

Floodwood School Board Handbook



Approved: 1.27.2025

Revised: 5.19.2025

Introduction	4
Navigating this Handbook	4
Handbook Maintenance and Review Procedure	4
District Information	4
District Identity	5
Leadership Directory	6
Strategic Framework	7
Board Membership	7
Post Election Procedures	7
Canvass and Declaration of Results	7
Certification of Results	7
Issuance of Certificate of Election	7
Campaign Financial Report Certification of Filing	8
Taking Office	8
Official Oath of Office	8
Ceremonial Oath of Office	8
Organizational Meeting	8
District Intake Paperwork	8
Board Organization	9
Eligibility Requirements	9
Term of Office	9
Filling Vacancies	9
Board Composition	9
Board Offices	9
Board Compensation	11
Expense Reimbursement	11
Learning the Job	12
Learning from Board Colleagues	12
Mentorship	12
Ongoing Professional Development	12
Individual Board Membership	13
Duties as an Individual Board Member	14
Board Time Commitment	14
Conflict of Interest	14
Working as a Board Team	14
Duties of the Board	15
Board Governance Model	16
Standards for Board Leadership	16
Attributes of High-Performing Board Teams	16
School Board Self-Evaluation	16
Role of the Superintendent	17
Hiring a Superintendent	17
Duties of the Superintendent	17
Tenets of an Effective Board-Superintendent Relationship	18
Evaluating the Superintendent	18
Board Communication Guide	19
Communication Between Board Members	19
Communication with the Superintendent	20

Communication with District Administrators and Staff	20
Communication with Constituents Including Staff, Students, Parents, and Community	21
Engaging with the Community	21
Communication with the Media	22
Communication on Social Media	22
Using a District Email	23
Board Meetings and Governance	24
Meetings of the Board	24
Types of Meetings	24
Open Meeting Law	25
Closed Meetings	25
Meetings Conducted by Interactive Technology	26
Meeting Operations	26
Attendance of Meetings	26
Acceptable Dress Code	26
Location of Meetings	26
Addressing Others	26
Presentations	27
Voting	27
Quorum of the Board	27
Parliamentary Procedure During Meetings	27
Presiding Officer	27
Superintendent's Role in Board Meetings	27
Board Committees	27
Election of Board Officers	28
Guide to Board Meeting Roles and Responsibilities	28
Data Privacy	29
Public Comments to the Board	29
Agenda and Minutes	30
Agenda Procedures	30
Consent Agenda	30
Meeting Minutes	30
References for Further Information	31

Introduction

Navigating This Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to outline the board's operating procedures and norms. It also includes important information on policies, meetings, committees, partnerships, and communication. Its ongoing guidance is meant to enable each board member to fulfill essential governance duties and to exercise their responsibilities as a board member, while also providing expectations and standards of behavior for the conduct of the board.

Handbook Maintenance and Review Procedure

- Annually, the handbook will undergo a review by the board. As part of this review, the board will:
 - Review mutual expectations of board norms;
 - Seek input and feedback regarding best practices, as needed;
 - Check the MSBA website for suggested handbook updates;
 - Adopt the updated handbook by a majority vote of the board.
- Board members may propose additions/revisions to the handbook by sending an email to the chair and superintendent requesting to add "handbook discussion" as a topic for an upcoming working session. "Request for Agenda Addition" form should be completed no less than 5 days prior to the meeting they would like it to be added to. The google form or paper form may be found on the "School Board" section of the district website.
- The handbook may be updated to reflect adopted policy changes without further board action;
- Hyperlinks within the handbook may be updated without further board action;
- The date this handbook was last reviewed, updated, and/or revised, is included on the cover page of this handbook.

District Information

The effectiveness of your decisions as a board member hinges on your knowledge of the district's school, staff, students, and the communities they inhabit. Recognizing the specific needs and aspirations of the Floodwood School will empower you to advocate for policies and initiatives that truly enhance our educational outcomes. By engaging with this information, you will not only enhance your ability to make informed decisions but also build trust and credibility with fellow board members, the community, staff, and students alike. Let this knowledge serve as the foundation of your tenure, guiding your decisions and initiatives to foster an environment where every student can succeed.

District Identity

The Floodwood School District is located in beautiful Northeast Minnesota surrounded by trees and water. At the center of the school district is where the Floodwood River and the Savanna River meet the St. Louis River.

Geographically, Floodwood is located on Highway 2 halfway between Duluth and Grand Rapids. Highway 73 also intersects with Highway 2 in the city of Floodwood. The school is located on Highway 73, within the city limits.

Floodwood School has a student body of about 165 students in grades Pre-K through 12. According to the 2020 census, the Floodwood School District is home to 1,480 residents.

The geographical area of the school district is 317 square miles. The political units within the school district are the city of Floodwood, eight townships in St. Louis County, as well as one township in Aitkin County. The townships in St. Louis County are Unorganized near Potshot Lake, VanBuren, Halden, Floodwood, 85% of North Arrowhead Township, Prairie Lake, Fine Lakes, as well as Cedar Valley. The district also includes one unorganized township in Aitkin County just west of Potshot Lake.

The Floodwood School has been in existence since 1893 when the first school, a log building, was constructed. This was the same year the village of Floodwood was organized. The sum of four hundred dollars was borrowed from the state to buy books and supplies. The district was not independent at the time, so the school was a County School. Eight children attended the first year.

In 1911 the first building was built on the present site of the school. It was a six room, brick building. This was also the year that the school district became Independent School District No. 19. The children were transported to school with a team and wagon or sled. A man and team were paid twenty-eight dollars a month for hauling children twenty-four miles a day. The children that lived too far from town were boarded at homes in town. Their room and board were paid by the state.

The first class to graduate from Floodwood, after completing four years of high school, was in 1926. There were five graduates.

In the years to follow, there were five one-room county schools in the area that closed and many of those students joined the Floodwood district.

In 1957 the school district lines were expanded considerably and the Floodwood School became Independent School District #698. Four more additions were added to the building prior to 1995 when a new school was erected on the school site only leaving the most recent additions from 1958 and 1976. In 2003 the school was again added onto.

The present K-12 building has state of the art technology capabilities with two gymnasiums, an industrial arts area comparable to a post-secondary training center, and a fully equipped fitness room complimenting the modern classrooms.

Leadership Directory

Board Members

Name	Board Position	Phone Number	Email Address
Leanaya Miller	Chair	218-269-2832	lmiller@isd698.org
Tracy Hutchinson	Vice Chair	218-476-2285	thutchinson@isd698.org
Corinne Suonvieri	Clerk	218-391-2318	csuonvieri@isd698.org
Tanya Johnson	Treasurer	218-349-6783	tjohnson@isd698.org
Dave Rohde	Member	507-573-1269	drohde@isd698.org
Kellee Young	Member	218-600-9581	kyoung@isd698.org

Superintendent's Office

Name	Position	Phone Number	Email Address
Susan Hoeft	Superintendent	218-476-2285	shoeft@isd698.org
Ashley Engh	Administrative Assistant	218-476-2285	aengh@isd698.org

Leadership Cabinet

Name	Position	Phone Number	Email Address
Amanda Fjeld	Principal	218-476-2285	afjeld@isd698.org
Allyn Clark	Facilities Manager	218-348-9281	aclark@isd698.org
Frank Bartsch	Activities Director	218-269-9207	fbartsch@isd698.org
Haley Walsh	Business Manager	218-476-2285	hwalsh@isd698.org

Schedule a Facility Visit or Tour

You have the same right as a parent or community member to visit the school as long as you adhere to the procedures the district has for visitors. You may also visit the school in an official capacity with the board's authority or to fulfill a specific duty required of you as a board member. In any event, be sure to communicate with the superintendent or building administrator to schedule your visit.

