

**Splendora Independent School District**  
***Governance Team Guidelines & Operating Procedures***

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## Introduction

***Governance Team Guidelines & Operating Procedures*** (hereinafter referred to as ‘the document’) defines the “partnership” between the superintendent and board members to a great extent. It clarifies expectations for one another, as well as responsibilities for practices and issues that are anticipated to occur on a frequent basis. It does not attempt to cover all potential scenarios as the document is meant to be a brief reference guide for each member of the team. Just like a partnership in the business world, each individual wants to know what he or she is responsible for accomplishing in order for the organization to be successful.

The ***Governance Team*** in Splendor ISD will operate more effectively and efficiently if the expectations for “how we will function as a team” are clearly defined. ***Governance Team Guidelines & Operating Procedures*** is based on practice, not theory. It is also a “living document” in that it should be reviewed annually and modifications should be made at the pleasure of the Governance Team and the needs of the district. A good time to review this document is after each school board election as it is an excellent tool for new board member orientation.

The update and development of ***Governance Team Guidelines & Operating Procedures*** assures a common understanding among members of the Governance Team and provides an excellent foundation for new Board member orientation as it provides district and Board member responsibilities. Additionally, the document will describe the mode of operation of the Governance Team to new, district level administrative staff. The document should be reviewed periodically to ensure it accurately reflects the expectations of the Governance Team and that its contents reflect actual practices of the team and individual members.

## Governance Team Members

Dr. Jeff Burke	Superintendent
Allen Wells	President
Dan Muirhead	Vice President
Kimberly Klepcyk	Secretary
Barry Welch	Assistant Secretary
Jason Sessum	Member
Brandon Fry	Member
Jennifer Stewart	Member

## Board Organization, Duties, and Responsibilities

### Organization

At the first meeting following school board elections, an agenda item will be placed to disband the present Board and select new officers. Nominations and voting must take place in open session.

The Board shall elect a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and an Assistant Secretary, who shall be members of the Board. Officers shall be elected by plurality vote of the members present and voting. Board officers shall serve for a term of one year or until a successor is elected. Officers may succeed themselves in office. A vacancy among officers of the Board shall be filled by a majority action of the Board.

Typically the selection of officers will follow the outline below:

- Motion made, seconded, and passed to disband the current board and appoint the Superintendent as temporary chairperson.
- The Superintendent then asks the Board for nominations for the office of Board President.
- After nominations have ceased, the Superintendent then calls for the vote, with the selection being made by majority vote of those members present.
- The Superintendent then turns the chair to the newly elected President. The President then conducts the election of the Vice-President using the same nominating and voting process. The same procedure is then used for the Secretary position and then the Assistant Secretary position.

### Duties

#### President:

The legal duties and powers of the Board President are described in detail in policy BDAA Legal. He/she also has the right to discuss, make motions and resolutions, and vote on all matters coming before the Board. The Board President also appoints all Board committees, unless otherwise provided by policy or Board consensus.

#### Vice-President:

The Board Vice-President shall act in the capacity and perform the duties of the Board President in the event of the absence or incapacity of the president and will perform other duties as prescribed by the Board.

### Secretary:

The Secretary of the Board shall keep or cause to be kept, an accurate record of the proceedings of each board meeting and will send, or cause to be sent, notices of board meetings. In the absence of the President and Vice-President of the Board, the Secretary shall call the meeting to order and conduct the election of a president pro tem. The Secretary will also perform other duties as directed by the Board.

### Assistant Secretary:

The Assistant Secretary of the Board shall act in the capacity and perform the duties of the Secretary of the Board in the event of the Secretary's absence.

### Responsibilities

In addition to the responsibilities of Board Officers listed above, Policy BAA Legal provides an overview of key Board responsibilities. Key responsibilities are briefly described as follows:

- Review and adopt the district's vision and mission statements (August)
- Conduct an annual evaluation of the superintendent (January)
- Conduct an annual board self-evaluation (May)
- Approve district goals (March)
- Review and adopt the annual district budget (June)

SISD related policies:
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(BEC Legal)
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(BDAA Local)
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Board Essential Roles (See insert on next page)

## Board Meetings

### Board Meeting Agenda

- A. In consultation with the board president, the superintendent shall prepare the agenda for all board meetings. The deadline for including board agenda items will be the third business day prior to the board meeting. On request in writing of any board member, an agenda item may be included on the board agenda. If the agenda item has been acted upon within the previous twelve months, two board members are needed to request that it be placed on another board agenda.
- B. The draft agenda may include items from the board agenda calendar as scheduled in advance by the Board of Trustees as well as actions required by law. Before the agenda is finalized, the superintendent will consult with the board president for approval of the final agenda.
- C. The consent agenda may include items listed below and action may be taken with a single vote without discussion. Placement of items on the consent agenda will be done at the discretion of the superintendent and board president. At the board meeting, any board member may ask questions or discuss a consent agenda item by asking the board president to remove it from the consent agenda for the purpose of giving the item individual consideration. The board president will allow discussion on any item requested for removal from the consent agenda by a board member.

