REMOTE PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS  

The Cleveland County Board of Education (the “Board”) acknowledges that attendance at Board meetings is essential for its members to perform their official duties and to add to the diversity of thought and opinion in the Board’s deliberations. The Board strongly encourages its members to be physically present for all Board meetings. The Board recognizes, however, that extenuating circumstances may occasionally prevent a member from being physically present at a meeting. It further recognizes that advances in technology, such as audio and video conferencing, have made it possible for members to communicate and deliberate with each other from remote locations. Therefore, to promote full participation of Board members while ensuring access and transparency for the public as required by the Open Meetings Law, G.S. 143-318.9 et seq., the Board authorizes remote participation in Board meetings subject to the following procedures and requirements.

A. AUTHORIZED CIRCUMSTANCES FOR REMOTE PARTICIPATION

1. The Board authorizes remote participation consistent with the requirements of this policy in any meeting of the Board that is not a closed session, a hearing appeal or other quasi-judicial proceeding. If the Chair is participating in the meeting remotely, the Vice Chair will serve as Chair for the meeting as the Board believes the individual Chairing the meeting should be physically present.

2. A member may attend a meeting and participate in Board deliberations and decisions by remote participation if the member is prevented from physically attending the meeting. Remote participation is not to be used solely for a Board member’s convenience or to avoid attending a particular meeting in person.

3. Acceptable means of remote participation include telephone-, Internet-, or satellite-enabled audio or video conferencing, or any other technology that enables the remote participant and all persons present at the meeting location to be clearly audible to one another. Text messaging, instant messaging, email, and web chat without audio are not acceptable means of remote participation.

B. PROCEDURE FOR REMOTE PARTICIPATION

1. A member of the Board who desires to participate in a meeting remotely shall notify the Board Chair and the Superintendent at least four hours in advance of the meeting so that necessary arrangements can be made.

2. The Chair or designee at the meeting location shall initiate contact with the member prior to the start of the meeting to secure participation.

3. The Chair shall announce the remote participant and the means of remote participation at the beginning of the meeting.

4. The meeting Chair may decide how to address technical difficulties that arise when utilizing remote participation, but whenever possible, the Chair should
suspend discussion while reasonable efforts are made to correct any problem that interferes with a remote participant’s ability to hear or be heard clearly by all persons present at the meeting location. If, however, the technical difficulties distract from or impede the orderly progress of the meeting, a majority of the members physically present may vote to end the remote participation.

5. A member participating remotely shall notify the Chair if leaving the meeting before it is adjourned or rejoining the meeting after a period of absence.

6. All votes taken will be by voice vote.

7. Participation by electronic communication will be noted in the official Board minutes. Any interruption to or discontinuation of the member’s participation will also be noted in the minutes.

8. Any costs associated with remote participation other than normal telephone or Internet connection shall be borne by the remote participant.

The Superintendent is directed to provide the technology sufficient to implement this policy in accordance with all applicable laws.

Legal References: G.S. ch. 143, art. 33C

Adopted: October 9, 2017