

**BUCKHOLTS ISD
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

BOARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

Board Operating Procedures Handbook

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DRAFT

The purpose of the Board Operating Guidelines is to hopefully clarify potential issues before they arise.
The Board of Trustees should review these guidelines annually.

I. Board

A. Introduction

The Texas Education Code states that, as a body corporate, a School Board has the “exclusive power and duty to govern and oversee the management of the public schools of the district”.

It is what falls in between those lines that make the job of a School Board so complex. There are tangible tasks such as adopting policies, building facilities, evaluating the Superintendent, overseeing budgets, setting tax rates, and much more to keep a School Board Trustee very, very busy. Additionally, there are intangible issues ranging from developing a vision for the district to dealing with a variety of stakeholders.

B. The Role of a School Board Member (BISD Board Policy B-series)

1. Teamwork

A Board working in a culture of teamwork and visionary focus is more likely to be governing a district where great strides in education are being made. The group as a whole is only as good as its individual parts so it becomes very important that individual Board members understand their legal, philosophical, and moral responsibilities. It is also critically important for members to know the policies that already exist in their district.

2. Productive Actions

To operate most effectively, individual Board members need to understand how to conduct themselves appropriately in complex situations and at public meetings; how to deal effectively with the public and the media; and how to deal responsibly with the Superintendent and district staff. Disagreements are a natural part of teams and teamwork and, by supplying new creative ideas and suggestions, can oftentimes lead to effective new solutions.

C. Monitoring Academic Excellence

1. Overview

The primary focus of this segment is monitoring academic excellence. The public expects their local schools to produce academic excellence, a condition in which students learn and achieve at the highest level possible.

2. School Board is a Single Unit

Philosophies and strategies determined by School Boards to promote academic excellence are not universally “right” or “wrong.” A School Board functions as a single unit with the power and responsibility to make decisions. Academic excellence for the Board then becomes a function of the Board’s decision-making process.

Individual members have their own definitions of academic excellence and preferences as to how it can and should be achieved. However, since these definitions and preferences may vary extensively, the goals and agenda which individual members believe may lead to the opposite result if individual members struggle to “promote their own cause” without regard for the “common good.”

Unity and consensus of the Board is essential if the goal of academic excellence is to be realized.

3. Knowledgeable Board Members and Staff

Leadership is fundamental in achieving unity and consensus. Some people perceive unity and consensus as an indication that members have compromised their positions or hastily offered a “rubber stamp” endorsement for the Superintendent. If the Superintendent is an effective and sensitive leader, trust can be established, and unity will be accomplished with few instances of disagreement.

Quality decisions depend upon Board members and administrative staff becoming knowledgeable, studying the issues and providing thoughtful input into the decision-making process, reflecting the needs of all students and preferences of the community in addressing those needs.

Boards often react to what they hear and what they believe the public wants. The danger in this is that some populations may not verbalize their concerns to the Board. The needs of all populations must be addressed. Communicating with and involving diverse groups of parents and citizens in the team effort is essential to a successful academic program. It is important to note that Board members should not be expected to become experts in school administration. Quality depends upon appropriate delegation of responsibilities and a clear understanding of individual functions (e.g. Board members determine policies and administrators carry out those policies).

4. Effective Measures

Data driven measures will be established to guide, determine, and assess progress toward academic excellence.

There are reasonable limits on how Board members monitor academic excellence. Obviously, they cannot attend every school every day and see if everyone is doing what is expected, nor should they. Board members monitor by reviewing results, results that are measured primarily in terms of progress toward specified measurable goals. If an established goal is that 95% of all students will attend school every day and pass all sections of state assessments, published results are reviewed to determine the degree of success attained.

A critical component in developing an effective academic program is the planning process through which the vision, goals and objectives, and performance evaluation are determined. The evaluation must consider the results obtained as compared with the results desired. The temptation to “follow the crowd” and do what other districts are doing should be resisted unless such activities are clearly in line with established goals.

5. Consistency and Continuity within the Board

If a School Board is able to effectively monitor academic excellence, the members must adhere to the established goals and respond appropriately with the necessary resources (e.g. staffing, facilities, and funding) to enable the goals to be achieved. It is also difficult for a Board to monitor academic excellence when membership is unstable, and time and energy is spent in orienting new members.

