

# SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER HANDBOOK



“Being a member of a board of education is one of the most important jobs that a person can hold, and it should be reserved for people who have the courage, the fortitude, and the desire to make a difference.”

~Jim Burgett, Author  
*The Art of School Boarding*



# Forward

The Bloomingdale School District 13 Board of Education understands and appreciates that access to a quality public education is not just a constitutional requirement, but also a moral and ethical imperative to ensure that all individuals have an opportunity to fully maximize their potential. Accordingly, all Bloomingdale School District students are entitled to a quality educational experience that prepares them to be college and career ready to become lifelong learners.

In order to provide the necessary and appropriate leadership for the Bloomingdale School District 13 public schools, the board of education, both collectively and individually is committed to governing as a professional board of directors. This means a commitment to the principles and procedures of professional governance, the sharing of a common understanding of board policies, practices, procedures, and principles, a focus on continuous learning and improvement, and a willingness to serve as a model of effective leadership to students, staff and the community.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a document that includes the board's procedures and principles for the benefit of current and future members of the Bloomingdale School District 13 board of education. The board of education and superintendent periodically review and discuss pertinent sections of the handbook to refresh their knowledge and practices. A significant component of new school board orientation is to peruse the handbook.

This handbook includes eleven chapters that address various aspects of effectively serving as a school board member. Special thanks to Benjamin School District 25 for sharing the original source material in our efforts to educate and communicate with the community. Updates will continually be made to ensure the handbook is current and relevant.

Sincerely,

*Your Board of Education*

Bloomingdale School District 13

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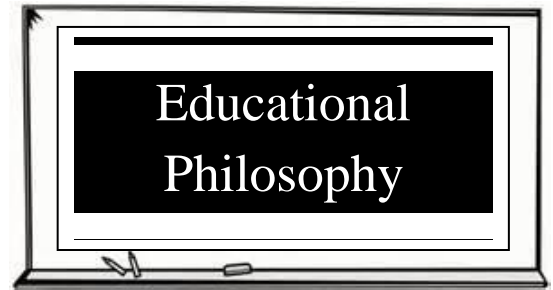
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# CHAPTER 1



## Mission

The Mission of Bloomington School District 13 is

Developing actively involved learners, well-rounded students, and responsible citizens in partnership with the community

The district strives to achieve higher levels of excellence in academics and supports students in developing 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills, including collaboration, problem solving, communication, critical thinking, creativity, and innovation.

The responsibility of providing a quality education for students requires the cooperation of district personnel, parents, students, and community. Parents are recognized as the first and most important teachers of children. This responsibility for providing a quality education becomes shared when the child enters school and the school becomes a partner with the parent and child to accomplish learning objectives.

Quality education is achieved through the interaction of people and programs. The board of education, administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents, and the community work together to provide an efficient and effective instructional program. The instructional program addresses needs in all areas of the child's development; social, emotional, intellectual and physical.

Recognizing that students have varied abilities, aptitudes, interests, and backgrounds, Bloomington School District 13 makes every effort to provide a sequential program of learning to motivate and challenge individual students at an appropriate level of difficulty. The district, on an ongoing basis, examines students' needs, modifies programs to meet those needs and monitors and reports students' progress.

*Board Policy 1.30*

## Vision

An exceptional, individualized education for each and every student

# CHAPTER 2



## IASB's Foundational Principles of Effective Governance

### Obligation to Govern Effectively

The “*Foundational Principles of Effective Governance*” have served as the Illinois Association of School boards’ primary document to explain the role of school board members in their district. These six principles are the cornerstone of IASB’s beliefs about the governance process.

Supporting these principles are certain rights and responsibilities. These include the “*Code of Conduct*,” a document that states 12 standards for ethical and effective behavior for all school board members. Coinciding with these responsibilities are the “*School Board Member Opportunities and Expectations*.” Combined, these documents form the basic tenets of School Board Governance.

As the corporate entity charged by law with governing a school district, each school board sits in trust for its entire community. The obligation to govern effectively imposes some fundamental duties on the board:

#### 1. The Board Clarifies the District Purpose

As its primary task, the board continually defines, articulates and re-defines district ends to answer the recurring question — who gets what benefits for how much? Effective ends development requires attention to at least two key concerns: student learning and organizational effectiveness.

- Ends express the benefits the school district system with clarity of purpose and a clear direction. A school board rarely creates district ends; rather, it most often detects them through listening and observing.
- Ends reflect the district’s purpose, direction, priorities and desired outcomes and are recorded in statements of core values/beliefs, mission, vision and goals.
- In effective school districts, every part of the organization is aligned with the ends articulated by the school board in written board policy.
- Well-crafted ends enable the school board to effectively and efficiently monitor district performance and assess organizational success (Principle 5).

#### 2. The Board Connects With the Community

The school board engages in an ongoing two-way conversation with the entire community. This conversation enables the board to hear and understand the community’s educational



aspirations and desires, to serve effectively as an advocate for district improvement and to inform the community of the district's performance.

- Effective communication is essential to create trust and support among community, board, superintendent and staff.
- The school board must be aggressive in reaching out to the community – the district's owners – to engage people in conversations about education and the public good. In contrast, people who bring customer concerns to board members should be appropriately directed to the superintendent and staff.
- A board in touch with community-wide concerns and values will serve the broad public good rather than being overly influenced by special interests.

### **3. The Board Employs a Superintendent**

The board employs and evaluates one person — the superintendent — and holds that person accountable for district performance and compliance with written board policy.

- An effective school board develops and maintains a productive relationship with the superintendent.
- The employment relationship consists of mutual respect and a clear understanding of respective roles, responsibilities and expectations. This relationship should be grounded in a thoughtfully crafted employment contract and job description; procedures for communications and ongoing assessment; and reliance on written policy.
- Although the board is legally required to approve all employment contracts, the board delegates authority to the superintendent to select and evaluate all district staff within the standards established in written board policy.

### **4. The Board Delegates Authority**

The board delegates authority to the superintendent to manage the district and provide leadership for the staff. Such authority is communicated through written board policies that designate district ends and define operating parameters.

- Ultimately, the school board is responsible for everything, yet must recognize that everything depends upon a capable and competent staff.
- “Delegates authority to” means empowering the superintendent and staff to pursue board ends single mindedly and without hesitation. A board that does (or re-does) staff work disempowers the staff. High levels of superintendent and staff accountability require high levels of delegation.
- Delegation is difficult for anyone accustomed to direct action. However, to appropriately stay focused on the big picture and avoid confusing the staff, members of the school board must discipline themselves to trust their superintendent and staff and not involve themselves in day-to-day operations.

## 5. The Board Monitors Performance

The board constantly monitors progress toward district ends and compliance with written board policies using data as the basis for assessment.

- A School board that pursues its ends through the delegation of authority has a moral obligation to itself and the community to determine whether that authority is being used as intended.
- Unless the board is clear about what it wants, there is no valid way to measure progress and compliance.
- A distinction should be made between monitoring data (used by the board for accountability) and management data (used by the staff for operations).
- The constructive use of data is a skill that must be learned. The board should have some understanding of data, but will typically require guidance from the staff.

## 6. The Board Takes Responsibility for Itself

The board, collectively and individually, takes full responsibility for board activity and behavior – the work it chooses to do and how it chooses to do the work. Individual board members are obligated to express their opinions and respect others' opinions; however, board members understand the importance of the board ultimately speaking with one clear voice.

- The school board's role as trustee for the community is unique and essential to both the district and community.
- While the board must operate within legal parameters, good governance requires the board be responsible for itself, its processes and contributions. Board deliberations and actions are limited to board work, not staff work.
- The board seeks continuity of leadership, even as it experiences turnover in membership. The board accomplishes this by using written board policies to guide board operations, by providing thorough orientation and training for all members, and by nurturing a positive and inviting board culture.

## School Board Member Opportunities and Expectations

This is a summary of the rights and treatment that all board members are entitled to expect as members of the school board. These rights are limited to the board's legal operating authority and should not be interpreted to extend an individual's authority as a board member. The school board recognizes that good governance operations depend on each board member being able to expect the following in a manner consistent with board policy:

## On joining the School Board ...

1. A thorough orientation to the board, including the board's governing process — the work the board chooses to do and how the board chooses to do the work.
2. A thorough orientation to the District's operations, finance and structures.
3. Access to the District's School Board Policy Manual, the board's regular meeting minutes for the past year, material explaining the board's roles and responsibilities and other information that might facilitate a better understanding of District operations.

## Before a meeting ...

1. Notification of board meetings and receipt of meeting agendas at the same time that other board members receive theirs and consistent with board policy.
2. An opportunity to propose the addition of pertinent items to the agenda.
3. The timely receipt of information before each meeting that will enable the board member to make informed decisions.

