

EVENT PROTOCOL

Background

The superintendent of schools has been given the responsibility to ensure positive external and internal communications are developed and maintained. The emphasis of events, such as graduation and other ceremonies are on celebrating and recognizing student achievements, and the purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines that can help schools, and ultimately the district, in creating positive and respectful relationships.

With this aim, ceremonies should ensure inclusive language and purpose and language should be as gender neutral as possible to reflect the safe, caring and inclusive values of the district.

For schools who choose to invite dignitaries to school functions, protocols will vary from one situation to another, depending on who is involved in the particular event. There are also exceptions for Indigenous education department events.

Procedures

1. Invitations

- 1.1 Schools have discretion in whether or not to invite dignitaries, however when inviting important guests a written letter of invitation should be sent with plenty of advanced notice, outlining the invited dignitary's role at the event, and providing contact details.
- 1.2 The superintendent's office should be contacted if a representative of senior staff is requested to attend a school event.

2. When to Invite a Board of Education Trustee

- 2.1 Use your discretion for the most part, extending invitations primarily for the more significant, large-scale events.
- 2.2 If the event is significant enough to invite the media, it is certainly an event trustees may also wish to be invited to. (This is also about keeping trustees in the loop before reading about an event in the paper, whether they are able to attend or not).
- 2.3 If the event involves any outside dignitaries or politicians (city councillor, mayor, MLAs, MPs) trustees must be invited to attend.
- 2.4 Trustees need to be notified at least two weeks prior to the event.
- 2.5 If no trustee was available to attend, the Master of Ceremonies should be instructed to express regrets on behalf of the Board of Education.

3. Introductions and Recognition of Traditional Lands

- 3.1 All ceremonies and/or large-scale events should begin with recognition that the event is occurring on traditional territory of the Laichwiltach First Nations. The following indicates an exception by school/location: Cortes (Klahoose First Nation) and Sayward School

(Komok's First Nation). The school district (and/or school) honours its relationship with the Laichwiltach (or Klahoose or Komok's depending on location) peoples, the Homalco First Nations and all other First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples who reside in these territories.

- 3.2 At a public event at which dignitaries are present, the Master of Ceremonies should introduce the most senior dignitaries first, following this order:
- a. Members of the Senate representing British Columbia;
 - b. MP's cabinet members first;
 - c. MLA's (cabinet members first);
 - d. Board Chair;
 - e. Civic officials (Mayor first);
 - f. Other civic councillors and trustees;
 - g. Senior bureaucrats and heads of other organizations;
 - h. Prominent community members.

The only exception to this would be Indigenous education department events (see 8.1).

- 3.3 At a district event, the introductions should take place in the following order:
- a. Board Chair;
 - b. Vice Chair;
 - c. Trustees in attendance;
 - d. Superintendent of Schools, Assistant Superintendent;
 - e. Principal, Vice-Principal.

The only exception to this would be Indigenous education department events (see 8.1).

- 3.4 Trustees and Indigenous advisory council members, if in attendance, should be recognized with an introduction at all times.

4. Speakers/Presenters

- 4.1 If outside politicians are invited to speak, the board chair (or designate) must be invited to speak as well. To request a trustee speaker or presenter, address your email to the board chairperson and copy the email to the secretary-treasurer's administrative assistant.
- 4.2 When organizing the order of speakers, protocols dictate that the most senior dignitary speaks last.
- 4.3 If a dignitary was asked to speak but is unable to attend, an invitation to provide a written statement that can be read on their behalf should be extended.

5. Welcome & Seating

- 5.1 Provisions for parking may be made for dignitaries, trustees, and an elder if invited to provide a blessing. This is a small gesture that is often greatly appreciated in gratitude for their time and attendance.
- 5.2 Where possible, provision should be made for trustees and other important guests to be greeted by staff or students.

- 5.3 If dignitaries are to be speaking at the event, speaker seating should be arranged so that the most senior dignitary is closest to the podium. The only exception to this would be Indigenous education department or Indigenous Advisory Council events (see 8.2).
- 5.4 If dignitaries are to be seated as audience members, they should be provided with reserved seating in the front row. Ideally, with seats identified by name. Again, this is a small gesture that can make these individuals feel more welcome in our schools.
- 5.5 Provisions regarding welcomes and seating are, of course, dependent upon receiving confirmation of attendance from the invited dignitary, trustee, or elder.

6. Formal or Ceremonial Protocol

While extremely rare, school districts or schools occasionally may be included in royal visits (including those of Canada's Governor-General and/or British Columbia's Lieutenant Governor); visits by the Prime Minister or Premier, senior cabinet ministers, ambassadors; or other prominent dignitaries. In such circumstances, the formal protocol of either the Government of Canada or Province of British Columbia takes precedent. Information on proper protocol in these special circumstances can be obtained from the following websites:

<http://www.gov.bc.ca/officeofprotocol>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/protocol-guidelines-special-event.html>

The superintendent's office must be contacted in these instances. If you are uncertain what approach to take, contact the communications and community engagement officer.

7. Media Invitations

- 7.1 The district's communications and community engagement officer is to be copied on all media invitations.
- 7.2 For potential media invitations to media beyond the local radio station & newspaper, contact the district's communications and community engagement officer.

8. Indigenous Education Department and Indigenous Advisory Council Events

- 8.1 Chiefs and councils, Indigenous Advisory Council members, and elders should be introduced in this order prior to Board of Education members.
- 8.2 The elder providing the blessing should be seated closest to the podium and asked to speak first, leave first and, if food and refreshments are provided, to get their food and refreshment first.
- 8.3 At the Indigenous graduation ceremony, Indigenous Advisory Council members should be on stage as part of the congratulatory line to shake hands with students following their presentation.