6. **Realistic Expectations**
Realistic expectations must be established, even if ambitious goals are set. If a district has several “underperforming” campuses, it may be appropriate, but perhaps not realistic to expect every campus to achieve recognized or exemplary status in a short time period. Dramatic changes in the instructional program may be required, and the Board should be willing to provide the staff and resources required to accomplish the goals. Ambitious goals require extraordinary commitment. If goals are not achieved, but respectable progress has been noted, positive reinforcement should be utilized with recognition of efforts.
7. **Board Responsibility for Programs**
According to Statewide Standard VII for Board members, the Board member shall accept responsibility for the adoption of high-quality instructional programs containing the following focus.
Instructional Program Characteristics:
 - a) Well-balanced curriculum
 - b) Positive learning environment for all students which maximizes student success
 - c) Evaluation of instructional programs
 - d) Compliance with legal requirements
 - e) Well-balanced co-curricular programs
 - f) Research on effective teaching and school management practices
 - g) Quality materials and equipment to support the instructional programs
 - h) Student services (guidance, library, health, safety)
8. **Board Responsibility**
With the Board accepting its primary responsibilities of establishing instructional priorities and goals, setting policies, approving budget expenditures, and approving textbooks, the Superintendent and administration are expected to implement the policies, manage the budget and carry out the goals of the Board. Through mutual cooperation and acceptance of accountability standards, academic excellence is a realistic goal for many Texas school districts.

II. Superintendent/Board Relations

- A. **Overview**
The Board’s responsibility is to define the district’s policies and goals that shall reflect the district’s advocacy for all students. Board members serve as advocates for all students by providing leadership at the local, state, and national level. The policies set by the Board will ensure that the mission and goals of the district are achieved. It is the Board’s responsibility to hire a Superintendent, who then implements the policies and goals adopted by the board. The Board shall evaluate the Superintendent’s job performance based upon these policies and goals.
- B. **Effective Working Relationships**
A district is only as strong as the Superintendent/Board relationship. The Superintendent is the CEO of the organization, and the Board is a governing body, much like a Board of Directors in a business setting. The Board must empower the Superintendent to

accomplish the directives provided by the Board, without getting involved in the day-to-day minutiae.

An effective Board member communicates with the Superintendent about a concern. It is the Superintendent's job to take action and resolve situations. Board members should not violate the chain of command, causing disrespect and unclear expectations between staff, the Superintendent, and the Board.

C. Key Agreements for Success: Doctrine of "No Surprises and No Gotcha"

1. No Surprises – The administration agrees to take every action necessary to ensure that board members are informed and are not surprised about happenings in the district. Board members will not be forced to vote on an item for which adequate background information is not provided. The Future Action Item section on board agenda is designed to provide a notice of action items that will be considered within the next two weeks. This notice is designed to provide board members an opportunity to ask any question and receive any clarification needed before voting on an item. No item will be brought forward for action without going through the future action item section, unless it is an emergency item and board is willing to forego the aforementioned practice.

2. No Gotcha – Administration will be committed to providing detailed information about action items and district operations and any background information that is necessary to understand the action recommended to the board. Administration requests that if questions evolve that those questions are shared as quickly as possible with the superintendent, so that appropriate responses can be provided. If questions are posed publicly for the first time, administration respectfully requests the opportunity to either answer the question if the answer is available or defer the answer until further investigation is completed and provide the response according to our normal communication protocols.

Administration is committed to presuming positive intent and will provide as much detail as requested concerning rationale, logic and perspective concerning a recommended action. We welcome questions and will respond according to protocols. Questions received by the Superintendent by Wednesday will be answered in the following weekly update. Those questions received after Wednesday will be answered in the following week's update. Questions concerning board items will be submitted with ample time for administration to develop a response and preferably before the day of the meeting. If questions are submitted on day of the board meeting, an opportunity will be given to the Superintendent to provide answers at a later date or in a future communication document. If questions arise at the board meeting and the presenter is prepared to answer the question, an answer will be provided. If questions arise at the board meeting that the presenter is unprepared to answer, the response will be provided in the following weekly update.

3. General Communication Principles:

- a) Consistency – Information will be shared with all board members; but it will be shared first with the President and Vice President and then evenly with all. All members will receive the same information in a timely manner. Regular communication will occur weekly with all board members through weekly updates, phone calls, text message and/or face to face meetings.

- b) Openness – Information will be freely shared with all board members and where necessary, possible board perspective will be solicited. This practice allows for smoother implementation and defense of the decision.
 - c) Trust – Administration will be intentional about sharing the facts, the good, the bad, and the ugly.
 - d) Transparency – Administration will share decisions made along with background, logic, rationale, alternatives and the motivation behind the decision.
 - e) Timeliness – Information will be shared with the board at the earliest possible time to ensure that the board is not blind-sided in alignment with the agreement of “no surprises.”
- C. Superintendent and Board Member Communication
 - 1. Board to Superintendent
 - a) Board members will keep the Superintendent informed of concerns in a timely manner
 - b) Board will communicate with its community through public hearings, regular Board meetings, Parent Advisory Council meetings and regular publications
 - c) Individual Board members cannot speak in an official capacity outside the Boardroom
 - 2. Superintendent to the Board
 - a) Superintendent will communicate information to all Board members in a timely manner
 - b) Superintendent will distribute requests from the Board President to all Board members in a timely manner
 - 3. Superintendent Liaison Between Board and Staff
 - a) The only employee the Board is responsible for directing is the Superintendent
 - b) The Superintendent will direct the activities of all staff
 - c) The Superintendent is the liaison between Board members and staff
- D. Requests for Information
 - 1. Chain of Command
 - a) Verbal requests for information should be made to the Superintendent
 - b) Written requests for information should be submitted to the Superintendent
 - c) All Board requests must be made with the Superintendent’s knowledge
- E. Board Meeting – Agenda Preparation
 - 1. Establishing the Agenda
 - a) Superintendent and Board President will prepare the agenda for the Board meeting
 - b) Any item requested by at least two Trustees will be added to the agenda