### Examples of Consent Agenda Items

- 1. Minutes of regular and special board meetings
- 2. Acceptance of financial reports
- 3. Routine bid recommendations in alignment with district policy
- 4. Approval of personnel contracts that comply with district policy
- 5. Requests to use district facilities
- 6. Routine, non-controversial items
- 7. Board policy updates

The above items are examples only. Not all topics listed may be included as part of the consent agenda.

SISD related policies:
BE (LEGAL)                      BE (LOCAL)                      BJA (LOCAL)

## Items Eligible for Executive Session

- A. 551.071. Consultation with attorney. A governmental body may conduct a private consultation with its attorney when the government body seeks advice about pending or contemplated litigation, a settlement offer, or any of the appropriate exceptions listed for an executive session. Example: Discussing a real estate transaction with an attorney.
- B. 551.072. Deliberation regarding real property. A governmental body may conduct a closed meeting (executive session) to deliberate the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property if deliberation in an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the position of the governmental body.
- C. 551.074. Personnel matters. An executive session may be conducted to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee. Also, to hear a complaint or charge against an employee unless the employee who is the subject of the charge or complaint requests an open meeting or hearing to hear the complaint.
- D. 551.076. Deliberation regarding security devices. A governmental body may deliberate the deployment of security personnel or devices in an executive session.
- E. 551.0821. Personally identifiable information about public school student. Deliberation concerning a student in which personally identifiable information is discussed will be held in executive session – even if the student’s name is not mentioned in the deliberation.
- F. 551.084. Exclusion of witness from hearing. A governmental body that is conducting a hearing may exclude a witness from the hearing while another witness is testifying.
- G. 551.073. Prospective gift. The governmental body may conduct an executive session to deliberate a negotiated contract for a prospective gift or donation if deliberation in an open session would have a detrimental effect.
- H. Ed. Code 39.030. The Board of Trustees shall conduct an executive session to discuss or adopt individual assessment instruments or assessment instrument items.
- I. 418.183. Emergency management – homeland security. Issues related to 418.175 in the Government Code are exempted from the open meeting requirement; however, a tape recording of the proceedings should be made.



- J. 551.087. Economic development. Deliberations concerning the offer of financial incentives for companies to locate in the school district may be held in executive session.

SISD related policies:

BEC (LEGAL)      DCE (LEGAL)      GF (LEGAL)

### Notice of Meetings

Members of the Board shall be given notice of regular and special meetings on Thursday prior to regularly scheduled Monday Board Meetings. Notice for special meetings will be at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled time of the meeting and at least two hours prior to the time of an emergency meeting.

The district shall provide special notice of each meeting to any news media that has requested notification. When an emergency meeting is called or an emergency item is added to an agenda, the district shall notify any news media that have previously requested special notice of all meetings. (BE Legal)

### Executive Session/Closed Meetings

Notice of all meetings shall provide for the possibility of a closed meeting during an open meeting, as provided by law. (BEC Legal)

For each closed meeting, except for consultations with its attorney, the board shall keep a certified agenda of the proceedings. The presiding officer and secretary shall certify that the agenda is a true and correct record of the proceedings. (BEC Legal) Board members must limit discussion to those items specified in the closed session.

No voting or polling of members is allowed in closed session. A final decision, or vote must take place in an open meeting. (BEC Legal)

No board member or other participant in a closed meeting shall, without lawful authority, disclose to a member of the public any deliberations made in a closed session.

### Board Meetings/Audience Participation

Participants must have signed up prior to Board Meeting start time. At regular Board meetings, the Board shall permit public comment, regardless of whether the topic is an item on the agenda posted with notice of the meeting. At all other Board meetings, public comment shall be limited to items on the agenda posted with notice of the meeting. Participation is limited to three minutes to make comments to the Board, unless the participant requires the use of a translator, in which case participation is limited to six minutes. The Board will only consider complaints that remain unresolved after being addressed through proper administrative channels and when they have

been placed on the agenda. The Board of Trustees shall not deliberate, respond, or make decisions regarding any subject that is not included on the agenda that is posted.

