# \*DRAFT\* BOARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

South San Antonio ISD

[INSERT DISTRICT LOGO]

Updated: [Insert Date]

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# **Section 1: Overview and Governance Framework**

# Purpose of the Board Operating Procedures

These Board Operating Procedures establish the expectations, processes, and standards by which the South San Antonio Independent School District ("District") Board of Trustees conducts its business. These procedures ensure that all Board actions are lawful, transparent, efficient, and consistent with adopted Board Policy and the Texas Education Code. These procedures are binding upon all Trustees and the Superintendent and shall remain in effect until amended by Board action.

### **Policy Types**

The District maintains four levels of policy and procedure, each with their own purpose:

- **Legal Policy:** Derived from state or federal statute, rule, or court decision. Legal policy is not adopted by the Board but summarizes binding law.
- **Local Policy:** Adopted by the Board of Trustees to address local governance matters within legal parameters. The Board should consider adoption of local policy through the lens of whether the policy will help the board achieve its Student Outcome Goals.
- Administrative Regulation: Administrative procedures issued under the Superintendent's authority to implement policy. These are meant for the Superintendent to issue additional clarity.
- **Exhibit:** Forms, templates, or other operational documents that support Legal or Local Policy.

# **Annual Review and Adoption Process**

The Board Operating Procedures shall be reviewed annually, no later than June 30, as part of Board training and orientation. Revisions may be recommended by any Trustee or the Superintendent and must be approved by majority vote of the Board, through the normal policy review process. The Superintendent shall ensure all Trustees receive the most current version and that the adopted manual is posted on the District's website.

# **Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities**

# Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees (TEC § 11.151 – 11.1512)

The Board of Trustees governs and oversees the management of the District. In accordance with the Texas Education Code, the Board shall:

- Establish vision and goals for student achievement and District performance.
- Adopt policy and ensure compliance with applicable law.
- Hire, evaluate, and, when necessary, dismiss the Superintendent.
- Adopt an annual budget and set the tax rate.
- Monitor student outcomes, financial integrity, and overall District performance.
- Advocate for public education and engage the community in support of District goals.
- Conduct all business in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and Public Information Act.

#### **District Priority Setting**

The Board believes that one of its most important responsibilities is to clearly delineate the priorities for the school system and focus its own time and attention on the achievement of those priorities, called Goals.

Accomplishment of these goals will become the focus of the Superintendent and District over that time frame. To create focus in the system, the Board will adopt goals lasting for 5 years. These goals will be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound. The administration will then identify critical progress measures to measure during the academic year. which will give the Board and community insight into the likelihood that the goals will be accomplished.

The Board also recognizes that it is the Board's role to set the goals (outcomes), but it is the administration's role to identify the most aligned progress measures (outputs) and select the strategies and align resources (inputs) to achieving those goals. These priorities shall become the first priority for resource allocation and system alignment. The board commits to spending time monthly monitoring progress towards them by looking at recommended progress measures as laid out by the administration.

# Responsibilities of the Superintendent [BJA(LOCAL)]

The Superintendent serves as the chief executive officer of the District and is accountable to the Board for effective execution of policy and management of operations. The Superintendent shall:

- Oversee the day-to-day management of the District in a manner aligned to helping the District achieve its vision and goals.
- Direct, organize, and supervise all District personnel and programs.

- Prepare and recommend the annual budget and ensure fiscal integrity.
- Provide the Board with timely, accurate information necessary for governance decisions.
- Ensure compliance with all legal, financial, and regulatory obligations.
- Maintain open, professional communication with Trustees.
- Recommend policy changes and administrative procedures as needed.

### Board Work vs. Superintendent Work

The Board focuses on governance, while the Superintendent focuses on management. Board Work is defined as Operations designated by state or federal law/rule or items designated by the board's adopted student outcome goals, superintendent constraints, progress measures, vision, and/or values. Items that are not legally required and that the board has not designated as board work are, by default, superintendent work. The Board commits to spending its time on Board Work, not Superintendent Work.

### Board Officers: Duties and Authority [BDAA(LOCAL)]

The Board shall elect a President, Vice President, and Secretary from among its members at the first regular meeting following each trustee election.

- **President:** Presides over meetings, signs all legal documents as required, appoints committees when authorized, and serves as spokesperson for the Board.
- Vice President: Acts in the President's absence and performs duties as assigned by the Board.
- Secretary: Ensures accurate recording of minutes and attests to official documents.
- Officer Terms: Officers shall serve one-year terms or until successors are elected. No
  officer has independent authority outside that granted by the Board.