You should use school visits to build good working relations with building principals and staff, to celebrate the positive accomplishments of the school, and to show your pride as a member of the board. Look for opportunities to visit when a school is hosting a special event or recognition program for students and staff.

When visiting, board members should follow the same protocol as all visitors by signing in at the office.

Strategic Framework

MISSION STATEMENT We the people of the Floodwood School District, a collaboration of students, parents, school staff, and communities, dedicate ourselves and our collective resources to life-long learning using individual education plans as a tool which guarantees that learners will be equipped with life skills.

District Strategic Plan can be found at <https://www.isd698.org/page/strategic-plan>.

Additional resources can be found on the district website. If you are in need of specific information, requests can be made to the District Administrative Assistant.

Board Membership

When considering your governance role, embracing the procedural steps that underpin the integrity of the democratic process is paramount. From post-election procedures to the establishment of board offices, each action reflects your commitment to transparency and accountability. By being diligent in these duties, you acknowledge the trust placed in you by constituents. Prioritizing effective governance ensures you serve the community and prioritize the needs of students.

Post-Election Procedures

Canvass and Declaration of Results

Between the third and tenth days after a district election, the board must canvass the returns and declare the results of the election. [Minn. Stat. 205A.10, Subd. 3.](#)

Certification of Results

The district clerk shall certify the results of the district election to the county auditor. [Minn. Stat. 205A.10, Subd. 3.](#)

Issuance of Certificate of Election

After canvassing the election and the time for contesting an election has passed (seven days after the canvassing board has declared the result of the election), the board shall issue a certificate of election to the candidate for each office who received the largest number of votes cast for the office. If there is a contest, the certificate of election to that office must not be issued until the outcome of the contest has been determined by the proper court. [Minn. Stat. 205A.10, Subd. 3;](#) [Minn. Stat. 204C.40, Subd. 2.](#)

Campaign Financial Report Certification of Filing

The Certification of Filing is due no later than seven days after the general election. [Minn. Stat. 211A.05.](#)

Taking Office

Board members take office the first Monday in January. [Minn. Stat. 123B.14, Subd. 1.](#)

Official Oath of Office

The official oath of office is administered once elections have been canvassed, the candidates have turned in their certificate of campaign filing report, and the seven-day contest period has ended. When the contest period ends, the school election officer should give each winning candidate the certificate of election. Each winning candidate then has thirty days to sign the official oath and acceptance of office form in front of a notary. By signing this document, the individual officially becomes a board member on the first Monday in January. [Minn. Stat. 358.05.](#)

Ceremonial Oath of Office

The ceremonial oath of office is usually administered at the organizational meeting on the first Monday in January (or as soon thereafter as practicable). While the official oath of office is required, the ceremonial oath of office is optional.

Organizational Meeting

On the first Monday in January (or as soon as practicable thereafter) each year, newly elected board members' terms of office begin, and boards must meet to organize for the year. [Minn. Stat. 123B.14, Subd. 1.](#) During this meeting, ceremonial oaths of office may be administered, officers are elected, committee assignments are established, and meeting schedules are adopted. This process lays the groundwork for the board's operations, emphasizing collaboration and effective governance to serve the district and its stakeholders.

For more regarding organizational meetings see, [MSBA's First Monday in January Handbook.](#)

District Intake Paperwork

All new board members will be provided with the following documents prior to the organizational meeting by the District Administrative Assistant.

- Providing a copy of the board handbook
- Providing a copy of school and board calendars
- Completing onboarding paperwork
- Collecting contact information including home address and cell phone number and a photo
- Completing payroll paperwork
- Completing a background check
- Setting up a district email
- District device, if needed
- Scheduling a one-on-one meeting with the superintendent
- Scheduling a one-on-one meeting with your board mentor
- Providing MSBA login information
- Providing MSBA's contact information (Phone: 507-934-2450; Online Inquiry Form)

Board Organization

Eligibility Requirements

To run for a board seat, you must be (1) at least 21 years old, (2) an eligible voter, (3) a district resident for at least 30 days prior to election/appointment, and (4) not convicted of a felony. [Minn. Stat. 123B.09](#); [Minn. Stat. 204B.06, Subd. 1.](#)

Term of Office

Board members are elected to four-year terms and take office on the first Monday in January. The term of a member who has been appointed to fill a vacancy will be for the remainder of the predecessor's term until the date of the district's next general election. There is no limit on the number of consecutive terms a board member can serve. [Minn. Stat. 123B.09.](#)

Filling Vacancies

A vacancy on the board can occur for a number of reasons including when a member dies, resigns, or ceases to be a resident of the district. All vacancies will be filled according to [Minn. Stat. 123B.09.](#)

For more information, regarding filling vacancies see: [Steps to Fill a School Board Vacancy with Sample Application and Interview Questions.](#)

Board Composition

School boards in Minnesota are made up of either six or seven members. Some exceptions have been created by special legislation, often for consolidated districts. The superintendent is an ex-officio (non-voting) member of the board. [Minn. Stat. 123B.09.](#)

Board Offices

Officers of the board include chair, vice-chair (optional), clerk, and treasurer. These positions are determined annually at the organizational meeting. All board members, regardless of office, maintain equal rights and equal voices. See the Election of Board Officers section on page 27 for information regarding nominating and voting procedures.

Role of the Chair

- The chair, when present, shall preside at all meetings of the board, countersign all orders upon the treasurer for claims allowed by the board, represent the district in all actions, and perform all duties a chair usually performs.
- In case of absence, inability, or refusal of the clerk to draw orders for the payment of money authorized by a vote of the majority of the board to be paid, the chair may draw the orders, or the office of the clerk may be declared vacant by the chair and treasurer and filled by appointment.

Role of the Vice-Chair (optional)

- The vice-chair shall perform the duties of the chair in the event of the chair's temporary absence.

Role of the Clerk

- The clerk shall draw and sign all orders upon the treasurer for the payment of money for bills allowed by the board for salaries of officers and for teachers' wages and all claims, to be countersigned by the chair.
- Clerk will call roll and votes during board meetings
- The clerk shall perform the duties of the chair in the event of the chair's and the vice-chair's temporary absences.
- By resolution, the board may combine the duties of clerk and treasurer in a single person in the Office of Business Affairs. Typically, that single person almost always delegates at least some duties to others.

Role of the Treasurer

- By resolution, the board may combine the duties of clerk and treasure in a single person in the Office of Business Affairs. Typically, that single person almost always delegates at least some duties to others.

