



## Overview

# Discover *dialogue*)))

At the Calgary Board of Education, every voice matters and that's why we've developed a community engagement framework, called *dialogue*.

***Dialogue* ensures people have the opportunity to be heard, to share their perspectives and participate in decisions that affect them.**

The *dialogue* process is used by employees to determine how and when to engage students, parents, employees and community members. It provides guidance on how people can participate in decision-making. It defines roles and responsibilities and establishes best practices to be applied across our school system.

*Dialogue* is not about the loudest voice winning and it's not about voting. It is about engaging people in conversations about decisions that may affect them, their family and their community. It's about listening and communicating in an open, clear and honest way. Our process follows international standards for effective community engagement and ultimately, helps us to make the best decisions for students, together.

## Guiding principles

CBE values:

- Students come first.
- Learning is our central purpose.
- Public education serves the common good.

Our goal of student success, our values and what we heard from our communities have all helped to shape the *dialogue* guiding principles:

### **We will be accountable for following through on our commitments.**

Outcomes and actions will be consistent with commitments made early in the process.

### **We will have honest, clear communication.**

Communication and dialogue will be clear, candid and forthright.

### **We will be inclusive of all voices.**

Community capabilities and preferences for engagement and communication are reasonably accommodated and barriers are addressed wherever possible.

### **We will have mutual respect for all participants.**

Dialogue will be conducted with respect for all participants.

### **We will be responsive to you.**

We are committed to hearing and understanding the views of stakeholders.



When engagement is not needed, open two-way communication with the community is still important.

Our goal is to make sure communication is clear, meaningful and timely.



There can be no *dialogue* without you. Be a part of it.

## When is Engagement Needed?

Some situations require community engagement while other situations do not. Sometimes the distinctions between community engagement and communications can get blurry. The first step of the *dialogue* process involves a thorough assessment of the situation.

When is engagement needed?

- **When there is a decision to be made.** Not every decision requires full-scale engagement, but there may be opportunities to involve people in aspects of the decision or the implementation.
- **When others will be impacted by a decision.** Community engagement provides an important opportunity for those impacted by a decision to express their concerns, ideas and aspirations.

Communicating often through the engagement process is really important. These communications will help to ensure that participants have a good understanding of the following:

- the purpose of the engagement
- the decision that's being made
- opportunities to contribute through the engagement process
- their role in the engagement process
- which aspects of the decision can be influenced by contributions from stakeholders

## We All Have a Part to Play

We all have a part to play in the education of our young people.

*Dialogue* ensures people have the opportunity to be heard, to share their perspectives and participate in decisions that affect them.

The *dialogue* framework is designed to be used by CBE employees who may be leading community engagement initiatives. There are occasions when the Board of Trustees may actively engage community members. Regardless of who is leading the engagement, dialogue helps ensure a consistent and effective approach to community engagement.

It's important to recognize that as a group, employees play a dual role in community engagement. Employees may lead some engagement, and are also an important stakeholder group that can contribute significantly through the engagement process.

## Defining the Role of Participants

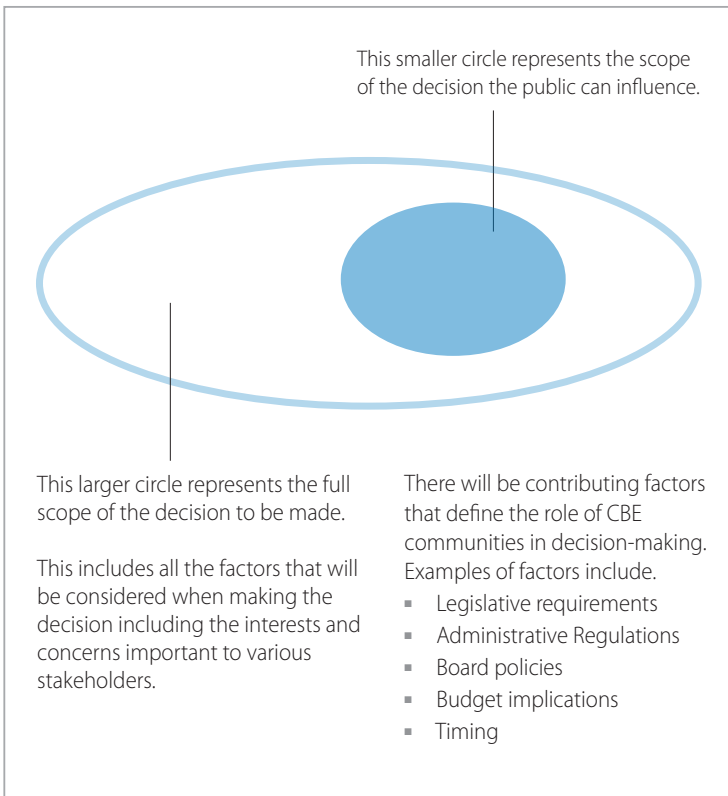
There are a few key steps in developing the engagement plan that help determine the role of participants in the process:

