

# Edina Public Schools Board Operating Norms

*Through our commitment and work, the members of the Edina School Board will strive to provide an excellent public education that meets the needs of all students in our district. The academic excellence we expect is accomplished in partnership with our students, parents, teachers, administrators, non-licensed staff and community members. The purpose of this document is to provide governing expectations and consistency for the conduct of the school board. This document serves to supplement our policies, which exist to provide a code of ethics, structure, operating guidelines, general meeting parameters, and the basic roles and responsibilities of our school board.*

## **General Board Conduct**

As a board, we will model with each other the leadership and relationships we seek to build with others. How we run meetings, interact with each other, district staff, and the community, sends clear signals about how we value the mission, values, and vision we have established for the Edina School District. Collaborative relationships based on trust, respect, and accountability will build credibility and inspire confidence in our leadership, our vision, and the work of Edina Public Schools.

## **Role of School Board and Superintendent**

The role of the School Board is to be the trustee of public education and to protect, conserve, and advance its progress. The role of the Superintendent is to lead district operations, and to implement board policy and decisions. The Board recognizes the Superintendent as the chief executive officer and expects recommendations, proposals and suggestions from the Superintendent on matters before the Board. As a board, our staff interaction will be facilitated through the office of the Superintendent. The board recognizes that only the board as a whole has power, and no individual board member has authority or power independently. The board will focus on strategic leadership rather than administrative details, observe clear distinction between board and superintendent responsibilities, and give direction through majority decisions of the full board rather than through individual decisions.

### **In fulfilling our roles as members of the Edina School Board, we will:**

1. Make our decisions based on the available information, and in the best interest of all students. This obligation supersedes (a) any conflicting loyalty a member may have to advocacy or interest groups (b) loyalty based upon membership on other boards or staff, and (c) conflicts based upon the personal interest of any Board member or any member of their family.
2. Make every attempt to attend all board functions including committee meetings, and remain informed of activities, programs, and incidents in the district within the board's purview.
3. Respect and remain mindful of the different roles within the school system, including, but not limited to the School Board, the Superintendent, Administrators, Teachers, and Staff.
4. Not publicly criticize an employee or other board member.
5. Meet with district personnel only after notifying the Superintendent, and attend staff meetings, staff training and other administrative events only upon invitation.
6. Accept responsibility for all board decisions, regardless of the vote and speak with one voice after a decision has been made.
7. Take no private or public actions that will compromise the District.
8. Participate, when possible, in opportunities that provide professional growth and commit to continuous improvement through annual self evaluation.

## **Meeting Protocols**

We shall conduct business through a set agenda that advances district goals. The Board Chair and Superintendent will ensure the agenda is appropriately balanced to provide adequate time for deliberation of each issue. As a general practice, we will endeavor not to vote on a new issue in the same meeting in which the issue is presented. Items will be addressed in subsequent meetings through

planned agenda items, unless it is determined by the Board Chair or Superintendent that it would be detrimental to delay the issue. (EPS Policy 203 *Operation of the School Board*)

While every board member has the right request an agenda item or a change to an agenda at a board meeting, as best practice in preparing agendas and materials for Board meetings, we will strive to:

1. Make a request to the Board Chair or Superintendent seven (7) days prior to a meeting for an item, presentation or material they wish to be considered at the meeting.
2. Make a request 96-hours in advance to the Board Chair or Superintendent for any changes to the posted agenda. If materials are not made available seven days in advance of a meeting, then any requests should be made within 48 hours of receipt of materials.
3. If a board member has a question pertaining to a board agenda item that requires time and preparation, members should contact the Superintendent, or the Board Chair directly with any questions at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.
4. Recognize and respect that it takes a majority of the board in attendance to add an item to the meeting or work session agenda during said meeting.
5. Inform the Superintendent or Board Chair prior to the board meeting if a board member identifies an error in a presentation or minutes so corrections can be made.