- c) Agenda and supporting materials will be delivered to all Board members at least 72 hours prior to a meeting
 - d) The agenda will be posted for public information 72 hours prior to a meeting
 - e) Agendas are proposed by administration
 - f) In accordance with the Texas Open Meeting Act laws, no item can be placed on the agenda less than 72 hours in advance of the meeting, except in an emergency as per the Texas Code
 - g) Any item requiring expenditure of funds must be posted separately so that each item is voted on as an individual item and so reflected in the minutes
2. Items Restricted from the Agenda
- a) All personnel issues must be conducted in an executive session
 - b) Any item that violates right to privacy laws
3. Meeting Requirements
- a) The Board will observe Robert's Rules of Order
 - b) Minutes of special committee meetings shall be a supplement to the regular Board meeting minutes
 - c) Oral and written reports of special committees shall be presented at the regular Board meeting and filed with regular Board meeting minutes
 - d) Timelines for service and task completion of special committees shall be established
4. Voting
- a) The Board President will vote on all action items
5. Patrons Addressing the Board at Meetings
- a) The Board is assembled to gather input only
 - b) The Board will not answer questions or enter into two-way dialogue except with their attorney in the case of an employee hearing, or as considered appropriate by the Board
 - c) The Board will limit presentation time to five minutes per speaker
 - d) The total time allotted is 30 minutes to hear comments from the public
 - e) Delegations of more than five persons shall appoint one person to present their views before the Board
 - f) The Board will not entertain comments that contain personal and identifiable information on individual personnel in public session
6. Board Response to Patrons Addressing the Board
- a) Board members can hear comments
 - b) The Board President may direct questions to the Superintendent to investigate items and communicate findings to the Board.

F. Hiring/Evaluating the Superintendent

Effective Boards will work together as a team to hire a new Superintendent. This can be a very stressful process with many chances for personal agendas. It is a golden

opportunity to work together to forge a new vision for the education of students in the district.

1. Process for Hiring a Superintendent
 - a) Determine the method for identifying candidates
 - (1) Hire a consultant
 - (2) Job posting within the district
 - (3) Advertise
 - (4) Other
 - b) Review resumes
 - c) Identify the list of candidates for interviews
 - d) Interview the candidates / determine the best candidate
 - (1) Establish a list of topics to discuss, including district mission, goals, current issues, and Board expectations
 - (2) Be consistent in the interview process, i.e. ask the same questions in the same way each time
 - (3) Be fair to all candidates
 - (4) Do not discuss personal observations
 - e) Evaluate the candidates after all have been interviewed
 - f) Extend an offer to the candidate
 - (1) Agree upon compensation
 - (2) Agree upon terms of contract
 - (3) Consult with legal counsel regarding contract wording
 - (4) Publicly announce the decision
2. How to Evaluate the Superintendent
 - a) The president will schedule a meeting to be held, in the first 45 days of the calendar year, to conduct the summative evaluation of the superintendent.
 - b) The president will call a special meeting with no other items on the agenda for the summative evaluation meeting.
 - c) The president will distribute blank evaluation instruments to each member at least two weeks in advance of the summative evaluation meeting along with instructions for completing the instrument.
 - d) The superintendent will prepare a report and present it to the president for distribution to board members with the blank evaluation instruments. The report will include:
 - (1) Summary results on superintendent performance goals established following the previous year's summative evaluation
 - (2) Summary of progress on current year's district goals
 - (3) Report on student performance as required by the state
 - (4) Any additional district or professional highlights the superintendent believes will demonstrate effective performance for the past year
 - e) Members will fill out their evaluation instruments in advance and bring the completed forms to the summative evaluation meeting.
 - f) Board members will meet in a properly posted and convened closed

