

Gatesville Independent School District

Board Operating Procedures



Doing What's Best for Kids!

GATESVILLE ISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES
STANDARD OPERATING
PROCEDURES & CODE OF ETHICS

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I. Governance

- A. The Gatesville ISD School Board is committed to a participative process-driven governance style. Board level decision making processes shall therefore include the following elements to whatever extent is practical and appropriate for the matter at hand.
 - Clearly stated objectives
 - Reconciliation with policy and past practices
 - Timelines
 - Community input
 - Communication plan
 - Define the mission and goals of the district
 - Set policy and goals to accomplish the mission
- B. Board members as individuals shall not exercise authority over the District, its property, or its employees. [BBE (Local)]
- C. President: [BDAA (Local)]
 - 1. shall preside at all Board meetings unless unable to attend;
 - 2. conduct and monitor Board meeting deliberations to ensure that only Board issues are discussed;
 - 3. facilitate agenda planning (including consent agenda items), development, and ordering of agenda items during meetings;
 - 4. compile and facilitate the summative evaluation of the Superintendent;
 - 5. appoint committees;
 - 6. shall call special meetings;
 - 7. sign all legal documents required by law.
- D. Vice President: [BDAA (Local)]
 - 1. shall act in capacity of President in absence of President;
 - 2. automatically become President of the Board if a vacancy in that office occurs.
- E. Secretary: [BDAA (Local)]
 - 1. keep, or cause to be kept, an accurate record of the proceedings of each Board meeting;
 - 2. ensure that notices of Board meetings are posted as required by law;
 - 3. in the absence of the President and Vice President of the Board, call the Board meeting to order and conduct the election of a president Pro-Tem;
 - 4. sign or counter-sign all warrants and other documents as directed by action of the Board.
- F. Term of Officers [BDAA (Local)]
 - 1. Board officers shall serve for a term of one year until a successor is elected;
 - 2. Officers may succeed themselves in office;
 - 3. Each officer shall perform any legal duties of the office and other duties as required by action of the Board.
- G. Vacancy [BDAA (Local)]
 - 1. A vacancy among officers of the Board, other than the President, shall be filled by majority action of the Board.

II. Process for Selecting Board Officers

- A. Selection of Board Officers shall take place at the first regular Board Meeting following the election of School Board Trustees.
- B. The election of Trustees of the District shall be on the November uniform election date. Gov't Code 573.042. [BBB (Legal)]

- C. The president shall request nominations for Board Officer Positions and hold the election. If the president or vice president is no longer on the board after the election, the secretary of the board typically conducts an election for a temporary chair who then conducts the election for the new president; the new president conducts the elections for the remaining officers. If there is no board secretary, any board member (for example, the most senior member) may assume the chair and follow the process described above.
- D. All sitting Board members, as well as newly elected members, are eligible to hold office regardless of their tenure serving on the Board.

III. Communications

- A. The Superintendent will communicate with Board members via memorandum or email, and telephone calls when appropriate.
- B. The Superintendent will communicate to Board members in timely fashion information concerning discussion and action items that will be on the agenda of monthly Board meetings.
- C. The Superintendent and Board members will communicate with each other in a manner that maintains appropriate confidentiality.
- D. The Superintendent and Board members will openly share concerns, information, and agendas.
- E. With respect to providing information and counsel to the Board, the Superintendent shall not fail to give the Board as much information as necessary to allow Board members to be adequately informed.
- F. A quorum of Board members cannot communicate about Board business outside of a posted board meeting via email or any other means.
- G. Board members may request information and/or reports from the Superintendent. [BBE (Local)]
- H. Individual Board members must not speak in an official capacity outside of properly convened and conducted meetings. [BBE (Legal)]
- I. An individual Board member, acting in his or her official capacity, has the right to seek information pertaining to District fiscal affairs, business transactions, governance, school operations, and personnel matters, including information that properly may be withheld from members of the general public in accordance with the Public Information Chapter of the Texas Government Code. Written responses to information requests from the Board will be distributed to all Board members in a timely manner.
- J. Individual Board members shall not have access to confidential student records unless the member is acting in his or her official capacity and has a legitimate educational interest in the records. Individual Board members shall seek such access from the Superintendent. At the time access to the records is provided, the Board member shall be advised of his or her responsibility to comply with confidentiality requirements.
- K. Individual Board members shall not issue formal written or oral requests for information directly to campus principals or other administrators not designated as Board contacts. Board members may e-mail or call the Superintendent to ask questions or request information.
- L. The Board will communicate with the community through public forums, public hearings, regular Board meetings and the District's calendar of events.
- M. Board members are encouraged to share information about meetings and events with other Board members at properly posted Board meetings. Board members should

notify the Superintendent's office to allow for calendar additions and postings as needed.