## During a meeting ...

1. Board meetings that start on time stay on task and end at a reasonable time.
2. Unless restricted by board policy, the opportunity to question the appropriateness of any item on the agenda, to request the removal of an item from a consent agenda for independent consideration and to propose changes before the agenda is approved.
3. The opportunity to make and second motions regarding agenda items and to move to defer action on any agenda item or to enter into closed session as allowed by law.
4. An opportunity to request the justification, alternatives and consequences for items presented for a decision and to participate in full and free discussion before voting.
5. The opportunity to express opinions during a board meeting without interruption and ridicule, as well as civil and respectful treatment by all other school board members and staff members.
6. The opportunity to speak candidly during a legally called closed session without concern for being repeated or confidentialities being breached after the meeting.
7. The opportunity to remind other board members of policy and legal responsibilities, including those imposed by the Open Meetings Act, without fear of reprisal. This

- includes the ability to suggest that the board or an officer, whichever is appropriate according to board policy, consult with the board attorney about the legality of a current or planned action or procedure.
8. The opportunity to request that a roll call vote be taken and, when a voice vote is taken, the opportunity to request that the minutes reflect an individual's vote.
  9. The opportunity to suggest the correction of any inaccuracies in the minutes before their approval while recognizing that minutes are not a meeting transcript.
  10. The opportunity to participate in the process of selecting officers when the board reorganizes at an open meeting.
  11. The opportunity to participate in all policy making functions including suggesting changes to board processes.

## In general ...

1. Similar opportunities afforded other members of the board including the opportunity to have expenses reimbursed pursuant to board policy for attending non-District meetings and educational opportunities.
2. A professional relationship with the superintendent in which both parties respect each other.
3. The receipt of timely, accurate responses from the superintendent to reasonable inquiries.
4. The opportunity to express personal opinions and viewpoints provided no attempt is made to undermine board action, misrepresent the majority board opinion, or otherwise violate board policy or this "School Board Member Opportunities and Expectations."
5. The opportunity to participate in regular board self-evaluations.
6. Access to relevant data pertaining to district and board performance.

*The items listed are not generally legally enforceable. Instead, they are items that will enable an individual to fulfill his or her duties and responsibilities as a school board member.*

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# CHAPTER 3



## School Board Governance Basics

Bloomington School District 13 is governed by a school board consisting of seven members. The board's powers and duties include the authority to adopt, enforce and monitor all policies for the management and governance of the District's schools.

Official action by the school board may only occur at a duly called and legally conducted meeting at which a quorum is physically present.

School board members, as individuals, have no authority over school affairs, except as provided by law or as authorized by the board.

*Board Policy 2.10*

## Guiding Principles

The Bloomington School District 13 school community believes

- Students learn best when instruction is individualized based on their unique interests, motivations, strengths, and weaknesses.
- Teachers do their best in an environment that honors their strengths, encourages collaboration, and provides administrative, curricular, and instruction-based support.
- High-quality employees result in a high-quality District.
- Technology is a tool that can be used to enhance instruction and prepare students with the skills they need to succeed.
- Students' educations are enhanced when the entire community is involved in the teaching and learning process.
- Community partnerships strengthen District schools.
- Strong fiscal management and long-term planning are essential for the health of the District.

## Core Values

Bloomington School District 13 is committed to:

- Ensuring every child will learn;
- Treating everyone with honor and
- Working together to achieve.

## Roles and Expectations

Bloomington School District 13 strongly adheres to the principle that it is a collaborative school community comprised of students, parents, educators/support staff, and community who each contribute significantly to the success of every child. The role of each member is important and creates the concept of a total school community. Parent/guardian participation in the education of their child(ren) is a critical component to each individual's success.

- Parents are the primary lifelong teachers of children.
- A well-prepared staff willing to grow professionally is essential for learning.
- Children should learn to make responsible choices.
- Learning takes place through personal effort, collaboration and taking reasonable risks.
- Children need a safe, supportive environment in which to learn.
- District 13 participates in a global community of learning resources.

## Expectations for Excellence

Bloomington School District 13 should maximize the use of all available resources to provide the best educational experience and environment for pupils. This educational experience should include those skills that will develop independent learning, promote the values of good citizenship and service, and emphasize cooperative communication, interaction and sharing between students, parents, educators/support staff, and community members. Students should be prepared to be successful and productive members of society and to understand and adjust to a rapidly changing world and global community.

- High expectations stimulate growth.
- All children must learn ***how*** to learn.
- Each child should be challenged and given the opportunity to individually succeed in an ever-changing world.
- A positive self-concept must be fostered.
- Each child's unique learning style should be considered.

## Powers and Duties of the School Board

The major powers and duties of the school board include, but are not limited to:

1. Organizing the board after each consolidated election by electing officers and establishing its regular meeting schedule and, thereafter, taking action during lawfully called meetings to faithfully fulfill the board's responsibilities in accordance with State and federal law.

2. Formulating, adopting, and modifying board policies, at its sole discretion, subject only to mandatory collective bargaining agreements and State and federal law.
3. Employing a superintendent and other personnel, making employment decisions, dismissing personnel, and establishing an equal employment opportunity policy that prohibits unlawful discrimination.
4. Directing, through policy, the superintendent, in his or her charge of the District's administration. Approving the annual budget, tax levies, major expenditures, payment of obligations, annual audit, and other aspects of the District's financial operation; and making available a statement of financial affairs as provided in State law.
5. Entering contracts using the public bidding procedure when required.
6. Providing, constructing, controlling, and maintaining adequate physical facilities; making school buildings available for use as civil defense shelters; and establishing a resource conservation policy.
7. Establishing an equal educational opportunities policy that prohibits unlawful discrimination.
8. Approving the curriculum, textbooks, and educational services.
9. Evaluating the educational program and approving School Improvement and District Improvement Plans.
10. Presenting the District report card and School report card(s) to parents/guardians and the community; these documents report District, School, and student performance.
11. Establishing and supporting student discipline policies designed to maintain an environment conducive to learning, including deciding individual student suspension or expulsion cases brought before it.
12. Establishing attendance units within the District and assigning students to the schools.
13. Establishing the school year.
14. Requiring a moment of silence to recognize veterans during any type of school event held at a District school on November 11.
15. Providing student transportation services pursuant to State law.
16. Entering into joint agreements with other boards to establish cooperative educational programs or provide educational facilities.
17. Complying with requirements in the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. Specifically, each individual board member must, if an allegation is raised to the member during an open or closed board meeting that a student is an abused child as defined in the Act, direct or cause the board to direct the superintendent or other equivalent school administrator to comply with the Act's requirements concerning the reporting of child abuse.
18. Communicating the schools' activities and operations to the community and representing the needs and desires of the community in educational matters.

## Indemnification

To the extent allowed by law, the board shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless school board members, employees, volunteer personnel (pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/10-22.34, 10-22.34a and 10-22.34b), mentors of certified staff (pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/2-3.53a, 2-3.53b, and 105 ILCS 5/21A-5 et. seq.), and student teachers who, in the course of discharging their official duties imposed or authorized by law, are sued as parties in a legal proceeding. Nothing herein, however, shall be construed as obligating the board to defend, indemnify, or hold harmless any person who engages in criminal activity, official misconduct, fraud, intentional or willful and wanton misconduct, or acts beyond the authority properly vested in the individual.

*Board Policy 2.20*

## Challenging Lessons

Experienced board members from across the nation were asked to identify the most difficult lesson or fact they had to learn about board service. Here's what they said most often.

- Learning to acknowledge publicly that you have no power and authority as an individual board member; that only the board as a whole can make policies and decisions for the school district.
- Determining what your function is on the board and how to accomplish it effectively.
- That no matter what you *think* you know about board service when you first come on board, you still have a lot to learn.
- Recognizing the difference between setting policy (the board's job) and administering the schools (the superintendent's job).
- That you must represent *all* the students. Your decisions must be made in the interest of the total school system and not made solely for special groups or interests.
- Learning how to respond to the complaints and concerns of citizens, school administrators, and other staff.
- That change comes slowly.
- That you can't solve everyone's problems by yourself.
- That you must think deeply and sometimes accept a reality that is contrary to your own beliefs.
- That effective board service means being able to hold the minority viewpoint when voting on a given issue; then openly supporting the majority vote of the board in your community.
- Discovering how the schools are funded.
- That the primary focus of all board decisions must be student achievement.

*National School Boards Association  
Becoming A Better Board Member*



# CHAPTER 4



## Top 10 Reasons to Become a School Board Member

10. Because I really like to sit on hard chairs for extended periods of time.
9. Because there are very few foods I don't enjoy, or at least won't eat.
8. Because I enjoy being at numerous evening events. (You may have a problem if your spouse enjoys you being at these meetings.)
7. Because I like a challenge.
6. Because educators made a real difference in my life.
5. Because I have the gift to listen, hear, and understand positions that are different from my own.
4. Because I have the ability to be ardent in my beliefs or opinions, but also the ability to compromise when necessary.
3. Because I want our children and young people to be successful in school and I don't care who gets the credit.
2. Because I realize that every child has the ability and right to be as good an education as we can provide.
1. Because I believe I can make a difference in the education of the children and young people where I live.