# **Section 3: Board Member Ethics and Standards**

# Standards of Conduct and Professional Courtesy [BBF(LOCAL)]

Trustees shall:

- Conduct themselves as representatives of the entire community, not any single interest.
- Maintain decorum and civility in all deliberations and public interactions.
- Prepare for and attend all meetings unless unavoidably absent.

- Respect the majority decision of the Board while retaining the right to express dissent professionally.
- Uphold confidentiality of matters discussed in closed session and information protected by law.
- Avoid conflicts of interest, self-dealing, or the appearance of impropriety.
- Treat all persons with dignity, respect, and fairness.

#### **Compliance with Operating Procedures**

All Trustees are expected to comply with these procedures at all times. Trustees will review these procedures annually and certify that they will comply with the Board's operating procedures.

### **Reporting and Resolving Concerns**

If a Trustee believes that another Trustee's behavior or action is inconsistent with these procedures, the concerned Trustee shall first address the matter privately with that member. If unresolved, the issue shall be brought to the Board President.

If the concern involves the President, it shall be referred to the Vice President.

### **Corrective and Remedial Options**

If informal discussion does not resolve the matter, the Board President may place an item on a future agenda for discussion in closed session titled "Deliberation of Duties of a Public Officer." Following deliberation, the Board may by majority vote:

- Require specific training related to Board Operating Procedures.
- Remove the Trustee from any Board-appointed office or committee.
- Issue a formal reprimand in public session.

# Conflicts of Interest [BBFA(LOCAL)]

Board Members will comply with all Conflict of Interest reports outlined in BBFA(Local). 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 or organization that contracts with the school district, or when a Board Member, or member of the family, receives \$250 or more in aggregate gifts from a business that contracts with the school district.

To preserve public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of Board decision-making, Trustees shall avoid participation in matters where the Conflict of Interest threshold is met or if significant campaign contributions could reasonably create an appearance of influence or bias.

A Trustee shall recuse themself from deliberation and voting on any item before the Board involving a vendor, contractor, consultant, or organization that (1) would have met the requirements outlined above regarding the Conflict of Interest form or (2) has, within the preceding three years, made a campaign contribution of \$100 or more in aggregate to the Trustee's campaign. In such instances, the Trustee shall publicly state the reason for recusal and abstain from participation in discussion or vote on the matter. The Trustee shall physically or virtually step back from the deliberation area, when feasible, to avoid the appearance of influence.

### Trustee and Vendor Engagement

Trustees shall refrain from engaging with district vendors about district business unless expressly necessary for the fulfillment of the project. The Superintendent or designee shall be the point of contact for any vendors who are engaged directly with the district. In the situations where the vendor is engaged by the Board itself, the Board President shall operate as the point of contact.

# **Outside Organizations Connected to Trustees**

Any outside organizations that have an official connection with sitting Trustees shall follow all regular procedures for partnership within the district. No organizations shall receive preferential treatment based on their connection with an individual trustee.

# **Section 4: Continuous Improvement**

# New Trustee Orientation [BBD(LEGAL)]

Each newly elected or appointed Trustee shall participate in an orientation program within sixty (60) days of election or appointment. Orientation shall include:

- 1. Board Goals, including the process for setting them
- 2. Board Operating Procedures
- 3. Roles & Responsibilities of a Board Member
- 4. Distinguishing between Inputs, Outputs, and Outcomes
- 5. Differentiating between Board Work and Superintendent Work

- 6. Superintendent Evaluation
- 7. Board Self-Evaluation

### **Board Member Continuing Education**

All Trustees shall complete annual continuing education in accordance with [BBD(LEGAL)] and [BBD(LOCAL)].

- In the first year of service, each Trustee shall complete at least ten (10) hours of continuing education in addition to orientation and required legal training.
- In subsequent years, each Trustee shall complete at least five (5) hours annually.
- 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 three-hour team building session
- The Board President shall announce, in open session at the last regular meeting before the May election, the training status of all Trustees.

#### **Board Self-Evaluation Process**

The Board shall conduct formative self-evaluations at least quarterly and, within 45 days prior to conducting the annual evaluation of the Superintendent, shall conduct an annual summative self-evaluation. These evaluations should take place in January, April, July and October. The Board shall self-evaluate using the Quarterly Progress Tracker tool provided by Lone Star Governance.

# Superintendent Evaluation Process [BJCD(LOCAL)]

The Board shall evaluate the Superintendent annually based on the District's achievement of Board-adopted student outcome goals and compliance with Superintendent constraints.

