

# **Mahtomedi School Board and Superintendent Leadership Team Operating Practices**

*"The following expectations have been developed and agreed upon to in order to provide structure to the operation of the School Board and to strengthen the relationship among School Board members and between the School Board and Superintendent:"*

## **1. How we relate to one another (unity, conflict and decision making)**

- Board members will relate to one another with honesty, integrity, and respect. Once a clear majority of the Board has agreed to a certain position and discussed it thoroughly, other Board members will not renew discussion of that topic provided that a full discussion and vote has taken place.
- Both Board unity and honest disagreement are legitimate and have their appropriate place (individual responsibility, member responsibility, chair responsibility).
- When a majority of the Board makes a decision, the minority members will respect majority rule and exemplify the standard, "I did not agree with this action, but I will respect and support the position of the Board."
- A board member may request that an issue be reopened by going to the board chair with the "new" information. This is information that was not previously discussed or previously available. The board chair will confer with the superintendent at the agenda setting meeting to determine if the request warrants reopening the issue.
- Board members and Superintendent will not criticize or second guess each other behind the scenes.
- Board members agree to devote time on an annual basis to review these norms/guiding principles

## **2. How we communicate (boundaries, transparency, being informed)**

- The Superintendent will respect the need for all Board members to have the same information that relates to issues coming before the Board.
- The Superintendent will provide written updates on a regular basis on issues of interest and concern affecting the school district.
- Board members will channel requests for information, reports, etc. through the Superintendent rather than directly to staff.

- All official communication between Board members and other school district staff will be channeled through the Superintendent, particularly if it relates to performance of school district employees (*Exception – thank you notes from board members to staff*).
- Upon request of the board, the superintendent will capture the key discussion points and next steps/action plans and include them in the board notes.
- When communicating via email “reply all” is discouraged.

### **3. How we govern (roles, responsibilities and expectations)**

- It is agreed that the Board Chair and Superintendent will meet prior to each meeting so that he or she is fully prepared to run the meeting.
- Legal questions should be forwarded to the Superintendent who will contact an attorney for assistance.
- Board members will contact the Superintendent when they receive parental complaints rather than contacting the staff directly. In addition, Board members will encourage the complaint to follow the correct order of contacts.
- All routine personnel recommendations will be approved unless the Superintendent is contacted in advance.
- Board members will appropriately clarify their role; i.e. citizen, parent, or school board member in their interactions with teachers and other staff.
- Board members will set the general parameters for subcommittee and task force committee assignments
- Board members will notify building principals when visiting a building in their official capacity as a member of the Board.
- Board members will attempt to visit each building at least once per year.
- Board members who are not in attendance at assigned school board committee meetings are responsible for getting information discussed prior to any full school board meeting where the same issue may be discussed.
- Board members will focus on policy and board parameters and not on administrative/management activities.
- Board members will recognize and respect that their authority exists where a quorum of the Board meets and not as individuals.
- Committees will select a chair who will be responsible for sharing pertinent information from the committee meeting with the full board at the first available meeting.

- Board members who serve as representative to groups outside the school board will report back to the full board at the first available meeting.

#### **4. How we conduct meetings (meeting protocol/process and participation)**

- It is the Board Chair's responsibility to remind members, when necessary to limit discussions to the agenda. The superintendent will work to limit the number of presentations and their length.
- Board members may bring to the Board items they think are important policy issues. They begin this process by bringing the item to the attention of the Superintendent or the Board Chair who will then schedule the item for a future Board meeting. The Board Chair will be the "gatekeeper" for these issues. At the beginning of a meeting, the Board Chair will discuss what requests have been made and any decision about whether or not to add the item. If the Board Chair determines that an item will not be added to the agenda, the Board member who made that request can ask the Board for approval to add the item. If there is a "second" to the motion and a majority vote for the item, it will be added.
- Board members agree to prepare for discussions in advance and review the materials distributed in the packet before the meeting.
- Board members who disagree with recommendations in the addendum or need more information before making a decision will contact the Superintendent or School Board Chair prior to the meeting.
- The Board Chair will welcome visitors and make it clear at the beginning of the meeting how they can participate. Citizens in the audience can be recognized and comment from the podium at the beginning of the meeting during the "Public Comment" time period.
- There will be no response from board members to public comments except in rare circumstances in which the Board Chair or superintendent will reply.
- Board members needing additional information about consent list recommendations or wishing to move items from the consent list will contact the Superintendent or Board Chair before the meeting.
- An agenda, addendum, and background material for each board meeting will be provided the Monday before each meeting. Additional items may be added at a later date, as needed.
- "No surprises" is an important management standard in regard to public board meetings and is a shared responsibility of the Superintendent and individual Board members.

- Upon request of the board, a use of hand of 5 for check-in/straw polling for how members feel on a particular issue will be employed.
- During meetings, the use of technology will only be allowed to further the agenda or the issue at hand.

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