

La Vega ISD Board of Trustees Standard Operating Procedures and Code of Ethics
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I. Governance

- A. The La Vega ISD School Board is committed to a participative process-driven governance style. Board level decision making processes shall therefore include the following elements to whatever extent is practical and appropriate for the matter at hand.
 - Clearly stated objectives
 - Reconciliation with policy and past practices
 - Timelines
 - Community input
 - Communication plan.
 - Define the mission and goals of the district
 - Set policy and goals to accomplish the mission
- B. Board members as individuals shall not exercise authority over the District, its property, or its employees. [BBE (Local)]
- C. President: [BDAB (Local)]
 - 1. shall preside at all Board meetings
 - 2. appoint committees
 - 3. shall call special meetings
 - 4. sign all legal documents required by law
- D. Vice-President: [BDAC (Local)]
 - 1. shall act in capacity of President in absence of President
 - 2. automatically become President of the Board if a vacancy in that office occurs
- E. Secretary: [BDAD (Local)]
 - 1. keep, or cause to be kept, an accurate record of the proceedings of each Board meeting
 - 2. in the absence of the President and Vice-President of the Board, the Secretary shall act in the capacity of the President
 - 3. counter-sign all warrants

II. Process for Selecting Board Officers

- A. Selection of Board Officers shall take place at the first regular Board Meeting following the election of School Board Trustees.
- B. The election of Trustees of the District shall be on May uniform election date. Gov't Code 573.042. [BBB (Legal)]
- C. The Superintendent or designee shall request nominations for Board Officer Positions and hold the election.
- D. All sitting Board members, as well as newly elected members, are eligible to hold office regardless of their tenure serving on the Board.

III. Communications

- A. The Superintendent will communicate with Board members via memorandum and telephone when appropriate.
- B. The Superintendent will communicate to Board members in a timely fashion information concerning discussion and action items that will be on the agenda of monthly Board meetings.
- C. Board members may request information and/or reports from the Superintendent. [BBE (Local)]
- D. Individual Board members cannot speak in an official capacity outside of properly convened and conducted meetings. [BBE (Legal)]

- E. The Board will communicate with the community through public forums, public hearings, regular Board meetings and the District's calendar of events.

IV. Board Meetings

A. Developing the agenda:

1. In consultation with the Board President, the Superintendent shall prepare the agenda for all Board meetings. [BE (Local)]
2. Any Trustee may request that a subject be included on the agenda for a meeting, and the Superintendent shall include on the agenda of any meeting all Trustee requested topics that have been timely submitted. [BE (Local)]
3. The deadline for submitting items for inclusion on the agenda is noon of the fourth working day before regular meetings and noon of the fourth working day before special meetings. [BE (Local)]
4. In accordance with Government Code 551.043, no item may be placed on the agenda less than 72 hours in advance of a meeting unless in the case of an emergency or when there is an urgent public necessity. In these exceptions, posting of a supplemental agenda item is allowed if posted for at least two hours before the meeting is convened. [BE (Legal)]

B. Items that cannot be on the agenda:

1. All personnel issues must be conducted in closed session unless specifically required by the Texas Open Meeting Law to be conducted in Open Session.
2. Anything that violates right to privacy, i.e. Texas Open Meeting Law, Texas Open Records Act cannot be placed on the agenda.

C. Use of Consent Agenda

- * Routine Items
- * Budget Amendments
- * Financial Statements
- * Minutes of Previous Meetings

D. Called Special Meetings

1. The President of the Board shall call a special meeting at the President's discretion or on request by two of the members of the Board.
2. A special meeting notice shall be posted for at least 72 hours before the meeting is convened. [BE (Local)]

E. Closed Session

1. The Board can discuss in closed session only those items specifically allowed by law. [Government Code Section 551], [BEC (Legal)]
2. A final action, decision, or vote on a matter deliberated in a closed meeting shall be made only in an open meeting for which proper notice has been given. [BEC (Legal)]
3. All discussion occurring during closed session must remain confidential. [BEC (Legal)]

F. Conduct of the Open Session

1. The Board will observe the parliamentary procedures in **Robert's Rules of Order**.

G. Discussion of Agenda Items

1. Discussions shall be addressed to the President of the Board and then the entire membership.
2. Discussion shall be directed solely to the business currently under deliberation, and the Board President shall halt discussion that does not apply to the business before the Board. [BE (Local)]

H. Citizens Addressing the Board [BED (Local)]

1. Public participation is limited to the designated open forum portion of the meeting. At all other times, the audience shall not enter into discussion or debate on matters being considered by the Board, unless recognized by the President.
 2. Thirty minutes shall be allotted to hear persons who desire to make comments to the Board.
 3. No presentation shall exceed five minutes. Delegations of more than five persons shall appoint one person to present their views before the Board.
 4. Persons who wish to participate in the open forum portion of the meeting shall sign up as they arrive, indicating the topic about which they wish to speak.
 5. Specific factual information or recitation of existing policy may be furnished in response to inquiries, but the Board shall not deliberate or make a decision regarding any subject that is not included on the agenda posted with notice of the meetings.
 6. The Board will **not** entertain comments concerning individual personnel or individual students during the public open forum or during the course of the regular open session.
- I. Voting - Voting shall be done verbally or by hand, as directed by the president. Any member may abstain from voting, and a member's vote or failure to vote shall be recorded upon that member's request. The board president shall have the right to discuss, make motions and resolutions and vote on all matters coming before the board. (BDAA Local)