Duties Performed by District Staff overseen by Clerk and Treasurer

- The clerk shall keep a record of all meetings in the books provided.
- Within three days after an election, the clerk shall notify all persons elected of their election.
- On or before September 15 of each year, the clerk shall:
 - file with the board a report of the revenues, expenditures, and balances in each fund for the preceding fiscal year.
 - make and transmit to the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education (Commissioner) certified reports, showing:
 - revenues and expenditures in detail, and such other financial information required by law, rule, or as may be called for by the Commissioner;
 - length of school term and enrollment and attendance by grades; and
 - other items of information as called for by the Commissioner.
- The clerk shall enter into the clerk's record book copies of all reports, the teachers' term reports, the proceedings of any meeting, and keep an itemized account of all expenses of the district.
- The clerk shall furnish to the county auditor, on or before September 30 of each year, an attested copy of the clerk's record, showing the amount of proposed property tax levy voted by the district or the board for school purposes.
- The clerk shall perform such duties as required by the Minnesota Election Law or other applicable laws relating to the conduct of elections.
- The treasurer shall deposit the funds of the district in the official depository.
- The treasurer shall make all reports which may be called for by the board and perform all duties a treasurer usually performs.
- In the event there are insufficient funds on hand to pay valid orders presented to the treasurer, the treasurer shall receive, endorse, and process the orders in accordance with [Minn. Stat. 123B.12](#).

Associated Policy: 202 - School Board Officers

Board Compensation

The clerk, treasurer, and superintendent of any district shall receive such compensation as may be fixed by the board. Unless otherwise provided by law, the other members of the board shall also receive such compensation as may be fixed by the board. All members of the board may receive reimbursement for transportation at the rate provided for in [Minn. Stat. 471.665](#). No board member or district employee shall receive any compensation or benefits based on incentives or other money provided to the district by or from a source of group insurance coverage referenced in [Minn. Stat. 471.6161, Subd. 1](#), except for a refund provided under [Minn. Stat. 123B.75, Subd. 10](#), or a wellness plan that is mutually agreed upon by the district and the exclusive representatives of employees.

The Board of Directors annual salary for regular meeting shall be:

School Board Director- Regular Meetings: \$2,100.00

School Board Chair- Regular Meetings: \$2,250.00

School Board Clerk- Regular Meetings: \$2,200.00

The Board of Directors compensation for attendance at other meetings, including meeting attended outside the district shall be established per meeting as follows:

Working Sessions/Special Meetings: \$100.00

Committee Meetings: \$40.00

Meet and Confer: \$40.00

All day meetings, workshops or MSBA conference per day: \$200.00

Expense Reimbursement

Verification for actual expenses must be attached to any expense claim submitted. When a person is assigned a conference or meeting, all expenses shall be reimbursed within guidelines set in the current Activities/Employee Handbook. Reimbursement requests must be made within 30 days of the event. Reimbursement requests after 30 days will not be granted. For additional guidance for expense reimbursement, please contact the District Business Manager.

Associated Policies: 212 – School Board Member Development, 214 – Out-of-State Travel by School Board Members, and 412 – Expense Reimbursement.

Learning the Job

Learning from Board Colleagues

One of the most valuable resources at your disposal, outside of this handbook, is the wealth of experience and knowledge possessed by your fellow board members and district staff. Engaging with them can significantly enhance your understanding of board operations, policies, and educational best practices. Your colleagues on the board bring diverse backgrounds and perspectives that can provide invaluable insights. Here are a few ways to leverage their experience:

Workshops and Retreats – Participate actively in board workshops and retreats. These sessions are designed not only to address key issues but also to foster team building and collective learning.

Committee Participation – Join board committees that align with your interests and expertise. Working closely with other members on specific topics will deepen your understanding and contribute to your professional growth.

Informal Meetings – Work with the superintendent to schedule informal meetings with key staff members to discuss specific areas of interest. These one-on-one interactions can offer a more personalized learning experience and help you build strong working relationships.

Mentorship

The district recognizes the importance of supporting new board members as they transition into their roles. To facilitate this, the district has implemented a mentorship program designed to provide guidance, support, and valuable insights. Each new board member will be paired with an experienced mentor who will help them navigate their responsibilities and become effective contributors to the board. This mentor will be a seasoned board member with a deep understanding of the district's operations, policies, and culture. The assignment will be made by the board chair in consultation with the superintendent to ensure a good match based on experience and areas of expertise.

To support you in this transition, you and your mentor will use the [MSBA New Board Member Orientation Year At-a-Glance](#) to guide you through your first year. This program aims to provide you with the knowledge, tools, and support necessary to become an effective and confident board member. Mentor and mentee should schedule a time before each school board meeting to check-in regarding the upcoming agenda, policies, and procedures.

Our orientation program is structured to ensure you receive a balanced combination of printed materials, hands-on training, and personal mentorship. Throughout the year, you will engage in various learning sessions, attend MSBA training events, and participate in board meetings and district activities. These experiences are designed to deepen your understanding of board operations, district policies, and educational goals. By the end of your first year, you will have a solid foundation to effectively contribute to the board's mission of providing quality education for all students. Mentors are encouraged to attend the workshops and trainings with the mentees to make the information more relevant and specific to the district.

Ongoing Professional Development

Continuous learning is crucial for effective governance. Board members are encouraged to participate in school board and related workshops and activities sponsored by local, state, and national school boards associations, as well as in the activities of other educational groups. Each board member shall receive training in school finance and management developed in consultation with the Minnesota School Boards Association. [Minn. Stat 123B.09, Subd. 2](#). Below is a full list of MSBA's Learning to Lead Phase Workshops.

- [Learning to Lead – School Board Basics: Phase I Workshop](#)
- [Leadership Foundations – School Finance and Management: Phase II Workshop](#)
- [Building a High-Performance School Board Team: Phase III Workshop](#)
- [Representing Your Community Through Policy and Engagement: Phase IV Workshop](#)

Other MSBA Professional Development Opportunities – To learn more about these opportunities, see the [Workshops and Events](#) section of the MSBA website.

In District Workshops	Events
Mutual Expectations Workshop	Leadership Conference
School Board Self-Evaluation Workshop	Summer Seminar
Superintendent Search Workshop	Delegate Assembly
Superintendent Evaluation Workshop	Day at the Capitol
Regional Workshops	Advocacy Tour
Officers' Workshop	Coffee and Conversation Series
Negotiations Seminars	Board Chair Chat
	Monthly Webinars

Covered workshops will be reimbursed per annual resolution to establish school board member compensation. Covered workshops sponsored by the Minnesota School Boards Association shall include the annual MSBA Leadership Conference, all phases of Board Training, summer session, officer training and negotiation seminars. Other workshops may be approved by board action. A board member who wishes to receive the compensation shall submit a requisition to the Superintendent.

Associated Policy: 212 – School Board Member Development.

MSBA Series of Publications – New board members automatically receive the following publications to stay current on education related news.

- **eClippings** – Receive daily links to K-12 news from around the state.
- **Leader Newsletter** – Monthly updates regarding MSBA news and events, topical news items, administrative topics, and much more.
- **Journal Magazine** – Bimonthly magazine includes school features, exploration of leadership issues, in-depth stories on education trends, and a directory of vendors.

