

Draft Board Operating Procedures

Crockett County Consolidated Common School District

May ____, 2009

TOPIC: Board Member Communication Between Meetings

Procedure:

- 1) Board members may communicate with each other to:
 - Share information
 - Share opinions
- 2) Communications should not be used to lobby for votes, to conduct "straw polls" with a majority of board members or to otherwise circumvent the Texas Open Meetings Act.

TOPIC: Board Member Communication with the Community

Procedure:

Given that a board of trustees' responsibility is to promote the success of the Crockett County CCSD, its students and staff, **board members shall:**

- 1) Clarify trustees' obligations, responsibilities and limitations as a member of the board.
- 2) Inform community members about using the established chain of command if appropriate.
- 3) Communicate responses to public questions, inquiries and suggestions.
- 4) Support board decisions.
- 5) Not publicly criticize district personnel.
- 6) Not speak for the board unless specifically designated as the board spokesman on an issue (where no spokesperson is specifically designated, the board president serves as the spokesperson).
- 7) Communicate positively, listen responsibly and advocate for the district.

TOPIC: Dealing with Complaints from the Community

Procedure:

- 1) Explain that, as an individual member of the board, you cannot solve issues.
- 2) Ask if complainant has talked to the involved party. If no, encourage community member to do so; if yes, then.....
- 3) Ask if complainant has followed the chain of command.
- 4) If complainant does not know the district's chain of command, provide the following information:
 - Talk to the authority closest to the problem. Then...
 - Go to the authority over the person closest to the problem. Then...
 - Talk to the superintendent. Then....
 - Bring the complaint to the board of trustees following district policy.
- 5) Board members should, where appropriate, inform the superintendent if, in their opinion, the issue has the potential to escalate.
- 6) The superintendent will inform the board and/or involved members of the resolution of any referred issue as appropriate.
- 7) Listen respectfully; remain impartial.

TOPIC: Board Member's Request for Additional Information

Procedure:

Additional information related to board meeting agenda items:

- 1) Board members should contact the person identified as the "responsible person" for the agenda item and request information directly. If the requested information is not readily available in a timely manner, then the board member shall be informed.

Additional information related to a non-agenda item:

- 2) Board members may contact the Superintendent and request information regarding specific questions.
- 3) Trustee requests for information should reflect information sought in the trustee's official capacity.

Individual trustees shall not require District employees to prepare reports, perform analysis of information or create new records; such requests shall be made to the Superintendent and shall be by board action.

Individual trustees who obtain confidential information must be vigilant in maintaining confidentiality.

Trustees should limit information requests to those necessary for carrying out the official duties of the trustee.

TOPIC: Placing Items on the Board Meeting Agenda

Procedure:

- 1) Items that board members desire be included on the board meeting agenda are forwarded to the superintendent or board president by noon on the fifth calendar day before a regular or special called meeting.
- 2) The agenda must be published and posted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.

TOPIC: Board Meetings-Participants' Responsibilities

Procedure:

Regularly scheduled board meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month. Agenda packets are mailed no later than the preceding Friday.

- 1) All participants will be prepared to address the agenda.
- 2) Board members will read agenda packet materials before each board meeting.
- 3) The board president will have full authority to follow and enforce all Robert's Rules of Order.
- 4) The president may limit time of debate of individual members in order to allow each member an opportunity to speak.
- 5) Disclosure of items discussed in closed session to members of the public or other persons not entitled to attend the closed meeting may:
 - invade the privacy rights of others;
 - negatively impact the district's bargaining position with respect to the purchase of real estate;
 - negatively impact the district's position in litigation;
 - undermine the relationship of trust between trustees;
 - may negatively impact the District in other ways;
 - potentially constitute misuse of official information prohibited under Section 39.06 of the Texas Penal Code.

As fiduciaries to the District, trustees should scrupulously maintain the confidentiality of sensitive information learned in the context of their duties, including information obtained in closed session.

TOPIC: Board Member Communications with Staff (Other than Superintendent)

Procedure:

For communication coming from a staff member to the board member:

- 1) If the communication is a complaint—
 - a) The board member will listen respectfully and then refer the staff member back to the chain of command so that district policy can be applied in resolving the issue.
 - b) If, in the opinion of the board member, the staff member has used the chain of command of the complaint is regarding the chain of command, the board member will contact the superintendent and ask clarifying questions regarding the situation and negotiate an acceptable time frame with the superintendent for that information to be collected and made available.
 - c) The board member will not direct the superintendent to take any action on the complaint without board approval.
- 2) If the conversation is not in the nature of a specific complaint, the board member will inform the superintendent of the gist of the conversation as soon as practical.

TOPIC: Board Member Campus Visits

Procedure:

Board members are invited to attend public events at campuses throughout the district, and in the same manner as other parents in matters involving their own children.

Board members who wish to make campus visits for other reasons recognize that an unannounced visit from a trustee may be disruptive and distract from student learning. Therefore, board members will:

- 1) Notify the campus principal of his or her wish to visit the campus, and schedule an appointment for the visit.
- 2) Board members will sign in and sign out with the campus administrative office and observe campus security measures.

The board member shall notify the superintendent of schools that the campus visit has been scheduled for a particular date and time.

TOPIC: Failure to Observe Operating Guidelines

Procedure:

These Operating Guidelines have been established collaboratively between the trustees and the administration, and are intended as a resource to assist trustees in carrying out their duties.

Trustees who fail to comply with the Operating Guidelines may be the subject of a board meeting to address trustee roles and responsibilities. Trustees may be admonished or censured where, in the view of the majority of the board of trustees, the trustee has acted in a manner inconsistent with these Operating Guidelines.