

Section 3-1.13. Statement of Policy; role of school superintendent; limitations; freedom of expression. — A. The School Board recognizes the importance of collaborating and having open and meaningful conversations with other elected officials at all levels of government for the betterment of public education in the City of Suffolk. It is the expressed intent of the School Board to foster and encourage such dialogue between individual members of the School Board and their elected representatives in the U.S. Senate, House of Representatives, Virginia Senate, Virginia House of Delegates, Mayor and members of the Suffolk City Council.

B. The school superintendent should also interact and collaborate with elected officials at the federal, state and local levels of government, and with the city manager or the city manager's designees on matters pertinent to the overall operations of Suffolk Public Schools.

C. With the exception of advocating for approval of city appropriations for the operation of Suffolk Public Schools, school renovations, new school construction projects, or matters pertaining to school safety, the school superintendent must advise the school board chair of the following before engaging in conversations with the mayor or any elected member of the Suffolk City Council: (1) that there is a need to interact with certain elected city officials; (2) the purpose or subject matter for the interaction; (3) the outcome that is expected to be achieved by having the interaction; and (4) whether there a need for further interaction or collaboration by members of the School Board with their elected counterpart on City Council.

D. It is not the intent of this policy to infringe on any freedom of expression or first amendment rights of the school superintendent, but to ensure that members of the School Board are notified when there is a need for engagement with any elected official for the advancement of Suffolk Public Schools that does not involve city appropriations for the operation of Suffolk Public Schools, school renovations, new school construction projects, or matters pertaining to school safety.

Legal Authority — Virginia Code § 22.1-78