1. Decide what's in and out of scope
2. Identify impact on CBE communities
3. Determine level of engagement

**Scope** – It's important to be able to identify what's within the scope of the engagement so that participants have a clear understanding of the parts of the decision that can be influenced by community input. The scope of the engagement is always smaller than the scope of the decision.

**Impact** – It's important to identify all the stakeholders who may be affected by a decision and identify the extent they may be impacted, either positively or negatively. This may affect how they are involved in the engagement process.

**Level of engagement** – Helping stakeholders to understand the level of influence their input will have on the ultimate decision is an important aspect of keeping expectations realistic and maintaining strong levels of participation in the engagement process.



## Dialogue Process Overview

The *dialogue* process clearly outlines the decision we are trying to make, the direction we need to take and how to reasonably include people in decisions that affect them.

**Discover** the *dialogue* framework

**Define** the situation, stakeholders and impact

**Develop** the engagement plan that includes many ways for people to participate

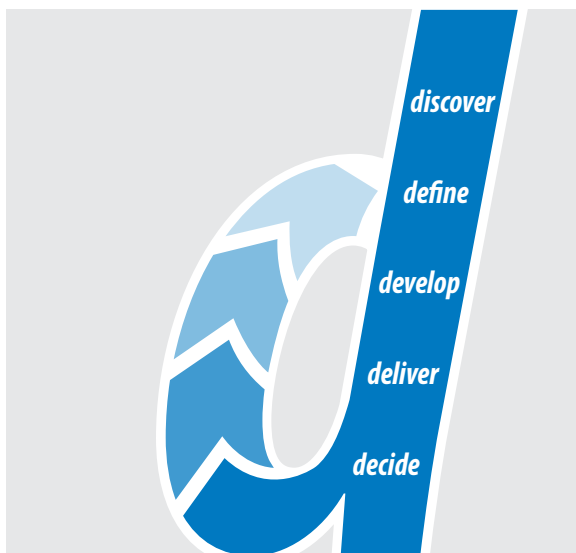
**Deliver** on the plan by actively engaging in *dialogue*

**Decide** the best way forward by analysing input and reporting

[learn more |](#)

Details on the process can be found at [cbe.ab.ca/dialogue](http://cbe.ab.ca/dialogue)

For employees leading engagements, a toolkit of resources can be found on staff insite.



*Dialogue* involves continuously collaborating, learning, adjusting and improving.

# CBE Levels of Engagement

INCREASING LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT 

	Inform & Communicate	Gather Input	Work Together	Assign
<b>CBE Commitment</b>	We will listen to each other and share information.	We will consider advice in a meaningful and transparent way.	We will co-create solutions to address problems and seize opportunities together.	To the greatest extent possible we will implement your recommendations.
	Throughout all levels and steps in the decision we will keep the community informed.			
<b>WHAT</b>	CBE and community have dialogue together to understand individual concerns & aspirations.	CBE asks questions and the community shares their perspective.	The community and CBE collaborate to develop options in support of decision-making.	Based upon clearly defined parameters, the community is assigned with specific parts of the decision.
<b>WHY</b>	To build mutual understanding and respect.	To gather input in response to questions or alternative approaches.	The decision is complex and will impact the community. A high degree of understanding between the CBE and community is required.	The level of impact is clear and there are opportunities for higher levels of engagement.
<b>Example Techniques</b>	Dialogue Circle Forums Telephone Townhall Gatherings Discussion Boards	Symposium Survey Focus Group Interview Online Workbook	Workshop World Café Charette Open Space Appreciative Inquiry	Study Circle Future Search Advisory Committee Task Team Community Panel Community Jury



## Be Part of the *Dialogue*

When we work together, we make better decision for our students. Working together means we acknowledge and respect diverse perspectives, we listen to understand, and we find solutions that best meet the needs of our students. When we do this well, our students are better equipped to become successful citizens who contribute their ideas, passion and energy to society.

Learn more | [cbe.ab.ca/dialogue](http://cbe.ab.ca/dialogue)

There are many opportunities to provide input and get involved.