- meeting, without the superintendent present to discuss their individual ratings and determine a rating for each indicator. The president will record the board's consensus ratings on a blank copy of the instrument.
- g) From a review of the board's composite ratings, the board will identify:
 - (1) Agreed upon areas of strength
 - (2) Agreed upon areas for improvement
 - (3) Specific improvements the board would like to see in the areas that need improvement
 - h) For areas in which there is no clear agreement about a rating, the board will discuss reasons for their varying ratings and try to reach consensus about what, if anything, the board would like to see differently regarding that indicator in the coming year.
 - i) After reaching consensus about the superintendent's performance ratings and desired improvements, the board will discuss their agreements about areas of strength, areas needing improvement, and specific improvements they would like to see, with the superintendent in a properly posted closed meeting.
 - j) The board will allow the superintendent to respond and ask questions about the board's ratings.
 - k) The president will allow individual members to share concerns or ratings that differ from the majority of the board. However, the president will clearly distinguish between directives that represent a majority of the board and opinions of individual members. The superintendent is not expected to take action based on individual comments.
 - l) The president will compile all results of the summative evaluation in a written document that includes the following:
 - (1) The board's consensus ratings and agreements about the superintendent's performance
 - (2) Any specific expectations the board has regarding the superintendent's performance for the coming year
 - (3) Individual board members' instrument ratings and comments
 - m) The team may wish to specify where the final, confidential, written copy of the superintendent's evaluation will be filed. Options might include the superintendent's personnel file, if that can be kept confidential from other employees, or at the office of the board's attorney.
 - n) At a posted meeting within the quarter following the summative evaluation, the board and superintendent will discuss the areas for superintendent performance goals and identify areas in need of improvement to review at the next summative evaluation. Performance goals will be derived primarily from district comprehensive goals.
 - o) The board will include the final superintendent performance goals in the superintendent evaluation instrument, make any other revisions to the instrument desired by the board (after consultation with the superintendent as required by law) to ensure that it reflects board priorities and the superintendent's duties accurately, and adopt the updated instrument to be used for the next summative evaluation. The board will strive to complete this within two months of the evaluation meeting.
 - p) The board will conduct an interim evaluation for the purpose of reviewing progress on the superintendent performance goals annually six months

- after the summative evaluation.
- q) Board members who have concerns about the superintendent's performance between evaluation meetings may take the concern directly to the superintendent or may take the concern to the board president.

Related policies: BJCD (LEGAL) and BJCD (LOCAL)

III. Transitions

A. Overview

Change in the composition of the seven elected members of the Board of Trustees is inevitable. New Board members may join each year following annual elections as required by law. Vacancies on the Board may and do occur at other times than at the end of a term.

During a transition in membership, the Team of Eight needs to know what procedures or practices to follow in order to make the transition as quick, legal and efficient as possible. The least amount of disruption and the smoother the transition, the less impact it will have on the overall operation of the district.

B. Commencement

1. It will be an expectation that all current sitting Trustees at the time of graduation will be in attendance at the Commencement Ceremony.
2. The presiding officer whose signature appears on the diploma, or designee, will award diplomas to graduating students.
3. Any non-returning Trustees may be invited to participate in graduation if he/she has an immediate family member graduating.

C. Board Member Replacement

1. Need to Know
 - a) The departing Team of Eight member should give notice of impending resignation as soon as possible
2. Possible Courses of Action
 - a) Fill the vacancy via:
 - (1) Special election
 - (2) Regularly scheduled election
 - (3) Appointment until a regularly scheduled election
 - b) Do not fill the vacancy
3. Timing Considerations
 - a) If less than one year till the end of the term, consider:
 - (1) Special election (and its additional unbudgeted expense); or
 - (2) Appointing an individual; or
 - (3) Not filling the vacancy
 - b) If greater than one year, but less than two years to end of term, consider:
 - (1) Special election (and its additional unbudgeted expense); or
 - (2) Scheduled election; or

- (3) Appointing an individual
 - c) If greater than two years to end of term, consider:
 - (1) Special election (and its additional unbudgeted expense); or
 - (2) Scheduled election
- 4. Review Anticipated Issues
 - a) If controversial issues, such as bond elections, contract disputes, or boundary changes are on the horizon, consider filling the vacancy through the public choice of an election
 - b) If no controversial issues are anticipated and the time to the end of the term is relatively short, consider appointment
- 5. Board Vacancy Appointments

The Board may not require more qualifications for an appointee than are required by law for an individual running for elections

D. Board Member Officer Elections

- 1. **TIMELINE:** During the same month when new and/or returning Trustees take the oath of office, the officer elections will be initiated and completed.
- 2. **POSITION AND NUMBER:** The Board of Trustees shall annually establish, by position and number, the officers of the Board to be submitted to this process. Minimally, the offices shall be: President, Vice-president, Secretary and Board Assistant Secretary.
- 3. **CHARACTERISTICS/RESPONSIBILITIES:** The Board shall, once the position and number of officers is established, annually determine, by consensus, the leadership characteristics and/or responsibilities of each position being submitted to this process.
- 4. **STATEMENTS:** Each board member shall individually express their desires regarding board officer service.
- 5. **REMOVAL FROM CONSIDERATION:** An individual member may, by simple announcement, remove themselves from consideration for any or all offices of the Board.
- 6. **CONSENSUS:** Board members shall make their desires for officer selection known in a consensus building manner.
- 7. **OFFICER ELECTIONS:** In accordance with Roberts Rules of Order, officer elections shall be conducted by nominations and second and receipt of a majority of the votes by Board members in attendance in regular session. Voting shall continue until a candidate receives a majority. A candidate shall not be dropped from the ballot unless they voluntarily withdraw.