[Add More Info Once Completed]

# **Section 5: Board Meetings**

# Meeting Schedule and Types [BE(LOCAL)]

Regular meetings: These are the primary vehicle for conducting Board business where the Board shall consider and act on all items necessary for the operations of the district.

**Board Workshops:** Board workshops may be scheduled as needed and be comprised of discussion items that the Board wishes to devote significant time to working together in

partnership with the Superintendent on. The discussion on Board workshops should help build consensus on the direction for the district and provide the Superintendent and team insight into how the Board is considering the work going forward.

**Emergency Meetings:** Emergency Meetings may be called by the Board President as Texas law allows with proper notice under the Texas Open Meetings Act.

### Agenda Preparation and Distribution

#### Preparation of the Agenda

In consultation with the Board President, the Superintendent shall prepare the agenda for all Board meetings.

#### Trustee Requests for Agenda Items

If three board members make a written request to the Superintendent's office to add a particular item to an upcoming agenda, the President will ensure that it is added to an agenda within the next 30 calendar days. Only the members who added the agenda item may remove it with unanimous agreement.

#### **Board Materials Release Timeline and Trustee Questions**

The Superintendent shall ensure that all trustees receive the agenda and all supporting documentation at least ten days in advance of the scheduled meeting. Trustees are expected to review the material sent and compile all questions to send to administration by the fifth calendar day before the meeting. The Superintendent and team will compile responses to Board member questions and provide those answers to all trustees at least two days before the scheduled meeting. All inquiring and responses will be visible in the posted agenda.

### Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda will be used as a way of efficiently acting on routine or uncontroversial items. The Board will act on these items with a single vote, without discussion. All action items that were on the agenda at the time of its dissemination to the Board will begin on the Consent Agenda. Action items that are legally required to be adopted separately, or items added to the agenda at a later point shall not be placed on the Consent Agenda and will be acted on separately as an Action Item.

# Removing Items from Consent Agenda

Any item may be pulled from the Consent Agenda at the written request of two trustees to the Board President and Superintendent. All written requests must be received by 5:00pm two days prior to the Board meeting. Consent items being removed through this process will instead be

placed as an Action Item. The Board President may pull an item from the Consent Agenda to be an Action Item at any time.

#### **Deadlines and Posting Requirements**

Agendas shall be posted at least seventy-two (72) hours before a regular or special meeting and one (1) hour before an emergency meeting. The Superintendent shall ensure timely electronic delivery of the agenda packet to all Trustees.

# Meeting Procedures and Rules of Order

Board meetings shall follow *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* except as otherwise provided by law or local procedure. The Board President shall maintain order, recognize speakers, and ensure that discussion remains germane to the posted item.

#### **Deliberating Motions**

The board president will ensure that deliberation is germane to the motion under consideration. Each board member shall be allocated ten minutes of discussion time during each agenda item discussion round. The board shall have up to two rounds of discussion per agenda item. The board president will not recognize a member who wishes to be heard for a second time on a motion until all other board members have had an opportunity to speak to the motion.

#### Conduct and Decorum in Meetings

Trustees shall conduct themselves with professionalism and respect toward one another, staff, and the public. The Board President may call any member to order who fails to observe decorum.

# Public Participation and Decorum [BED(LOCAL)]

Members of the public may address the Board in accordance with law and policy.

The Board shall not engage in dialogue with speakers. The Board President may impose reasonable time limits and remove individuals who disrupt proceedings.

# Executive Sessions [BEC(LEGAL)]

The Board may meet in closed session only for purposes permitted by law. No final action shall be taken in executive session. Information discussed in closed session is confidential by law and shall not be disclosed by any Trustee.

#### Time Use Tracker

The Board recognizes that how it spends its collective Board time shows the community what its priorities are. Therefore, the Board will create processes to track what percentage of its time it spends focusing on its stated priorities – its Student Outcome Goals and Superintendent

Constraints. The Board strives to spend at least 50% of Board-authorized public meeting time focused on these priorities. See appendix C for the Time Use Tracker format.

# Committees [BDB(LOCAL)]

Board Special Committees: The Board President may choose to create a Board Committee to assist the Board with accomplishing specific tasks related to Board Work. The President may create Special Committee and shall appoint members to special committees to fulfill specific assignments, unless otherwise provided by Board action. Each Special Committee shall be given (1) specific charges and/or deliverables and (2) a timeline for completion not to exceed a year. The function of committees shall be fact-finding, deliberative, and advisory, but not administrative. Special committees shall report their findings to the Board and shall be dissolved upon completion of the assigned task, a vote of the board, or at the end of the timeline assigned, whichever comes first.

Superintendent Committees: The Superintendent may choose to create a District Committee at any time. These committees shall be given a specific charge by the Superintendent and may include board members, district staff, community members, staff, students or stakeholders. The Superintendent or designee shall determine the agenda and meeting cadence of these committees.

# **Section 6: Communication and Information Protocols**

# Communication Between Trustees and Superintendent

The Superintendent shall keep Trustees informed of significant District matters through regular written updates, meeting agendas, and reports. Trustees shall direct requests for information or assistance to the Superintendent rather than directly to staff.

# Board Member Requests for Information [BBE(LOCAL)]

Individual Trustees have the right to access District records in their official capacity, but they do not have the right to require staff to create new reports or compile data without board action. Requests for existing records shall be submitted to the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent shall have up to two weeks to provide the request and information and response to all Trustees. If the request is deemed by the Superintendent to require the creation of new reports or new compilations of information that will take significant time from district staff, the item will be referred to the Board President for potential Board action.

#### **Board Member Communication**

- District Staff: Trustees recognize that the Superintendent is the sole employee of the Board and is responsible for the management and supervision of all District staff. Trustees shall not give advice, make recommendations, or issue directives to any employee. Trustees shall not raise concerns or complaints with staff members other than the Superintendent or designee. All questions, requests, or concerns regarding operations, personnel, or campus matters shall be directed to the Superintendent to avoid interference with staff in the performance of their duties and the accomplishment of District goals.
- Media: The Board President shall be designated as the spokesperson for the Board. The Superintendent shall be the spokesperson for the District. News media requests for District information, interviews, comments, or statements shall be directed to the Superintendent or designee. In any situation affecting the District or an individual campus, the Superintendent or designee shall be the official District spokesperson and shall be responsible for all communication with the news media. Individual board members retain their ability to speak to the media, but shall clarify that they are speaking on behalf of themselves as an individual and not on behalf of the Board.
- Legal Counsel: The Board President shall serve as the point of contact for the Board with any Legal Counsel for the Board. All requests for opinions, responses or work shall be made by Board President. All individual trustees may direct any requests they have to the Board President, but the President retains the right to determine which requests get made to Legal Counsel. The Superintendent may engage with Legal Counsel on behalf of the district as needed.

#### Social Media and Electronic Communication Guidelines

- A. Trustees shall distinguish between (a) personal accounts, (b) campaign accounts, and (c) official District communications channels. If a Trustee identifies themself as a Trustee on a personal or campaign account, the account bio shall include a disclaimer such as: 'Opinions are my own and not those of the District or Board." If a Trustee includes their title or otherwise holds themself out as a Trustee on a personal or campaign account, each account must contain a clear disclaimer indicating the Trustee is speaking as a private citizen and not in an official capacity.
- B. Trustee realize that by usings a personal account to conduct official school district business, the Trustee's account may become a public forum under the First Amendment.

- C. Trustees shall not deliberate District business with a quorum via social media, direct messages, group chats, or comment threads, and shall not 'reply all' or otherwise facilitate serial communications that could constitute a meeting under the Texas Open Meetings Act.
- D. When complaints or requests for action are posted or messaged to a Trustee, the Trustee shall refrain from case-specific engagement and instead direct the individual to the appropriate administrator or established grievance channels as outlined in the section: Responses to Community or Employee Complaints.
- E. Trustees shall avoid posting or engaging on social media during Board meetings and shall maintain focus on deliberation and decision-making.
- F. Trustees will conduct themselves online in a manner that reflects well on the district; Trustees will avoid posting information that has not been verified and made public by the district and never post anonymously about school business or repeat rumors.

### Confidentiality and Public Information Act Compliance

Certain information disclosed to board members is confidential by law and may not be disclosed to third parties. Trustees shall protect all confidential information obtained through service on the Board and comply fully with the Texas Public Information Act. Board members also should not disclose any information to which they have access by virtue of their position as board members that has not been made public, if, to do so, would compromise the board or the administration in the conduct of their affairs.

# **Section 7: Handling of Complaints**

# Handling of General Public Complaints [GF(LOCAL)]

Trustees receiving general complaints from community members shall:

- A. Listen courteously and remain impartial.
- B. Ask if the complainant has spoken with the people closest to the issue yet (i.e. the teacher, principal, etc.).
- C. Remind the complainant that the fastest way to get resolution is to follow the chain of command and offer to connect the complainant to the Superintendent or designee to help get them connected to the person who can best resolve the complaint.
- D. Note that at any point the person can file an official complaint through the grievance process outlined in GF(Local).

# Handling Employee Complaints [DGBA(LOCAL)]

- A. Employees shall be directed to follow the grievance process established in policy.
- B. Trustees shall not investigate or resolve personnel matters independently.
- C. Trustees shall remind any employees that they cannot engage with any active or potential grievance complaint as doing so would compromise their ability to be neutral in a Level 3 Grievance hearing.
- D. All complaints shall move through the regular grievance process as outlined in DGBA(Local).
- E. Any Trustee who has engaged with an employee about a complaint that is pending before the Board beyond what is outlined in these procedures shall recuse themselves from any grievance hearings involving that same individual.

# Handling Student or Parent Complaints [FNG(LOCAL)]

All Student or Parent complaints shall be follow the grievance process established in policy FNG(Local). If approached about a pending or potential complaint:

- A. Trustees shall not investigate or resolve personnel matters independently.
- B. Trustees shall remind any students or parents that they cannot engage with any active or potential grievance complaint as doing so would compromise their ability to be neutral in a Level 3 Grievance hearing.
- C. All complaints shall move through the regular grievance process as outlined in FNG(Local).
- D. Any Trustee who has engaged with an student or parent about a complaint that is pending before the Board beyond what is outlined in these procedures shall recuse themselves from any grievance hearings involving that same individual.

# **Section 8: Community Engagement**

Board Engagement & Outreach: Trustees take seriously their responsibility to represent the vision and values of the community and recognize that they have a responsibility to actively work to communicate regularly with the wider community in a constructive and cohesive manner. The Board Members recognize that their responsibility is to engage in two-way dialogue with the wider community and cannot delegate this responsibility.

As such, the Board has identified two ongoing methods for ongoing constructive two-way dialogue with the community:

 Board Newsletter: The Board will draft a newsletter each quarter about (1) progress of the district towards achieving its goals and adhering to its constraints, (2) major decisions of the board, and (3) upcoming events and news regarding the district. This

- newsletter will then be approved by the full board and disseminated through district channels as well as available for individual Trustees to share as they see fit.
- **Bi-Annual Two-Way Community Conversations:** Each semester, the Board will host at least three community conversations where groups of 2 3 Trustees will share progress towards the goals of the district and engage attendees around a particular topic in which the Board is asking for feedback in a structured manner. The Board will collectively agree on the content for each of these meetings each semester.

Superintendent Engagement & Outreach: The Superintendent shall be focused on the engaging the direct stakeholders most directly impacted by the day-to-day operations of the district – the parents, students and staff. While the Superintendent is encouraged to build relationships and engage with the wider community, the Board recognizes its own role in maintaining active dialogue with the wider community.

# **Section 9: Board Operations**

### Board Member Expenses and Travel [BBG(LOCAL)]

A travel budget for the Board shall be established as part of the annual budget planning process and shall be budgeted in the general fund. Trustees shall be allocated a budget for travel, professional development training, and reasonable expenses associated with attending functions of District-related organizations. Total expenses incurred shall not exceed the budgeted amount for such expenses as adopted by the Board for the fiscal year. Education-related meetings, functions, and activities of, or sponsored by, the following entities are approved for travel at the expense of the District.

# Attendance and Participation Standards

Trustees recognize that their attendance and engagement at Board Meetings is critical to ensure a highly functional Board that authentically represents the vision and values of the district. Therefore, Trustees commit to attend all meetings unless prevented by unavoidable circumstances. Excessive absences may be addressed under Section 3 of these Procedures.

# School and Facility Visits [BBE(LOCAL)]

Board members are encouraged to visit campuses as time allows but also recognize that their presence can cause significant disruption. In order to minimize disruption, Board Members wishing to visit campuses in their official capacity, should let the Superintendent's office know at least 24 hours in advance. The Board Member will receive a response that confirms whether or not the campus will be available for a visit. A Board Member visit may be declined if the Superintendent deems it will interfere with the delivery of instruction.

A Board member shall adhere to any posted requirements for visitors to first report to the main office of a District facility, including a school campus. Visits during the school or business day shall not be permitted if their duration or frequency interferes with the delivery of instruction or District operations. A board member shall be escorted by a campus administrator at all times. Board members shall not give directives or feedback to school staff at any point. Any concerns should be directed only to the Superintendent.

If a Board Member is visiting a campus in their unofficial capacity (i.e. as a parent or a grandparent), then they should follow all regular protocols and refrain from using their district credentials.

# **Appendices**

Appendix A: Board Calendar and Annual Governance Timeline

Appendix B: Board Code of Ethics and Signature Page

Appendix C: Time Use Tracker

Appendix D: Trustee Training Tracker

Appendix E: Superintendent Evaluation Instrument