations, etc.
 - 1.6 Public Engagement: The process of soliciting, summarizing, sharing and incorporating input for the purposes of decision making.

Procedures

1. The District will follow best practices as guided by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2).
 - 1.1 District staff will engage with audiences and stakeholder groups in a clear and transparent manner, explaining the public participation goal and the decision-making process and responsibilities.

2. The District shall design processes and use tools that encourage participation by a broad cross-section of audiences and stakeholder groups to ensure representative views and ensure that:
 - 2.1 Materials and information clearly outline options for input, feedback or influence by engagement participants; and incorporates clear language and audience-accessible visuals to explain information;
 - 2.2 There are varied opportunities to participate (in-person, online, etc.);
 - 2.3 Promotes public engagement activities broadly, using social media and owned channels, earned and paid media, community networks, advertising, site-specific locations and through partners' owned-channels;
 - 2.4 Leverages existing groups (community meetings, gatherings, parent advisory committee meetings, committee and Board meetings, etc.) as well as hosting events (in-person or virtually);
 - 2.5 Seeks representative samples of audiences and stakeholder groups; and,
 - 2.6 Provides timely and transparent reporting to audiences and stakeholder groups and decision-makers with rigorous analysis of input received.

3. District staff are responsible to identify topics on which to engage audiences and stakeholder groups and the opportunities for meaningful participation.
 - 3.1 Engagement methods will be selected to ensure broad-based participation is possible. Where appropriate, members of audiences and stakeholder groups may be requested to help formulate the public participation plan and provide input about materials, timing and methodologies;
 - 3.2 Engagement will be done within a reasonable timeline providing adequate opportunity for public input and respecting decision-makers' responsibilities and required schedules (for example budget process, programs and registration timelines, etc.);
 - 3.3 Engagement processes, activities and materials will be audience-centric and clearly outline expectations and commitments of the District and/or the Board; and,
 - 3.4 Based upon direction of the Board, the Superintendent with advice of District communications staff, will determine the topics/areas appropriate for public engagement consistent with the School Act, the Board of Education Policy Manual and Administrative Procedures, and adhere to legislation including privacy and copyright.

4. Participation Spectrum of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)

IAP2 Spectrum (adapted)	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal	To provide the public (s) with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the topic, alternatives and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision -making in the hands of the public
Promise to the Public	We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listened to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and, provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporating your advice and recommendation into the decision to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide
Tactics/Tools/ Methodologies	newsletters, social media, email, website, earned media, community updates, committee & Board reports for info, information	Surveys, Q&As, meetings, information sessions, open houses, discussion guides and feedback	Surveys, world cafes, open houses, discussion guides + feedback forms, talking circles, focus groups, delegations, etc.	Surveys, world cafes, focus groups, early input on development, deliberative polling, etc.	Require documentation of process, analysis of public participation and must be consistent with Board policies, administrative procedures as well as legal and fiduciary requirements of the District.

Reference: Section 8, 20, 22, 65, 85 School Act Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Board Policies 1, 2 and 12, Administrative Procedures 105, 110, 114, 150, 153, 155 and 180

Effective: December 4, 2019