Individual Board Membership

Duties as an Individual Board Member

The position of board member carries with it a profound responsibility to uphold the highest ethical standards. A commitment to integrity, transparency, and accountability will not only enhance the effectiveness of educational policies but also strengthen the community's confidence in the board's decision-making. Remember that your actions and decisions will help shape the future of our students, school, and community. Let the Code of Ethics in District Policy 209 guide you in navigating the complexities of governance with unwavering moral clarity and purposeful dedication.

Associated Policy: 209 – Code of Ethics.

Board Time Commitment

The time required to complete your board responsibilities will most vary by time of year. It will depend on how many meetings are scheduled, which committees you serve on, what issues are going on in the district at the time, and how much time you need to prepare for upcoming meetings. For example, if the district is going through a building project, hiring a superintendent, or developing the district budget, the time needed for board meetings may be more extensive. On average, however, you can anticipate spending about nine to twelve hours a month on board service.

Conflict of Interest

As a board member, you are expected to uphold the highest standards of integrity by actively avoiding any conflicts of interest in your official capacity. This means refraining from any personal financial involvement in district transactions such as sales, leases, or contracts you oversee or participate in. If a potential conflict arises, you must fully disclose your interests and abstain from decision-making processes related to those interests. You will operate under stringent guidelines to ensure that any exceptions to this rule are handled transparently, with unanimous consent and clear documentation. This approach maintains the community's trust and ensures all decisions are made solely in the best interest of the district and its stakeholders.

Associated Policy: 210 – Conflict of Interest

Working as a Board Team

At the heart of educational excellence lies the steadfast commitment of the board, entrusted with duties that shape the very fabric of our district's future. Defined by statute, yet driven by a passion for progress, the board's responsibilities encompass a profound dedication to nurturing thriving learning environments and supporting the endeavors of our administration. Crucial to fulfilling these responsibilities is the collaborative spirit of board teamwork, where collective wisdom and shared vision pave the path toward transformative change. By fostering an environment of mutual respect and

collaboration, the board can harness its collective strength to address challenges, capitalize on opportunities, and ultimately, advance the educational journey of every student in our district.

Duties of the Board

- The board has powers and duties specified by statute. The board's authority includes implied powers in addition to specific powers granted by the legislature.
- The board exercises administrative functions. It also has certain powers of a legislative character and other powers of a quasi-judicial character.
- The board shall superintend and manage the district; adopt rules for their organization, government, and instruction; prescribe textbooks and courses of study; and make and authorize contracts.
- The board shall have the general charge of the business of the district, its facilities and property, and of the interest of the school.
- The board, among other duties, shall perform the following in accordance with applicable law:
 - provide by levy of tax, necessary funds for the conduct of school, the payment of indebtedness, and all proper expenses of the district;
 - conduct the business of the school and pay indebtedness and proper expenses;
 - employ and contract with necessary qualified teachers and discharge the same for cause;
 - provide services to promote the health of its pupils;
 - provide school buildings and erect needed buildings;
 - purchase, sell, and exchange district property and equipment as deemed necessary by the board for school purposes;
 - provide for payment of claims against the district, and prosecute and defend actions by or against the district, in all proper cases;
 - employ and discharge necessary employees and contract for other services;
 - provide for transportation of pupils to and from school, as governed by statute; and
 - procure insurance against liability of the district, its officers, and employees.
- The board, at its discretion, may perform the following:
 - provide library facilities, public evening school, adult and continuing education programs, summer school programs, and intersession classes of flexible school year programs;
 - furnish school lunches for pupils and teachers on such terms as the board determines;
 - enter into agreements with one or more other independent districts to provide for agreed upon educational services;
 - lease rooms or buildings for school purposes;
 - authorize the use of school facilities for community purposes that will not interfere with their use for school purposes;
 - authorize co curricular and extracurricular activities;

- receive, for the benefit of the district, bequests, donations, or gifts for any proper purpose; and
- perform other acts as the board shall deem to be reasonably necessary or required for the governance of the school.

Associated Policy: 201 – Legal Status of the School Board

Board Governance Model

The [MSBA Board Governance Model](#) delineates the distinct roles and responsibilities of the board and the superintendent, ensuring both governance and management functions are clearly articulated and understood. It outlines the board's role in setting expectations and parameters through policy adoption, budgeting, contracting, and focusing on student achievement for all. It also highlights the superintendent's responsibilities in providing leadership and supervision, thus ensuring policies and strategies set by the board are effectively implemented.

Standards for Board Leadership

The board is responsible to the community to govern efficiently and lead effectively to provide students an equitable education that results in high achievement. To assist in this journey, see the [Standards for School Board Leadership](#) developed by the MSBA. This document outlines best practices for board members and provides the standards we should strive to meet as part of a high-performing board team.

Attributes of High-Performing Board Teams

1. Everyone clearly understands the mission, goals, and role of the board; everyone knows who is, and who should be, doing what.
2. Board members are skilled in group leadership and/or membership functions.
3. Board members have a high degree of trust in one another.
4. Interaction occurs in a supportive atmosphere. Suggestions, comments, ideas, information, and criticism are all offered in a manner that is helpful. Respect is shown for varying team viewpoints.
5. Expectations for the group and its members are high. Goals are stretched.
6. The board is not dominated by an individual or sub-group; everyone participates and has the opportunity to influence the discussion.
7. The board has established procedures for operation including decision-making, conflict resolution, and meeting management.
8. The board is future focused. Decisions are made with long-term consequences and benefits in mind.
9. The board evaluates its performance periodically.

School Board Self-Evaluation

School Board self-evaluations can be an invaluable tool for assessing and enhancing the effectiveness of our governing body. This process allows us to reflect on our collective performance, identifying strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. Engaging in a self-evaluation enables us to gain insights into individual contributions and understand the dynamics and overall functioning of the

board. It also fosters open communication, promotes accountability, and strengthens teamwork among board members. By participating in the process, we can gain insights that will empower us to make informed decisions, enhance our effectiveness in serving the community, and contribute to the continuous improvement of the board's performance and impact.

Typically this will be completed in November of every year. Action can be taken over the following year to address areas of concern to help drive school improvement and student achievement. Mid year review of objectives and progress will be completed in July of each year.

Based on the results of the self evaluation, 3-5 annual objectives will be developed. These objectives should follow the SMART model (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time Bound). These objectives should be in line within the scope of the board's control.

District Administrative Assistant will send out and receive self evaluations to be compiled and presented to the board at a regular meeting or working session.

Role of the Superintendent

The board employs a superintendent to lead and manage the district. The superintendent is an ex-officio, non-voting member of the board and the chief executive officer of the school system. The superintendent's duties and responsibilities are derived largely from three sources: statute, the employment contract, and the job description. Superintendents are responsible for the management of the school, the administration of all board policies, and are directly accountable to the board. The superintendent must annually evaluate each principal assigned responsibility for supervising a school building in the district. Also, the superintendent may delegate responsibilities to other district personnel but shall continue to be accountable for actions taken under such delegation. [Minn. Stat. 123B.143.](#)

Hiring a Superintendent

One of the most critical responsibilities of the board is the hiring of a superintendent. The selection of the superintendent is a decision that shapes the future of the district, influencing the quality of education, the effectiveness of school management, and the overall success of students. The importance of this decision cannot be overstated. The superintendent's vision and leadership directly impact educational outcomes and the district's ability to achieve its strategic goals. Therefore, it is imperative that the board conducts a thorough and meticulous search process, considering candidates' experience, leadership style, and alignment with the district's values and objectives. This decision requires careful deliberation and a commitment to finding a leader who will foster a positive educational environment, promote innovation, and address the diverse needs of the school community. In essence, the hiring of a superintendent is not just a routine administrative task but a defining moment that sets the course for the district's future.

Duties of the Superintendent

For the most recent approved Superintendent job description, please contact the District Administrative Assistant.

Tenets of an Effective Board-Superintendent Relationship

Understanding and fostering a productive relationship between the board and the superintendent is critical for the success of our educational institution. The [17 Tenets of an Effective Board-Superintendent Relationship](#) provides a comprehensive guide outlining key principles and best practices for maintaining a collaborative and effective partnership. This document highlights essential responsibilities and expectations for both the board members and the superintendent, promoting a clear understanding of each party's role in governance and administration. By adhering to these tenets, our board can ensure decisions are made efficiently, communication remains open and transparent, and the strategic goals of our district are met.

Evaluating the Superintendent

Evaluation of a superintendent's performance is one of the board's most important responsibilities. The evaluation of the superintendent is an inherent managerial right of the board. Each board member should review the superintendent's employment contract to determine the evaluation-related provisions, if any, that may be included. Done correctly, an evaluation is a useful governance tool that helps drive school improvement. In fact, a high-quality evaluation process enhances positive school-superintendent relationships, improves communication, clarifies leadership roles, creates common understandings, and provides a mechanism for accountability and communication.

Timeline/Process of Superintendent Evaluation

Goal Setting- July 1st of each school year

- Superintendent will develop three goals relating to the District's Strategic Plan and/or District/School Board Directives.
- Superintendent will meet with the Personnel Committee to finalize goals.
- Superintendent goals will be approved by the full board through consent agenda.

Mid Year Formative Review- January

- Superintendent will complete a Mid-Year Summary of progress on each goal.
- The Superintendent will present Mid- Year Summary to the school board.
- The School Board will provide comments regarding progress on each goal.

End of Year Summative Evaluation- May

- The Superintendent will provide the School Board with the end of year Summative Evaluation form for their input and feedback.
- School Board members provide comments and ratings for each goal area.

Board Communication Guide

Communication Between Board Members

Adhering to guidelines for effective and lawful communication with your fellow board members is crucial. While open and collaborative communication is vital for the board's success, remember that discussions outside of official board meetings must be handled carefully to avoid violating the Minnesota Open Meeting Law (OML). This law requires any gathering of a quorum of board members, where official business is discussed, must be conducted in public and notice must be provided to ensure transparency. (See exceptions in the Closed Meeting Chart on pages 25.) Therefore, while informal discussions can be valuable for building relationships and exchanging ideas, avoid veering into areas of official board business unless they are part of a scheduled public meeting.

Building Collaborative Relationships – School governance is founded on the belief that a group of very different people representing various constituencies in their district can make better decisions than any one person alone. That diversity is the board's strength. It's best to be open-minded about the opinions of your fellow board members. Your goal should not be to change them to your point of view, but rather to determine the best solution to an issue by working together to try and accommodate all views. You want the students to be the “winners” — not one board member or another.

Addressing Team Dysfunction – Open communication is critical to the proper functioning of the board. If you feel the board is not functioning well, it may be appropriate to suggest a workshop where the board reviews its ground rules, board policies on board operations, and board/administrative relations that establish how the leadership team will function. If these ground rules and policies are not effective, then consider modifications to them. The board may want to hire a facilitator to assist with discussions to improve the board's working relations. MSBA can help with a custom board in-service tailored to the board's specific situation.

Guidelines for interacting outside a board meeting

- **Do Not Discuss Board Business.** Focus on topics such as general education trends, personal updates, or board training and development without steering into specifics of pending decisions or board business.
- **Be Cautious with Written Communication.** Exercise caution with emails, texts, and social media interactions among board members. Avoid group messages or email chains discussing board business that could be construed as a meeting.
- **Be Transparent with Your Intentions.** Always make the purpose of any gathering clear, ensuring it is social or educational in nature and not meant for making decisions or deliberations that should be reserved for official meetings.
- **Consider Public Perception.** When planning to meet outside of formal board meetings, consider how such gatherings might be perceived by the public. It's crucial to remember any appearance of conducting board business or decision-making outside of the designated public meetings could undermine community trust and confidence.

Associated Policy: 205 – Open Meetings and Closed Meetings

Situation	District Protocol
I have general questions about board governance and/or operation.	Contact Board Chair and/or Superintendent
I have a concern or questions regarding board governance.	Contact Board Chair and/or Superintendent
I have a concern or questions regarding district operations.	Contact Board Chair and/or Superintendent

Communication with the Superintendent

You need to establish a productive working relationship with the superintendent. To do this, you need to communicate with that individual. If you have questions, it is better to call the superintendent and discuss them before the board meeting rather than surprise the superintendent at a public meeting. If the questions are concerns or relate to negative feelings from the community, superintendents appreciate knowing about them in advance of the board meeting so they can come prepared to address them. It is appropriate to call the superintendent, set up a meeting to discuss questions, or send an email for simple questions or requests. When contacting the superintendent, it is important for you to keep the scope of such contacts within reason, to permit adequate time to receive a response, and to generally remain cognizant of the superintendent's other responsibilities and demands on their time.

Disagreements with the Superintendent – Always treat your fellow board members, the superintendent, and other administrators with respect. However, don't be afraid to disagree on an issue. In fact, a discussion about an issue that reflects two or more views usually results in a better decision than if everyone agrees with the first solution offered. Be certain to debate the issue, not the person, and maintain decorum in debate.

Communication with District Administrators and Staff

You will likely come in contact with district employees, including administrators, teachers, and other staff members. While there's nothing wrong with talking to district staff, keep in mind that complaints should follow the chain of communication. Additionally, understand individual board members do not have authority to direct the work of district staff members. Directing requests through the superintendent can assist with appropriate prioritization, identifying information that may be readily available, and determining when it may be appropriate to have the full board weigh in regarding certain requests and project ideas.

Discussing Your Child with Staff – This can be a tricky area. No matter what you say about "speaking as a parent, not a board member," it may be difficult for some teachers to separate your role on the board from your role as a parent. Some board members have indicated their significant others frequently take the lead in speaking to their children's teachers. Make sure you're not using your position as a board member to secure special treatment for your child. If there are issues you wish to discuss with a teacher, you should follow the normal procedures for contacting your child's teacher to discuss them. Keep in mind that you do not relinquish your parental rights now that you're a board member.

Communication with Constituents Including Staff, Students, Parents, and Community

Identify the person contacting you and ensure you have their contact information. Seek to understand the situation or interest but, generally, do not agree or commit to resolve it personally as that is not the role of individual board members. Here are some general expectations:

- Do not agree to confidentiality or commit to limit your options of notification.
- Do not get involved in staff employment or contractual issues.
- Do not attempt to work with a parent who is working on behalf of an organized group rather than on behalf of their own student.
- When applicable, redirect the person to the appropriate staff person or administrator to address the concern. Chain of communications should be staff member, principal, superintendent and then school board.
- Be alert to patterns of like concerns and notify the superintendent's office of the possibility.
- If the concern raises governance or public relations questions, contact the board chair in addition to the superintendent.
- Avoid forming and communicating opinions about a board decision before the board has discussed it in a board meeting.

Situation	District Protocol
If I get a phone call, email, or stopped in public from a constituent with concerns regarding the district.	Listen to concerns however encourage constituents to follow the chain of communication to resolve the issue. Board members should try to refrain from following the chain of communication on behalf of the constituent.
If I get a phone call, email, or stopped in public from a constituent regarding the board's decisions.	Listen to concerns however support board decisions publicly even if you personally disagree.
If I get an email that is addressed to the entire board with concerns from a constituent.	Board Chair should respond individually to constituents and update the rest of the board afterwards. No "Reply All" on an email sent to the entire board. If needed, concern will be added to an upcoming meeting for board discussion.
There is a situation that requires the district's legal counsel to be contacted.	Board Chair and Superintendent will contact legal counsel and report back to the rest of the board. If needed, discussion will be added to an upcoming meeting for board discussion.

Engaging with the Community

Be proactive. The board can engage key stakeholders by inviting and appointing them to participate in standing and ad hoc committees, advisory panels, focus groups, forums, and surveys to describe a vision for the district, set its goals, plan strategically, align resources with goals, and other actions offering them an opportunity to learn about public education and to influence governance decisions. Encourage all members of the community to visit their school. Invite them to extracurricular activities, schedule a grandparents' day, and offer tours. In public education, familiarity often breeds support.

Use a variety of means to engage community members, inform them about the district, and learn about their interests, priorities, and concerns. Print and electronic media, social media (be mindful of emerging trends for younger parents), the district’s website, and face-to-face conversations all play important roles in a year-round district campaign to inform and to be informed.

While accentuating the positive — student successes and district progress — don’t neglect the negative. Be the first to let the community know about clouds looming on the horizon, and what the board is doing to dispel them. The board should be ambassadors for the district by scheduling dialogues with a cross section of the community — preferably in their neighborhoods as well as in online forums. And be prepared to address negative comments and feedback in a positive, proactive manner.

In addition, consider the varying expectations of the district’s constituents. The parents of seniors may have far different expectations than the parents of kindergartners, and elderly community members with no students in the district may want completely different types of communication.

Associated Policy: 612.1 – Development of Parent and Family Engagement Policies for Title I Programs.

Communication with the Media

It's important to handle media interactions with care to maintain the veracity and unified voice of the board. Maintaining a unified voice is crucial as it ensures all board communications are consistent, clear, and reflect the collective decisions and strategic direction of the board. This unified approach helps to build trust and credibility with the community, stakeholders, and the media.

Situation	District Protocol
If I am approached by the media regarding a concern or board decision.	Direct media to the Board Chair or Superintendent.

Communication on Social Media

Social media plays a significant role in board members’ responsibilities. To use social media effectively while avoiding potential pitfalls, remember your posts should reflect well on your role and set a good example for students and the community. Be careful not to share personal, confidential, or legally protected information about students, employees, or board members. Opt for face-to-face or telephone conversations for private matters instead of using social media. Control your emotions and avoid posting in anger or frustration, as negative statements can have lasting consequences and may lead to legal issues. Always use polite language and refrain from abusive, profane, or offensive comments. Additionally, avoid posting on behalf of the district or sharing commercial messages linked to the district. Use social media primarily for listening, making announcements, and gathering feedback rather than conducting board business. Finally, ensure you comply with all relevant laws and district policies, including those related to acceptable use, harassment, discrimination, and privacy. Your online actions should always reflect the values and responsibilities of your position within the district.

Situation	District Protocol
I know about an upcoming district event that should be featured on social media.	Contact the District Administrative Assistant regarding district communication options.
I saw a post containing false or misleading information regarding the board or district.	Contact the Board Chair and/or Superintendent with concerns.

Using a District Email

You should use a district email account for your board communications. While this creates another account to monitor, the extra effort is well worth it. As an elected official, your communications related to your office are presumed to be public data unless a provision of law makes part or all of the email private. Your emails may contain private personnel data ([Minn. Stat. 13.43](#)), private educational data ([Minn. Stat. 13.32](#)), correspondence with a private individual ([Minn. Stat. 13.601](#)), or protected medical information.

Members of the public may request access to public government data for any reason. Government entities must respond to these requests, and any work required to separate private data from public data, known as redaction, cannot be charged to the requester. The government entity must keep public data readily accessible, and redacting private data is its responsibility. Often, decisions about redaction need to be made by legal counsel, which adds to the expense.

If you use a personal or work email account, access to the public data may require you to turn over the personal or work device on which the emails are stored. If you use a district email address, the district's computer system can be searched to respond to public data requests. As a result, you do not have to worry about your personal or work devices being unavailable or about your personal or work information being shared with others.

Using a separate email account also separates your board work from personal or business correspondence. This reduces the number of emails that need to be searched in preparation for responding to a public data request, saving the district time and money.

Another reason this separation is helpful is in how you think about your emails related to board work. Remembering the presumed public status of what you write in emails to other board members, the superintendent, and other district personnel about board work can save you from explanations and embarrassment. Public data may end up on the local news or social media, so it is wise to keep this in mind as you compose emails related to board work.

A final consideration is the potential to violate the OML. If a two-way communication about board business occurs among a quorum of the board (or a quorum of a board committee), it results in an OML violation, and the emails create a record of the violation.

Communicating with Board Members Via Email – To ensure OML compliance, you are strongly discouraged from using email to communicate with other board members about issues within the board's realm of authority, except for procedural elements like establishing meeting dates and locations. Generally, you should use email only for one-way communications to and from the board chair or superintendent to distribute information.

Situation	District Protocol
I have questions regarding an email I received from the board chair or superintendent.	Contact the person who emailed you. Never have a conversation with the entire board via email.
Another board member emailed me regarding board business.	One on one conversations are allowed via email between board members. Never have email conversations with 4 or more board members involved.
I have important information that everyone on the board needs to know before the next board meeting.	You may email the entire board, however note “Do not reply all” in the email and do not have group conversations within the emails.

Board Meetings and Governance

Board meetings are pivotal gatherings that dictate the course of educational policies and decisions within a district. Governed by a structured framework, these meetings encompass various types, from regular sessions to emergency convenings, each serving distinct purposes and following legal mandates outlined in Minnesota statutes. Moreover, the operational norms, roles of board officers, and adherence to parliamentary procedures shape the conduct of these meetings, ensuring efficiency, transparency, and accountability. In this comprehensive overview, we delve into the intricacies of board meetings, covering everything from meeting types and legal obligations to procedural guidelines and public participation protocols.

Meetings of the Board

Types of Meetings

Regular Board Meeting – Regular meetings of the board are held according to an established schedule. The schedule must be kept on file at the district office. No additional notice required unless the date, time, or place of the regular meeting is changed. [Minn. Stat. 13D.04, Subd. 1.](#) At Regular meetings, boards take action on policies, contracts, bid awards, personnel appointments, etc. This meeting may be a regular, a special, or an emergency meeting.

Special Meeting – The board may hold a special meeting to conduct business as needed. A special meeting can provide extra time for presentations, such as review of building-level outcomes, or to deal with an issue that arises but is not likely to be ongoing. A special meeting requires three days’ notice (posted on the district’s main bulletin board and either published in the official newspaper or mailed/delivered to those persons requesting notice) of the date, time, place, and purpose of the meeting. Board discussion and action must fall within the posted purpose(s) of the meeting. [Minn. Stat. 13D.04, Subd. 2.](#)

Emergency Meeting – The board may hold an emergency meeting called to deal with a situation that

requires immediate board consideration and possible action, such as a response to a school fire, a school safety issue, etc. The board determines when an emergency meeting is needed. Good faith effort must be made to notify the news media that have requested notice in the same manner as notice is given to board members. If the situation allows for a three-day notice, hold a special meeting. [Minn. Stat. 13D.04, Subd. 3.](#)

Working Session - A work or study session is a meeting of the board with selected staff or presenters to study and discuss in depth matters which potentially will come before the board. This meeting may be a regular or a special meeting.

Retreat/Workshop - This is a leadership team meeting for board members and the superintendent, often led by a professional facilitator and dealing with evaluation and/or development issues. This is usually a special meeting.

Committee - Board committee meetings are covered by the OML. Other committee meetings that include board members may also be covered by the OML. Minn. Stat. 13D.01, Subd. 1.

Organizational Meeting – The first meeting in January will be devoted to business required for the proper organization of the board. The agenda may include:

- Seating new members including administering the ceremonial oath of office
- Electing officers for chair, vice-chair, clerk, and treasurer
- Setting the dates, time, and location(s) for regular board meetings
- Setting board member compensation
- Establishing standing committees and committee members
- Designating district depositories
- Mileage reimbursement
- Discussion of any changes needed to School Board Handbook

Open Meeting Law (OML)

The Open Meeting Law ([Minn. Stat. Ch. 13D.](#)) is intended to preserve the rights of the public to observe actions and decisions of its representatives. To satisfy this, all meetings of the board will be open to the public for attendance, and a schedule of the board's regular meetings and working sessions will include times and locations and shall be kept on file at the district office. (See the Closed Meeting Law Chart link below for exceptions). Additionally, the board will ensure a schedule of meetings is posted on the district's website. The OML applies to all meetings of the public body and, in general, meetings of its committees and subcommittees. For the law to apply, a quorum (a majority of the members of the board) must be present. Although the responsibility to ensure meetings are properly noticed lies with the board, this operational activity is typically carried out by the staff member who functions as the clerk to the board.

Closed Meetings

Minnesota's OML requires all board meetings to be open to the public with few exceptions. A public body must begin in an open meeting and state on the record the specific grounds permitting the meeting to be closed and describe the subject to be discussed. A majority vote is needed to close the meeting, with the time and place announced at the public meeting before going into closed session. Please review [Minn. Stat. 13D.05](#) before proceeding to close a meeting. For specific questions, consult

with legal counsel.

For more information regarding closed meetings, see [MSBA's Closed Meeting Law Chart](#).

Meetings Conducted by Interactive Technology

In the ever-evolving landscape of governance, technology has become an indispensable tool for facilitating communication and collaboration. Section 13D.02 of the Minnesota Statutes acknowledges this reality by outlining the conditions under which meetings governed by section 13D.01 can be conducted using interactive technology.

For more information regarding remote meetings, see [Minn. Stat. 13D.02 Meetings Conducted by Interactive Technology](#).

Meeting Operations

Attendance of Meetings

All board members are expected to attend all meetings. However, it is recognized that scheduling conflicts will occur.

If a board member is unable to attend a scheduled meeting, they should notify the District Administrative Assistant, Board Chair and Superintendent, preferably by group email, of their absence as soon as they know they will be unable to attend. In the event that 3 or more members are unable to attend, the District Administrative Assistant will contact the board chair for guidance on rescheduling the regular meeting as the board will not have sufficient attendance for a quorum.

Acceptable Dress Code

School board members should wear attire that is clean and appropriate.

Inappropriate clothing includes but is not limited to, the following:

1. ***Clothing that is too revealing***, exposed underwear, tops that expose midriff, and other clothing that is not keeping with community standards.
2. Clothing bearing a message that is lewd, vulgar, or obscene.
3. Apparel promoting products or activities that are illegal for use by minors.
4. Emblems, badge symbols, signs, words, objects or pictures on jewelry communicating a message that is racist, sexist or otherwise derogatory to a protected minority group, evidence of gang membership or affiliation, or approves, advances or provokes any form of harassment or violence.

Board Meeting Etiquette

1. Be on time and prepared. BoardBook can sometimes be updated the same day as the meeting with important information. The administrative assistant will usually send an email stating an update has been made. This also allows meetings to start on time if members have technical issues with connections or programs.

2. Cell phones should be on silent or turned off. In general, try to refrain from texting at the table and only do so in an absolute emergency.
3. Refrain from side conversations at the board table. Side conversations can be distracting to the speaker and can be viewed negatively by the public in attendance. If you have a question or need clarity on a subject, please ask the group as others may need the same clarification. This also helps make sure the board is on the same page and all information is factual to the board and no inaccuracies are spread.
4. Utilize position names vs people. This is important as discussion can become personnel related and in that case the board meeting should be closed to protect employee privacy and confidentiality. Examples of this would be Activities Director, Facilities Manager, Elementary Teacher, Basketball Coach vs “Tom”, “ Bob”, Sally”.

Location of Meetings

All board meetings are held in the district media center unless noted otherwise on the calendar. In case of a need for venue change, the District Administrative Assistant will post the change of venue at the district bulletin board, original location doors and social media/website.

Presentations

All presentations should be added by the Superintendent, Board Chair or Board members may complete “Request for Agenda Addition” form no less than 5 days prior to the meeting they would like a presentation to be added to. The google form or paper form may be found on the “School Board” section of the district website. Presenters will be added to the agenda at that time. Board members may ask questions of the presenter after the presentation or during if welcomed.

Voting

Each elected member of the board will have one vote. A roll call vote will be taken when required by law or when requested by any board member.

Quorum of the Board

In order for a board meeting to be official and before any action can be taken by the board, at least a quorum of board members must be present. In the absence of a quorum, the only official action that the board may take is to adjourn the meeting. The gathering of a quorum constitutes a meeting if “members discuss, decide, or receive information as a group on issues relating to the official business of the district.”

Parliamentary Procedure During Meetings

An orderly school board meeting allows school board members to participate in discussion and decision of school district issues. Rules of order allow school board members the opportunity to review school-related topics, discuss school business items, and bring matters to conclusion in a timely and consistent manner.