### Board Member Preparation for Meetings

- A. The Superintendent will ensure that all information needed for informed decision-making is supplied to each Board member in agenda information delivered four days prior to the regular board meeting. The agenda and support materials will be provided electronically unless a request is made for a written copy. If a written copy is requested, Board members are asked to discuss delivery options at the time of the request.
- B. Each Board member will prepare for the Board meeting by studying the agenda and support materials and asking clarifying questions of the Superintendent at least one day in advance of the meeting if possible. While it is likely that questions often result as part of the discussion of an agenda item, when a Board member knows that he/she will have a specific question it is appreciated if that question is asked prior to the meeting.

### Board Member Questions Concerning the Agenda

- A. Board members are encouraged to ask for information from the Superintendent at least one day prior to the Board meeting. This will allow time for appropriate research, if needed.
- B. Any questions about agenda items or requests for additional information prior to the board meeting will be directed to the Superintendent. The Superintendent or his/her designee for that particular agenda item will respond to the Board member and an electronic copy of the question and response will be provided to all Board members.
- C. The Superintendent will determine if the information requested is readily available or will require additional time to gather or research. If additional time is needed the Superintendent and the Board member will agree upon an appropriate time frame in which the information will be provided.
- D. If a written summary or report is requested, the Superintendent will present a copy of it to each Board member.
- E. Even when information about agenda items is provided in advance or Board members receive answers to specific questions prior to the Board meeting; they are not prohibited from discussing or asking additional questions during the Board meeting.

- F. Board members seeking information during the Board meeting should ensure that the question pertains to agenda items.

### Exhibiting Professionalism and Courtesy in Board Meetings

Board members shall observe and adhere to parliamentary procedures according to *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* and the Board President will ensure that discussion is related to the agenda item being addressed.

The Board President may recognize Board members prior to comments being given about an agenda item, particularly if several members wish to speak to the item.

Professional courtesy will be extended to all members of the Governance Team, school district staff, and visitors to the Board meeting.

## Communication

### Governance Team Communication

- A. The Superintendent will communicate with each Board member via weekly reports (emails) that will include information such as:
  - 1. District events
  - 2. Progress reports on Board goals and directives
  - 3. Follow-up reports in answer to Board member questions
  - 4. Information or reports requested by a Board member
  - 5. General program updates
- B. The Superintendent will communicate requested information to all Board members in as timely a manner as possible without interfering with the regular conduct of district business.
- C. The Superintendent will meet with the Board President as needed, or communicate by telephone or electronic means to inform him/her of district issues that may need to come before the Board for discussion or action.
- D. Board member phone calls to the Superintendent will be returned during the same day if at all possible.

- E. Board members may communicate with other individual members for purposes of asking questions, clarifying information, or socializing under circumstances that do not conflict with or circumvent the Texas Open Meetings Act.
- F. Board members may not communicate with other individual members for purposes of soliciting votes in support of or opposition to items of business that may come before the Board.
- G. Board members who wish to share information relevant to district business or issues before the Board will relay the information to the Superintendent for distribution to all members in his/her weekly reports.

Splendora ISD related policies: BE (LEGAL)	BJA (LOCAL)
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### Board Member Requests for Information Not Related to Meeting Agendas

- A. Board members will contact the Superintendent to request information about the school district or Board of Trustee business.
- B. The Superintendent, at his/her discretion, may refer the Board member to a staff person with direct knowledge about the information requested.
- C. The Superintendent will determine if the information requested is readily available or additional time is needed to gather information or research the issue.
- D. If the information is available, the Superintendent will provide it to the requesting Board member.
- E. If a written response is provided, a copy of the information will be provided to each Board member.
- F. If the Superintendent determines that the request is unreasonable and will divert staff time or attention from Board priorities, the Superintendent or the requesting Board member may ask the Board President to place the request on a meeting agenda. The requesting Board member may then ask if a majority of the Board wishes to direct the Superintendent to generate a report to include the requested information.

## Board Member Contact with Campuses

- A. Board members are encouraged to attend as many school events as their time and schedule permits.
- B. Board members will check in with the principal's office when he/she arrives at a campus during the school day, as per guidelines for all visitors to campuses.
- C. Board members will not go into classrooms or other areas on campus for the purposes of conducting personnel evaluations or investigations.
- D. Board members may not give direction to any staff or student except when immediate safety or liability is an issue.
- E. While Board members have no authority when not at the board table, as individuals, it is sometimes difficult for staff members to see them as ordinary parents, therefore;
  - a. When visiting with teachers of their own children, Board members should make it clear that they are acting as parents rather than as a member of the Board.
  - b. Board members will not request or accept extraordinary consideration for themselves or their children.
- F. Board members will not ask district employees for extraordinary consideration for anyone.