- N. Individual Board members may communicate with members of the community as they deem appropriate. While Board members strive to be responsive to community stakeholders, it is not possible for them to respond to each inquiry due to the volume of such interactions.
- O. The Board of Trustees encourages community input, and if requested, the confidentiality of individuals will be maintained when possible.
- P. Correspondence related to formal complaints or grievances, as specified in Board Policies DGBA, FNG, and GF (Legal & Local) will not be forwarded to Board members in order that they may maintain their objectivity pertaining to matters that may require Board action in the future. The sender will be notified with an explanation of the decision to not forward the communication.
- Q. If parents, students, or other members of the public bring concerns or complaints to an individual Trustee, the Board member should listen to the complaint or grievance already filed under Board Policies DGBA, FNG, or GF and upon which the Board may be requested to take action.
- R. The Educational Philosophy is adopted and reviewed annually two months after the board election or as needed.
- S. The Educational Philosophy is developed and approved through a formal process and disseminated to stakeholders through the following venues: Student Code of Conduct, monthly Board of Trustee packets, and information posted on G.I.S.D. web page.

IV. Conflict of Interest

- A. Board members are expected to avoid conflicts of interest involving any matter pending before the Board. A conflict of interest is deemed to exist when a member is confronted with an issue in which the member has a personal or pecuniary interest or an issue or circumstances that could render the member unable to devote complete loyalty and singleness of purpose to the public interest. Accordingly:
 - a. If a Board member has a substantial personal or private interest in any matter pending before the Board, the member shall disclose such interest to the Board and shall not vote on the matter.
 - b. A member of the Board shall not also be an employee of the district, nor shall a member receive any compensation for services rendered to the district. This provision shall not prohibit members from receiving reimbursement for authorized expenses incurred during the performance of Board duties.
 - c. The Board shall not enter into any contract with any of its members or with a firm in which a member has a financial interest unless one or more of the following conditions apply:
 - i. The contract is awarded to the lowest responsible bidder based upon established competitive bidding procedures; or
 - ii. The Board member is the highest bidder for merchandise sold at a public auction.
 - d. A Board member is expected to avoid conflict of interest in the exercise of the member's fiduciary responsibility. Accordingly, a Board member may not:
 - i. Disclose or use confidential information acquired during the performance of official duties as a means to further the Board member's immediate family;

- ii. Accept a gift of substantial value or economic benefit which would tend to improperly influence a reasonable person, or which the Board member knows or should know is primarily for the purpose of a reward for official action.
- iii. Engage in a substantial financial transaction for private business purposes with a person whom the Board member directly or indirectly supervises.
- iv. Perform an official act, which directly confers an economic benefit on a business in which the Board member has a substantial financial interest or is engaged as a counsel, consultant, representative, or agent.

V. Board Meetings

- A. Developing the agenda:
 - 1. In consultation with the Board President, the Superintendent shall prepare the agenda for all Board meetings. [BE (Local)]
 - 2. Any Board member may request that a subject be included on the agenda for a meeting, and the Superintendent shall include on the preliminary agenda of the meeting all topics that have been timely submitted by a Board member. [BE (Local)]
 - 3. The deadline for submitting items for inclusion on the agenda is noon of the seventh calendar day before regular meetings and noon of the fifth calendar day before special meetings. [BE (Local)]
 - 4. The order of business for regular Board meetings shall be as set out in the agenda accompanying the notice of the meetings. At the meeting, the order in which posted agenda items are taken may be changed by consensus of Board members [BE (Local)]
 - 5. In accordance with Government Code 551.043, no item may be placed on the agenda less than 72 hours in advance of a meeting unless in the case of an emergency or when there is an urgent public necessity. In these exceptions, posting of a supplemental agenda item is allowed if posted for at least two hours before the meeting is convened. [BE (Legal)]
- B. Use of Consent Agenda: The Board may approve items such as the following without discussion on a consent agenda:
 - 1. When the agenda is prepared, the Board President shall determine items, if any, that qualify to be placed on the consent agenda. A consent agenda shall include items of a routine and/or recurring nature grouped together under one action item. This commonly includes budget amendments, financial statements, bills and payroll, and minutes of previous meetings.
- C. Called Special Meetings or Emergency Meetings
 - 1. The President of the Board shall call a special meeting at the President's discretion or on request by two of the members of the Board.
 - 2. A special meeting notice shall be posted for at least 72 hours before the meeting is convened. An emergency meeting shall be posted for at least 1 hour before the meeting is convened. [BE (Local)]
- D. Closed Session
 - 1. The Board can discuss in closed session only those items specifically allowed by law. [Government Code Section 551], [BEC (Legal)]