*~Source: William J. Phalen, Sr.  
Calvert County, MD Board of Education*

## School District Elections

School District elections are non-partisan, governed by the general election laws of the State, and include the election of school board members, various public policy propositions, and advisory questions. Board members are elected at the consolidated election held on the first Tuesday in April in odd-numbered years. If, however, that date conflicts with the celebration of Passover, the consolidated election is postponed to the first Tuesday following the last day of Passover. The canvass of votes is conducted by the election authority within 21 days after the election.

The board, by proper resolution, may cause to be placed on the ballot: (a) public policy referendum according to Article 28 of the Election Code, or (b) advisory questions of public policy according to Section 9-1.5 of the School Code.

The board Secretary serves as the local election official. He or she receives petitions for the submission of a public question to referenda and forwards them to the proper election officer and otherwise provides information to the community concerning District elections.

*Board Policy 2.30*

## **School Board Member Qualifications**

A school board member must be, on the date of election a United States citizen at least 18 years of age, a resident of Illinois and the District for at least one year immediately preceding election, and a registered voter.

Reasons for making an individual ineligible for board membership include holding an incompatible office and certain types of state or federal employment. A child sex offender, as defined in state law, is ineligible for school board membership.

*Board Policy 2.40*

## **Board Member Term of Office**

The term of office for a School board member begins immediately after both of the following occur:

- The election authority canvasses the votes and declares the winner(s); this occurs within 21 days after the Consolidated Election held on the first Tuesday in April in odd-numbered years; and
- The successful candidate takes the Oath of Office as provided in board policy. The term of office ends four years later when the successor assumes office.

*Board Policy 2.50*

## **Traits of Effective Board Members**

Effective board members have a number of traits in common, yet it is important to realize that these characteristics are not acquired immediately.

Knowledge and experience are not adequate. Board members must be willing to learn and be open to new knowledge. In addition, an effective board member has a commitment to all children of the district. It is important the board members possess courage and a conviction of the importance of public education. They must be committed to fulfilling their responsibilities in areas of board work. Members must also have the ability and willingness to make decisions and must have a commitment to the democratic process.

In addition, an effective board member must have time and energy to commit to the work of the board, the ability to accept the will of the majority, respect for education as a profession and the ability to communicate well with others.

An effective board member makes every attempt to attend all board meetings and prepares for meetings by reading and analyzing the agenda and support information. Effective board members

avoid springing surprises at board meetings, abide by board policies and rules, and hold off making personal decisions until all the evidence has been provided and board discussion is completed. An effective board member strives to foster unity and harmony among the board and differentiates between problems that require board action and those which should be solved by administration. This board member supports the superintendent's or administrator's authority, shares responsibility for board decisions, accepts and evaluates criticism and advice objectively, avoids personality conflicts and improves personal boardsmanship qualities. Responsible board members are more effective board members. They listen to their constituents but, as individuals, respect the corporate authority and responsibility of the board.

*~Iowa Association of School Boards Member Handbook*

## Board Member Duties

The duties and obligations of an individual board member shall include the following:

- Familiarize himself/herself with the *Illinois School Code* and other applicable state and federal law, regulations of the Illinois State Department of Education and Bloomingdale School District 13 policies and procedures;
- Have knowledge of educational goals and objectives of the District;
- Work harmoniously with other board members;
- Vote and act impartially in the board meetings for the welfare of the district;
- Accept the will of the majority vote in all cases and support to the resulting policy or action;
- Represent the board and Bloomingdale District 13 to the public in such a way as to promote both interest and support for district policies and programs; and,
- Refer complaints to the proper school authorities and to abstain from individual counsel and action.

## Board Members Visiting Schools

Board members are encouraged to be informed about our schools, and visits to our schools can be part of that process. Periodic visits to the schools will be scheduled for the board and superintendent at mutually agreed upon times. If a board member wishes to visit one or more of our schools, he/she should first inform the superintendent of schools of his/her desire to visit a school(s) and the superintendent of schools will then work with the school principal(s) to schedule a school visit for the board member. When visiting any of our schools, board members must be mindful that they do not serve in an administrative function and should not attempt to direct, criticize or discipline staff members.

## Board Member Removal from Office

If a majority of the board determines that a board member has willfully failed to perform his or her official duties, it may request the Regional Superintendent to remove such member from office.

*Board Policy 2.60*

## Vacancies on the School Board

Elective office of a school board member becomes vacant before the term's expiration when any of the following occurs:

- Death of the incumbent;
- Resignation in writing filed with the secretary of the board;
- Legal disability of the incumbent;
- Conviction of a felony, bribery, perjury, or other infamous crime or of any offense involving a violation of official oath or of a violent crime against a child;
- Removal from office;
- The decision of a competent tribunal declaring his or her election void;
- Ceasing to be an inhabitant of the District or a particular area from which he or she was elected, if the residential requirements contained in *The School Code* are violated;
- An illegal conflict of interest; or
- Acceptance of a second public office that is incompatible with board membership.

## Filling Vacancies

Whenever a vacancy occurs, the remaining members shall notify the Regional Superintendent of Schools of that vacancy within 5 days after its occurrence and shall fill the vacancy until the next regular board election, at which election a successor shall be elected to serve the remainder of the unexpired term. However, if the vacancy occurs with less than 868 days remaining in the term, the person so appointed shall serve the remainder of the unexpired term, and no election to fill the vacancy shall be held. Members appointed by the remaining members of the board to fill vacancies shall meet any residential requirements as specified in *The School Code*. The board shall fill the vacancy within 45 days after it occurred by a public vote at a meeting of the board. Immediately following a vacancy on the board, the board will publicize it and accept résumés from District residents who are interested in filling the vacancy. After reviewing the applications, the board may invite the prospective candidates for personal interviews to be conducted during duly scheduled closed meetings.

*Board Policy 2.70*

## Board Member Oath

Each School board member, before taking his or her seat on the board, shall take the following oath of office:

I, (*name*), do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of member of the Board of Education (or Board of School Directors, as the case may be) of (*name of School District*), in accordance with the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the State of Illinois, and the laws of the State of Illinois, to the best of my ability.

I further swear (or affirm) that:

I shall respect taxpayer interests by serving as a faithful protector of the School District's assets;

I shall encourage and respect the free expression of opinion by my fellow board members and others who seek a hearing before the board, while respecting the privacy of students and employees;

I shall recognize that a board member has no legal authority as an individual and that decisions can be made only by a majority vote at a public board meeting; and

I shall abide by majority decisions of the board, while retaining the right to seek changes in such decisions through ethical and constructive channels.

As part of the Board of Education, I shall accept the responsibility for my role in the equitable and quality education of every student in the school district;

I shall foster with the board extensive participation of the community, formulate goals, define outcomes, and set the course for Bloomingdale School District 13;

I shall assist in establishing a structure and an environment designed to ensure all students have the opportunity to attain their maximum potential through a sound organizational framework;

I shall strive to ensure a continuous assessment of student achievement and all conditions affecting the education of our children, in compliance with State law;

I shall serve as education's key advocate on behalf of students and our community's school (or schools) to advance the vision for Bloomingdale School District 13; and

I shall strive to work together with the District Superintendent to lead the school district toward fulfilling the vision the board has created, fostering excellence for every student in the areas of academic skills, knowledge, citizenship, and personal development.

The board president will administer the oath in an open board meeting; in the absence, of the president, the vice president will administer the oath. If neither is available, the board member with the longest service on the board will administer the oath.

The board adopts the Illinois Association of School Boards' "Code of Conduct for Members of School Boards." A copy of the Code shall be displayed in the regular board meeting room.

*Board Policy 2.80*

## Board Member Code of Conduct

As a member of my local school board, I will do my utmost to represent the public interest in education by adhering to the following standards and principles:

- I will represent all school district constituents honestly and equally and refuse to surrender my responsibilities to special interest or partisan political groups.
- I will avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of impropriety which could result from my position, and will not use my board membership for personal gain or publicity.
- I will recognize that a board member has no legal authority as an individual and that decisions can be made only by a majority vote at a board meeting.
- I will take no private action that might compromise the board or administration and will respect the confidentiality of privileged information.
- I will abide by majority decisions of the board, while retaining the right to seek changes in such decisions through ethical and constructive channels.
- I will encourage and respect the free expression of opinion by my fellow board members and will participate in board discussions in an open, honest and respectful manner, honoring differences of opinion or perspective.
- I will prepare for, attend and actively participate in school board meetings.
- I will be sufficiently informed about and prepared to act on the specific issues before the board, and remain reasonably knowledgeable about local, State, national, and global education issues.
- I will respectfully listen to those who communicate with the board, seeking to understand their views, while recognizing my responsibility to represent the interests of the entire community.
- I will strive for a positive working relationship with the superintendent, respecting the superintendent's authority to advise the board, implement board policy, and administer the District.
- I will model continuous learning and work to ensure good governance by taking advantage of board member development opportunities, such as those sponsored by my State and national school board associations, and encourage my fellow board members to do the same.
- I will strive to keep my board focused on its primary work of clarifying the District purpose, direction and goals, and monitoring District performance.

## Board Member Conflict of Interest

No School board member shall have a beneficial interest directly or indirectly in any contract, work, or business of the District unless permitted by State law.