E. Dedication Plaques

The dedication plaque for district facilities will contain the names of the current Board of Trustees and Superintendent at the time of that facility's dedication.

IV. Travel and Training

A. Training

1. Board members shall complete continuing education annually in accordance with state statutes.
2. No training shall take place during a Board meeting, unless the meeting is posted for training delivery.

B. Annual Requirements

TASB Training Requirements For School Board Members (2020 – 2021)

| Length of Service | Local District Orientation | Intro to TEC | Open Government | Cybersecurity | Post-Legislative Update to TEC | Child Abuse Prevention | Evaluating and Improving Student Outcomes (formerly SB 1566) | Team Building | Additional Continuing Education (based on assesses needs) |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|--|---|--|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| New Trustees (First Year) 25 hrs | Local Orientation*2 (within 60 days) 3 hrs | (within 120 days) 3 hrs | OMA*3 (within 90 days) 1-2 hrs PIA 1-2 hrs | 1 hr Each year | N/A because update is incorporated into intro to TEC | 1 hr every two years | (within 120 days) 3 hrs *2 Every two years | 3 hrs*2 each year with all trustees and the Superintendent | 10 hrs first year 5 hrs each year |
| Experienced Trustees (After First Year) 9-16 hrs | Can attend, but not required | --- | | | Sufficient length 1-2 hrs after each legislative session | | | | |
| Providers | School District | ESC | TASB or other registered provider | See Department of Information for Resources website | TASB or other registered provider | TASB or other registered provider | TASB or other registered provider | TASB or other registered provider | TASB or other registered provider |

Training Requirements Notes:

*1 Required hours after the first year will vary depending on how the Post-Legislative Update,

OMA: Open Meetings Act

Child Abuse, and Student Achievement and Accountability hours fall for an individual trustee.

TEC: Texas Education Code

*2 Trustees may receive any training online except Local Orientation for new board members,

PIA: Public Information Act

Team Building, and Evaluating and Improving Student Outcomes.

SBOE: State Board of Education

*3 **OMA and PIA training** is required (outside SBOE rule) of all elected officials, within 90 days of election or appointment. PIA training may be delegated by district policy.

C. Travel Planning

1. Consider seminars conducted across the state at various locations including Regional Service Centers, annual state and national conventions sponsored by TASB and NASB. However, other sources available on topics of school board management and public education are not prohibited.
2. Maintain a travel log of cash expenses and receipts for your records. Use the per diem (per location) provided by the federal government. Do not request funds in excess of actual amounts expended.

3. Adhere to the allocated travel budget and maintain prudent spending habits while traveling.
4. The School Board travel budget will be evenly allocated to each Trustee.
5. Board Members may secure their own travel arrangements and be reimbursed as soon as confirmation of arrangements have been received.
6. All conference registrations will be paid for by the district as soon as possible.

D. Potential Outcomes from Training

1. Share new learning with other Board members
2. Work to bond the Team of Eight
3. Raise questions through exposure to new training concepts
4. Stay informed on issues
5. Stay focused on the opportunity for diversified training
6. Approach training with an open and receptive mind
7. Record and report appropriate credits
8. Apply new learning in role as a school board member

V. School Visit Guidelines

- A. Board members are encouraged to attend as many school events as their time permits.
- B. Board members may visit any campus after checking with the principal about the best time to visit.
- C. Board members will check in with the principal's office following campus guidelines.
- D. Board members may interact with any staff member or student during free periods, lunch, or recess.
- E. Board members will not go unannounced to any district building or classroom.
- F. Board members are not to go into teachers' classrooms or individual buildings for the purposes of evaluations or investigations.
- G. Board members may not give any advice or direction to any staff or students except when safety or liability is immediately at risk.
- H. While members of the board of trustees have no authority as individuals, it is sometimes difficult for staff members to see them as ordinary parents, therefore,
 1. When visiting with teachers of their own children, board members will make it clear that they are acting as parents rather than as members of the board.
 2. Board members will not request nor accept extraordinary consideration for their students.