Associated Policies: 203 – Operation of the School Board – Governing Rules and 203.1 – School Board Procedures; Rules of Order.

Presiding Officer

The chair will preside over all board meetings. If the chair is unable to preside, the vice-chair (if one has been appointed), will perform the duties of the chair. Should both the chair and vice-chair be unable to preside, the clerk will perform the duties of the chair. In the unlikely event that the chair, vice-chair, and clerk are unable to preside, the treasurer will perform the duties of the chair.

Superintendent’s Role in Board Meetings

The superintendent is a key person at all board meetings. The superintendent and chair commonly plan the meeting agenda together. The superintendent makes certain the meeting room is set up as required and all tools needed are available, such as audio or visual recording equipment, internet access, microphones, etc. Each item on the agenda is introduced by the chair; however, for discussion or action items, the superintendent or a designee is often asked to explain the issue. The superintendent’s recommendation should be solicited before a vote is taken.

Board Committees

Committees may be established to address recurring needs of the board. Committees are in place to make the board’s work more efficient and effective. They serve in advisory capacities and bring recommendations to the full board for decision making. Board committees should meet as often as necessary to accomplish their work and should meet only when there is substantive work to be done.

Board Committees assignments are established at the annual organizational meeting. School Board Members will be asked for preference prior to organizational meeting and Board Chair will make appointments to all committees.

The school board hereby appoints the following standing committees:

- Activities Committee
- Facilities Committee
- Personnel/Finance Committee
- Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness

Each committee is composed of at least one school board member and the Superintendent. Each school board member shall serve on at least one committee.

Additional representation appointments are made for:

- IASC Board of Directors
- Community Education Advisory
- MSHSL
- Legislative Liaison
- All Committee Alternate

Associated Policy: 213 – School Board Committees.

Election of Board Officers

Minnesota law is silent on the method of electing officers, except that the election must be by open vote and not by any form of secret ballot. [Minn. Stat. 13D.01, Subd. 4](#). Subsequently, the board may establish its own procedures, including procedures for nominating officers and voting procedures. The board will establish procedures in advance of the meeting so that everyone will know what to expect from the outset. The board must follow the procedures, but the procedures can be changed if the majority of the board members agree.

For more information regarding officer elections, see [MSBA's First Monday in January Handbook](#).

The acting Chair should ask for nominations for the board officer. The Chair should ask three times for additional nominations. Nominations do not require a second. Then they declare the nominations closed. The acting Chair will call for a vote. If more than one person is nominated, clerk to take roll call votes for nominated persons.

Guide to Board Meeting Roles and Responsibilities

Effective management and clear understanding of roles are essential for the smooth operation of board meetings. The [Guide to Board Meeting Roles and Responsibilities](#) provides a detailed outline of the duties and expectations for board members, the chair, the superintendent, and administrative staff before, during, and after meetings. This comprehensive guide helps ensure all participants are well-prepared, meetings are conducted efficiently, and follow-up actions are clearly defined. It covers everything from agenda preparation and legal advice to maintaining a positive meeting atmosphere and accurate record-keeping.

Data Privacy

It's essential to understand how data privacy relates to board meetings. When discussing district matters in board meetings, we encourage open dialogue. However, we need reasonable restrictions to ensure orderly proceedings and protect individuals' privacy and due process rights. These rights extend to both employees and students of the district. For employees, this includes the privacy of their personnel data. Similarly, students have privacy rights concerning their educational data. To uphold these privacy rights, we have procedures in place for handling agenda items and complaints.

Associated Policies: 406 – Public and Private Personnel Data and 515 – Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records.

Public Comments to the Board

The board recognizes the value of participation by the public in deliberations and decisions on district matters. However, the board retains the right to determine whether and how public comment may occur.

Public Comment time provides an opportunity for constituents to address the Floodwood School Board of Education. Those who complete public comment requests will have up to 3 minutes in which to address the Board. Hand outs or documents to share must be submitted to the District Administrative Assistant at least 4 hours before the meeting. The Board Chair has full discretion over the Public

Comment period, including the ability to manage speaking time to allow for additional comments. No inappropriate comments or behavior will be tolerated. Inappropriate behavior is defined as attempting to engage individual board members in conversation, insults, obscenities or profanity, attacks against any person in his/her personal capacity, and/or physical violence or threat thereof.

Floodwood School Board of Education requires requests to sign up for public comment at a minimum of 4 hours before the meeting. This information is used to connect with and to follow up with individuals speaking during the public comment section of the meeting.

School Board members should refrain from conversation after public comment unless the board chair permits. Topics brought to public comments will be addressed on a case by case basis. This may include being added to upcoming working sessions to allow the district to collect information the school board may need for proper discussion, Board Chair and/or Superintendent may meet with the individual who made the public comment or topic may be added to upcoming committee meetings if necessary.

Associated Policy: 206 – Public Participation in School Board Meetings/Complaints About Persons at School Board Meetings and Data Privacy Considerations.

Agendas and Minutes

Agenda Procedures

The board will conduct business during meetings through an adopted agenda that advances board work and district goals. The agenda serves as a roadmap for the meeting, outlining topics such as reports, presentations, discussions, and decisions. It is expected all board members will read the agenda and any supporting documents prior to the meeting. Each board member has the right to request additions, amendments, or revisions to the agenda prior to its adoption, and the board will determine if those changes are to be made.

District Administrative Assistant with Superintendent and Board Chair will develop agendas for all meetings. Board agendas with attachments will be made available through BoardBook to all board members. Agendas for regular or special meetings will be made public and emailed to board members the Wednesday prior to a meeting date. Working Sessions will be made public and emailed to board members no later than the Friday prior to a meeting date.

If board members have any questions regarding items or attachments on the agenda, they are encouraged to reach out to the Board Chair, Superintendent and/or District Administrative Assistant for assistance.

All board members are expected to have reviewed all agenda items and attachments prior to the board meetings.

If any changes are made to the agenda after it has been initially sent out, additional emails will be sent regarding changes to notify board members.

Associated Policy: 203.5 – School Board Meeting Agenda.

Consent Agenda

The superintendent, in consultation with the board chair, may place items on the consent agenda. A consent agenda is a part of the agenda that includes items typically approved together in one motion. These items may include meeting minutes, routine reports, personnel appointments, and other administrative matters. By grouping these items together, the board can streamline the meeting process and focus on more substantive discussions. If any board member wishes to discuss or vote separately on an item listed in the consent agenda, they can request to have it removed for individual consideration.

Associated Policy: 203.6 – Consent Agendas.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes will be carefully recorded to include all actions of the board and all votes taken at a board meeting by the board's clerk or designee. Minutes do not include discussion or editorial comments.

District Administrative Assistant will complete board minutes within 7 days of meetings. Unofficial minutes will be available on Boardbook once completed. Approval of minutes will occur at the next board meeting. School Board Meeting minutes will be published monthly in the designated school publication. They are also available to the public on BoardBook.

Associated Policy: 204 – School Board Meeting Minutes.

References for Further Information

Additional information and policies can be found on the district website as well as MSBA website.