

# **Board Protocols**

## **Board Meetings**

Board meetings are business meetings of the Board held in public during which the Board will strive to focus on student achievement. The public has the opportunity to be well informed via attendance at meetings as well through the use of sources of information such as the District website, newsletters, public forums, etc.

Comments/questions from the public during regular meetings and Public Hearings will be handled by the Board President. This may include directing the comment/question to someone more suited to respond. Comments/questions that can be responded to quickly or need clarification should be addressed immediately. Should the Board President deem a question requires investigation or lengthy explanation, the person posing the question will be advised by the Board President that the Superintendent, or designee, will respond personally within a reasonable amount of time. If the Board agrees any response to a question raised at a meeting would be of interest to the general public the information will be provided at a subsequent board meeting.

Presentations by staff should be in the Executive style rather than the Education style, unless the topic dictates otherwise as determined by the Superintendent. The presumption is that all members have read the meeting material, called ahead with specific questions, and are now prepared to discuss the issue.

## **Unity of Purpose**

We affirm the unique role of public education, whereby each community collectively pools its resources for the common good through the education of its students. Therefore, we seek to uphold and improve public education for our community.

- ◆ We want to build trust and move the district forward.
- ◆ We want to become an effective team.
- ◆ We want to understand our individual jobs and collective responsibilities.
- ◆ We want to be a team with a common, focused direction.
- ◆ We want to create a district culture that supports positive change.
- ◆ We want to perpetuate a positive district culture that survives in the face of a board member and staff turnover.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Meeting Protocol**

#### **1. Abiding by Majority Decisions of the Board:**

- a. No individual board member, other than the Board President, has the authority to act or speak on behalf of the Board without the consent of the Board.
- b. Board members have an obligation to express their opinions and respect others' opinions. Board members understand the importance of speaking with one clear voice to the Superintendent.
- c. Board members have the right to disagree with the decision of the Board, but will support the Board in its decision and abide by the will of the majority.

#### **2. Placing Items On and Off The Agenda:**

- a. A Board Member may request an item be placed on a future agenda by making such request during Future Topics at any board meeting. After discussion, the Board will agree by consensus to add or remove the topic from the agenda. When a Future Topic appears on the next agenda it should be assumed there has been no significant Administrative time invested in the topic. The timing of placement will be determined by the Superintendent and the Board President.
- b. Action items should first appear as Discussion items at least one meeting prior to action, except in extenuating circumstances or when approvals are perfunctory in nature (ex: resolving that we are a school district).

#### **3. Closed Session:**

Board members will maintain the confidentiality of Closed Session information.

#### **4. Dress:**

When attending Board related functions the accepted dress code is business casual.

**5. Attendance:**

The Board President and the Superintendent should both be notified of your intended absence for functions you would otherwise be expected to attend.

**6. Behavioral Expectations:**

- a. Start with the common belief that everyone has good intentions. Presume positive intent.
- b. Listen and seek to understand the viewpoints of others; value the opinions of others
- c. Disagree respectfully for the productive exchange of ideas
- d. Advanced preparation to allow for balanced and active participation
- e. Awareness of both verbal and non-verbal behavior: Body language, eye contact, tone of voice, etc.
- f. Members should model the behavior they expect in return.
- g. Follow proper protocols and processes of a school board member (staying in the balcony).
- h. The Board will follow Robert's Rules for asking questions, whereby members raise their hand to be recognized by the Board President. An exception would be during a presentation when the presenting staff member can manage the flow of questions.

## **Communications**

- 1. Asking Agenda Related Questions:** Questions related to the board packet should be submitted, by phone or email, to the Superintendent with appropriate staff members and the Board President copied, no later than noon the day before the board meeting, if the member intends to explore the subject during the board meeting.

- a. Any document the Superintendent provides to a board member resulting from a question raised by a BOE member, will be shared with all Members prior to the meeting via email.

**2. Board Member Request for Information:**

Board members will self-monitor to ensure one person's request for information does not divert an inappropriate amount of time from staff efforts to achieve district goals. The Superintendent may bring that request to the board for a consensus, if the superintendent feels that the request will divert too much attention from staff efforts.

- a. When an individual board member requests and is provided information, it will be provided to all board members, ("One gets, all gets.")

