

**NAVARRO ISD
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
CODE OF CONDUCT
And Board Operating Procedures**

PREAMBLE: As members of the Navarro Independent School District Board of Trustees, we realize that to be the most effective advocates for children, we, as a Board, must function as a team and at all times treat each other and the people we serve with the utmost courtesy, dignity, respect and professionalism. Should we, for whatever reason, fail to follow these guidelines, we ask that our fellow Board members call it to our attention. Should that occur, we pledge to accept the feedback without anger or retribution, and to renew our efforts to follow this Code of Conduct and Board Operating Procedures. We shall promote the best interests of the school district as a whole, and, to that end, we shall adhere to the following educational and ethical standards.

BOARD CODE OF CONDUCT

I. Governance

- (A) I will bring about desired changes through legal and ethical procedures, upholding and enforcing all laws, administrative rules and regulations, court orders pertaining to schools and district policies and procedures.
- (B) I will make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of all children in the District, regardless of ability, race, creed, sex, national origin, disability or social standing. All decisions will place the needs of children first.
- (C) I will recognize that the board must make decisions as a whole, as a body corporate, and make no personal promise or take private action that may compromise the role and integrity of the board. All board action must take place in an official board meeting.
- (D) I will focus board action on policy making, goal setting, planning and evaluation as outlined in Board policy and state law.
- (E) I will vote to appoint the best-qualified personnel available after due consideration of the recommendation by the Superintendent. I will insist on regular and impartial evaluation of all staff by the Superintendent.
- (F) I recognize that the role of the Board is to govern and oversee the management of the District. I will delegate authority to the Superintendent for the day-to-day operations of the district.

- (G) As a board member, I will not step outside my role to govern and oversee the management of the district by seeking to participate in the administration of the day to day operations of the District.

II. Conduct

- (A) I will respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law, including closed session discussions.
- (B) To the extent possible, I will attend all regularly scheduled and specially set board meetings, arrive on time, and I will be informed of the issues to be considered at the meetings.
- (C) I will assist in making policy decisions only after full discussion at publicly held board meetings, and I will render all decisions based on available facts, and I refuse to surrender judgment to individuals or special groups.
- (D) I will not use my board position for personal or partisan gain.
- (E) I will disagree in an agreeable manner. I will not hold grudges or question other board member's ethics or motives as to their vote or views on issues.
- (F) I will be firm, fair, just, and impartial in all decisions and actions.
- (G) I will respect the majority decision as the decision of the Board.

III. Communication

- (A) I will encourage the free expression of opinion by all board members. I will make a good faith effort to understand and accommodate the views of others.
- (B) I recognize the appropriate channels to refer complaints to the Superintendent and will do so.
- (C) I will seek communication between the board, students, staff, and the community at board meetings as required to appropriately conduct board business.
- (D) I will communicate to fellow board members and the Superintendent at appropriate times my expression of public concerns.
- (E) If I am board president, I will make sure that persons addressing the board follow established policy guidelines. I will verbally remind speakers that the Board cannot respond to, or engage in a discussion of, items that are not on the agenda.

- (F) If I am board president, I will make sure that persons addressing the board do so in a professional manner and not allow inappropriate communication to be directed to the board or the Superintendent during board meetings.
- (G) If I am board president, I will insure that all board members are given an opportunity to reflect their views. I will work toward building consensus among all Board members.
- (H) As a Board member I will not withhold school district information from other Board members.

IV. Board Preparation

- (A) I will become informed about current educational issues and seek continuing education opportunities such as those sponsored by state and national school board associations.
- (B) I will disseminate pertinent information gathered at training workshops and conventions with the Superintendent and fellow Board members.