**Edina Public Schools Policy 209 outlines the Code of Ethics that all Board Members will follow in fulfilling their roles. As best practice when conducting board meetings and work sessions, we will strive to:**

1. Engage in meaningful, professional, focused and open discussion.
2. Start and end on time, utilize a timekeeper, and maintain a timed agenda with meeting objectives in order to have effective and efficient meetings.
3. Invite input from all board members, be respectful of everyone's thoughts and ideas, and allow an opportunity for board member input. Articulate clearly and concisely, on topic, and loudly enough so all can be heard.
4. Express our opinions and beliefs about issues. Board discussions will be open and candor encouraged. Honest disagreements are legitimate and have an appropriate place on the board; however, board members shall respect one another's opinions and shall not criticize one another in an inappropriate manner.
5. Focus on issues rather than personalities.
6. Come prepared by reading the packet before the board meetings and work session.
7. Ask administrators to share only highlights of the meeting's reports.
8. Remain on the topic(s) communicated on the agenda posted before the meeting or work session.
9. Refrain from the use of cell phones during board meetings and work sessions.

### **Board Committees**

The Edina School Board uses committees to discuss issues related to policy, governance, teaching and learning, and finance and facilities. Board Committees are used to clarify issues, elicit board questions, and prepare for public presentation of policies, issues, and decision-making. As committees do not have a quorum, committees are in place to make the board work more efficient and effective.

Committees do not have decision making authority.

**As defined in Policy 213 and through best practice, in the Operations of Committees, we will strive to adhere to the following:**

1. Committees will act only within the guidelines and mission established for that committee or subcommittee by the School Board.
2. Committees will act only as advisory to administration and the board.
3. Committees will not meet independent of, or without prior knowledge and approval of administration.
4. Committees will not stray into management work, and not direct or oversee school district staff, which is the function of the Superintendent.
5. Committees will not initiate work outside the scope of administration recommendations without full board approval.
6. If a Committee or board member would like a Committee to work on a project or item that is not already assigned, the full board, in conjunction with the Superintendent, needs to decide if the Committee should work on that item.
7. Committees should provide feedback to administration to help them prepare recommendations and presentations.
8. However, any direction to the Superintendent related to Committee work will come only from the full Board.
9. Committees should meet as often as necessary to accomplish their work and should meet only when there is substantive work to be done.
10. Committee chairs will work with the Superintendent and the Board Chair to understand work requirements and constraints of the District in managing projects.
11. Committees will designate a secretary who will record meeting highlights .
12. At monthly public board meetings, Committee Chairs should be prepared to give updates on substantive committee progress on issues that have not already been addressed in the public meeting.

### **Communications**

The Edina School Board will be planful and systematic in its communications to set expectations, enhance understanding, and build support with each other and the community.

**In Board communications, we will strive to:**

1. Have the Superintendent update the entire board on issues on a bi-weekly basis via email.
2. Communicate with the community through regular board meetings, District Communications Office publications, meeting minutes, and public hearings or listening sessions.
3. Speak and/or write in an official capacity outside the board room only when given specific authority from the Board.
4. Communicate to the Board only through the Superintendent. Board members will not send emails to a quorum of the Board.
5. Respond to community member emails only through the Superintendent or District Communications team if the email contains substantive district or board information (who will work with the Board Chair in formulating a response if warranted). The Superintendent will provide a summary to the Board of material responses. Board members may respond to personal emails on substantive district or board information after coordinating with the Superintendent.

## **Information Request Procedures**

The School Board and Administration will work together to identify the information and data needed for board decision making. The Board will be cognizant of the district's limited resources and time when requesting action from staff.

### **When a Board Member is seeking data or information, we will strive to:**

1. Recognize the distinction between “monitoring data” (data used by the school board to address accountability) and “management data” (data used by the staff for operations).
2. Limit requests to information related to issues before the Board.
3. Make all requests either to the full Board or to the Superintendent, who will review all information requests to determine if the information is readily available.
  - a. If the information is readily available, the requested information shall be provided to the full Board.
  - b. If the information is not readily available, the Superintendent will work with the Board Chair to present the request to the full Board to determine if the information is relevant, valuable and a priority. The Superintendent will give an approximate date when the information will be available to the School Board.

## **Board Liaisons**

Members of the Edina School Board, through regular, ongoing communication, participate and collaborate with various state, city and district organizations that represent varied matters regarding the School District. Board liaisons should have a formal reporting process so board members and the community can better understand what is going on at the liaison level.

1. Board liaisons represent the interests of the Edina School District and not themselves when they are serving in their liaison role.
2. If a board liaison cannot make their liaison commitment, it is their responsibility to find a replacement.