Board members must annually file a *Statement of Economic Interests* as required by the Illinois Governmental Ethics Act. Each board member is responsible for filing the statement with the county clerk of the county in which the District's main office is located by May 1.

*Board Policy 2.100*

## Qualifications, Term, and Duties of Board Officers

The school board officers are: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. These officers are elected or appointed by the board at its organizational meeting.

### President

The board elects a president from its members for a 1-year term. The duties of the president are to:

- Focus the board meeting agendas on appropriate content and preside at all meetings;
- Make all board committee appointments, unless specifically stated otherwise;
- Attend and observe any board committee meeting at his or her discretion;
- Represent the board on other boards or agencies;
- Sign official District documents requiring the president's signature, including board minutes and Certificate of Tax Levy;
- Call special meetings of the board;
- Serve as the *head of the public body* for purposes of the Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act;
- Ensure that a quorum of the board is physically present at all board meetings; Administer the oath of office to new board members; and Serve as the board's official spokesperson to the media.

The president is permitted to participate in all board meetings in a manner equal to all other board members, including the ability to make and second motions.

The vice president fills a vacancy in the presidency.

### Vice President

The board elects a vice president from its members for a 1-year term. The vice president performs the duties of the president if:

1. The office of president is vacant;
2. The president is absent; or
3. The president is unable to perform the office's duties.

A vacancy in the Vice Presidency is filled by a special board election.

## Secretary

The duties of the Secretary are to:

- Keep minutes for all board meetings and keep the verbatim record for all closed board meetings;
- Mail meeting notification and agenda to news media who have officially requested copies;
- Keep records of the board's official acts, and sign them, along with the president, before submitting them to the treasurer at such times as the treasurer may require;
- Report to the treasurer on or before July 7, annually, such information as the Treasurer is required to include in the treasurer's report to the Regional Superintendent;
- Act as the local election authority for the District;
- Arrange public inspection of the budget before adoption;
- Publish required notices;
- Sign official District documents requiring the secretary's signature; and
- Maintain board policy and such other official documents as directed by the board.

The Secretary may delegate some or all of these duties, except when State law prohibits the delegation. The board appoints a secretary pro tempore, who may or may not be a board member, if the Secretary is absent from any meeting or refuses to perform the duties of the office. A permanent vacancy in the office of Secretary is filled by special board election.

## Recording Secretary

The board may appoint a Recording Secretary who is a staff member. The recording secretary shall:

- Assist the secretary by taking the minutes for all open board meetings;
- Assemble board meeting material and provide it, along with prior meeting minutes, to board members before the next meeting; and
- Perform the secretary's duties, as assigned, except when State law prohibits the delegation.
  - In addition, the recording secretary or superintendent receives notification from board members who desire to attend a board meeting by video or audio means.

## Treasurer

The treasurer of the board shall be either a member of the board who serves a 1-year term or a non-board member who serves at the board's pleasure. A treasurer who is a board member may not be compensated. A treasurer who is not a board member may be compensated provided it is established before the appointment. The treasurer must:

- Be at least 21 years old;



- Not be a member of the County Board of School Trustees; and
- Have a financial background or related experience, or 12 credit hours of college-level accounting.

**The Treasurer shall:**

- Furnish a bond, which shall be approved by a majority of the full board;
- Maintain custody of school funds;
- Maintain records of school funds and balances;
- Prepare a monthly reconciliation report for the superintendent and board; and
- Receive, hold, and expend District funds only upon the order of the board.
- A vacancy in the Treasurer's office is filled by board appointment.

*Board Policy 2.110*

# CHAPTER 5



## Board Member Development

The school board desires that its individual members learn, understand, and practice effective governance principles. The board is responsible for board member orientation and development. Board members have an equal opportunity to attend State and national meetings designed to familiarize members with public school issues, governance, and legislation.

The board president and/or superintendent shall provide all board members with information regarding pertinent education materials, publications, and notices of training or development.

### Mandatory Board Member Training

Each board member is responsible for his or her own compliance with the mandatory training laws that are described below:

- Each board member taking office after June 13, 2011 must complete at least 4 hours of professional development leadership training in education and labor law, financial oversight and accountability, and fiduciary responsibilities within the first year of his or her first term that begins after that date.
- Each board member who was in office on January 1, 2012 must complete training on the Open Meetings Act within one year of that date. Each board member taking office after January 1, 2012 must complete this training no later than 90 days after taking the oath of office. After completing the training, each board member must file a copy of his or her certificate of completion with his or her board.
- After the District's implementation of the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) evaluations, each board member must complete a training program on PERA evaluations before participating in a vote on a dismissal based on an optional alternative evaluative dismissal process.

The superintendent or designee shall maintain on the District website a log identifying the complete training and development activities of each board member, including both mandatory and non-mandatory training.

### New Board Member Orientation

The orientation process for newly elected or appointed board members includes:

The board president or superintendent, or their designees, shall give each new board member a copy of or online access to the Board Policy Manual, the board's regular meeting minutes for the past year, and other helpful information including material describing the District and explaining the board's roles and responsibilities.

- The board president or designee shall schedule one or more special board meetings, or schedule time during regular meetings, for board members to become acquainted and to review Board processes and procedures.
- The board president may request a veteran board member to mentor a new member.
- All new members are encouraged to attend workshops for new members conducted by the Illinois Association of School Boards.

*Board Policy 2.120*

## **Board Member Request for Information**

It is important for board members to be informed about the school district and the performance of our students. The superintendent of schools and school administrators regularly provide board members with data and information via the weekly Board Bulletin and presentations at board meetings. Board members who seek additional information are to work through the superintendent of schools to obtain this information, which will be provided to all board members.

## **Board Member Expenses**

No school board member may receive compensation for services.

The board may advance or reimburse members the actual and necessary expenses incurred while attending:

- Meetings sponsored by the Illinois State Board of Education or by the Regional Superintendent of Schools;
- County or regional meetings and the annual meeting sponsored by any school board association complying with Article 23 of the School Code; and
- Meetings sponsored by an organization in the field of public school education.

In addition, the board may reimburse a member for registration fees or tuition for a course that allowed the member to comply with the mandatory training described in policy 2:120, Board Member Development, or other training provided by one of the providers described in the above list. When possible, registration fees will be paid by the District in advance.

## **Board Self-Evaluation**

The board will conduct periodic self-evaluations with the goal of continuous improvement.

## **Transportation; Hotel/Motel; Meals; and, Miscellaneous Expenses**

The least expensive transportation will be used, providing that no hardship will be caused to the board member. Board members will be reimbursed for: air travel at the coach or single class commercial airline rate; rail or bus travel at actual cost (rail or bus travel costs may not exceed the cost of coach airfare); use of personal automobiles at the standard mileage rate approved by the Internal Revenue Service for income tax purposes; toll charges and parking costs; automobile rental costs when the vehicle's use is warranted; taxis, airport limousines, or other local transportation costs; hotel/motel charges; meal charges; and, other expenses incurred while attending a meeting sponsored by organizations described herein by fully describing the expenses on the expense voucher, attaching receipts if possible.

*Board Policy 2.125*

# CHAPTER 6



## Board-Superintendent Relationship

The school board employs and evaluates the superintendent and holds him or her responsible for the operation of the District in accordance with board policies and State and federal law.

The board-superintendent relationship is based on mutual respect for their complementary roles. The relationship requires clear communication of expectations regarding the duties and responsibilities of both the board and superintendent.

The board considers the recommendations of the superintendent as the District's Chief Executive Officer. The board adopts policies necessary to provide general direction for the District and to encourage achievement of District goals. The superintendent develops plans, programs, and procedures needed to implement the policies and directs the District's operations.

*Board Policy 2.130*

## Evaluation of the Superintendent

A fair and meaningful evaluation process builds a positive and productive relationship between the board and the superintendent. The annual evaluation of the superintendent uses a process that addresses measurable goals and objectives, leadership, and evidence of meeting goals. The evaluation consists of four parts:

- I. Essential Duties and Responsibilities:
  - a. Educational Leadership
  - b. Administration Management
  - c. Personnel Management
  - d. Communications/Public Relations
  - e. Other Areas of Suggestion, Concern
- II. Superintendent's Self Evaluation on Goals and Outcomes for Current School Year
- III. Contractual Goals for Upcoming School Year
- IV. Evaluation Summary by School Board including Comments, Supporting Evidence and Rating

The goals and progress towards them is an ongoing part of the conversation with the board and superintendent throughout the year.