Splendora ISD related policies:
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GKA (LEGAL))
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BBF (LOCAL)
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## Response by Board Members to Community Member or Employee Complaints

- A. Listen briefly and respectfully; remain impartial
- B. Ask if the complainant has followed the complaint procedure (following the “chain of command”) outlined in district policy
- C. Remind the complainant of the Board's responsibility to remain impartial regarding complaints that may ultimately be brought to the Board on appeal.
- D. If the complainant does not know the district's complaint procedures or “chain of command,” the Board member should provide the following information:

- a. The complainant must first discuss the problem with the authority closest to the problem. In most cases this is the immediate supervisor if it is an employee or the principal if it is a campus issue.
  - b. If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution, he/she may file a formal grievance according to procedures outlined in policy for students and parents, employees, or community members.
  - c. If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution offered through the formal complaint process, the complainant may appeal to the next level of authority as outlined in policy.
  - d. When all levels of administrative appeal have been exhausted without satisfaction by the complainant, he/she may appeal the complaint to the Board of Trustees according to procedures outlined in policy. The Board President will place the complaint on the agenda for presentation to and discussion by the Board.
  - e. The Board may uphold the decision of the Superintendent or designee regarding the complaint, overturn it, offer an alternative solution, or the Board may take no action.
  - f. Complaints regarding an individual will be heard in closed session unless specific law or local policy provides otherwise.
- E. Board members should inform the Superintendent of all relevant complaints from staff and community. If requested by the Board member forwarding the request, the Superintendent will notify the individual Board member as to the resolution of the complaint.

SISD related policies:

DGBA (LOCAL)      FNG (LOCAL)      GF (LOCAL)      BBF (LOCAL)

### Communicating with the Community and/or Personnel

- A. Board members are encouraged to participate in community activities. When doing so, Board members may choose to provide information and/or respond to questions based on the following:
  - a. Relay information about district goals or other district information the Board member is comfortable providing
  - b. Interact in a positive manner
  - c. Listen politely and respectfully to comments
  - d. Refer questions about specific district activities to the Superintendent when they do not know the answers or if the individual wants detailed information.

- B. The Board of Trustees encourages community input, however, it will not respond to anonymous calls or letters unless they involve the safety and security of students and/or employees. If the anonymous communication refers to a significant issue, the Board member will contact the Superintendent to inform him/her of its' content.
- C. Signed letters addressed to the Board or a Board member will be forwarded to the Superintendent for inclusion in the weekly information provided to the Board.
- D. The Board will communicate to the community collectively through district communication strategies authorized by the Board in policy or the district communication plan.

SISD related policies: BBF (LOCAL)
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### Communicating with the Media

- A. The Superintendent and the Board President shall act as spokespersons for the Board of Trustees to the media on all school district related issues. Generally speaking, questions concerning district operations should be referred to the Superintendent and questions regarding board policy or actions taken by the Board should be referred to the Board President. This practice will promote a single “position statement” which can be clearly understood by the public as opposed to potentially having multiple statements on an issue.
- B. A Board member who receives a call from the media requesting information, comments, or an interview regarding district related issues will direct them to the Superintendent and/or Board President, depending on the nature of the questions.
- C. Board members retain the right to speak to the media as individuals but are strongly encouraged to direct all media inquiries to the Superintendent and/or Board President.
- D. When speaking to a media representative, a Board member should clarify when speaking as an individual rather than as a spokesperson for the Board of Trustees. When speaking as an individual, the Board member will remind the media representative of the position or action of the Board of Trustees as a body – if the Board has taken action on the issue.

SISD related policies:
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## Evaluation of the Superintendent

### Updating the Superintendent Evaluation Instrument

After district goals are identified and priorities of the Board are established for the next school year, the Governance Team should review the content of the Superintendent's evaluation instrument to ensure proper alignment. This will ensure that the Board and Superintendent have an understanding of the challenges and priorities that are going to be emphasized in the coming year and that appropriate evaluation indicators may be developed. The evaluation instrument shall be based on the Superintendent's job description, student performance, and Governance Team priorities. The document evaluating the performance of the Superintendent is confidential.

### Objectives of the Superintendent Evaluation Process

Based on law and board policy the following objectives are associated with the superintendent evaluation process:

- Clarify to the Superintendent his or her role and priorities, as seen by the Board
- Clarify to Board members the Superintendent's role, according to the Board's written criteria, as expressed in the Superintendent's job description and the district's goals and priorities
- Foster an early understanding among new Board members of the evaluation process and the Superintendent's current performance objectives and priorities
- Develop and sustain a harmonious working relationship between the Board and the Superintendent
- Include indicators on the evaluation instrument that reflect high expectations and outstanding Governance for the day-to-day operations of the school district
- Ensure fairness and objectivity in the evaluation process

The superintendent evaluation process and evaluation instrument will be provided to Board members with agenda items for the meeting in which the evaluation is to be conducted.

SISD related policies:

BJA (LEGAL)

BJCD (EXHIBIT)

BJCD (LOCAL)

BJCD (LEGAL)



## New Board Member Orientation & Governance Team Training

### Reporting Requirements

The minutes of the last regular meeting of the Board held during a calendar year must reflect whether each Trustee has met or is delinquent in meeting the training required to be completed as of the date of the meeting. *Education Code 11.159*

### Training Requirements

New Board members shall receive a district orientation session within 60 days before or after their election or appointment and an orientation to the Texas Education Code within the first 120 days of election or appointment. Texas Education Code orientation sessions are offered through the Regional Education Service Center. New Board members are also encouraged to attend the TASB Summer Governance Conference, if possible. New Board members will also be trained on parliamentary procedures according to *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*. Once a year all Board members will receive a review of parliamentary procedures according to *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.

All Board members shall receive an update session following each session of the Texas Legislature and the entire Board and Superintendent shall annually participate in a team building session. The lengths of these trainings are not specified, but are usually at least three hours.

In addition to the orientation and team building training, all Board members shall receive additional continuing education on an annual basis. To the extent possible, the entire Board shall participate in continuing education programs together. In the first year of service, Board members shall receive at least ten hours of continuing education in fulfillment of assessed needs in addition to required orientations and team building training. Within 90 days of election or appointment, new board members should receive one (1) hour of Open Meetings Training provided by the Attorney General's Office.

After the first year of service Board members shall receive at least five hours of continuing education annually in fulfillment of assessed needs. This of course is in addition to required team building training and a Texas Education Code update if a session of the Texas Legislature has been held that year.

The Board President shall receive continuing education related to Governance duties of the Board President as some portion of the annual requirement.

SISD related policies: BBD (LEGAL)      BBD (EXHIBIT)
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## Professional Development for Board Members

Board members and the Superintendent are encouraged to seek and attend relevant opportunities for professional development in addition to required training activities. Membership in state and national organizations and attendance at conventions, conferences, clinics, and workshops provide opportunities to learn about best practices and bring new ideas back to Splendora ISD.

Subscriptions to school board newsletter services, journals, and other written works are also efficient ways to learn examples of new or best practices.

Board members wishing to participate or attend professional development activities that are not planned for the entire Board should contact the Superintendent and Board President. If either should have a question as to the appropriateness of the request, the matter shall be brought to the Board as an agenda item for consideration.

## Board Member Reimbursement for Expenses

Professional development for Board members is encouraged and reimbursement for travel and related expenses should be included in the district's budget each year. Utilize policy BBG (LOCAL) for Board member reimbursement when attending meetings, workshops, and conventions as an official representative of the Board.

SISD related policies:

BBG (LOCAL)      BBG (LEGAL)

## Board Member Ethics & Vendor Influence

In addition to Splendora ISD Board Member Ethics, BBF (LOCAL) attached, Board members will comply with state required annual Conflict of Interest reports outlined in BBFA (LEGAL), if applicable. The Conflict of Interest form is provided by the Texas Ethics Commission and applies to any Board member when he or she, or any member of the family, receives more than \$2,500 per year from a business that contracts with the school district, or when a Board member, or member of his or her family, receives \$250 or more in aggregate gifts from a business that contracts with the school district.

Board members may be a reference as to the professionalism and quality of a potential vendor for the school district, but he or she should communicate to the vendor and school district personnel that their personal knowledge of the vendor should not be represented as individual preference or support. Vendor selection is based on school district business practices and guidelines, state law, and district policy.

Board members should not request assistance, information, or school district equipment from school district employees for the purpose of personal or professional gain or on behalf of a friend or relative.

SISD related policies:

BBF (LOCAL)

BBFA (LEGAL)

Gov't Code 171.004