

Como-Pickton Consolidated Independent School District

Board Operating Procedures



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RELATED POLICY: For individual references on board policy, please use the On-line District Policy Manual search feature by topic for details. As Policy references are subject to change after each legislative session and upon other state rulings and court decisions, the policy references used herein are subject to change.

LAST REVISED:

I. How To: Prepare the Board Meeting Agenda

- 1) Any Board Member may request an item be placed on the agenda for Board consideration by contacting the Superintendent or Board President by noon of the 5th business day prior to the regular meeting or noon of the 3rd day before a special meeting.

- 2) Items requiring significant preparation time may, at the discretion of the Board President, be deferred to a later meeting. This decision is based on the time needed to prepare supporting information.

- 3) A draft agenda will be developed by the Superintendent and presented to the Board President for approval and revision five business days prior to the scheduled meeting date.

- 4) The draft agenda will include previously scheduled items from the board agenda calendar and any items required by law.

- 5) A consent agenda may be used to present items for a single vote without discussion according to the following guidelines:
 - a) Items will be placed on the consent agenda at the discretion of the Board President.

 - b) At the Board meeting, any individual Board Member may request that an item be removed from the consent agenda and be considered as a separate agenda item.

 - c) Following action on the consent agenda, the Board President will allow discussion on any item requested for removal from the agenda by a Board Member.

 - d) Examples of items that may be included on the consent agenda:
 - i) Routine items
 - ii) Minutes of regular and special board meetings
 - iii) Acceptance of financial reports
 - iv) Approval of personnel contracts that comply with District policies
 - v) Budget amendments
 - vi) Gifts, donations and bequests
 - vii) Updates of Board policy
 - viii) Routine bid recommendations
 - ix) Any other item deemed appropriate for a consent agenda by the Superintendent and Board President.

6) The final agenda:

a) No item can be placed on the agenda less than 72 hours in advance of the meeting, unless an emergency or urgent public necessity exists. The meeting agenda must be posted 72 hours in advance of the meeting.

b) Any agenda item added to the agenda after the original posting shall be done so in accordance with state laws.

7) Items for Closed Session

a) All personnel discussions and deliberations shall be conducted in a closed session unless specifically required by the Texas Open Meetings Law to be conducted in open session.

b) Anything that violates a right to privacy, i.e., Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Public Information Act, Federal Education Records Privacy Act, cannot be placed on the agenda for the open meeting except for the agenda notice for a trial decision.

Related Policies: See On-line District Policy Manual and BE (LEGAL and LOCAL), BEC (LEGAL)

Adopted or Revised:

II. How to: Request Information About Agenda Items

- 1) Board Members are encouraged to ask the Superintendent for information about agenda items before the Board meeting.
- 2) Any questions about agenda items or requests for additional information about them will be directed to the Superintendent or his/her designee, or the administrator responsible for the agenda item, as noted in the agenda packet.
- 3) If the information requested is readily available, the Superintendent (or designee) will provide it to the requesting Board Members and report it to the Board as a whole at the meeting. If the requested information cannot be gathered prior to the meeting, the Superintendent (or designee) will make every attempt to provide the answers or requested information at the meeting to the Board as a whole.
- 4) If a written report is provided in response to the request, all members will receive a copy. Note, however, that a request for a written report may require Board action.
- 5) Board Members may discuss any supporting information in the meeting, if necessary.
- 6) Board Members may ask additional questions about agenda items in the meeting.
- 7) Board Members may not discuss agenda items among themselves prior to the Board meeting.

Adopted or Revised:

III. How to: Participate in Board Meetings as a Board Member

- 1) The Superintendent and Administration will ensure that supporting information required for informed decision-making is supplied to each Board Member in the Board Meeting Agenda Packet.
- 2) Agenda packets will be available to Board Members at least 3 days before scheduled regular board meetings or at the meeting if an emergency meeting is called.
- 3) A quorum of Board Members must be present to hold a Board Meeting. All Board Members should be prepared to address the items on the agenda.
 - a) Board Members will read agenda packet materials before each Board meeting.
 - b) Board Members will ask agenda-item-related questions of the Superintendent.
 - c) Board Members are not precluded from asking relevant questions about agenda items during board meetings. However, the right to question should not serve as an excuse for lack of preparation.
- 4) The Board President will have full authority to follow and enforce Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised), designated in policy as the Board's parliamentary authority, unless pre-empted by Board Policy or procedures, or by a majority vote of the Board Members at a meeting.
- 5) All discussion of motions shall be directed solely to the business currently before the Board.
- 6) The Board President has the responsibility of keeping the discussion to the motion at hand, and shall halt discussion that does not apply to the business before the Board, as stated in the Board agenda.
- 7) The Board President has the right to recognize a Board Member prior to the Board Member giving his/her comments.
- 8) Voting shall be by show of hands. Any member may abstain from voting, and a member's vote or failure to vote shall be recorded.
- 9) The Board President may vote on all action items.
- 10) Role of Board in Closed Session
 - a) Board Members shall only discuss those items listed on the closed session agenda and as limited by law.
 - b) Board must make all decisions and vote in open session.
 - c) Information discussed during closed session must remain confidential.
 - d) A written certified agenda will be created for each Closed Session.

11) Role of Board in a Hearing

- a) During a Hearing, the Board is to listen to each presentation (Grievance hearings are limited to 10 minutes per side) of existing evidence. No new documentation or information is to be considered.
- b) The Board may not answer questions or enter into a two-way dialogue except as provided for at the hearing pursuant to current legislation.
- c) The Board will be able to ask questions at the appropriate time in a hearing.
- d) Each Board Member must declare he/she is able to make an unbiased decision in order to participate in a Hearing.

12) Evaluation of the Superintendent

- a) Annually, prior to consideration of the Superintendent's contract, the Board will evaluate the Superintendent's performance. Each Board Member shall complete the Superintendent's appraisal instrument.
- b) The Board President will present the final scoring and complete comment listing to the superintendent in closed session. Performance goals shall be established annually.

13) Evaluation of the Board

- a) At least annually, the Board shall conduct a self-evaluation of the Board and Board Members performance. The evaluation shall consider such items as role recognition, relationship with others, performance at Board meetings, self-improvement activities, and compliance with Board Operating Procedures.

14) Reviewing Board Operating Procedures

- a) Standard Board Operating Procedures will be reviewed annually and updated as needed. New Legislation or Court Rulings may override an individual operating procedure without affecting any other procedure contained herein.

Related Policies: See On-line District Policy Manual and BE (LEGAL and LOCAL), BDAA (LEGAL and LOCAL), BJCD (LEGAL and LOCAL) GF (LOCAL)

Adopted or Revised:

IV. How to: Elect Board Officers

1) Board Officer Election

Election of Board Officers is held in May of each year for the following year after the Board election and after new members, if any, are sworn in and take the Oath of Office.

2) Role and Authority of Board Member and/or Board Officers

- a) No Board Member or officer has authority outside the Board meeting except as specifically designated in Board policy and herein.
- b) Board Members can act only as a body corporate. No individual Board Member can commit the District or the Board.
- c) No Board Member can direct employees in regard to performance of their duties.
- d) All Board Members are expected to complete all continuing education requirements.
- e) President
 - 1) Shall preside at all Board meetings
 - 2) Shall appoint committees
 - 3) Shall call special meetings, and
 - 4) Shall sign all legal documents required by law.
- f) Vice-President
 - 1) Shall act in the capacity of President in the President's absence.
- g) Secretary
 - 1) Shall keep accurate record of Board meetings
 - 2) Shall call meeting and an election for President Pro Tem, in the absence of President and Vice-President.

Related Policies: See On-line District Policy Manual and BBE (LOCAL), BDAA (LEGAL and LOCAL)

Adopted or Revised:

V. How to: Participate as a Board Member during "Public Comment" portion of a Board Meeting

- 1) Persons wishing to address the Board during the open "public comment" portion of a Board Meeting must comply with the provisions of Policy BED (LOCAL) that outlines the specific times and procedures applicable to public comments during board meetings.
- 2) A copy of policy BED (LOCAL) will be available for public review at the posted meeting site.
- 3) During the "public comment" section of the meeting, Board Members will listen to comments but, as the designated spokesperson, only the presiding officer may respond, if a response to the speaker is required. Those responses are limited to:
 - a) Stating specific factual information or to correct misstatements presented by the speaker.
 - b) Referring the speaker to applicable board policy.
 - c) Placing the item on a future Board agenda for discussion, if not listed on the current Board agenda.
- 4) The presiding officer may direct the Superintendent to investigate matters brought forward during public comment and to report findings to the board at a later meeting.
- 5) The Board will not entertain negative comments about individual students or personnel in open session. Such comments should be communicated through the District's complaint procedures, in accordance with Board Policy, and will be heard in closed session except as provided otherwise by law.
- 6) The Board must bear in mind that persons who speak during "public comment" portion have First Amendment rights. The Board should seek legal advice before disallowing a person's contribution to public comment based solely on the content of the speaker's comments.
- 7) The presiding officer will limit the total time for "Public Comment" to 30 minutes during regular Board meetings. Each speaker is allowed 10 minutes. If more than three topics are requested, the Board President may determine if additional overall time is to be allowed or individual speaker time is to be shortened. If multiple speakers wish to present the same topic, the President may request that a representative be selected among those signed up to speak. Should additional time be needed for all speakers to address the Board, the Board may designate a future meeting as a public hearing to address specific issues.

Related Policies: See On-line District Policy Manual and BED (LEGAL and LOCAL), FNG, DGBA, GF (LOCAL)

Adopted or Revised:

VI. How to: Request Information Not Related to Agenda Items

- 1) Board Members should request information not related to a meeting agenda item directly from the Superintendent.
- 2) The Superintendent will determine if the information requested is available from existing sources or records or if it requires that a special, one-time-only report be developed.
- 3) If the requested information can be provided from readily available data with no diversion of staff time, then it will be provided as soon as reasonable.
- 4) In the event the request requires a special report that will divert staff time from established priorities, the Superintendent will notify the requestor and the Board President of this fact.
- 5) The Board President will place the request for information on the next meeting agenda to determine if a majority of the Board agrees that the requested information is important for its future decision-making and orders that the report be developed.
- 6) If the Board agrees that the information is important for future decision-making, and orders the report, then the Superintendent will prepare a report or will direct that a report be developed and provided as requested by the Board.
- 7) All Board Members will receive a copy of any report generated by a Board Member's request, in accordance with this procedure.

Related Policies: See On-line District Policy Manual and BBE (LOCAL)

Adopted or Revised:

VII. How to: Communicate With Board Members Between Meetings

1) The Superintendent may communicate with each Board Member by email, or other communication method. Such communication may include information such as:

- a) District events;
- b) Progress reports on directives;
- c) Follow-up reports in answer to Board Member questions; or
- d) Updates on administrative matters or District operations.

2) The Superintendent will meet with the Board President as needed, or communicate by telephone, fax, and/or email to inform him or her of District issues that may need to come before the Board for information or action.

3) The Board President may direct the Superintendent to distribute copies of documents to each Member of the Board for information purposes. Email is the preferred method of distribution, unless unusual circumstances dictate an alternate method.

4) 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.

5) Board Members may communicate with other individual members for purposes of attending conferences, or socializing under circumstances that do not conflict with or circumvent the Texas Open Meetings Act.

6) Board Members may not communicate with other individual members for purposes of deliberating District business or soliciting votes in support of or opposition to items of business that may come before the Board.

7) Board Members who wish to share information relevant to District business will relay the information to the Board President, who will advise the Superintendent regarding distribution to all members.

Related Policies: See On-line District Policy Manual and BE (LEGAL) and BJA (LOCAL)

Adopted or Revised:

VIII. How to: Communicate With the Community

1) Board Members are encouraged to participate in community activities as liaisons between the public and the school district. When doing so, Board Members are expected to:

- a) Relay information about District goals.
- b) Clarify a trustee's limitations, obligations, and responsibilities as a Member of the Board.
- c) Support Board decisions.
- d) Interact in a positive manner.
- e) Listen politely and respectfully to comments.
- f) Make no commitment on behalf of the Board or District.
- g) Not criticize District personnel.
- h) Refer questions about specific District activities to the appropriate staff person when the answers are not known.