*Bloomington School District 13 Superintendent Evaluation*

# Board-Superintendent Expectations

## The Board Expects:

- To receive periodic communication from the superintendent every week via email or delivered Thursday Letter publication.
- To be notified initially by phone as soon as possible for:
  - School emergency (lock down, fire, etc.)
  - Student emergency (arrest, injury, illness, death, etc.)
  - Staff emergency (arrest, injury, illness, death, etc.)
- To receive board packets and supporting documentation on Thursday before the scheduled regular board meeting on the following Monday, or the day preceding a special board meeting.
- All board members receive the same information:
  - One member's request for additional information results in all members receiving or having the same access to the information.
  - Special communications are made to all board members.
- Reasonable requests for additional information are satisfied in a timely manner.
- Board members treat each other and the staff with respect.
- The superintendent and the staff treat all board members with respect.
- The superintendent may meet with the board president on the Wednesday or Thursday prior to the scheduled regular board meeting on the following Monday to review and discuss the board meeting agenda.
- The superintendent provides a self-appraisal of performance according to the Evaluation Plan.
- No surprises!

## The Superintendent Expects:

- That requests for placing items on the agenda will be received 10 days prior to the board meeting.
- That direction is only given at board meetings when a majority of the board votes to give direction.
- That board members are respectful toward the staff, and of the staff's time.
- That board members read all supporting documentation before the board meeting.
- That board members contact the superintendent with questions about agenda items or support materials by noon on the day of the scheduled board meeting.
- That board members provide feedback and a summative evaluation of the superintendent's performance according to the evaluation process timeline.
- No surprises!

# Board Protocol

- Placing new business items on the agenda:
  - Board member contacts superintendent or board president ten days prior to meeting
- Participating in public forums:
  - Citizen comments – follow Board Policy 2:230
  - Listen, no commitments
  - Speak with one voice once decision is made by board
- Asking agenda questions:
  - No surprises
  - All questions go to the superintendent
  - Monday 12 p.m., heads up!
- Communicating with members:
  - Follow Open Meetings Act
  - Debate issues, not one another
- Communicating with staff:
  - Listen, no commitments
  - Chain of command
  - Board member calls superintendent with information
- Visiting schools:
  - Open door
  - Invitations
  - Structured time
- Responding to complaints:
  - Listen
  - Chain of command
  - Board member calls superintendent with information
- Communicating with the media
  - Superintendent
  - Board president
- Orienting new members:
  - Superintendent: half-day session
  - Mentor
- Conducting closed sessions:
  - Follow the Open Meetings Act
  - Confidentiality is critical
- Respect appropriate roles of board and superintendent
- Conduct self-assessments and evaluations for continuous improvement

## Learning Together as a Board-Superintendent Team

A board member is elected to one of the most important roles in education: school governance. Learning together as a board-superintendent team, coupled with deep conversations about implications of that learning for your district, is critical to building a shared focus strong enough to maintain your commitment to leading long-term improvement efforts. The board's learning is focused around the board member's role in the context of school improvement. It's also about gaining broader understanding and background, networking with other school boards and learning from their success and experiences. To fulfill this important role, effective school boards:

- Establish board learning time, commit agenda time around school improvement efforts and learn together in the context of the district's goals and improvement initiatives.
- Engage in deep conversations about the implications of their learning in order to build a shared focus through shared information and discussion.
- Build a trusting and supportive relationship with the superintendent, in which both the board and superintendent develop a willingness to lead and to allow others to fulfill their leadership roles.
- Lead through thoughtful policy development, based on shared learning, to build momentum and capacity for change to embed expectations for improvement in the culture of the school district.

*Iowa Association of School Boards Member Handbook*

## Communications To and From the Board

Staff members, parents, and community members should submit questions or communications for the school board's consideration to the superintendent. The superintendent shall provide the board with a summary of these questions or communications and provide, as appropriate, his or her feedback regarding the matter. If contacted individually, board members will refer the person to the appropriate level of authority, except in unusual situations. Board members' questions or communications to staff or about programs will be channeled through the superintendent's office. Board members will not take private action that might compromise the board or District. There is no expectation of privacy for any communication sent to the board or its members individually, whether sent by letter, email, or other means.

*Board Policy 2.140*

## Board Member Use of Electronic Mail

Email to, by, and among board members, in their capacity as board members, shall not be used for the purpose of discussing District business. Email among board members shall be limited to: (1) disseminating information, and (2) messages not involving deliberation, debate, or decision-making. Email may contain:

- Individual responses to questions posed by community members, subject to the other limitations in this policy.



- Agenda item suggestions
- Reminders regarding meeting times, dates, and places
- Board meeting agendas or information concerning agenda items

*Board Policy 2.140*

## Committees

The School Board may establish committees to assist with the Board’s governance function and, in some situations, to comply with State law requirements. These committees are known as Board committees and report directly to the Board. Committee members may include both Board members and non-Board members depending on the committee’s purpose. The Board President makes all Board committee appointments unless specifically stated otherwise. Board committee meetings shall comply with the *Open Meetings Act*. A Board committee may not take final action on behalf of the Board – it may only make recommendations to the Board.

### Special Board Committees

A special committee may be created for specific purposes or to investigate special issues. A special committee is automatically dissolved after presenting its final report to the Board or at the Board’s discretion.

### Standing Board Committees

A standing committee may be created for an indefinite term although its members will fluctuate.

### Superintendent Committees

Nothing in this policy limits the authority of the Superintendent or designee to create and use committees that report to him or her or to other staff members.

*Board Policy 2.150*

## School Attorney

The School Attorney shall be appointed to serve as the legal advisor to the board and superintendent. Compensation shall be agreed upon in advance.

The attorney shall:

- When requested by the superintendent or board president, serve as counselor to the board at regular meetings and special meetings in writing.
- At the request of the board, represent the District in litigation to which the board may be a party or in which it may have an interest.

- Render a written opinion on any legal question when requested by the superintendent or board president.
- Approve, prepare, or supervise the preparation of all legal papers and instruments executed by the officers of the board, and perform such other legal duties as the board may request.
- Be available for consultation as requested by the superintendent, his or her designee, or board president.

The board shall retain the right to consult or employ other attorneys on matters of special concern, or to terminate an attorney on retainer with an appropriate adjustment in the retainer fee.

*Board Policy 2.160*

## **Procurement of Architectural, Engineering, and Land Surveying Services**

The school board selects architects, engineers, and land surveyors to provide professional services to the District on the basis of demonstrated competence and qualifications, and in accordance with State law.

*Board Policy 2.170*

# CHAPTER 7



## Types of School Board Meetings

### General Meeting

For all meetings of the school board and its committees, the superintendent or designee shall satisfy all notice and posting requirements contained herein as well as in the Open Meetings Act. This shall include mailing meeting notifications to news media that have officially requested them and to others as approved by the board. Unless otherwise specified, all meetings are held in the District's main office. Board Policy 2:220, *School Board Meeting Procedure*, governs meeting quorum requirements.

### Regular Meetings

The board announces the time and place for its regular meetings at the beginning of each calendar or fiscal year and sets the schedule at the organizational meeting of the board of education. The superintendent shall prepare and make available the calendar of regular board meetings. Meeting dates may be changed with 10 days' notice in accordance with State law.

A meeting agenda shall be posted at the District's main office or other location where the meeting is to be held, at least 48 hours before the meeting. Items not specifically on the agenda may still be considered during the meeting.

### Closed Meetings

The board and board committees may meet in a closed meeting to consider the following subjects:

1. The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1).
2. Collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2).
3. The selection of a person to fill a public office, as defined in the Open Meetings Act, including a vacancy in a public office, when the public body is given power to appoint under law or ordinance, or the discipline, performance or removal of the occupant of a public office, when the public body is given power to remove the occupant under law or ordinance. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(3).
4. Evidence or testimony presented in open hearing, or in closed hearing where specifically authorized by law, to a quasi-adjudicative body, as defined in the Open Meetings Act,

provided that the body prepares and makes available for public inspection a written decision setting forth its determinative reasoning. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(4).

5. The purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body, including meetings held for the purpose of discussing whether a particular parcel should be acquired. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5).
6. The setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the public body. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(6).
7. The sale or purchase of securities, investments, or investment contracts. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(7).
8. Security procedures and the use of personnel and equipment to respond to an actual, a threatened, or a reasonably potential danger to the safety of employees, students, staff, the public or public property. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(8).
9. Student disciplinary cases. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(9).
10. The placement of individual students in special education programs and other matters relating to individual students. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(10).
11. Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the public body finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the closed meeting. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11).
12. The establishment of reserves or settlement of claims as provided in the Local Governmental and Governmental Employees Tort Immunity Act, if otherwise the disposition of a claim or potential claim might be prejudiced, or the review or discussion of claims, loss or risk management information, records, data, advice or communications from or with respect to any insurer of the public body or any intergovernmental risk management association or self- insurance pool of which the public body is a member. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(12).
13. Self-evaluation, practices and procedures or professional ethics, when meeting with a representative of a statewide association of which the public body is a member. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(16).
14. Discussion of minutes of meetings lawfully closed under the Open Meetings Act, whether for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21).

The board may hold a closed meeting, or close a portion of a meeting, by a majority vote of a quorum, taken at an open meeting. The vote of each board member present, and the reason for the closed meeting, will be publicly disclosed at the time of the meeting and clearly stated in the motion and the meeting minutes.

A single motion calling for a series of closed meetings may be adopted when such meetings will involve the same particular matters and are scheduled to be held within 3 months of the vote.

No final board action will be taken at a closed meeting.

