



Media Release

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COMMITTEE MEETINGS NOW OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Democracy is essential to public education and the democratic process must be open and transparent. This belief was an important part of the Board's Strategic Planning Workshop held in February, 2011. At that workshop trustees worked to ensure the Board's democratic decision-making process was open and transparent by directing that Policy 8: *Committees of the Board* be amended to ensure that Committee meetings of the Board be open for public attendance. Regular Business meetings of the Board of Trustees are already open for public attendance.

Trustees also stipulated that they wanted to ensure that Policy 7: *Board Operations* state that "in-camera" sessions that the public cannot attend, only be called to deal with "land, labour, and legal" issues, which must be held in closed session and not open for public attendance. Motions dealing with land, labour and legal must, however, come forward and are voted on at Regular Business meetings that are open for public attendance.

At its Regular meeting in March, 2011 the Board approved amendments to Policy 8: *Board Committees* so that the policy reads, "Committee meetings shall be open for public attendance." Policy 7: *Board Operations* states that there are only four reasons the Board would choose to go in-camera. The four reasons deal with land, labour, legal and personal information that is considered confidential under the *Freedom of Information and Privacy Act*. As such the Board was not required to amend the policy.

The primary purpose of committee meetings shall be to act in an advisory capacity to the Board. As a result of the Board's decision, groups or individuals with an interest in a specific item may ask to be placed on a Committee meeting agenda to make a presentation to the Board of Trustees. All notes of committee proceedings shall be made available to members of the public upon request following adoption by the Board at a Regular Board meeting. Committee meetings shall be conducted in the same manner as regular Board meetings and shall normally be subject to the same rules of procedure.

Both of these policies can be viewed on the Division website.

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