2) The Board encourages community input; however, it will not respond to or act on the basis of anonymous calls or letters.

3) Signed letters addressed to the Board or a Board Member will be forwarded to the Board President or the Superintendent for inclusion in the Board information packet.

4) The Board will communicate with its community through public hearings, regular Board Meetings, and regular publications.

5) Individual Board Members cannot speak in an official capacity outside the Board Meeting unless authorized by the Board.

6) Board Members will act in accordance with Board Ethics as described in Policy BBF (LOCAL)

Related Policies: See On-line District Policy Manual and BBF (LOCAL)

Adopted or Revised:

IX. How to: Respond to Community or Employee Complaints

- 1) Listen briefly and respectfully. Remind the complainant of the board's responsibility to remain impartial and noncommittal because complaints may ultimately be brought to the board on appeal.
- 2) Ask if the complainant has followed the "Chain of Command" outlined in District policy.
- 3) If the complainant does not know the District's "Chain of Command," provide the following information:
 - a) The complainant should first discuss the problem with the person in authority closest to the problem.
 - b) If not satisfied with the resolution of the problem, the complainant should go to the administrative supervisor of the person noted in "a."
 - c) The administrative supervisor will help the complainant initiate any correspondence or forms required in policy and attempt to resolve the complaint.
 - d) If still not satisfied, the complainant may appeal to the Superintendent or designee for resolution.
 - e) If the superintendent is unable to resolve the issue or the complainant is still not satisfied, the formal complaint is brought to the board following local policy.
- 4) Board Members will inform the superintendent of all complaints from staff and community but will not direct the Superintendent to take specific actions.
- 5) The Superintendent shall inform the board of the resolution of complaints referred by Board Members if the complaint requires Superintendent intervention.

Related Policies: See On-line District Policy Manual and DGBA (LEGAL and LOCAL) pertains to employees; FNG (LEGAL and LOCAL) pertains to parents and students; GF (LOCAL) is for public complaints. BBF (LOCAL)

Adopted or Revised:

X. How to: Communicate With the Media

- 1) The Board President or designee will serve as the Board spokesperson to the media on issues regarding Board actions.
- 2) The Superintendent or a specified designee shall be the official District spokesperson to the media on issues of District attention.
- 3) Any Board Member receiving a call from the media requesting information, comments, or an interview will direct the media representative to the Superintendent for District business and to the Board President for Board-specific issues.
- 4) If speaking to a media representative, Board Members should clarify at the beginning of the interview that they are speaking as individuals rather than as authorized representatives of the Board.
- 5) When speaking as an individual, the Board Member will remind media representatives of the official position or action already taken on the issue by the Board and will refer media to the appropriate spokesperson for further information.
- 6) It is inappropriate for a Board Member to state an opinion on an upcoming issue that is scheduled for discussion at a later Board meeting.

Related Policies: See On-line District Policy Manual and BBF (LOCAL), BJA (LOCAL), and GBB (LOCAL)

Adopted or Revised:

XI. How to: Visit Campuses as a Board Member

- 1) Board Members are encouraged to attend as many school events or accept as many invitations as their time permits.
- 2) Board Members may visit any campus after checking with the principal about the best time to visit. A Board Member's visit must not disrupt the learning process.
- 3) Board Members are required to check in with the principal's office and to follow campus guidelines for visitors.
- 4) Board Members may not give any direction to any staff or students, except when safety or liability is immediately at risk.
- 5) Board Members may interact with any staff member or student during free periods, lunch, or recess.
- 6) Board Members may not go unannounced to any district building or classroom.
- 7) Board Members may not go into a teacher's classroom or individual buildings for purposes of evaluation or investigation.
- 8) Board Members may not enter a teacher's classroom during instructional time.
- 9) When visiting with teachers of their own children, Board Members will make it clear that they are acting as parents rather than as Board Members, and will schedule appointments through the campus administrator.
- 10) Board Members will not request or accept extraordinary consideration or "favors" from any District employee.