VI. Communications

- A. Overview
Effective communicators are clear, concise and work at relating to other people, while hostility, vague or hidden meanings and sarcasm frequently hinder human interaction. Always remember the old adage that *communication is not what you say, it is what people hear*. Through effective communication skills, Board members must strive to exchange ideas in a positive, respectful manner.
- B. Handling Information, Concerns and/or Complaints from the Public

1. Listen briefly and respectfully; remain impartial.
2. Ask if the complainant has followed the "Chain of Command" outlined in district policy.
3. Remind the complainant of the board's responsibility to remain impartial regarding complaints that may ultimately be brought to the board on appeal.
4. Contact and inform the Superintendent.

C. Chain of Command

1. Chain of Command Defined
 - a) The chain of command is the appropriate channel to take to get problems solved.
 - b) The person at the lowest level and closest to the problem should solve an issue (for example, teachers should solve in-class problems).
 - c) Involving "upper" levels too early in the process strips lower levels of their ability and responsibility to solve problems.
 - d) The Chain of Command moves up through the organization to the Superintendent, and ultimately, to the Board of Trustees.

D. Media Communications

1. Board President as Official Spokesperson
 - a) The Board President shall function as the official spokesperson for the Board.
 - b) Only the Board President is entitled to speak for the Board.
 - c) This does not restrict other Board members from speaking at meetings, hearings, public functions, or to the media.
 - d) Once a majority opinion has been reached, individual Board members will publicly support that opinion.

E. Member to Member Communications

1. Types of Communication
 - a) Board members may use any of the following methods to communicate with each other:
 - (1) Weekly Board memos
 - (2) Weekly information packets
 - (3) E-mail
 - (4) Voice mail
 - (5) Fax
 - (6) Telephone
 - (7) Special committee meetings
 - (8) Personal contact
 - (9) Text
 - b) Board members shall never meet or talk in a group large enough to constitute a quorum unless an official meeting notice has been posted

F. Member to Staff Communications

1. Board members should always communicate ideas and concerns through the Superintendent and Board President.
2. Board members shall not give staff members direct orders

VII. Personalities

A. Overview

All School Boards are composed of citizens who feel passionately about issues. The Board's tone impacts the effectiveness of all district management. It is every Board member's responsibility to give their very best to Board work. It is important to check personalities at the door and work together to effectively educate children.

B. Understanding the Team of 8 Role

1. Each Board Member is:
 - a) 1 of 8
 - b) A Trustee for the entire ISD
 - c) A Leader for the entire ISD
 - d) An elected public official
 - e) Responsible for governance
 - f) Equal to all the other Board members
 - g) Responsible for personal preparation for all meetings
 - h) Expected to attend district-wide functions
 - i) Expected to be familiar with current laws and Attorney General opinions
 - j) Expected to attend further training
 - k) Expected to support Board decisions
2. Each Board Member is not:
 - a) Empowered to fix situations
 - b) Empowered to speak for the Board or Team of Eight
 - c) Effective as a divisive, negative influence
 - d) Allowed to misuse confidential information
 - e) Authorized to micro-manage with personal agenda
 - f) More important than any other Board member
 - g) A vehicle for special interest groups
 - h) Expected to attend ALL district-wide functions
 - i) Expected to be a legal expert on all aspects of public education

C. Productive Disagreement

1. Does Unanimous Equal Unity?
 - a) There are situations when unity is impossible due to differing points of view on an issue
 - b) When possible, Board members will set aside differences on sub-points and vote unanimously for the entire item
 - c) There are also times when issues cannot be set aside, leading to divided public votes
2. Divided Public Votes
 - a) Members must remember common courtesy, diplomacy and the fact that all members were elected democratically
 - b) When voting with the majority, be pleasant and tolerant of other viewpoints
 - c) When voting with the minority, speak your view courteously in a calm tone of voice and without personal references or rancor

3. After a Divided Vote
 - a) The Board President will repeat the successful motion as closely as possible and refer to the future as the entire Board moves the item forward
 - b) Minority viewpoints are inappropriate **after** the vote
 - c) Board members should publicly support Board decisions, regardless of the vote
 - d) Board members should not speak negatively or disparagingly with the media regarding minority viewpoints after the vote is taken
- D. Abuse of Power
 1. Abuse of power is evidenced when a Board member gives orders instead of making a request.
 2. Another example of abuse of power is requesting special reports and studies, without informing other Board members or sharing the results.
- E. Productive Actions
 1. With Board Members
 - a) Work cooperatively with all Board members
 - b) Treat all members with dignity and respect
 2. With Superintendent and Staff
 - a) Treat the Superintendent with dignity and respect
 - b) Observe the chain of command
 3. With Patrons
 - a) Listen responsively to their concerns
 - b) Refer them to the appropriate person in the chain of command