V. Citizen Request/Complaint to Individual Board Member

- A. When a citizen complains to a Board member, the member should listen to the citizen to obtain a full understanding of the complaint.
- B. The Board member should remind the citizen of due process and that the Board member must remain impartial in case the situation goes before the Board.
- C. Refer the citizen to appropriate person/chain of command.
- D. The Board member will inform the Superintendent of the complaint within 24 hours.
Note: Citizens must pursue established resolution channels with regards to complaints and concerns before they will be allowed to address the Board. After pursuing these established resolution channels, Board Policy GF (Local) provides citizens the opportunity to formally present their complaint or concern to the Board. (Level III)

VI. Employee Request/Concern to Individual Board Member

- A. Individual Board members will follow the same steps A, B, and C and D above in responding to an employee request or complaint.
- B. Employees will follow the resolution procedures outlined in Board policy when filing a complaint. [DGBA (Local)]
- C. After following the proper resolution procedures of DGBA (Local), employees will be permitted to present their complaint or concern to the Board. (Level III)

VII. Media Inquiries

- A. The Superintendent is the official spokesperson for the District. The Board President is the official spokesperson for the Board.
 1. All Board members who receive calls from the media concerning particular Board action shall direct them to the Board's spokesperson.
 2. All Board members who receive calls from the media concerning school district operations, personnel, or other issues separate from specific Board action, shall direct them to the Superintendent.

VIII. Anonymous Phone Calls/Letters

- A. The La Vega Board of Trustees encourages community input: however, anonymous phone calls or letters will not receive Board attention, discussion or response and will not result in directives to the administration.
- B. Anonymous phone calls or letters that allege misconduct on the part of district personnel will be referred to the Superintendent.

IX. Evaluation of the Superintendent

- A. The Superintendent evaluation instrument will be distributed to all Board members before the formal evaluation.
- B. In September:
 - Board of Trustees provides a written evaluation presented to the Superintendent
 - 1. Board may take action in Open Session to extend Superintendents Contract and make salary adjustments.
 - 2. The Superintendent will receive a composite evaluation instrument that contains an average score for each indicator as rated by the individual Board members.

X. Board Member Visits To School Campuses

- A. All Board members are encouraged to attend any school's events as their time permits.
- B. Board members are not to go unannounced into teachers' classrooms or individual buildings.

XI. LVISD Board of Trustees - Code of Ethics

As a member of the Board, a trustee shall promote the best interests of the District as a whole, and, to that end, a trustee shall adhere to the following educational and ethical standards:

- 1. Bring about desired changes through legal and ethical procedures, upholding and enforcing all laws, State Board of Education rules, and court orders pertaining to schools.
- 2. Make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of all children in the District, regardless of ability, race creed, ethnicity, sex, or social standing.
- 3. Recognize that decisions must be made by the Board as a whole and make no personal promise or take private actions that may compromise the Board.
- 4. Focus Board action on policymaking, goal setting, planning, and evaluation, and insist on regular and impartial evaluation of all staff.
- 5. Support and protect school personnel in the proper performance of their duties.
- 6. Vote to appoint the best-qualified personnel available after consideration of recommendations of the Superintendent.
- 7. Hold confidential all matters pertaining to school that, if disclosed, may needlessly injure individuals or the schools, and respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law.
- 8. Attend all regularly scheduled Board meetings insofar as possible and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings.
- 9. Delegate authority for the administration of the school to the Superintendent.
- 10. Endeavor to make policy decisions only after full discussion at publicly held Board meetings, and render all decisions based on the available facts and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special groups.

11. Encourage the free expression of opinion by all Board members and seek systematic communications between the Board and students, staff, and all elements of the community.
12. Communicate to Board members and the Superintendent at appropriate times expressions of public reaction to Board policies and school programs.
13. Become informed about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed information, such as those sponsored by state and national school boards associations.
14. Refrain from using the position of Trustee for personal or partisan gain.
15. Make certain the Board remains responsive to the community.
16. Remember always that the first and greatest concern of a Trustee must be the educational welfare of all the students attending the public schools. [BBF (Local)]

XII. Cause for Removal of a Board Member [BBC (Legal)]

Board members may be removed from office for:

1. Incompetency," which means:
 - a. Gross ignorance of official duties;
 - b. Gross carelessness in the discharge of those duties; or
 - c. Unfitness or inability to promptly and properly discharge official duties because of a serious physical or mental defect that did not exist at the time of election.
2. "Official misconduct," which means intentional, unlawful behavior relating to official duties by a board member entrusted with the administration of justice or the execution of the law. The term includes an intentional or corrupt failure, refusal, or neglect of a board member to perform a duty imposed on the board member by law
3. Intoxication on or off duty caused by drinking an alcoholic beverage, but not if it was caused by drinking an alcoholic beverage on the direction and prescription of a licensed physician.
4. Conviction of a board member by a jury for any felony or for misdemeanor official misconduct. The conviction of a public officer by a petit jury for any felony or for a misdemeanor involving official misconduct operates as an immediate removal from office of that officer.

XIII. Board Member Travel Guidelines

1. Legitimate expenses incurred by Board members while traveling on official school business shall be reimbursable consistent with Board policy and state and federal laws. Specific requirements for reimbursements include, but are not limited to the following:
 - a. No alcoholic beverages
 - b. No spouse, children, or other family member expenses
 - c. Convention sponsored hotel or the equivalent or the Board Member pays the difference (single or double room is allowable)
 - d. Board members may attend conferences as follows: 1 in state, 1 out-of-state conference; additional conferences may be considered.
 - e. Meals, hotel, travel, rental cars, and registration, and other reasonable expenses are allowable.
 - f. Members desiring to join organizations in addition to TASB will be considered.

XIV. Reviewing Board Operating Procedures

Board Operating Procedures will be reviewed annually and updated as needed.