NAVARRO ISD BOARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

PREAMBLE: It is essential to the smooth and efficient functioning of the District that Board members thoroughly understand and adhere to their proper role, which is to govern and oversee the management of the District. Board members may not attempt to exercise individual authority over the District, and members' interactions with the Superintendent or staff must recognize the lack of authority vested in individuals except when explicitly authorized by the board. Board members are prohibited from participating in the day-to-day operations of the school district. The governance framework for Navarro ISD is set forth in Policies BA, BAA, BBB, BBE, BE, BEC, BED, in the Navarro ISD Board Code of Conduct and Board Operating Procedures.

In addition to and in conjunction with the Board Code of Conduct, the following procedures will govern the conduct of the Navarro Board of Trustees.

1. Developing the Board Meeting Agenda

- A. Who can place items on agenda and guidelines:
 - 1. Agendas are created by the Superintendent in consultation with the Board President and presented to the Board on Thursday prior to the Monday meeting.
 - 2. Board members must request in writing or verbally to the Superintendent or Board President at least seven (7) days prior to the Board meeting or three (3) days prior to a special meeting, any item they desire to have placed on the agenda. This includes any items the Board President wants placed on the agenda. A verbal request will be followed up by a written request.

3. In accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, no item can be placed on the agenda less than 72 hours in advance of the meeting, except in an emergency as defined by law.
 4. The Superintendent and Board President shall include on the agenda all trustee requested agenda items that have been timely submitted according to board operating procedures.
- B. Items that will not be heard in open session:
1. All personnel issues unless an exception under the Texas Open Meetings Act applies.
 2. Anything that could violate an individual's right to privacy.
 3. All exceptions as covered in the Texas Open Meetings Act.
- C. Use of Consent Agenda:
1. Board members shall call the Superintendent with questions regarding consent agenda items prior to the meeting; if more discussion is warranted, that item may be pulled at the request of any board member and considered as an action item. Consent items include:
 - a. Budget amendments
 - b. Minutes of regular and special board meetings

2. Member Conduct During Board Meetings

In addition to the following procedures, at all times board members shall adhere to the Board Code of Conduct.

- A. Patrons addressing the Board:
1. Audience participation at Board meetings is limited to the portion of the meeting designated as Open Forum. At all other times during a Board meeting, the audience shall not enter into discussion or debate on matters being considered by the Board, unless recognized by the presiding officer. No presentation shall exceed five minutes. Delegations of more than two persons shall appoint one person to present their views before the Board.
 2. At regular meetings the Board shall allot a total of 30 minutes to hear persons who desire to make comments to the Board. Persons who wish to participate in the Open Forum shall sign up with the presiding officer or designee before the meeting begins and shall indicate the topic about which they wish to speak.
- B. Board response to patrons addressing the Board:
1. Board members can hear comments.
 2. Board president may direct administration to investigate item(s) and report back to the Board.

3. Board members cannot respond or enter into discussion with the audience during the meeting as:
 - (a) Items on the agenda will be discussed as appropriate and scheduled on the agenda;
 - (b) Items not on the agenda do not permit Board members to respond or discuss except to make factual statements or refer to board policy.
 4. The Board President may exercise discretion in allowing patron comments to exceed 5 minutes or to extend the 30 minute time allotted for Open Forum.
 5. Board members may request that the Board President extend the Open Forum times set out in this policy.
- C. Discussion of Employee/Student Issues
1. The Board will not allow complaints regarding individual personnel in open session unless required by law.
 2. The Board will not allow complaints on individual students in public session unless required by law.
- D. Hearings:
1. The Board will conduct all hearings in accordance with the applicable board policies (e.g. DGBA, FNG, GF).
 2. During hearings, board members will seek legal counsel as deemed necessary.
- E. Board shall observe the parliamentary guidelines in Robert's Rules of Order. A summary of Robert's Rules of Order will be provided to each Board member.
- F. Discussion of Motions:
1. All discussions shall be directed solely to the business currently under deliberation.
 2. The Board President has the responsibility to keep the discussion to the motion at hand and shall halt discussions that do not apply to the business currently before the Board.
- G. The Board President shall recognize a Board Member prior to giving their comments.