VIII. Board Culture

- A. Overview

A productive Board has processes for addressing inappropriate conduct by Board member(s).
- B. Induction into Board Culture
 1. External Board Training
 - a) New Board members should be encouraged to attend as much training as possible during their first year of service.
 - b) Refer to the chart of Required Training
 2. Internal Board Mentoring
 - a) A new Board member may be mentored by an existing Board member who will:
 - (1) Answer questions
 - (2) Identify resources
 - (3) Explain existing policy and procedures
 - (4) Give background on issues
 - (5) Serve as a sounding board for ideas.
 - b) Other mentors are the Board President and Superintendent
 3. Internal District Training

- a) The Superintendent should meet with the new Board member(s) to provide district overview
 - b) The Superintendent may arrange for New Board members to visit with key staff members to familiarize themselves with such issues as:
 - (1) Finance/Budgets
 - (2) Curriculum and Instruction
 - (3) Safety and Discipline issues
 - (4) School Management issues
 - (5) Other Issues of Interest
 - 4. Team of Eight Training
 - a) Shortly after the election, the Board should conduct a Team of Eight training session
 - b) The training should facilitate creating an open and constructive atmosphere and working relationship among all Board members
 - 5. Year-end Review for New Board Member
 - a) The Board should provide an opportunity for the new member to share experiences and observations with the Board.
 - b) Existing Board members should seriously consider any suggestions for improving the process of integrating new members into the Team of Eight
- C. Board Dialogue
 - 1. Guidelines for Raising a Concern
 - a) The Board shall have an agreed upon guideline for a Board member to officially raise a concern regarding the working relationship of the Board
 - b) When a Board member invokes the Guideline for Raising a Concern, all other Board members must treat the concerns seriously and respectfully
 - 2. Atmosphere
 - a) Board members must be willing to listen to the substance of the identified concern
 - b) Board members must strive to remain non-defensive about concerns being raised
 - c) Board members raising concerns should state their concerns in calm, non-inflammatory language
 - d) All Board members should stay focused on what is best for the education of the students, and avoid personal agendas
 - 3. Procedures
 - a) In the event communication at this level is unsuccessful in resolving the concern, the Board must have a procedure for going to the next level – See D below
- D. Procedures for Conflict Resolution
 - 1. Facilitator
 - a) In the event an issue cannot be constructively resolved, the Board may consider engaging a Facilitator.
 - b) The Facilitator's role would be to aid and direct the discussion, not take sides.

- c) Typically, an effective Facilitator will be a professional from outside the district. (TASB can assist in identifying a Facilitator).
 - d) In the event the Board is unable to resolve the concern with the assistance of a Facilitator, the Board must have a procedure for going to the next level.
 - 2. Mediator
 - a) The Board may engage a professional mediator to resolve the conflict.
 - b) Mediation requires all parties to come to the table in good faith.
 - c) If the Board is unable to resolve the concern with the assistance of a mediator, the Board must have a procedure for going to the next level.
 - 3. Board of Review
 - a) Another possible source of impartial resolution is to conduct an internal Board of Review regarding the behavior of an individual Member.
 - b) The Board member must be given a chance to modify his/her behavior.
- E. Board Sanctions
 - 1. Private Censure of Behavior
 - a) In the event a Board member does not change the inappropriate behavior, the Board may choose to censure or sanction the Board member.
 - b) The Board may do this privately, in a closed session.
 - c) The censure will consist of a factual statement of:
 - (1) The inappropriate behavior of the named Board member
 - (2) The desired behavior
 - (3) A statement of agreement by a majority of the Board members that the behavior is inappropriate
 - 2. Public Sanction of Behavior
 - a) The Board may also choose to issue a public sanction, either:
 - (1) Concurrently with the private censure
 - (2) After the Board member has still not modified the behavior, even following a private censure
 - b) The sanction would consist of a factual statement of:
 - (1) The inappropriate behavior of the named Board member
 - (2) The desired behavior
 - (3) A statement of agreement by a majority of the Board members that the behavior is inappropriate
 - 3. Withdrawal of Resources
 - a) The Board may choose to withdraw financial resources from the offending Board member
 - b) Examples might be disallowance of attendance at conventions, seminars or travel to other districts
 - 4. Requests for Resignation
 - a) Under extreme conditions, the Board may agree to ask the offending Board member to resign

IX. Planning

A. Overview

The planning process for the Board of Trustees is cyclical and is composed of visioning and goal setting, creating an annual planning calendar and conducting a yearly self-assessment audit. A clear process gives direction and focus to district personnel.