2. A final action, decision, or vote on a matter deliberated in a closed meeting shall be made only in an open meeting for which proper notice has been given. [BEC (Legal)]
3. All discussion occurring during closed session must remain confidential. [BEC (Legal)]
4. Generally, personnel issues will be discussed in closed session, unless specifically required by the Texas Open Meetings Act.
5. Generally, matters involving an individual's right to privacy will be discussed in closed session.
4. A certified agenda will be kept for each closed session stating only the topic discussed.
5. Each Certified Agenda will be kept in a labeled sealed envelope in the vault for a period of two years.

E. Conduct of the Open Session

1. The Board will observe the parliamentary procedures in Robert's Rules of Order for Small Boards.

F. Discussion of Agenda Items

1. Discussions shall be addressed to the President of the Board and then the entire membership.
2. Discussion shall be directed solely to the business currently under deliberation, and the Board President shall halt discussion that does not apply to the business before the Board. [BE (Local)]

G. Citizens Addressing the Board [BED (Local)]

1. Public participation is limited to the designated open forum portion of the meeting. At all other times, the audience shall not enter into discussion or debate on matters being considered by the Board, unless recognized by the President.
2. No presentation shall exceed five minutes.
3. Persons who wish to participate in the open forum portion of the meeting shall sign up as they arrive, indicating the topic about which they wish to speak.
4. Specific factual information or recitation of existing policy may be furnished in response to inquiries, but the Board shall not deliberate or make a decision regarding any subject that is not included on the agenda posted with notice of the meetings.
5. Specific complaints about individual district personnel shall be processed through the District's grievance policies DGBA (Employee), FNG (Parent/Student), and GF (Public) (LOCAL).
6. The Board requests that citizens not refer to individual students or employees by name during Public Comments.
7. The Board does not allow the use of video, slide, or other electronic communication.
8. If citizens bring a written statement or support materials, they should provide enough copies for the seven Board members and the Superintendent.
9. The Board shall not tolerate disruption at the Board meeting by members of the public. If, after one warning from the presiding officer, any person continues to disrupt the meeting by words or actions, the person shall be removed from the meeting.

H. Voting

1. Voting shall be done by a show of hands, as directed by the president. Any member may abstain from voting, and a member's vote or failure to vote shall be recorded upon that member's request. The Board president shall have the right to

discuss, make motions and resolutions, and vote on all matters coming before the board. [BDAA (Local)]

2. No item shall be acted upon by the Board unless the item is posted in the public notice for the meeting.

V. Citizen Request/Complaint to Individual Board Member

- A. When a citizen complains to a Board member, the member should listen to the citizen to obtain a full understanding of the complaint.
- B. The Board member should remind the citizen of due process and that the Board member must remain impartial in case the situation goes before the Board.
- C. The Board member shall refer the citizen to appropriate person/chain of command.
- D. The Board member will inform the Superintendent of the complaint within 24 hours.

Note: Citizens must pursue established resolution channels with regards to complaints and concerns before they will be allowed to address the Board. After pursuing these established resolution channels, Board Policies DGBA, FNG, and GF (Local) provide citizens the opportunity to formally present their complaint or concern to the Board. (Level III).

VI. Employee Request/Concern to Individual Board Member

- A. Individual Board members will follow the same steps A, B, and C in section V above in responding to an employee request or complaint.
- B. Employees will follow the resolution procedures outlined in Board policy when filing a complaint. [DGBA (Local)]
- C. After following the proper resolution procedures of DGBA (Local), employees will be permitted to present their complaint or concern to the Board. (Level III)

VII. Media Inquiries

- A. The Superintendent is the official spokesperson for the District. The Board President is the official spokesperson for the Board.
 1. All Board members who receive calls from the media concerning particular Board action shall direct them to the Board's spokesperson.
 2. All Board members who receive calls from the media concerning school district operations, personnel, or other issues separate from specific Board action, shall direct them to the Superintendent.

VIII. Anonymous Phone Calls/Letters

- A. The Gatesville Board of Trustees encourages community input; however, anonymous phone calls or letters will not receive Board attention, discussion or response, and will not result in directives to the administration.
- B. Anonymous phone calls or letters that allege misconduct on the part of district personnel will be referred to the Superintendent.