3. Voting:

- A. The Board President will vote on all action items.
- B. The Board President may make motions, second motions and enter into debate on all agenda items.
- C. In case of tie, the motion is defeated.
- D. In case of a less than unanimous vote, the Board will support the majority decision and go forward in harmony.

4. Individual Board Member Request for Information or Report

- A. When acting in his or her official capacity, an individual board member has the right of access to all documents and records of the district, subject to the responsibility to comply with confidentiality requirements. This right does not extend to confidential student records.
- B. Board members will request information, or seek access to records, or request copies of records through the Superintendent.
- C. Individual members shall not direct or require District employees to prepare reports derived from an analysis of information in existing District records or to create a new record compiled from information in existing District records. Directives to the Superintendent regarding the preparation of reports shall only be made after discussion and vote in a board meeting held in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.
- D. Written information/reports will be disseminated through the Superintendent's office and shared with all Board members.

5. Citizen or Employee Request/Complaint to Individual Board Members

The Board recognizes that as elected officials they will be presented requests and complaints from the public and from employees; therefore, strict adherence to this procedure is required.

- A. The Board member who is presented with a request or complaint outside the board meeting shall receive enough information in order to be able to understand the nature of the request or complaint. ("Do you want my help?" is an appropriate question that may precede the following advice.)
- B. The Board member shall then refer the citizen or the employee to the appropriate person/chain of command as appropriate.
- C. The Board member shall not become individually and personally involved in the complaint.
- D. The Board member must remind the citizen or employee of their role and that as a Board member they must remain impartial in the event the situation comes before the Board.
- E. The Board member shall notify the Superintendent as soon as possible of the request or complaint. (E.g. Even if board member refers the patron to the principal to resolve the complaint, the board member should advise the Superintendent of the referral).
- F. The Superintendent will ensure that the citizen or employee is contacted in a timely manner. Board members will be notified of the disposition of the complaint if appropriate as deemed by the Superintendent.

6. Board Member Visit to Campus

- A. All Board members are encouraged to attend as many school events as their time permits.

- B. Board members will not visit campuses to conduct board business except with the superintendent.
- C. Board members are required to sign in with the principal's office and follow campus guidelines for visitors.
- D. 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.
- E. Board members will not request or accept extraordinary consideration or favors from any district employee.

8. Communications

Attendance at Board meetings is important. Four members are required to establish a quorum. Decisions are binding on all members, so everyone's participation in the process is critical.

- A. The Superintendent will communicate regularly with all Board members via Board Packets and updates.
- B. If a Board member has a concern about any aspect of the Superintendent's duties or performance, he/she should go to the Superintendent and discuss the problem.
- C. If an individual board member has a concern about district management, he/she is encouraged to discuss the concern with the Superintendent. If a Board member wishes to continue discussion of the concern with the whole Board, he or she may request "Duties of the Superintendent" to be placed on a subsequent Board meeting agenda.
- D. Board members will not reprimand or provide direction to staff. Directives to the Superintendent shall be in the confines of a duly called Board meeting.
- E. Board members will not attempt to exert pressure or influence on the staff in order to coerce them into making particular recommendations or decisions.
- F. Board members will not conduct interviews with prospective employees.
- G. Individual Board members cannot speak in an official capacity for the Board outside the Board room unless otherwise authorized by the Board.
- H. Board members may encourage qualified acquaintances to apply for available jobs, but will not seek to influence members of a district committee or the administration to make a particular recommendation.
- I. Board members will not direct personnel to consider vendors other than those recommended through the competitive bidding or proposal process. The Sealed bid, RFP, and RFQ processes instruct prospective vendors and contractors not to contact board members during the bid process.
- J. Board members will only e-mail other trustees under the following circumstances:
 - (1) When it concerns non-board business, or
 - (2) When it involves the date, time, or place of meetings. E-mail communication from the Superintendent to the Trustees will be unrestricted.

9. Communication with Legal Counsel

- A. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to contact legal counsel on behalf of the district.
- B. Board members may contact legal counsel on behalf of the district in consultation with the superintendent or Board president.
- C. Board members may consult with legal counsel in closed session as allowed by the Open Meetings Act.

10. Evaluation of the Superintendent

- A. The Superintendent and Board shall function as a "Team of Eight".
- B. Board members will receive training on a locally developed process for Superintendent performance evaluation.
- C. A formative evaluation will be conducted in January and summative evaluation will be conducted in June.
- D. Each Board member will complete and deliver to the Board President, the approved appraisal instrument at least one week prior to the summative conference.
- E. Evaluation of the Superintendent will be conducted in closed session unless the Superintendent requests the evaluation be done in open session.
- F. Ratings and comments on the Superintendent's evaluation will be determined by Board consensus.

11. Evaluation of the Board

- A. The Superintendent and Board function as a "Team of Eight".
- B. A formal Self-evaluation of the Board shall be conducted annually using an instrument approved by the Board.
- C. The formal self-evaluation will be conducted every May addressing:
 - (1) Is the Board following the Board Code of Conduct?
 - (2) Is the Board following Board Operating Procedures?
 - (3) Is the Team of Eight Functioning Appropriately and Effectively?
 - (4) Were the goals set effective and were they accomplished?
- D. The evaluation will be used to determine team-building training needs and such training will be conducted annually.
- E. As deemed necessary, the Board shall utilize closed session under Texas Government Code 551.074 to evaluate and discuss the roles and responsibilities of board members as allowed by law.
- F. As deemed necessary, the Board shall utilize closed session under Texas Government Code 551.074 to hear complaints about public officials as allowed by law.
- G. A Board member may request that a discussion of the performance of the Board as a body corporate or the performance of individual board members be placed on a properly posted agenda for discussion and possible action.

- H. The Board may develop as it deems appropriate discussion items that address governance issues, board policy issues and the Board Code of Conduct and Operating Procedures.

12. Criteria and Process for Selecting Board Officers

- A. No board member can hold office without one year's experience as a Board member.
- B. Officer elections will be held in November of even-numbered years at the first regular meeting following the November trustee election. The Board meeting agenda will call for the nomination and election of officers.
- C. Election of officers will be conducted according to Board Policy BDAA (LOCAL).
- D. Board officers are: President, vice President, Secretary and Assistant Secretary.
- E. The Board President will facilitate the nomination and election of officers, or will pass the gavel to another officer.

13. Role and Authority of Board Members and/or Board Officers

- A. No Board member or officer has authority outside of the Board meeting unless otherwise delegated by the Board.
- B. No Board member shall direct employees in regard to their performance of their duties.
- C. The Board supervises and evaluates the Superintendent.
- D. The PRESIDENT:
 - 1. Presides at all Board meetings;
 - 2. Appoints Committees
 - 3. Shall call special meetings;
 - 4. Signs all legal documents required by law;
 - 5. Along with the Superintendent, sets the Board's agendas.
- E. The VICE PRESIDENT:
 - 1. Acts in the capacity of the President in his/her absence.
- F. The SECRETARY:
 - 1. Ensures that an accurate record of Board meetings is kept;
 - 2. Acting in the absence of the President and Vice President, the Secretary shall call the meeting and election for President Pro-tem.
- G. The ASSISTANT SECRETARY:
 - 1. Acts in the absence of the Secretary.
- H. OFFICE VACANCY:
 - 1. A vacancy among officers of the Board shall be filled by a majority action by the Board.

14. Role of Board in Closed Session

- A. The Board can only discuss those items listed for closed session agenda and allowed by law.

- B. The Board must vote in open session.
- C. Information discussed during closed session shall remain confidential.

15. Media Inquiries to the Board

Board members should direct media calls to the Board President and District Spokesperson and notify the Board President and Superintendent of the call.

16. Media Inquiries to Individual Board Members

Individual statements and responses by Board members are only individual statements and not representative of the entire Board and any individual board member making statements to the press will emphasize they are not speaking for the Board.

17. Phone Calls/Letters

The NAVARRO ISD Board of Trustees encourages input and the Board should refer appropriate calls and letters to the administration pursuant to the proper channels and board policies. If a Board member receives an anonymous complaint, the Board member should encourage the person to identify themselves and the nature of their complaint so the person can be referred to the appropriate administrator to handle the complaint/concern. Anonymous information will not be considered by the Board.

18. Response to Signed Letter Requests or Complaints

The NAVARRO ISD Board of Trustees encourages input. A signed letter will be forwarded to the Superintendent who will send acknowledgment to the originator of the letter. The Superintendent will respond and address the request/concern.

19. Required Board Member Training

- A. Board members are required to complete training as specified in Texas Education Code § 11.159 and Policy BBD according to assessed needs.
- B. New Board members shall participate in a local orientation session within 60 days after their election or appointment. Three (3) additional hours of orientation to the Texas Education Code are to be completed within the first year of service.
- C. New Board members shall also complete ten (10) hours of continuing education during the first year of service.
- D. Sitting board members shall receive an update to the Texas Education Code after each Legislative session, and at least (5) hours of continuing education each year following the first year.
- E. The entire Board, along with the Superintendent, shall annually participate in at least three (3) hours of team building training, facilitated by a registered provider.

20. Board Members as Parents

While Board members have no authority over staff members, it is often difficult for staff members to view the board member as a parent rather than as a board member. Board members are encouraged to:

- A. Make it clear that they are acting as parents;
- B. Board Members should not request nor accept extraordinary consideration for their children.

21. Reimbursable Expenses

- A. Board members shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenses for:
 - 1. Carrying out the business of the Board at Board request;
 - 2. Attending meetings and conventions as official representatives of the Board.
 - 3. Mileage, commercial transportation, parking, lodging, meals and other incidental expenses.
- B. Board members shall not be reimbursed for:
 - 1. Expenses of family members who travel with Board members.
 - 2. Alcoholic beverages
- C. The NAVARRO ISD Code of Conduct and Board Operating Procedures will be reviewed regularly, and updated at the June board meeting or at another agreed upon time.

22. Campaigning for Election or Re-election

- A. Board incumbents running for re-election shall not request or accept support from District employees during work time.
- B. Board members shall not utilize District equipment or materials for campaign.

23. Goal Setting

- A. A goal setting workshop will be conducted annually to develop long and short-term plans for the district. This process may be combined with the Board Self-Evaluation and Team Building activities.
- B. Superintendent priorities will be based on goals each year.

24. Violations and Sanctions

- A. Upon inclusion on the agenda and public posting in accordance with the law, the Board may convene in executive session to discuss a violation of the Navarro

Code of Conduct and Board Operating Procedures, or other board policies, so long as the deliberation is confined to the duties, discipline, or complaint against a board member.

- B. The board member may request that the deliberation be conducted in open session.
- C. As a consequence of these deliberations, the Board may elect to do nothing, may reconvene in open session and vote to: (1) Publicly reprimand the board member; (2) Recommend additional training for the board member; (3) Authorize the Board President to remove the board member from leadership positions in the district. Leadership positions include board officer positions and membership on any district or campus level committee. The Board may utilize any or all of these sanctions as allowed by this section.
- D. Nothing provided herein shall be construed to alter, modify, or limit in any way the rights of school district personnel and members of the public to file complaints against the board or board members under applicable board policies.

25. Board Review of Code of Ethics and Board Operating Procedures

- A. The Board will annually review the Board Code of Ethics and Operating Procedures.
- B. Each new board member will be given a copy of the Board Code of Ethics and Operating Procedures prior to or at the new board member's first board meeting.