## Reconvened or Rescheduled Meetings

A meeting may be rescheduled or reconvened. Public notice of a rescheduled or reconvened meeting shall be given in the same manner as that for a special meeting, except that no public notice is required when the original meeting is open to the public and: (1) is to be reconvened within 24 hours, or (2) an announcement of the time and place of the reconvened meeting was made at the original meeting and there is no change in the agenda.

## Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the President or by any 3 members of the board by giving notice thereof, in writing, stating the time, place, and purpose of the meeting to remaining board members by mail at least 48 hours before the meeting, or by personal service at least 24 hours before the meeting. Public notice of a special meeting is given by posting a notice at the District's main office at least 48 hours before the meeting and by notifying the news media that have filed a written request for notice. A meeting agenda shall accompany the notice. No matters will be discussed, considered, or brought before the board at any special meeting other than such matters as were included in the stated purpose of the meeting.

## Board Workshop

The board recognizes that in order to properly develop a long-range and in-depth plan for school improvement, it will be necessary to regularly meet in a workshop setting to allow for a more focused discussion of school district performance and initiatives. Although they are considered special meetings of the board of education, workshops are generally held at times and/or locations that are different from regularly scheduled meetings. In addition to the attendance of all board members, the board may invite the superintendent of schools, school administrators and other individuals to participate in its workshop.

## Emergency Meetings

Public notice of emergency meetings shall be given as soon as practical, but in any event, before the meeting to news media that have filed a written request for notice.

## Organizational School Board Meetings

During a March meeting in odd-numbered years, the school board establishes a date for its organizational meeting to be held sometime after the election authority canvasses the vote, but within 28 days after the consolidated election. The consolidated election is held on the first Tuesday in April of odd-numbered years. At the organizational meeting the following shall occur:

- Each successful candidate, before taking his or her seat on the board, shall take the oath of office.

- The new school board members shall be seated.
- The school board shall elect its officers who assume office immediately upon their election.
- The school board shall fix a time and date for its regular meetings.

*Board Policy 2.210*

## Posting Meeting Notices on the District Website

In addition to the other notices specified in this policy, the superintendent or designee shall post the following on the District website: (1) the annual schedule of regular meetings, which shall remain posted until the board approves a new schedule of regular meetings; (2) a public notice of all board meetings; and (3) the agenda for each regular meeting which shall remain posted until the regular meeting is concluded.

*Board Policy 2.200*

## School Board Meeting Procedure

### Agenda

The school board president is responsible for focusing the board meeting agendas on appropriate content. The Superintendent shall prepare agendas in consultation with the board president. The president shall designate a portion of the agenda as a consent agenda for those items that usually do not require discussion or explanation before board action. Upon the request of any board member, an item will be withdrawn from the consent agenda and placed on the regular agenda for independent consideration.

Items submitted by board members to the superintendent or the president shall be placed on the agenda for an upcoming meeting. District residents may suggest inclusions for the agenda. Items not specifically on the agenda may still be discussed during the meeting; no action will be taken on such items.

The superintendent shall provide a copy of the agenda, with adequate data and background information, to each board member at least 48 hours before each meeting, except a meeting held in the event of an emergency. The meeting agenda shall be posted in accordance with board policy 2:200, *Types of School Board Meetings*.

The board president shall determine the order of business at regular board meetings. Upon consent of a majority of members present, the order of business at any meeting may be changed.

### Voting Method

Unless otherwise provided by law, when a vote is taken upon any measure before the board, with a quorum being present, a majority of the votes cast shall determine its outcome. A vote of “abstain” or “present,” or a vote other than “yea” or “nay,” or a failure to vote, is counted for the purposes of determining whether a quorum is present. A vote of “abstain” or “present,” or

a vote other than “yea” or “nay,” or a failure to vote, however, is not counted in determining whether a measure has been passed by the board, unless otherwise stated in law. The sequence for casting votes is rotated.

On all questions involving the expenditure of money and on all questions involving the closing of a meeting to the public, a roll call vote shall be taken and entered in the board’s minutes. An individual board member may request that a roll call vote be taken on any other matter; the President or other presiding officer may approve or deny the request but a denial is subject to being overturned by a majority vote of the members present.

## Minutes

The board secretary shall keep written minutes of all board meetings (whether open or closed), which shall be signed by the president and the secretary. The minutes include:

- The meeting’s date, time, and place;
- Board members recorded as either present or absent;
- A summary of the discussion on all matters proposed, deliberated, or decided, and a record of any votes taken;
- On all matters requiring a roll call vote, a record of who voted “yea” and “nay”;
- If the meeting is adjourned to another date, the time and place of the adjourned meeting;
- The vote of each member present when a vote is taken to hold a closed meeting or portion of a meeting, and the reason for the closed meeting with a citation to the specific exception contained in the Open Meetings Act authorizing the closed meeting;
- A record of all motions, including individuals making and seconding motions;
- Upon request by a board member, a record of how he or she voted on a particular motion; and
- The type of meeting, including any notices and, if a reconvened meeting, the original meeting’s date.

The minutes shall be submitted to the board for approval or modification at its next regularly scheduled open meeting. Minutes for open meetings must be approved within 30 days after the meeting or at the second subsequent regular meeting, whichever is later.

At least semi-annually in an open meeting, the board: (1) reviews minutes from all closed meetings that are currently unavailable for public release, and (2) decides which, if any, no longer require confidential treatment and are available for public inspection. The board may meet in a prior closed session to review the minutes from closed meetings that are currently unavailable for public release.

The board’s meeting minutes must be submitted to the board treasurer at such times as the Treasurer may require.

The official minutes are in the custody of the board secretary. Open meeting minutes are available for inspection during regular office hours within 10 days after the board’s approval; they may be inspected in the District’s main office, in the presence of the Secretary, the superintendent or designee, or any board member. Minutes from closed meetings are likewise

available, but only if the board has released them for public inspection. The minutes shall not be removed from the superintendent's office except by vote of the board or by court order.

The board's open meeting minutes shall be posted on the District website within 10 days after the board approves them; the minutes will remain posted for at least 60 days.

## Verbatim Record of Closed Meetings

The superintendent, or the board secretary when the superintendent is absent, shall audio record all closed meetings. If neither is present, the board president or presiding officer shall assume this responsibility. After the closed meeting, the person making the audio recording shall label the recording with the date and store it in a secure location. The superintendent shall ensure that: (1) an audio recording device and all necessary accompanying items are available to the board for every closed meeting, and (2) a secure location for storing closed meeting audio recordings is maintained close to the board's regular meeting location.

After 18 months have passed since being made, the audio recording of a closed meeting is destroyed provided the board approved: (1) its destruction, and (2) minutes of the particular closed meeting.

Individual board members may listen to verbatim recordings when that action is germane to their responsibilities. In the interest of encouraging free and open expression by board members during closed meetings, the recordings of closed meetings should not be used by board members to confirm or dispute the accuracy of recollections.

## Quorum and Participation by Audio or Video Means

A quorum of the board must be physically present at all board meetings. A majority of the full membership of the board constitutes a quorum.

Provided a quorum is physically present, a board member may attend a meeting by video or audio conference if he or she is prevented from physically attending because of: (1) personal illness or disability, (2) employment or District business, or (3) a family or other emergency. If a member wishes to attend a meeting by video or audio means, he or she must notify the recording secretary or superintendent at least 24 hours before the meeting unless advance notice is impractical. The recording secretary or superintendent will inform the board president and make appropriate arrangements. A board member, who attends a meeting by audio or video means, as provided in this policy, may participate in all aspects of the board meeting including voting on any item.

## Rules of Order

Unless State law or board-adopted rules apply, the board president, as the presiding officer, will use *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* (10th Edition), as a guide when a question arises concerning procedure.



## **Broadcasting and Recording Board Meetings**

Any person may record or broadcast an open board meeting. Special requests to facilitate recording or broadcasting an open board meeting, such as seating, writing surfaces, lighting, and access to electrical power, should be directed to the superintendent at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Recording meetings shall not distract or disturb board members, other meeting participants, or members of the public. The board president may designate a location for recording equipment, may restrict the movements of individuals who are using recording equipment, or may take such other steps as are deemed necessary to preserve decorum and facilitate the meeting.

*Board Policy 2.220*

## **Public Participation at School Board Meetings**

The board of education, as a representative body of the district, wishes to provide an avenue for any citizen to express his/her interest in and concern for the public schools. Accordingly, the public is invited to attend any regular session of the board of education. The board meets monthly to determine and act on the needs of the schools and to review their progress in accomplishing pre-established goals. As such, board meetings are business meetings which must be conducted orderly and efficiently. Thus, while any citizen may observe a regular meeting, participation by non-board members is encouraged but regulated by certain procedures.

Any resident of the district, members of the schools' staff, or non-resident, may address the board of education.

## **Citizens Desire to Be Placed on the Agenda**

Person or persons wishing to be placed on the agenda must first notify the superintendent in writing by fully identifying themselves and the topic to be discussed. The superintendent, upon receipt of a properly executed request, will set a date for inclusion on the agenda as soon as practicable. The deadline for items and/or persons wishing to appear before the board on the agenda shall be one week prior to the regularly scheduled board meeting. The placement on the agenda of persons wishing to appear before the board shall be organized according to the time of the submitted written request as received by the superintendent.

## **Citizens Desire to Address the Board on Agenda Items**

Prior to board discussion, the superintendent shall clarify an agenda item. After clarification, the president will recognize those participants wishing to give input on an item. The board will only receive input and will not dialogue with participants. All participant input will occur prior to board debate.

## Citizens Desire to Address the Board on Non-Agenda Items

Citizens will have an opportunity to speak to the board at each meeting on concerns that are non-agenda items. At such times, and excepting emergency situations, all concerns shall be referred to the superintendent for study and, where appropriate for recommendation for future board action.

## To Speak at a Board Meeting

An individual will be limited to five minutes, and total time for participant input on any one agenda item will be limited to twenty minutes. This time limit may be extended by majority vote of board members present. A speaker's privilege may be terminated if he persists in improper conduct or abusive remarks.

At a public meeting of the board of education, no person may initiate charges or complaints against individual employees of the district or challenge instructional materials used in the district. All such charges, complaints or challenges shall be presented according to established policies.

*Board Policy 2.230*

## What YOU Can Do To Get The Most Out Of Your Board Meetings

As an individual member of your board, you're not in control of the board meeting, but there are some things you can do to make the most of them. Here are some tips from your school board colleagues:

- Do your homework. When you get the agenda and back-up materials, read them and be prepared to contribute to the discussion. Plan your questions in advance and jot them down before coming to the meeting.
- If you do not get the information you need, check with the superintendent or your board president before the meeting.
- Try to know in advance what is expected of you. Be prepared to make any presentation expected.
- Organize your papers before arriving at the boardroom. Bring everything you need.
- Arrive on time.
- Keep the board agenda and objectives in mind.
- Don't spring any "surprises" on the board.
- If you're unprepared, don't fake it. If others are obviously unprepared, but are debating the issues anyway, try to cut them off as diplomatically as possible (a motion to table is one method).

- Work to reach agreement on the issues and come to a decision. If the discussion gets bogged down, try to summarize and encourage action.
- Avoid having a hidden agenda – saying one thing and meaning another.
- Avoid espousing personal philosophies at length.
- Don't attack personalities, attack problems.
- Keep your eyes open. If, in mid-sentence (or mid-argument), you realize that everybody around you is either glaring at you, blushing for you, or packing up to go home, take the hint and stop talking.
- Don't dominate discussions.
- Broaden your concerns. No matter what special interest group encouraged your election or appointment, once on the board, you should cast your votes according to your conscience. Vote with the knowledge that, as a board member, you almost always know more sides of an issue than your constituents do.
- Do not debate issues with members of the audience.

*National School Boards Association  
Becoming A Better Board Member*

# CHAPTER 8



The school board governs using written policies. Written policies ensure legal compliance, establish board processes, articulate District ends, delegate authority, and define operating limits. Board policies also provide the basis for monitoring progress toward District ends.

## Policy Development

Anyone may propose new policies, changes to existing policies, or deletion of existing policies. Staff suggestions should be processed through the superintendent. Suggestions from all others should be made to the board president or the superintendent.

The superintendent is responsible for: 1) providing relevant policy information and data to the board; 2) notifying those who will implement, be affected by or required to implement a proposed policy and obtaining their advice and suggestions; and, 3) drafting policy recommendations into written form for board deliberation. The superintendent shall seek the counsel of the board attorney when appropriate.

## Policy Adoption and Dissemination

Policies or policy revisions will not be adopted at the board meeting at which they are first introduced, except when: (1) appropriate for a Consent Agenda because no board discussion is required, or (2) necessary or prudent in order to meet emergency or special conditions or to be legally compliant. Further board consideration will be given at a subsequent meeting(s) and after opportunity for community input. The adoption of a policy will serve to supersede all previously adopted policies on the same topic.

The board policies are available for any member of the public to review on the District's website.

## Board Policy Review and Monitoring

The board will periodically review its policies for relevancy, monitor its policies for effectiveness, and consider whether any modifications are required. The board may use an annual policy review and monitoring calendar.

## **Superintendent Implementation**

The board will support any reasonable interpretation of board policy made by the superintendent. If reasonable minds differ, the board will review the applicable policy and consider the need for further clarification. In the absence of board policy, the superintendent is authorized to take appropriate action.

## **Suspension of Policies**

The board, by a majority vote of members present at any meeting, may temporarily suspend a board policy except those provisions that are controlled by law or contract. The failure to suspend with a specific motion does not invalidate the board action.

*Board Policy 2.240*

# CHAPTER 9



## Access to District Public Records

Full access to the District's *public records* is available to any person as provided in the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), this policy, and implementing procedures.

### Definition

The District's *public records* are defined as records, reports, forms, writings, letters, memoranda, books, papers, maps, photographs, microfilms, cards, tapes, recordings, electronic data processing records, electronic communications, recorded information and all other documentary materials pertaining to the transaction of public business, regardless of physical form or characteristics, having been prepared by or for, or having been or being used by, received by, in the possession of, or under the control of the School District.

### Freedom of Information Officer

The superintendent shall serve as the District's Freedom of Information Officer and assumes all the duties and powers of that office as provided in FOIA and this policy. The superintendent may delegate these duties and powers to one or more designees, but the delegation shall not relieve the superintendent of the responsibility for the action that was delegated. The superintendent or designee(s) shall report any FOIA requests and the status of the District's response to the board at each regular board meeting.

### Requesting Records

A request for inspection and/or copies of public records must be made in writing and may be submitted by personal delivery, mail, telefax, or email directed to the District's Freedom of Information Officer. Individuals making a request are not required to state a reason for the request other than to identify when the request is for a commercial purpose or when requesting a fee waiver. All requests for inspection and copying shall immediately be forwarded to the District's Freedom of Information Officer or designee.

## Responding to Requests

The Freedom of Information Officer shall approve all requests for public records unless:

- The requested material does not exist;
- The requested material is exempt from inspection and copying by the Freedom of Information Act; or
- Complying with the request would be unduly burdensome.

Within 5 business days after receipt of a request for access to a public record, the Freedom of Information Officer shall comply with or deny the request, unless the time for response is extended as specified in Section 3 of FOIA. The Freedom of Information Officer may extend the time for a response for up to 5 business days from the original due date. If an extension is needed, the Freedom of Information Officer shall: (1) notify the person making the request of the reason for the extension, and (2) either inform the person of the date on which a response will be made, or agree with the person in writing on a compliance period.

Notwithstanding the above, the Freedom of Information Officer shall respond to requests for *commercial purposes* and to *recurrent requesters* (as those terms are defined in Section 2 of FOIA) according to Sections 3.1 and 3.2 of FOIA.

When responding to a request for a record containing both exempt and non-exempt material, the Freedom of Information Officer shall redact exempt material from the record before complying with the request.

## Copying Fees

Persons making a request for copies of public records must pay any applicable copying fee. The Freedom of Information Officer shall, as needed, recommend a copying fee schedule for the board's approval. Copying fees, except when fixed by statute, are reasonably calculated to reimburse the District's actual cost for reproducing and certifying public records and for the use, by any person, of its equipment to copy records. No copying fee shall be charged for the first 50 pages of black and white, letter or legal sized copies. No copying fee shall be charged for electronic copies other than the actual cost of the recording medium.

## Fees for Responding to a Request for a Commercial Purpose

In addition to copying fees, persons making a request for a *commercial purpose*, as defined in FOIA, must pay a fee of \$10 for each hour spent by personnel in searching for and retrieving the record. However, no fees shall be charged for the first 8 hours spent by personnel in searching for or retrieving a requested record. The District also charges the actual cost of retrieving and transporting public records from an off-site storage facility when the public records are maintained by a third-party storage facility under contract with the District.

Whenever the District charges any fees to a requester making a commercial request, the Freedom of Information Officer shall provide the requester with an accounting of all fees, costs, and personnel hours in connection with the request for public records.

## Access

The inspection and copying of a public record that is the subject of an approved access request is permitted at the District's administrative office during regular business hours, unless other arrangements are made by the Freedom of Information Officer.

Many public records are immediately available from the District's website including, but not limited to, a description of the District and the methods for requesting a public record.

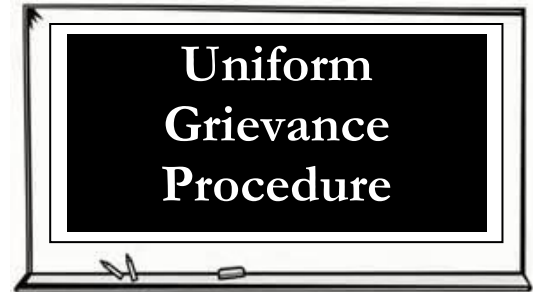
## Preserving Public Records

Public records, including email messages, shall be preserved and cataloged if: (1) they are evidence of the District's organization, function, policies, procedures, or activities, (2) they contain informational data appropriate for preservation, (3) their retention is required by State or federal law, or (4) they are subject to a retention request by the board attorney (e.g. a litigation hold), District auditor, or other individual authorized by the school board or State or federal law to make such a request. Unless its retention is required as described in items numbered 3 or 4 above, a public record, as defined by the Illinois Local Records Act, may be destroyed when authorized by the Local Records Commission.

*Board Policy 2.250*



# CHAPTER 10



A student, parent/guardian, employee, or community member in the School District should notify any District complaint manager if he or she believes that the school board, its employees, or agents have violated his or her rights guaranteed by the State or federal Constitution, State or federal statute, or board policy, or have a complaint regarding any one of the following:

- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. §2000d et seq.
- Equal Employment Opportunities Act (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act), 42 U.S.C. §2000e et seq.
- Sexual harassment (Illinois Human Rights Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972)
- Bullying, 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7
- Misuse of funds received for services to improve educational opportunities for educationally disadvantaged or deprived children
- Curriculum, instructional materials, and/or programs
- Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act, 820 ILCS 180
- Illinois Equal Pay Act of 2003, 820 ILCS 112
- Provision of services to homeless students
- Illinois Whistleblower Act, 740 ILCS 174/.
- Misuse of genetic information (Illinois Genetic Information Privacy Act (GIPA), 410 ILCS 513/ and Titles I and II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA), 42 U.S.C. §2000ff et seq.)
- Employee Credit Privacy Act, 820 ILCS 70/.

The complaint manager will attempt to resolve complaints without resorting to this grievance procedure and, if a complaint is filed, to address the complaint promptly and equitably. The right of a person to prompt and equitable resolution of a complaint filed hereunder shall not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies. Use of this grievance procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies and use of this grievance procedure does not extend any filing deadline related to the pursuit of other remedies. All deadlines under this procedure may be extended by the complaint manager as he or she deems appropriate. As used in this policy, "school business days" means days on which the District's main office is open.

## Filing a Complaint

A person (hereinafter complainant) who wishes to avail him or herself of this grievance procedure may do so by filing a complaint with any district complaint manager. The complainant shall not be required to file a complaint with a particular complaint manager and may request a complaint manager of the same gender. The complaint manager may request the complainant to provide a written statement regarding the nature of the complaint or require a meeting with a student's parent(s)/guardian(s). The complaint manager shall assist the complainant as needed.

## Investigation

The complaint manager will investigate the complaint or appoint a qualified person to undertake the investigation on his or her behalf. If the complainant is a student under 18 years of age, the complaint manager will notify his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) that they may attend any investigatory meetings in which their child is involved. The complaint and identity of the complainant will not be disclosed except: (1) as required by law, this policy, or (2) as necessary to fully investigate the complaint, or (3) as authorized by the complainant.

The identity of any student witnesses will not be disclosed except: (1) as required by law or any collective bargaining agreement, or (2) as necessary to fully investigate the complaint, or (3) as authorized by the parent/guardian of the student witness, or by the student if the student is 18 years of age or older.

Within 30 school business days of the date the complaint was filed, the complaint manager shall file a written report of his or her findings with the Superintendent. The complaint manager may request an extension of time. If a complaint of sexual harassment contains allegations involving the superintendent, the written report shall be filed with the board, which will make a decision in accordance with the following section of this policy. The superintendent will keep the board informed of all complaints.

## Decision and Appeal

Within 5 school business days after receiving the complaint manager's report, the superintendent shall mail his or her written decision to the complainant by U.S. mail, first class, as well as to the complaint manager.

Within 10 school business days after receiving the superintendent's decision, the complainant may appeal the decision to the board by making a written request to the complaint manager. The complaint manager shall promptly forward all materials relative to the complaint and appeal to the board. Within 30 school business days, the board shall affirm, reverse, or amend the superintendent's decision or direct the superintendent to gather additional information. Within 5 school business days of the board's decision, the superintendent shall inform the complainant of the board's action.

This grievance procedure shall not be construed to create an independent right to a hearing before the superintendent or board. The failure to strictly follow the timelines in this grievance procedure shall not prejudice any party.

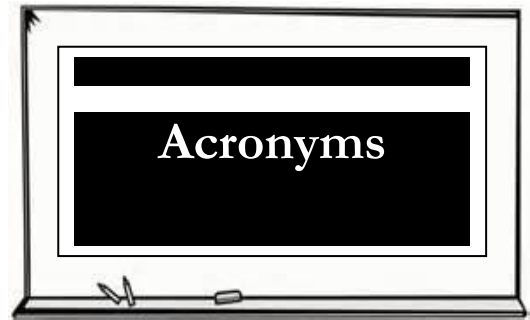
## **Appointing Nondiscrimination Coordinator and Complaint Managers**

The superintendent shall appoint a nondiscrimination coordinator to manage the District's efforts to provide equal opportunity employment and educational opportunities and prohibit the harassment of employees, students, and others.

The superintendent shall appoint at least one complaint manager to administer the complaint process in this policy. If possible, the superintendent will appoint 2 complaint managers, one of each gender. The District's nondiscrimination coordinator may be appointed as one of the complaint managers. The superintendent shall insert into this policy and keep current the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the nondiscrimination coordinator and the complaint managers.

*Board Policy 2.260*

# CHAPTER 11



ACA	Affordable Health Care Act
ACCESS	Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (English proficiency test)
ADA	Americans with Disability Act
ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
Ad Council	Administrative Team (superintendent, business manager, special services / intervention consultant, principals, technology coordinator, buildings and grounds supervisor)
ALICE	Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate
AimsWEB	Achievement Improvement Monitoring System
AM	Accelerated Math
AR	Accelerated Reader
ASC	Administration Service Center
AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress
BD	Behavioral Disorder
BEA	Benjamin Education Association
BLT	Building Leadership Team
BMS	Benjamin Middle School
BOE	Board of Education
CCS	Common Core Standards
COLA	Cost of Living Adjustment
CPDU	Continuing Professional Development Units
CPI	Consumer Price Index
DI	Differentiated Instruction
DLM	Dynamic Learning Maps
EAV	Equalized Assessed Valuation
EES	Evergreen Elementary School
ELIS	Educator Licensure Information System
ELL	English Language Learner
ESL	English as Second Language
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
FMLA	Family Medical Leave Act
FOIA	Freedom Of Information Act

FRE	Final Rate of Earnings
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
FTL	Follow The Leader
IAP	Incident Action Plan
IASA	Illinois Association of School Administrators
IASB	Illinois Association of School Boards
IASBO	Illinois Association of School Business Officials
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IDPH	Illinois Department of Public Health
IEA	Illinois Education Association
IELDS	Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IGAP	Illinois Goal Assessment Program (previous state assessment)
ILAR	Integrated Language Arts Reading
ILCS	Illinois Compiled Statutes
IMSA	Illinois Math and Science Academy
IMRF	Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund
ISAT	Illinois Scholastics Aptitude Test (most previous state assessment)
ISBE	Illinois State Board of Education
IST	Instructional Support Team
IWAS	ISBE Web Application Security
IXL	Web-based Math and Language Arts Learning Program
KIDS	Kindergarten Individual Development Survey
LEND	Legislative Education Network DuPage
LMC	Learning Media Center
LRC	Learning Resource Center
MSSA	Midwest Suburban Superintendent's Association
NEA	National Education Association
NGSS	Next Generation Science Standards
NJHS	National Junior Honor Society
NSBA	National School Boards Association
NSLP	National School Lunch Program
OMA	Open Meetings Act
OT	Occupational Therapy
PACT	ROE Personnel Administrators
PARCC	Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (current state assessment)
PDP	Professional Development Committee
PEL	Professional Educator's License
PERA	Performance Education Reform Act
PTAB	Property Tax Appeal Board

PTEL	Property Tax Extension Limit (Tax Cap)
Pre-K	Pre-kindergarten
PSAE	Prairie State Achievement Exam
PST	Problem Solving Team
PT	Physical Therapy
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RCDT	Region-County-District-Type
RIF	Reduction In Force
RtI	Response to Intervention
ROE	Regional Office of Education
SAMR	Model (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition)
SASED	School Association for Special Education in DuPage County
SB	Senate Bill
SC	Student Council
SEC	Securities and Exchange Commission
SGO	Student Growth Objective (synonymous with SLO-Student Learning Objective)
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SIS	Student Information System
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
STAR	Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading OR Standardized Testing And Reporting
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Math
SPED	Special Education
SSA	Social Security Administration
SWAC	Suburban West Athletic Conference
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TA	Teacher Assistant
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TIE	Technology Integration Enhancement
TIS	Technology Integration Specialist
TRIPLE I	IASB/IASA/IASBO (Illinois Association of School Boards / Illinois Association of School Administrators / Illinois Association of School Business Officials)
TRP	Teacher Retirement Insurance Program (TRIP)
TRS	Teacher Retirement System
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

# NOTES



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*The School Board Member Handbook was approved by the  
Board of Education on October 24, 2016..*