IX. Evaluation of the Superintendent

- A. The Superintendent evaluation instrument will be distributed to all Board members one month before the formal evaluation.
- B. The Board and Superintendent agree to follow a timeline of quarterly evaluations.

January-

Board of Trustees provides a written evaluation presented to the Superintendent

1. Board may take action in open session to extend the Superintendent's Contract and make salary adjustments.

2. The Superintendent will receive a composite evaluation instrument that contains a consensus score for each indicator as rated by the individual Board members.

February-

Review of superintendent evaluation procedures and instrument for next year.

April-

Formative Superintendent Evaluation: Superintendent will provide updates on board goals. Board of Trustees will offer feedback and seek clarification on goals.

July-

Interim (Mid-Year) Superintendent Evaluation: Superintendent will provide updates on goals. Board of Trustees will offer informal feedback on performance.

October-

Formative Superintendent Evaluation. Superintendent gains community input on district goals through the DEIC.

November-

Approve district/campus improvement plans. The Board and Superintendent shall update and establish new district goals and review the status of long-term goals for the district.

December-

Superintendent provides an update on the status of progress toward district goals (in preparation for superintendent evaluation). Board of Trustees provides clarification and feedback to the Superintendent.

X. Board Member Visit to School Campus

- A. All Board members are encouraged to attend any school's events as their time permits. When visiting in a non-official capacity, notifying the Superintendent is not necessary; however, Board members must be aware of whether a quorum attends the event and Open Meeting Act requirement.
- B. Board members are not to go unannounced into teachers' classrooms or individual buildings for the purpose of evaluation.
- C. Board members are to call the superintendent before going on to a campus and visiting with campus administrators on official matters. At no time will Board members visit campuses or other school programs in an attempt to evaluate personnel.

XI. G.I.S.D. Board of Trustees - Code of Ethics

As a member of the Board, a trustee shall promote the best interests of the District as a whole, and, to that end, a trustee shall adhere to the following educational and ethical standards:

1. Bring about desired changes through legal and ethical procedures, upholding and enforcing all laws, State Board of Education rules, and court orders pertaining to schools.
2. Make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of **all** children in the District, regardless of ability, race, creed, ethnicity, sex, or social standing.
3. Recognize that decisions must be made by the Board as a whole and make no personal promise or take private actions that may compromise the Board.
4. Focus Board action on policymaking, goal setting, planning, and evaluation, and insist on regular and impartial evaluation of all staff.
5. Support and protect school personnel in the proper performance of their duties.
6. Vote to appoint the best-qualified personnel available after consideration of recommendations of the Superintendent.

7. Hold confidential all matters pertaining to school that, if disclosed, may needlessly injure individuals or the schools, and respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law.
8. Attend all regularly scheduled Board meetings insofar as possible and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings.
9. Delegate authority for the administration of the school to the Superintendent.
10. Endeavor to make policy decisions only after full discussion at publicly held Board meetings, render all decisions based on the available facts, and refuse to surrender judgment to individuals or special groups.
11. Encourage the free expression of opinion by all Board members and seek systematic communications between the Board and students, staff, and all elements of the community.
12. Communicate to Board members and the Superintendent, at appropriate times, expressions of public reaction to Board policies and school programs.
13. Become informed about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed information, such as those sponsored by state and national school boards associations.
14. Refrain from using the position of Trustee for personal or partisan gain.
15. Make certain the Board remains responsive to the community.
16. Remember always that the first and greatest concern of a Trustee must be the educational welfare of all the students attending the public schools. [BBF (Local)]

XII. Cause for Removal of a Board Member [BBC (Legal)]

Board members may be removed from office for:

1. "Incompetency," which means:
 - a. Gross ignorance of official duties;
 - b. Gross carelessness in the discharge of those duties; or
 - c. Unfitness or inability to promptly and properly discharge official duties because of a seriously physical or mental defect that did not exist at the time of election.
2. "Official misconduct," which means intentional, unlawful behavior relating to official duties by a Trustee entrusted with the administration of justice or the execution of the law. The term includes an intentional or corrupt failure, refusal, or neglect of a Trustee to perform a duty imposed on the Trustee by law and conviction of an offense relating to violation of purchase procedures. [CH (Legal)]
3. Conviction of a Trustee by a jury for any felony or for misdemeanor official misconduct. The conviction of a public officer by a petit jury for any felony or for a misdemeanor involving official misconduct operates as an immediate removal from office of that officer.

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

XIII. Reviewing Board Operating Procedures

Board Operating Procedures will be reviewed annually two months after the board election and updated as needed.