B. Visioning and Goal Setting

1. Review goal setting/standards process
 - a) Evaluate and discuss current district goals and standards
 - b) Adopt goals, vision statement and belief statement (Review in-depth every 5 years)
 - c) Review Goal/Standards Alignment. If new goals are added, then complete the following.
 - (1) Staff cross references current standards to proposed goals
 - (2) Staff suggests new standards
 - (3) Board of Trustees reviews staff's suggestions and provides input
 - (4) Staff drafts standards based on Board's input
 - (5) Board reviews new standards made by staff and makes revisions as appropriate
 - (6) Draft of new standards distributed to District Planning Committee for reflection
 - (7) District Planning Committee recommends refinements
 - (8) Board of Trustees approves new standards
 - d) Review written report to the Board on achievement of current standards
 - (1) Adjustments made to standards and measurements as needed
 - e) Incorporate new goals, standards and/or measurements into the District Improvement Plan and the Campus Improvement Plans
 - f) Approve Campus Improvement Plans
 - g) Review written report of Campus Improvement Plan reflection summaries based on achievement
2. Review visioning process
 - a) Review vision belief statements and goals
 - b) Gather information on future district implications
 - (1) Examine present data and predicted data based on district patterns
 - (2) Hear presentations from futurists on world, national, state and regional trends and patterns
 - c) Debrief regarding information gathered and make changes as needed
 - d) Repeat portions of goal setting process if needed

C. Annual Planning Calendar

1. Review the annual planning calendar
2. Make sure yearly items are addressed at the appropriate time
3. Add new items based on need, timeliness and current situations

D. Team Self Assessment Audit

1. Complete the annual team self assessment audit of Board effectiveness
2. Examine areas of strengths and areas needing improvement
3. Determine priority areas for continuing education for the upcoming year
 - a) Board of Trustees as a team
 - b) Individual needs
4. Review effectiveness of team and continuing education every 6-10 months

5. Annually report continuing education status for each Board member

X. Ethics for School Board Members

Buckholts ISD Board of Trustees Oath of Office:

I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm), that I will faithfully execute the duties of the office of Buckholts Independent School District Board of Trustees of the State of Texas, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States and of this State, so help me God.

Buckholts ISD Board of Trustees Officer's Statement:

I, _____ do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I have not directly or indirectly paid, offered, promised to pay, contributed, or promised to contribute any money or thing of value, or promised any public office or employment for the giving or withholding of a vote at the election at which I was elected or as a reward to secure my appointment or confirmation, whichever the case may be, so help me God.

Buckholts ISD Board of Trustees Letter of Re-Commitment:

In the interest of promoting student achievement, providing a safe environment for students, and making sound fiduciary decisions, I understand my role as a Board member is a significant responsibility and will make it a priority. I look forward to working with this team to move the District forward and, like the others I:

- Will support the Mission, Vision, Board Priorities, and Goals of the District.
- Will offer my expertise to help ensure the health and success of the District.
- Will work with the rest of the team to communicate the Board's role to this community.
- Will attend meetings / workshops and District functions to ensure I understand all current affairs.
- Will always hold the betterment of the membership of the Board as my priority, including during all participation in discussion and voting matters.
- Will not abuse my position as a Board member by using privileged information to aid and assist another cause, person, or organization.
- Will declare any conflict of interest, be it real, potential, or apparent, which is not immediately obvious with regard to any matter being discussed in my presence during a meeting.

I further understand that the following activities are considered by the Board to be conflicts of interest, and that conflicts of interest are not limited to the following situations:

- Where a member makes a decision or does an act motivated by other or additional considerations than "the best interests of the District;"
- Where a member learns of an opportunity for profit which may be available to him / her personally or to another organization of which he / she is a member, or to persons known to the member;
- Where the member, in any circumstance as related to the Board, puts his / her personal interests ahead of the best interests of the District.

I have read and fully agree to this Letter of Re-Commitment and look forward to assisting the

Board in this role.

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

- A. Equity in attitude
 - I will be fair, just, and impartial in all my decisions and actions.
 - I will accord others the respect I wish for myself.
 - I will encourage expressions of different opinions and listen with an open mind to others' ideas.
- B. Trustworthiness in stewardship
 - I will be accountable to the public by representing District policies, programs, priorities and progress accurately.
 - I will be responsive to the community by seeking its involvement in District affairs and by communicating its priorities and concerns.
 - I will work to ensure prudent and accountable use of District resources.
 - I will make no personal promise or take private action that may compromise my performance of my responsibilities.
- C. Honor in conduct
 - I will tell the truth.
 - I will share my views while working for consensus.
 - I will respect the majority decision as the decision of the Board.
 - I will base my decisions on fact rather than supposition, opinion, or public favor.
- D. Integrity of character
 - I will refuse to surrender judgment to any individual or group at the expense of the District as a whole.
 - I will consistently uphold all applicable laws, rules, policies, and governance procedures.
 - I will keep confidential information that is privileged by law or that will needlessly harm the District if disclosed.
- E. Commitment to service
 - I will focus my attention on fulfilling the Board's responsibilities of goal setting, policymaking, and evaluation.
 - I will diligently prepare for and attend Board meetings.
 - I will seek continuing education that will enhance my ability to fulfill my duties effectively.
- F. Student-centered focus
 - I will be continuously guided by what is best for all students of the District