**3. Communicating with the Superintendent (outside of Board meetings):**

There is an open door policy with continued respect for the Superintendent's time.

- a. The Superintendent will take direction from the Board as a whole.
- b. Board members will copy the Board President on communications to the Superintendent.

**4. Communicating with the Staff:**

All staff communications related to board business should go through the Superintendent with a copy to the Board President.

- a. District Level Administrators may be e-mailed directly with a copy to the Superintendent.
- b. Employee recognition - Once an employee has been recognized by the Board, individual board members may contact the staff member to congratulate them.
- c. All staff communications that are parental or personal in nature should be sent using your personal email address, rather than the district issued email address.

**5. Communicating With The Media:**

- a. The Board President (or designee) is the official spokesperson of the Board.
- b. The Superintendent (or designee) is the spokesperson for the District.
- c. Individual Members have the right to speak as individuals, but not to express the Board's position or other board members' positions.

**6. Communicating With The Public (outside meetings):**

- a. Individual Members have the right to speak as individuals, but not to express the Board's position or other board members' positions.

**7. Responding to Community:**

- a. Board members will listen carefully, remembering they are only hearing one side of the story
- b. Board members will then direct that person to the person in the District most appropriate (Chain of Command) who is able to help them resolve their concern.
- c. Board members will clarify that one board member has no individual authority to fix a problem.
- d. The Board President will respond to all BOE email inquiries, copy the superintendent and blind copy (bcc) the rest of the board.

## **8. Social Media:**

- a. Board members recognize that while we may be giving our individual opinion or stating a fact on social media, it has the potential to impact the entire board.
- b. When promoting official district business and activities, personal use of social media should be limited to directly sharing links from the district media platforms, without personal editorial or opinion.
- c. Board members will not post rebuttals/responses/corrections to district-related social media posts.
- d. Board members may post general district-related posts on their personal social media sites.

## **9. Electronic Communications:**

- a. Board members shall refrain from communicating electronically during a board meeting.
- b. Board members are allowed to excuse themselves if they need to take a call or send a text message.
- c. Board members will be judicious in their use of electronic communication with respect to district business and understand that most electronic communication is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and as such can be made public.
- d. In compliance with the Open Meetings Act, Board members will not “reply to all” to any district email.
- e. A board member may discuss district business in person or by telephone or email with only one other board member at a time.
- f. Board members will call the Superintendent if they think this is an issue of concern.

## **Committees**

A significant amount of the Board’s work is performed in Board Committees. It is the responsibility of the community and Board Members to follow the business of the Board through the committees. This allows for more efficient board meetings and affords more time for the Board to focus on student achievement during board meetings.

- a. All committee materials will be on the Board Book in advance of the committee meeting.
- b. Copies of materials not on Board Book (those distributed at the meeting) will be made available for Board members.

Board members should seriously consider recommendations to the board made by the committee, but are under no obligation to support the committee’s recommendation.

Comments/questions from the audience should be handled in the same way they are handled at regular Board meetings.

## **Visiting Campuses**

- a. Board members who plan on visiting a school (that their children do not attend) will call the Superintendent with appropriate lead time prior to their visit. Board members are encouraged to attend school events (sporting events, fine arts events, community events) *as a spectator* as their time permits.
- b. Board members wishing to visit a school in official Board capacity shall:
  - i. Discuss with the superintendent purpose (official capacity) and the best time to visit
  - ii. As a courtesy, notify the building principal of your visit
  - iii. Check in with the office staff upon arrival
  - iv. Follow campus guidelines for visitors (sign in, guest badge, escort, etc.)
  - v. Respect staff time and allow staff to perform their duties
  - vi. Not evaluate staff
  - vii. Not give direction to any staff or students
  - viii. Not accept gifts (other than nominal tokens) or favors from any district employee
- c. When visiting with teachers of their own children, board members will make it clear that they are acting as parents rather than board members.
- d. If a board member observes an issue on a campus, the concern will be communicated to the superintendent.

## **Administrator Hirings**

The Superintendent will notify Board members as soon as a candidate has been selected. At a Board meeting, subsequent to the candidate being hired, the new hire will meet with the Board for a brief, informal meet and greet.

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