

BEAVERTON SCHOOL BOARD & SUPERINTENDENT OPERATING AGREEMENT 2011-2012

DRAFT – The following is a draft to be considered and modified based on mutual agreement between the Board and Superintendent. The majority of this draft is taken from past Beaverton School District agreements. Changes have been made in formatting and order. Any suggested additions are underlined. You may refer to the past agreement document as a reference.

School Board Roles and Responsibilities

Board Members will:

1. Accept the following principles as a valid guide for its operation:
 - The School Board is a legal entity; members have no authority except when sitting as a board, or as authority is delegated for special duties by vote of the School Board or assigned to certain officers by law.
 - The School Board shall operate through its executive officer, the Superintendent of Schools.
 - The School Board will focus on policy-making, planning and evaluation, rather than day-to-day operations.
 - The School Board will make decisions as a whole Board only at properly called meetings. Board members recognize that individual members have no authority to take individual action in policy, district, and school administrative matters.
2. Authorize the Chair to speak on behalf of the Board to the media with regard to Board policy and decisions. The Chair may delegate this responsibility to other members of the Board and/or the Superintendent.
3. Limit special requests for such things as documents, reports, draft correspondence, and other forms of information.
4. Be both willing and active participants on committees which hold a special interest or have been assigned by the Chair.
5. Review School Board & Superintendent Agreements at the first Work Session of the year.
6. Respect the confidentiality requirement of Board Meeting Executive Sessions.
7. Agree to raise and discuss any issues of non-compliance with these operating agreements.
8. Focus on problem solving as the Board and staff communicate with one another. Participants should focus directly on key policy issues, moving the group in direction toward consensus building/decision-making.

Communication & Complaint Process

Board Members will:

1. Communicate with each other with a focus on problem solving. Members will come to Board meetings with an open mind. Members will seek to clarify issues by soliciting each other's points of view. Members should focus on key policy issues, moving the group in directions toward consensus building/decision making.
2. Effectively and tactfully use a variety of communication tools (i.e., e-mail, telephone) to share information and communication with other Board members, the Superintendent and/or the Superintendent's Council, and the community. This would include abstaining from conducting Board business or decision-making outside of Board meetings or executive session.
3. Communicate in a polite and respectful manner even though disagreements may occur. Discussions between Board members will serve as a model for acceptable public dialogue.
4. Clearly indicate that he/she is voicing his or her personal opinion, and not speaking on behalf of the Board, when speaking on positions taken by the Board in a non-school board public meeting. When a Board member is speaking on issues unrelated to Board business, the member should clearly indicate that he/she is speaking as an individual, not as a Board member during a public meeting.
5. When community or staff express concerns or complaints to the School Board or an individual Board member, he/she:
 - Will reference the District Public Complaint's policy KL. The policy will be used as a reference to direct the public member to the appropriate person in the system to process the concern.
 - If the community member has in fact followed policy up to the point of discussion with the Superintendent, the patron will be directed to the Office of the Superintendent and the Board member will alert the Superintendent of the issue.
 - If the complaint comes to the Board member by way of e-mail, the Board member will refer them to policy KL and help route them to the appropriate person in the system. If there is confusion on the person or department to pursue, the e-mail can be forwarded to the Superintendent's Office to be delegated appropriately.
6. Direct questions or concerns directly with the Superintendent and/or members of the Superintendent's Council. The intent of Board members will be to focus on issues of policy, governance and vision as apposed to management items.

Meetings and Decisions:

Board Members will:

1. Strive to become well informed on District issues. Be prepared for each meeting by reviewing the materials in advance.
2. Follow a two-phase approach to decision making on major issues. The first phase includes discussion, dialogue, and study. The second phase involves Board decision.

3. Honor the right of individual members to express opposing viewpoints and vote their convictions and then support decisions of the majority.
4. Recieve the information on Thursdays (when possible) in order to make informed decisions prior to regularly scheduled meetings either in the form of written reports and/or personal contacts with a member of the staff.
5. Attempt to ask questions and communicate in a timely manner regarding agenda items prior to actual meetings.
6. Begin meetings on time with an attempt to end on time.

Expectations of the Board Chair, Superintendent and Superintendent's Advisory Council:

1. The Chair is responsible to assure that new Board members are oriented to Board process.
2. The Chair assures that the Board follows its own process agreement
3. The Chair will manage the communication flow for special information requests.
4. The Chair will be expected and allowed to facilitate the meeting in a collaborative focused and timely manner.
5. The Superintendent will acknowledge the Board's role in setting policy and overseeing the performance of the Superintendent.
6. The Superintendent and designated staff will work with the Board to establish a clear vision for the School District, which should be reviewed yearly.
7. The Superintendent will prepare preliminary goals annually for the Board's consideration.
8. The Superintendent will communicate with the Board promptly and effectively.
9. The Superintendent will inform the Board of critical information including anticipated adverse media coverage and critical external or internal changes related to implementation of Board policy.
10. The Chair and Superintendent will work to develop efficient agendas with input from other Board members and staff, which ensures knowledgeable participation, thoughtful discussion and effective decision-making.