Related Policies: See On-line District Policy Manual and GKA (LEGAL), BBF (LOCAL)

Adopted or Revised:

XII. How to: Express Concern about Another Member's Performance

- 1) Individual Board Members are encouraged to express their concerns about another member's performance directly and privately to that member.
- 2) If addressing the issue directly with the member does not resolve the concern, then discussion with the Board President is appropriate.
 - a) The Board President shall discuss the concern with the individual in question on behalf of the reporting Board Member or shall moderate a discussion between the members. If a quorum of the Board is involved, the meeting must be posted and conducted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.
 - b) The Board President shall remind the Board Member whose behavior is in question about the adopted code of ethics and discuss how the questionable behavior does not comply with the code. The discussion also will identify more appropriate alternatives to the questionable behavior or refer the Board Member to policies or procedures that outline approved ways to deal with the issue that prompted the questionable behavior.
- 3) If the Board Member in question does not believe his or her behavior is in conflict with the Board's code of ethics, an agenda item specifying "evaluation of individual Board Members' performance" may be listed on the agenda for an upcoming Board meeting.
 - a) The matter will be discussed by the full Board in closed session in an attempt to clearly identify behavior that may be inappropriate and discuss possible solutions or alternative approaches that may have a more positive impact on the Board's cohesion and effectiveness.
- 4) If the concern involves the Board President, a Board Member may discuss his or her concerns with the Board Vice-President.
- 5) Board Members will not take concerns about fellow Board Members to the Superintendent.
- 6) Board Members will not speak negatively about another Board Member, the Superintendent, or District staff to members of the community.
- 7) Removal of Board Members from office is governed by policy. Board Members may be removed from office for:
 1. "Incompetency, " which means:
 - a. Gross ignorance of official duties;
 - b. Gross carelessness in the discharge of those duties; or

c. Unfitness or inability to promptly and properly discharge official duties because of a serious physical or mental defect that did not exist at the time of election.

2. "Official misconduct," which means intentional, unlawful behavior relating to official duties by a Board Member entrusted with the administration of justice or the execution of the law. The term includes an intentional or corrupt failure, refusal, or neglect of a Board Member to perform a duty imposed on the Board Member by law and conviction of an offense relating to a violation of purchasing procedures. [See CH]

3. Intoxication on or off duty caused by drinking an alcoholic beverage or controlled substance but not if it was caused by drinking an alcoholic beverage, or controlled substance on the direction and prescription of a licensed physician;

4. Conviction of a Board Member by a jury for any felony or for misdemeanor official misconduct.

Actions for removal of Board Members must be brought before the judge of the District Court holding jurisdiction, except that any court convicting a Board Member of a felony or official misconduct shall order immediate removal.

Related Policies: See On-line District Policy Manual and BBFA (LEGAL), BBF (LOCAL), BBC (Legal)

Adopted or Revised:

XIII. Orientation to New Board Members

- 1) Local District orientation will be scheduled to take place within sixty days of the date a new Board Member takes the oath of office.
- 2) The Superintendent and at least one incumbent Board Member will participate in the orientation. Additional administrative staff members may also be included to present specific information about the District.
- 3) Orientation will include, but is not limited to:

- a) General District information such as:

- Geographic area included and number of square miles
- Campus attendance boundaries
- Number of students, teachers, and other employees
- Number of campuses and their enrollments
- Student demographics
- Administrative structure and directory of key personnel
- Ongoing issues of interest to the community

- b) Overview of District programs and operations such as:

- District vision, mission, goals, and plans including,
 - District planning and evaluation process and calendar
 - Most recent AEIS report, campus report cards, and district annual report
- District budget overview including,
 - Current adopted budget summary
 - Recent trends in revenue, appropriations, tax rates, property values
 - Annual financial audit
 - Development process and calendar
- Overview of District curriculum objectives, standards, and instructional programs
- Policy development and review process and location of manuals on-line
- Personnel hiring practices and salary schedule
- Superintendent performance goals, current Superintendent evaluation instrument, process and calendar.

c) Board operations, including:

- Overview of roles and responsibilities of the Board and Superintendent
- Required continuing education and calendar of training opportunities
- Current Board improvement goals and continuing education targets
- Annual Board agenda calendar
- Calendar of District and Board events
- Current Board Operating Procedures

Related Policies: See On-line District Policy Manual and BBD (LEGAL)

Adopted or Revised: