



**BOARD RETREAT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 - 2:30 PM  
Oakdale Middle School Room 230  
815 S. Oakdale Ave.  
Medford, OR 97501

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**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Roll Call	
2. Agenda Adjustments and Approval	
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*The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. A request for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for other accommodations for persons with disabilities should be made at least 48 hours before the meeting to the Superintendent's office at (541) 842-3621 or [superintendent.office@medford.k12.or.us](mailto:superintendent.office@medford.k12.or.us).*



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	July 16, 2025
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	Structure for Board Meetings
<b>Item Type:</b>	Review/Discussion
<b>Administrator:</b>	Jeanne Grazioli & Board Chair Kendell Ferguson
<b>Objective:</b>	Review the current structure for Board meetings

**Background:** The Board will review the current structure and planning for Board meetings and discuss maintaining the current structure and/or revising processes.

**Additional Materials:** [2025-26 Board Meeting Calendar](#); [Regular Board Meeting Agenda Template](#); [Work Session Agenda Template](#); [Policy BDC Executive Sessions](#); [Policy BDDH Citizen Comments](#); [Policy BDDC Board Meeting Agenda](#); and [Board Agenda Planning Draft Schedule](#)

**Recommendation:** Review structure and documents and discuss preferences.

**Suggested Motion:** No action required at this time.

# 2025-2026 Board Meeting Calendar

Approved 7.1.2025

July 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

July 4 Independence Day - District Closed

August 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Aug 14 & 15 New Teacher Pre-Inservice Days  
 Aug 18-21 Inservice & Planning- No Students  
 Aug 22 Some staff per contracts - No Students  
 Aug 25 First Day of Instruction for designated students\*  
 Aug 25-28 Kindergarten Soft Start Week  
 Aug 26 First Day of Instruction for 7th, 8th, 10th - 12th grades  
 Aug 29 Schools Closed - Some staff per contracts

September 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Sep 1 Labor Day - District Closed  
 Sep 2 Full Day for Kindergarten Begins  
 Sep 26 Mid-Quarter - No Students

October 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Oct 10 Statewide Inservice Day - Schools Closed  
 Oct 24 End of First Quarter  
 Oct 27 Grading Day - No Students

November 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

Nov 11 Veterans Day - District Closed  
 Nov 24-25 Conference Days - No Students  
 Nov 26-28 Thanksgiving Break - District Closed

December 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Dec 5 Mid-Quarter - No Students  
 Dec 22-Jan 2 Winter Break - Schools Closed  
 Dec 24 Christmas Eve - District Closed  
 Dec 25 Christmas Day - District Closed

January 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Jan 1 New Year's Day - District Closed  
 Jan 5 Classes Resume  
 Jan 16 End of Second Quarter  
 Jan 19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day - District Closed  
 Jan 20 Grading Day - No Students

February 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Feb 16 President's Day - District Closed  
 Feb 23 Mid-Quarter - No Students

March 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Mar 20 End of Quarter  
 Mar 23 - 27 Spring Break - Schools Closed  
 Mar 30 Grading Day - No Students

April 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Apr 24 Schools Closed - Some staff per contracts & Snow Make-Up Day (if needed)

May 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

May 4 Mid-Quarter - No Students  
 May 25 Memorial Day - District Closed  
 May 27 IA and IAO Graduation Ceremonies  
 May 28 SMHS Graduation Ceremony  
 May 29 NMHS Graduation Ceremony

June 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Jun 4 End of Fourth Quarter/ Last Day of School  
 Jun 5 Grading/Pack-up Day - No Students  
 Jun 8-9 Snow Make-up Days (if needed)  
 Jun 19 Juneteenth - District Closed

No Students - Offices Open  
 Schools Closed - Some staff per contracts  
 District Closed - Holiday/Non-Contract Day  
 Conference Days - Non-School Day  
 \*Elementary grades 1-5. Kindergarten Soft Start and Orientation Day for 6th and 9th grade

Inservice / New Teacher Orientation Days  
 Reserved for Snow Make-up Day - Some staff per contracts  
 First Day for designated students / Last Day of School  
 Mid-Quarter - Grading/Professional Development Day  
 End of Quarter

  Board Meeting Dates



**Regular Meeting OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Date - 5:45 PM

Oakdale Middle School Room 230

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**AGENDA**

- 1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Roll Call**
- 2. Agenda Adjustments and Approval**
- 3. Citizen Comments**
- 4. Items for Information & Discussion**
  - a. Superintendent / School Report
  - b. Student Report
- 5. Board Action Items**
- 6. Consent Agenda**
  - a. Staff Assignment Report
  - b. Minutes from previous Board meeting
- 7. Announcements**
- 8. Adjournment**



**Work Session OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Date - 5:45 PM

Oakdale Middle School Room 230

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**AGENDA**

1. **Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Roll Call**
2. **Agenda Adjustments and Approval**
3. **Recognitions**
4. **Recess**
5. **Work Session Items**
  - a. Board Priority
6. **Consent Agenda**
  - a. Staff Assignment Report
  - b. Minutes from previous Board meeting
7. **Announcements**
8. **Adjournment**

# Medford School District 549C

Code: BDC  
Adopted: 12/12/16  
Revised/Readopted: 3/11/19; 1/22/20; 10/19/23  
Orig. Code(s): BDC

## Executive Sessions

The Board may, with appropriate notice, meet in executive session to discuss subjects allowed by statute but may not take final action except for the expulsion of a student and matters pertaining to or examination of the confidential records of the student.

An executive session may be included as an agenda item of an existing meeting or held as its own meeting. Proper notice is required.

If open session is held prior to the executive session, the presiding officer will announce the executive session by identifying the authorization under Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 192.660 or ORS 332.061 for holding such session and by noting the subject of the executive session.

The Board may hold an executive session:

1. To consider the employment of a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent.<sup>1</sup> (ORS 192.660(2)(a))
2. To consider the dismissal or disciplining of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, a public officer<sup>2</sup>, employee, staff member or individual agent who does not request an open hearing. (ORS 192.660(2)(b))
3. To conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to carry on labor negotiations. (ORS 192.660(2)(d))
4. To conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions. (ORS 192.660(2)(e))
5. To consider information or records that are exempt by law from public inspection. (ORS 192.660(2)(f))

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<sup>1</sup> This provision does not apply to the filling of a vacancy in elective office or on any public committee, commission or other advisory group; or for the consideration of general employment policies. Prior to holding an executive session under ORS 192.660(2)(a), the Board must ensure

- a. The vacancy has been advertised;
- b. Regular hiring procedures have been adopted;
- c. If hiring an officer, the public has had the opportunity to comment on the employment of the officer; and
- d. If hiring a chief executive officer, the Board has adopted hiring standards, criteria and policy directives in meetings open to the public in which the public has had the opportunity to comment on the standards, criteria and policy directives.

<sup>2</sup> To determine whether the individual involved is considered a public officer, consult with legal counsel.

6. To consult with counsel concerning the legal rights and duties of a public body with regard to current litigation or litigation likely to be filed. (ORS 192.660(2)(h))
7. To review and evaluate the employment-related performance of the chief executive officer of any public body, a public officer, employee or staff member who does not request an open hearing. (ORS 192.660(2)(i))
8. To consider matters relating to school safety or a plan that responds to safety threats made toward a school. (ORS 192.660(2)(k))
9. To consider matters relating to the safety of the governing body and of public body staff and volunteers and the security of public body facilities and meeting spaces. (ORS 192.660(2)(o))
10. To consider matters relating to cyber security infrastructure and responses to cyber security threats. (ORS 192.660(2)(p))
11. To review the expulsion of a minor student from a public elementary or secondary school. (ORS 332.061(1)(a))
12. To review matters pertaining to or examination of the confidential records of a student. (ORS 332.061(1)(b))

Members of the press may attend executive sessions except those matters pertaining to:

1. Deliberations with persons designated by the Board to carry on labor negotiations;
2. Hearings on the expulsion of a minor student; or examination of the confidential records of a student; and
3. Current litigation or litigation likely to be filed if the member of the news media is a party to the litigation or is an employee, agent or contractor of a news media organization that is a party to the litigation.

If an executive session is held pursuant to ORS 332.061, the following shall not be made public: the name of the minor student; the issue, including the student's confidential records; the discussion; and each Board member's vote on the issue.

Minutes shall be kept for all executive sessions.

Content discussed in executive sessions is confidential except as provided by law. Board members and the media are instructed not to disclose information obtained in executive session except when specifically authorized to do so or as required by law.

END OF POLICY

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**Legal Reference(s):**

[ORS 192.660](#)

[ORS 332.045](#)

[ORS 332.061](#)

OR. ATTY. GEN. Public Records and Meetings Manual.

Oregon Government Ethics Commission, [Staff Advisory Opinion](#) No. 22-106S

[House Bill 2806](#) (2023)

**Cross Reference(s):**

BDDG - Minutes of Board Meetings

CBG - Evaluation of the Superintendent

# Medford School District 549C

Code: BDDH  
Adopted: 11/06/17  
Revised/Readopted: 3/11/19; 2/17/22; 10/20/22  
Orig. Code(s): BDDH

## Citizen Comment at Board Meetings

All Board meetings, with the exception of executive sessions, will be open to the public. The Board invites the district's community members to attend Board meetings to become acquainted with the program and operation of the district. The public has a right to attend public meetings held in open session, and may be invited to share comments, ideas, and opinions with the Board during designated times on the agenda. The Board may conduct a meeting without citizen comment.

Individuals with hearing, vision, or speech impairments will be given an equal opportunity to participate in Board meetings and submit written comments to the Board. Individuals requesting assistance, aids or accommodations are encouraged to notify the district at least 48 hours prior to the Board meeting with the request, consistent with Board policy BD/BDA – Board Meetings. The Board shall make a good faith effort to provide an interpreter for hearing-impaired persons. Other appropriate auxiliary aids and services will be provided upon request and appropriate advance notice.

### Procedures for Oral Citizen Comment

The Board establishes the following procedures for citizen comment at Board meetings held in open session. The information will be accessible and available to all patrons accessing or attending such a Board meeting.

1. Citizen comment is limited to its designated place on the agenda and while time allows.
2. A person wishing to provide citizen comment, if an opportunity is provided by the Board during a meeting open to the public, will follow instructions for in-person or virtual meeting as directed on the School Board agenda section of the district website<sup>1</sup>. A request to give citizen comment in-person or electronically does not guarantee time will be available.
3. A person speaking during the citizen comment portion of the meeting may comment on a topic not on the published agenda.
4. A person speaking during the citizen comment portion of the meeting will state their name, whether they are a resident of the district, and, if speaking for an organization, the name of the organization. A spokesperson should be designated to represent a group with a common purpose.
5. A person giving citizen comment is limited to an established time limit of three minutes. Statements should be brief and concise. The Board chair has discretion to waive time limits or extend the overall time allotted for citizen comment. Additional time will be allocated in a fair and equitable manner.

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<sup>1</sup> When in-person attendees are allowed to provide oral comment, virtual attendees will be afforded the same opportunity, to the extent reasonably possible.

Time limits will be determined based on the number of commenters and the amount of time available for citizen comment. If a person has more comments than time allows or is unable to comment due to time constraints, the person is encouraged to submit additional written comments to the Board through the district office as directed.

6. Inquiries from the public during the designated portion of the agenda will not generally be responded to immediately by the Board chair, and may be referred to the superintendent or Board chair for reply at a later date. The Board will not respond to inquiries that are expected to be addressed during another designated portion of the agenda.

The Board will not typically hear citizen comment at Board work sessions.

Topics raised during the citizen comment portion may be considered for inclusion as agenda items at future Board meetings.

### **Procedures for Written Comment**

Members of the public may submit written comments or materials to the Board at any time at the district office, by mail, or by email to [citizencomment@medford.k12.or.us](mailto:citizencomment@medford.k12.or.us). Materials or comments submitted by noon on a Board meeting date will be provided to the Board before the Board meeting, but will not be read at the Board meeting. Names of those who submitted written comments will be acknowledged at the meeting and written comments will be added to the online Board packet after the meeting has occurred. Written comments must conform to the citizen comment guidelines for oral comments. Extra measures will be taken to assure the written comments meet the criteria before posting the comments online. Written materials or comments submitted may not warrant action by the Board.

### **Comments Regarding Staff Members**

A person speaking during the designated portion of the agenda for citizen comment may offer objective criticism of district operations and programs. The Board will not hear comments regarding any individual district staff member. The Board chair will direct the visitor to the procedures in Board policy KL - Public Complaints for consideration of a legitimate complaint involving a staff member. Any association contract governing the employee's rights will be followed. A commendation involving a staff member should be sent to the superintendent who will forward it to the employee, a supervisor and the Board.

END OF POLICY

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**Legal Reference(s):**

[ORS 165.535](#)  
[ORS 165.540](#)

[ORS 192.610 - 192.690](#)  
[ORS 332.057](#)

[ORS 332.107](#)

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101-12213 (2018); 29 C.F.R. Part 1630 (2020); 28 C.F.R. Part 35 (2020).

Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101-12133 (2018).

*Baca v. Moreno Valley Unified Sch. Dist.*, 936 F. Supp. 719 (C.D. Cal. 1996).

*Leventhal v. Vista Unified Sch. Dist.*, 973 F. Supp. 951 (S.D. Cal. 1997).

Oregon House Bill 2560 (2021).

**Cross Reference(s):**

BDDC - Board Meeting Agenda

# Medford School District 549C

Code: BDDC  
Adopted: 9/15/09  
Revised/Readopted: 3/11/19  
Orig. Code(s): BDDC

## Board Meeting Agenda

The Board chair and the superintendent will prepare an agenda for all regular meetings of the Board. Items of business may be suggested by any Board member, staff member, student or community member by notifying the superintendent or Board chair at least 10 working days prior to the meeting.

A consent agenda may be used by the Board for noncontroversial business. The consent agenda will consist of routine business that requires action but not necessarily discussion. These items may all be approved at the same time. A Board member may ask that any item be removed from the consent agenda. The removed item will then be placed on the action agenda.

The agenda will follow a general order established by board resolution. Opportunities for the audience to be heard may be included. The Board will follow the order of business set up by the agenda unless the order is altered by a consensus of the Board.

Items of business not on the agenda may be discussed and acted upon if the majority of the Board agrees to consider them.

The agenda, together with supporting materials, will be distributed to Board members at least three days prior to the meeting. The agenda will be available to the press and to interested patrons through the superintendent's office at the same time it is available to the Board members. Copies of the agenda for the press and public will not contain any confidential information included in the Board members' packets.

A copy of the agenda will be posted on the district website on the day of the meeting. Members of the public may request a copy of the agenda at the superintendent's office. Minutes from board work sessions and from regular or special board meetings shall be available at the district office and on the district website after approval by the Board.

The district will ensure equally effective communications are provided to qualified persons with disabilities upon request as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Appropriate auxiliary aids and services may include, but are not limited to, qualified interpreters, assistive listening systems, note takers, large print, Braille materials, audio recordings, and readers. Primary consideration will be given to the request of the person with a disability in the selection of the appropriate auxiliary aid and/or service.

Should the Board demonstrate that such a request would result in a fundamental alteration in the service, program, or activity, or an undue financial and administrative burdens, an alternate equally effective communications will be used.

Auxiliary aids and services for persons with disabilities will be available at no charge to the individual.

END OF POLICY

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**Legal Reference(s):**

[ORS 192.630](#)

[ORS 192.640](#)

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101-12213 (2012); 29 C.F.R. Part 1630 (2015); 28 C.F.R. Part 35 (2015).

Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008.

**Cross Reference(s):**

BDDG - Minutes of Board Meetings

BDDH - Public Comment at Board Meetings

**Proposed Agenda Planning Schedule 2025-2026**

Day	Date	Time	Board Attendees			Board Meeting Date
Monday	September 8	12:00-12:30 p.m.	Kendell	Sandra	Angela	September 18
Tuesday	September 23	12:00-12:30 p.m.	Kendell	Sandra	Erik	October 2
Monday	October 6	12:00-12:30 p.m.	Kendell	Sandra	Sunny	October 16
Monday	November 10	12:00-12:30 p.m.	Kendell	Sandra	Michael	November 20
Monday	December 1	12:00-12:30 p.m.	Kendell	Sandra	Lilia	December 11
Monday	January 5	12:00-12:30 p.m.	Kendell	Sandra	Angela	January 15
Tuesday	January 27	12:00-12:30 p.m.	Kendell	Sandra	Erik	February 5
Monday	February 9	12:00-12:30 p.m.	Kendell	Sandra	Sunny	February 19
Tuesday	February 24	12:00-12:30 p.m.	Kendell	Sandra	Michael	March 5
Monday	March 9	12:00-12:30 p.m.	Kendell	Sandra	Lilia	March 19
Tuesday	March 31	12:00-12:30 p.m.	Kendell	Sandra	Angela	April 9
Monday	April 13	12:00-12:30 p.m.	Kendell	Sandra	Erik	April 23
Monday	May 11	12:00-12:30 p.m.	Kendell	Sandra	Sunny	May 21
Monday	June 1	12:00-12:30 p.m.	Kendell	Sandra	Michael	June 11
Monday	June 15	12:00-12:30 p.m.	Kendell	Sandra	Lilia	June 25



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	July 16, 2025
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	Revisit Board Operating Agreement
<b>Item Type:</b>	Review and Discussion
<b>Administrator:</b>	Jeanne Grazioli, Board Chair Kendell Ferguson
<b>Objective:</b>	The Board will review the current Board Operating Agreement

**Background:** The Board will review the current BOA and determine if revisions are necessary.

**Additional Materials:** [Board Operating Agreement](#)

**Recommendation:** Review the BOA and provide feedback.

**Suggested Motion:** No action required at this time.

## How we work together

**No surprises:** We agree to ask the Board Chair or the Superintendent to place an item on an upcoming agenda to allow board members and staff to engage with the topic. The Board commits to only amending a meeting agenda, during a meeting, to add items where district operations necessitate a board decision.

**Follow the chain of command:** When a member receives an informal complaint, direct the person to solve the problem at the lowest level, which for policy issues is the Board. While members support constituents in the complaint process, they will be mindful to avoid hearing the substance of the issue and will refer complainants to district [Policy KL](#) when appropriate. Members will keep the Superintendent informed of potential formal complaints.

**Own the collective decision-making process:** The Board is committed to hearing all points of view, but once the Board makes a majority decision, all members should respect the decision.

**Exemplify the governance role:** The Board governs through regularly reviewed policies prioritizing student needs, complying with the law, and involving the affected parties in development and revisions. We will consistently maintain and apply District policies while being aware of and recognizing any situation's potential uniqueness.

**Vision Directed Leadership:** The Board will set clear goals for themselves and the Superintendent. The Board and Superintendent will set clear goals for the District.

**Assessment and Evaluation:** Objectively evaluate the Superintendent's performance and provide constructive feedback. Regularly conduct a board self-assessment/evaluation of the Board's performance. Annually establish professional development goals for the Board. Commit to participate in Board professional development.

## How we meet

**Utilize input:** The Superintendent should make recommendations, proposals, or suggestions on matters before the Board.

**The Board acts only as a body:** Individual Board members do not have authority. Only the Board as a whole has authority.

**Respectful meetings:** We agree to avoid words and actions that negatively impact an individual, the Board, or the District. We agree that we can disagree and will do so using common courtesy and respect for others. The Board will not react to impromptu complaints on the spot but will assure any individual(s) that the School District will follow up appropriately.

**Be prepared:** We agree to read all materials and seek clarification and information as needed before the Board meeting. Members will voice significant concerns about a proposal to the Superintendent or Board Chair in advance when possible.

**Avoid marathon Board meetings:** Members will make points as concisely as possible; speeches at Board meetings will be minimal. If a Board member does not have enough information to decide based on the information provided in the meeting agenda and attachments, the member should notify the Superintendent or Board Chair before the meeting. We agree to move to the question when the discussion is repetitive.

**Executive/closed sessions:** These will be held only for legally appropriate subjects. Board members will uphold confidentiality on all matters arising from the Board meeting in executive session.

**Agenda Development:** The Board Chair, Vice Chair, and one rotating member will meet at least one week before the Board meeting to prepare the agenda for the next meeting, work session, and executive session if applicable. The Board Secretary will email the draft agenda to the Board members following the agenda planning meeting. If the agenda is changed following the email, the Superintendent will communicate the change(s) via a follow-up email. Board members should contact the Chair to place an item on the agenda. Meeting materials will be available (email, hard copy, etc.) to the members approximately a week prior to the Board meeting. The consent agenda will include routine items all members agree to approve, such as personnel actions and annual appointments.

**Work Study Session Topics:** Work study sessions are intended to present background or in-depth information. The Board will meet annually to determine topics of interest aligned to District priorities. Additional required district reporting may also take place during work study sessions. The Board secretary will prepare and maintain the Board Presentations Calendar, which is updated monthly and emailed to members.

## How we communicate

**Board-Superintendent Communication:** The Superintendent will proactively inform the Board of important district activities and emergent issues. Routine matters will be communicated via email, while urgent or crises will use text messaging. Board members should avoid "reply all" and respect the chain of command by directing inquiries and concerns to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will take direction from the Board, not individual members.

**Communication between Board and District patrons:** To ensure that Board conversations and deliberations do not occur by email, the Board Chair should respond on behalf of the whole Board, with all Board members included in responses. The Board Chair may consult with the Superintendent and Vice Chair before responding. Responding to individual emails without copying the full Board is acceptable as

long as the Board member clarifies the opinions are their own.

In certain situations, and after consultation with the Superintendent, the Chair may prefer to delegate the response to the Communications Director or the District's attorney. Responses to community communications should occur within 72 hours of receipt. The chair will delegate if they are unable to meet this deadline. Use good judgment when replying to individual emails; confer with the Board Chair when in doubt.

**Communication between Board and legal counsel:** Legal counsel is responsible to the whole Board. The Board Chair or Superintendent will refer questions to legal counsel as necessary. Any legal opinion sought involving the Superintendent's employment or performance must be made to the Board Chair, with notice provided to other members. A Board member may request a legal opinion on different matters after consultation with the Board Chair.

**Communication between Board and the media:** While all members of the Board have the right to speak with the media, members must speak with a unified voice and after consultation with the Board Chair or Superintendent. When discussing Board decisions, policies, or individual views, Board members may speak in their individual capacity, provided they make it clear they are not speaking on behalf of the entire Board. Issues of a controversial nature should be referred to the Superintendent and the District Communications Director. In problems involving personnel matters, appeals, or other issues involving legal counsel, it is strongly recommended that members refer the media directly to the Superintendent, who may then consult with the District counsel.

**School visits:** Official school visits by Board members shall be regarded as informal expressions of interest in school affairs and not as "inspections" or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes. Board members will coordinate with the Board secretary 24 hours in advance and provide the estimated amount of time expected for the visit, as well as the purpose. The Board secretary will notify the principal as soon as possible, prior to school visits.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	July 16, 2025
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	Communication Expectations of the Interim Superintendent
<b>Item Type:</b>	Discussion
<b>Administrator:</b>	Jeanne Grazioli
<b>Objective:</b>	Discuss the communication expectations

**Background:** The Interim Superintendent will propose communication methods and seek the Board’s feedback on the most effective ways to maintain ongoing dialogue.

For reference, the current Board Operating Agreement states:  
“The Superintendent will proactively inform the Board of important district activities and emergent issues. Routine matters will be communicated via email, while urgent or crises will use text messaging. Board members should avoid "reply all" and respect the chain of command by directing inquiries and concerns to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will take direction from the Board, not individual members.”

**Additional Materials:** Refer to Board Operating Agreement in packet.

**Recommendation:** Discuss Board-Superintendent Communication.

**Suggested Motion:** No action required at this time.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	July 16, 2025
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	Board Communication with Media and Citizens
<b>Item Type:</b>	Review and Discussion
<b>Administrator:</b>	Jeanne Grazioli & Board Chair Kendell Ferguson
<b>Objective:</b>	Review BOA and policy regarding Board communication

**Background:** At this meeting the Board Chair will review the Board Operating Agreement and policy regarding Board communication with the media and citizens.

**Additional Materials:** Refer to BOA ; [Policy BG](#); and [Policy BCB](#)

**Recommendation:** Review communication policy and BOA and have a discussion.

**Suggested Motion:** No action required at this time.

# Medford School District 549C

Code: BG  
Adopted: 2/16/10  
Revised/Readopted: 3/11/19; 10/17/24  
Orig. Code(s): BG

## Board-Staff Communications

The Board desires to maintain open channels of communication between itself and the district staff. The basic line of communication will, however, be through the superintendent.

### Staff Communications to the Board

All formal communications or reports to the Board or any Board committee from staff members should be submitted through the superintendent. This procedure will not be construed as denying the right of any employee to address the Board about issues which are neither part of an active administrative procedure, nor disruptive to the operation of the district. In addition, this procedure does not restrict protected labor relations communications of bargaining unit members. Staff members are invited to Board meetings which provide an opportunity to observe the Board's deliberations on matters of district operation.

### Board Communications to Staff

All official communications, policies, and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the superintendent. The superintendent will provide appropriate communication to keep staff fully informed of the Board's policies, priorities and actions.

### Visits to Schools

Official school visits by Board members shall be regarded as informal expressions of interest in school affairs and not as "inspections" or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes. Board members will coordinate with the Board secretary 24 hours in advance and provide the estimated amount of time expected for the visit, as well as the purpose. The Board secretary will notify the principal as soon as possible, prior to school visits.

END OF POLICY

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### Legal Reference(s):

[ORS 332.107](#)

[OAR 581-022-2405](#)

Anderson v. Central Point Sch. Dist., 746 F.2d 505 (9th Cir. 1984).

Connick v. Myers, 461 U.S. 138 (1983).

Lebanon Education Association/OEA v. Lebanon Community School District, 22 PECBR 323 (2008).

### Cross Reference(s):

GBD - Board-Staff Communications

KK - Visitors to Schools

# Medford School District 549C

Code: BCB  
Adopted: 9/15/09  
Revised/Readopted: 3/11/19  
Orig. Code(s): BCB

## Board Officers

At its first scheduled meeting after July 1, the Board will elect one of its members to serve as chair and one to serve as vice chair for a term of one year. No member of the Board may serve as chair more than four years in succession. If a Board member is unable to continue to serve as an officer, a replacement will be elected and will serve the remainder of the officer's term until the following July.

The Board chair will:

1. Assist the superintendent in establishing the agenda for regular Board meetings;
2. Call special meetings when required;
3. Preside at all meetings of the Board and enforce the rules of order;
4. Sign the minutes and other official documents that require the signature of the chair;
5. Represent the district and the Board at official functions, unless this duty is delegated by the Board chair to another Board member;
6. Appoint all committees;
7. Have the right to discuss issues and vote.

In the absence, incapacitation or death of the chair, the vice chair will perform the duties of chair and, when so acting, will have the chair's powers. The vice chair will perform other functions as designated by the Board.

The superintendent will designate a staff member to serve as Board secretary and will directly supervise and evaluate the secretary. The secretary to the Board will take notes at Board meetings, compile minutes, and perform related work as assigned by the superintendent or requested by the Board chair. These duties will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Record the disposition of all matters on which the Board considered action.
2. Prepare and distribute minutes in advance for approval at the next Board meeting.
3. Maintain properly authenticated official copies of the minutes.
4. Maintain the official record of Board policies
5. Properly post all Board meetings.

**Board or District Spokesperson:**

The Board may appoint one of its members, usually the chair, or another person to make authorized statements to the public or the media when the Board deems that, under the circumstances, the district's position should be articulated by a single voice. The spokesperson serves at the Board's direction and may be removed or replaced at any time by action of a majority of the Board.

**END OF POLICY**

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**Legal Reference(s):**

[ORS 255.335](#)  
[ORS 332.040](#)

[ORS 332.045](#)  
[ORS 332.057](#)

[OAR 166-400-0010\(9\)](#)

**Cross Reference(s):**

BC/BCA - School Board Organization/Board Organizational Meeting



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	July 16, 2025
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	School Visits
<b>Item Type:</b>	Review and Discussion
<b>Administrator:</b>	Jeanne Grazioli & Board Chair Kendell Ferguson
<b>Objective:</b>	Review BOA and policy regarding school visits

**Background:** At this meeting the Interim Superintendent and Board Chair will review the Board Operating Agreement and policy regarding school visits and propose a plan for school visits for the 2025-26 school year.

**Additional Materials:** Refer to BOA and [Policy BG](#)

**Recommendation:** Review BOA and paragraph in policy BG regarding school visits and discuss plans for this school year.

**Suggested Motion:** No action required at this time.

# Medford School District 549C

Code: BG  
Adopted: 2/16/10  
Revised/Readopted: 3/11/19; 10/17/24  
Orig. Code(s): BG

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END OF POLICY

---

### Legal Reference(s):

[ORS 332.107](#)

[OAR 581-022-2405](#)

Anderson v. Central Point Sch. Dist., 746 F.2d 505 (9th Cir. 1984).

Connick v. Myers, 461 U.S. 138 (1983).

Lebanon Education Association/OEA v. Lebanon Community School District, 22 PECBR 323 (2008).

### Cross Reference(s):

GBD - Board-Staff Communications

KK - Visitors to Schools



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	July 16, 2025
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	Review Board/District Goals and Priorities
<b>Item Type:</b>	Review and Discussion
<b>Administrator:</b>	Jeanne Grazioli and Board Chair Kendell Ferguson
<b>Objective:</b>	Review existing goals and priorities

**Background:** The Board will review the current Board/District Goals and Priorities in anticipation of updating them for the 2025-26 school year.

**Additional Materials:** [Board/District Goals and Priorities](#)

**Recommendation:** Review the current goals and priorities.

**Suggested Motion:** No action required at this time.

## **Objective Key Result and Key Performance Indicators**

### **Objective Key Result: To Be Revised**

ALL MSD students graduate with the skills, knowledge, curiosity, and drive to succeed in a job, trade school, college, or university.

### **Board/District Goals (Key Performance Indicators): To Be Revised**

1. *Students Can Read*: Third Grade Reading, State Assessment
2. *Students Are Numerate*: Eighth Grade Math, State Assessment
3. *Students Are Engaged*: YouthTruth, Engagement Measure
4. *Students Graduate*: Four Year Graduation Rate and Five Year Completer Rate
5. *Students are Regularly Attending*: ODE Regular Attenders Data

*All Key Performance Indicators will be measured in aggregate, and disaggregated by student group.*

**2024-2025 Goal: Student Success shows consistent growth year-to-year. To be Revised**

### **Priorities and Desired Outcomes 2024-2025: To be Revised**

- Know every student by name, strength, and need, identify the academic, social, and emotional needs of every student and develop a plan to help meet those needs.
- Provide a system for intentional systematization of flexible credit opportunities to facilitate graduating on time.
- Identify and adopt effective teaching and learning methods and strategies.
- Improve safety and security.

Created: March 4, 2021 Board Work Session  
Revised: March 11, 2021 Executive Leadership Team (Shared with Board 3.12.21)  
Adopted: March 18, 2021 Board Meeting  
Revised: July 25, 2022 Board Retreat  
Reviewed: August 17, 2023 Board Retreat  
Revised: August 30, 2024 Board Retreat

**Revised Board Retreat TBA**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	July 16, 2025
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	Suggested Draft Priorities 2025-26
<b>Item Type:</b>	Report
<b>Administrator:</b>	Jeanne Grazioli
<b>Objective:</b>	Review the suggested draft priorities for the 2025-26 school year

**Background:** The Leader’s Intent document outlines the Interim Superintendent’s recommended priorities for the 2025–26 school year. These will inform the Board’s development of updated goals and priorities.

The priorities reflect input from various stakeholders and are part of the Interim Superintendent’s entry plan, which will be presented at the second session of the Board retreat in September (or earlier). The Board will review these draft priorities, along with current goals, to provide feedback and work toward alignment in setting final priorities for 2025–26.

**Additional Materials:** [Leaders Intent 2025-26](#)

**Recommendation:** Review the document and provide feedback.

**Suggested Motion:** No action required at this time.

# Leader's Intent 2025-2026

- 1. Curriculum Optimization: Support ELA and Math Achievement**
  - a. \*Fully Implement the New Math Curriculum
  - b. Expand and Enhance ELA Curriculum Use
  - c. Put the MSD Instructional Model into Practice
  
- 2. MSD Relationships: Build a Thriving, Engaged, and Connected District**
  - a. \*Strengthen Relationships to Support Staff and Family Retention and Engagement
  - b. Improve Partnerships with Employee and Community Organizations
  - c. Provide Pathways and Tools for Leadership Growth at All Levels
  
- 3. Student Success: Improve Student Career Readiness K-12**
  - a. Embed Rigorous, Flexible Learning Options into School Programs
  - b. Increase Student Attendance
  - c. \*Expand Equitable Access to College Credit and Career Credential Opportunities for High School Students
  
- 4. Safety and Security: Do the Basics Well**
  - a. Train Staff and Students on Proficiency in Emergency Response Protocols
  - b. Address and Monitor Identified Security Gaps from Site Assessments
  
- 5. Foster Inclusive School Communities: Students with Disabilities are Supported and Engaged**
  - a. \*Expand Staff Expertise and Resources to Equitably Support Students with Disabilities
  
- 6. Financial Stewardship: Support Educational Priorities**
  - a. \*Engage the MSD Community in Understanding and Shaping the District's Financial Future

\* = project

***Together in Purpose, Together in Progress!***



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	July 16, 2025
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	Staff Assignment Report
<b>Item Type:</b>	Report
<b>Administrator:</b>	Janel Reed, Jeanne Grazioli
<b>Objective:</b>	Approve new licensed and administrative staff.

### **Background:**

Under current Board Policy GB, one responsibility of the Board is to approve the hiring of licensed and administrative staff. The Staff Assignment Report includes that information, as well as any retirements or resignations.

**Additional Materials:** Staff Assignment Report

**Recommendation:** Administration recommends approval of the new hires.

**Suggested Motion:** A formal motion is not required if approved with the consent agenda.

**Medford School District Staff Assignment  
School Board Meeting, July 16, 2025**

**Recommendation for election to the position of Teacher for the 2025-26 school year:**

Employee Name	School/Location	Position	University/College
Lake, Christian	North Medford High School	Math Teacher	Southern Oregon University
Edwards-Henry, Carmen	Special Education	Speech Language Pathologist	Southern University A & M
Coopman, Ashlee	Howard Elementary	Sped Teacher / MAPS Kinder	Alliant International University
Reishman, Lily	Innovation Academy	Blended Learning Teacher/Engage	Lewis & Clark College
Devine, Dylan	South Medford High School	Math Teacher	University of Nevada, Reno
Addison, Rebecca	Kennedy Elementary	MAPS 2 Teacher	University of Hawaii

**Resignations:**

Employee Name	School/Location	Position	Effective Date
Colin Bado	Innovation Academy	Assistant Principal	6.20.2025



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	July 16, 2025
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	Consideration for approval of minutes from previous meeting(s)
<b>Item Type:</b>	Minutes
<b>Administrator:</b>	Jeanne Grazioli, Jodi Fahy
<b>Objective:</b>	Approve meeting minutes

**Background:** School Board policies BDDG and BDDC indicate the Board shall provide for the taking of written minutes of all its meetings, and that the minutes shall be available to the public after approval by the Board.

**Additional Materials:** Draft minutes for the Board Meeting held on June 26, 2025.

**Recommendation:** Approve the minutes included with the consent agenda.

**Suggested Motion:** A formal motion is not required if approved with the consent agenda.



## Regular Meeting of the Board of Education

Thursday, June 26, 2025 5:30 PM

Oakdale Middle School Room 230  
815 S. Oakdale Ave.  
Medford, OR 97501

Board members present: Lilia Caballero, Kendell Ferguson, Jeff Kinsella, Suzanne Messer (virtually), Sunny Spicer, and Cynthia Wright  
Board member absent: Michael Williams

*A video recording of the Board meeting can be found on the district website at [this link](#). The slide presentation can be viewed by clicking on Extras listed next to the meeting at [this link](#).*

### 1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Roll Call

Board Chair Cynthia Wright called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM, led the Pledge of Allegiance, and confirmed a quorum through roll call. She welcomed attendees and read the district's vision statement.

### 2. Agenda Adjustments and Approval

No objections were raised. The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

### 3. Recognitions

#### 3.a. New Medford School District Leaders

Interim Superintendent Jeanne Grazioli introduced the recognitions for Washington Elementary Principal Kara Sparks and Senior Executive Director Todd Bloomquist.

Bloomquist and Sparks provided information on their professional experience, prior jobs within and outside the district, and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to work with students and staff at Medford School District.

#### 3.b. Appreciation for Superintendent Bret Champion

Chair Wright expressed appreciation for Superintendent Bret Champion's leadership, highlighting his ability to energize the district, strengthen core practices, address challenges directly, and leave a strong foundation for the future. She thanked him for his service and leadership.

Board Directors shared their gratitude for Superintendent Champion's focus on building relationships between teachers and students, and his steady leadership during challenges such as COVID-19. They commended his integrity, vision, and the positive impact he had on staff, students, and the community.

In response, Superintendent Champion expressed his gratitude to the Board and the community. He reflected on the lessons learned about leadership, the strength of community collaboration, and the importance of public education. He voiced his confidence in the district's future under new leadership and shared his heartfelt appreciation for the opportunity to serve.

### **3.c. Appreciation for Board Directors Jeff Kinsella and Cynthia Wright**

#### **Board Director Jeff Kinsella**

Chair Wright and fellow Board Directors recognized Jeff Kinsella for his dedication, preparation, and candor throughout his service. He was praised for his focus on students, willingness to ask hard questions, and ability to balance serious leadership with approachability.

Director Kinsella reflected on his time on the Board, emphasizing the importance of seeing potential in every child and remaining focused on Board goals despite challenges. He read the book *Maybe*, a story about the endless potential in all of us, and presented a copy to the incoming Board members.

*The Board took a short recess in order to reboot the online streaming due to technical difficulties.*

#### **Board Chair Cynthia Wright**

Board Directors expressed gratitude for Cynthia Wright's fierce advocacy for students and her resilience as Board Chair during particularly challenging times. She was commended for her mentorship, dedication, and steadfast focus on student success.

Chair Wright shared her appreciation for the opportunity to serve, reflecting on her growth as a leader and the importance of building strong relationships. She encouraged the incoming Board to continue fostering collaboration and student-centered leadership.

## **4. Citizen Comments**

Chair Wright outlined citizen comment procedures. The following citizens addressed the Board:

#### **Taryne Saunders, Parent**

Expressed concerns regarding Board transparency and governance practices; questioned

the timing and process for appointing a new Board member following a recent resignation; and urged the Board to prioritize transparency and accountability.

**Sheryl Zimmerer, Charter School Director**

Thanked Superintendent Champion for his leadership in fostering collaboration between the District and charter schools; highlighted his role in building trust, supporting innovation, and strengthening relationships; and encouraged the Board to continue promoting a cooperative approach moving forward.

Chair Wright concluded citizen comments and thanked those who participated.

**5. Items for Information & Discussion / Board Action Items**

**5.a. Budget Amendment #3-2024-25**

Board Director Sunny Spicer asked district staff if the budget amendment included funds directly related to her organization which provides preschool services for the Medford School District. Assistant Superintendent of Operations Brad Earl responded that the budget amendment did not include funds that impact her organization, and that it included juvenile detention funding, special education funding, and the state school fund true-up.

**A motion was presented by Jeff Kinsella and seconded by Kendell Ferguson to approve Budget Amendment #3-2024-25 as presented.**

**Roll call vote: Kinsella: Yea, Messer: Yea, Caballero: Yea, Ferguson: Yea, Spicer: Yea, Wright: Yea**

**Result: Motion passed (Yea: 6: No: 0)**

**5.b. FY2025-26 Approved to Adopted Budget Changes**

Interim Superintendent Grazioli explained the delay in adopting the budget, noting the district had received as much information as they can expect. Earl added there had been no final numbers provided by the state, and that the budget was based on the most updated information.

**5.c. FY2025-26 Budget Adoption**

Board Director Sunny Spicer declared a conflict of interest as the executive director of an organization that receives funds from the Medford School District and recused herself from the budget adoption.

**A motion was presented by Jeff Kinsella and seconded by Kendell Ferguson to approve the Resolution Adopting the 2025-26 Budget as presented.**

**Roll call vote: Ferguson: Yea, Kinsella: Yea, Caballero: Yea, Messer: Yea,**

**Wright: Yea**  
**Result: Motion passed (Yea: 5, No: 0)**

**A motion was presented by Kendell Ferguson and seconded by Lilia Caballero to approve the Resolution Making Appropriations for the 2025-26 Budget as presented.**

**Roll call vote: Messer: Yea, Caballero: Yea, Kinsella: Yea, Ferguson: Yea, Wright: Yea**  
**Result: Motion passed (Yea: 5, No: 0)**

**A motion was presented by Jeff Kinsella and seconded by Kendell Ferguson to approve the Resolution to Impose and Categorize Taxes as presented.**

**Roll call vote: Kinsella: Yea, Ferguson: Yea, Messer: Yea, Caballero: Yea, Wright: Yea**  
**Result: Motion passed (Yea: 5, No: 0)**

Earl commended the finance staff for their relentless effort in navigating an incredibly complex budget.

#### **5.d. Officially Close Medford Online Academy**

**A motion was presented by Lilia Caballero and seconded by Kendell Ferguson to close Institution 5510 - Medford Online Academy, effective June 30, 2025.**

#### **Discussion:**

Chair Wright expressed gratitude for the purpose the online school served at the time students needed it during the pandemic. Staff confirmed that online options would still be available for students moving forward.

**Roll call vote: Messer: Yea, Caballero: Yea, Ferguson: Yea, Spicer: Yea, Kinsella: Yea, Wright: Yea**  
**Result: Motion passed (Yea: 6, No: 0).**

### **6. Consent Agenda**

#### **6.a. Staff Assignment Report**

#### **6.b. Minutes from previous Board meeting**

The consent agenda, which included the staff assignment report and minutes from the previous meeting, was approved without objection.

**7. Announcements**

**7.a. July 1 - Board Organizational Meeting at Oakdale Middle School - 5:30 PM**

Chair Wright welcomed Director Spicer to the Board and reminded attendees of the upcoming Board Organizational meeting on July 1 at Oakdale Middle School.

**8. Adjournment**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:27 PM

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Chair of the District School Board  
Medford School District

ATTEST:

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Superintendent-Clerk



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	July 16, 2025
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	Additional Annual Designations for 2025-26 School Year
<b>Item Type:</b>	Action/Consent Agenda
<b>Administrator:</b>	Brad Earl
<b>Objective:</b>	Approve the additional annual designations for the 2025-2026 school year

**Background:** There are a number of designations required or recommended as part of the organizational plan. In election years, that meeting must occur no later than the last day of July. (ORS 332.040 and 255.335(5)). At the July 1 Organizational Meeting, the Board approved the list of annual designations. Following the meeting, staff noticed that two designations were not included with the list, and therefore must be approved at this meeting. The list below provides details for the additional annual designations that must be approved by the Board.

**Appoint District Clerk** - Interim Superintendent Jeanne Grazioli

**Appoint Deputy Clerk** - Brad Earl, Budget Officer and Custodian of funds with authorization to sign district checks, make payments, accept quotes and award bids, executive interfund loans and/or cash advances in accordance with ORS 294.660, invest funds, and sign contracts

**Additional Materials:** None

**Recommendation:** Consider approving the additional annual designations.

**Suggested Motion:** A formal motion is not required if approved with the consent agenda.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	July 16, 2025
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	Reinstate Policy CBB
<b>Item Type:</b>	Consent Agenda
<b>Administrator:</b>	Jeanne Grazioli
<b>Objective:</b>	Reinstate Policy CBB - Recruitment and Appointment of the Superintendent

**Background:** Following the resignation of Superintendent Champion, staff was advised by legal counsel to suspend Policy CBB - Recruitment and Appointment of the Superintendent for the remainder of the school year to allow the Board to appoint an Interim Superintendent. The policy was suspended on March 6, Jeanne Grazioli was appointed Interim Superintendent and the Board delegated authority to the Board Chair and Vice Chair to negotiate an Interim Superintendent contract. The contract was approved at the March 20 meeting.

At this meeting, it is recommended the Board reinstate the policy.

**Additional Materials:** [Policy CBB](#)

**Recommendation:** Reinstate Policy CBB

**Suggested Motion:** A formal motion is not required if approved with the consent agenda.

# Medford School District 549C

Code: CBB  
Adopted: 6/16/87  
Revised/Readopted: 3/11/19  
Orig. Code(s): CBB

**The policy was suspended by the Board until June 30, 2025. Action taken on March 6, 2025.**

## **Recruitment and Appointment of the Superintendent**

The Board shall select and appoint the superintendent of schools. Should the position of superintendent become vacant, the Board shall follow procedures necessary to insure that the vacancy is filled with a responsible qualified candidate.

The Board may choose to promote a qualified person from within the current staff of the district or may seek qualified candidates from outside the system.

In all cases, the Board shall provide opportunity for public input into the criteria for selection of the superintendent, and shall adopt the standards and criteria to be used in hiring and evaluation at an open public meeting.

The Board shall appoint the superintendent by a majority vote of the Board members at a meeting for which notice has been given of that intended action.

END OF POLICY

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### **Legal Reference(s):**

[ORS 192.660\(7\)\(d\)](#)

[ORS 332.505](#)

### **Cross Reference(s):**

CBC - Superintendent's Contract

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# Event Agenda

Summer Board Conference

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## Friday, August 08, 2025

### Registration

7:30 AM – 4:00 PM | Location: Santiam Gallery

### Coffee and Pastries

8:00 AM – 8:45 AM | Location: Santiam Gallery and Willamette Foyer

Overnight guests at the Grand Hotel will receive a continental breakfast at the hotel and may enjoy complimentary coffee and pastries each morning at the Salem Convention Center with other attendees.

### Preconference Session 1: Board Governance Essentials

9:00 AM – 10:15 AM | Location: Willamette Ballroom

#### PRECONFERENCE

Good governance is essential to developing positive relationships within the board and a collaborative relationship with the superintendent and to improve student outcomes. This session will help you understand the distinction between board responsibilities and the executive officer duties, learn how to effectively operationalize governance through policy, and ensure cohesive communication. We will also discuss representing the educational entity as a whole while supporting improvement initiatives and maintaining the board's collective voice.

#### LI - BRONZE LEVEL

### Speaker



**Kristen Miles**

Board Development Director | Oregon School Boards Association

### Administrative Professionals Preconference Session 1: Policy Essentials, Updates and Policy Committee Best Practices

9:00 AM – 10:15 AM | Location: Croisan B & C

#### ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS PRECONFERENCE

Demystify the policy update process and learn how to manage board policy and administrative regulations with clarity and confidence. This session covers everything from first and second reading practices to submitting policies and ARs to the board, plus tips for agenda management and running an effective policy committee.

### Speaker



**Leslie Fisher**

Policy specialist | Oregon School Boards Association

### Break

10:15 AM – 10:45 AM | Location: Willamette Foyer

### Preconference Session 2: School Finance Demystified: What Every Board Member Needs to Know

10:45 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: Willamette Ballroom

#### PRECONFERENCE

School board members play a crucial role in shaping and overseeing district finances, but understanding Oregon's funding system and budget process can be daunting. We'll break down the fundamentals of school finance, clarify the board's responsibilities and explore how board members can ask informed questions, support long-term sustainability and build community trust. Walk away with tools to strengthen your role in financial governance — no accounting degree required.

#### LI - BRONZE LEVEL

### Speaker



**Jackie Olsen**

Executive Director | Oregon Association of School Business Officials

## Administrative Professionals Preconference Session 2: Public Meetings Law for Administrative Professionals

10:45 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: Croisan B & C

### ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS PRECONFERENCE

Gain a practical understanding of Oregon's public meetings laws as they apply to the administrative professional's role. This session covers required notices, executive session dos and don'ts, minutes and recordings, and how to navigate the intersection of legal compliance and administrative practice.

#### Speaker



**Kara Parker**

Assistant Legal Counsel | OSBA

#### Lunch Buffet

12:00 PM – 1:15 PM | Location: Willamette Foyer

## Preconference Session 3: Policy Fundamentals and Equity Advisory Committees'

1:15 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Willamette Ballroom

### PRECONFERENCE

Learn the basics of school board policy work. We will talk about the process, organization and tips to work through the stacks of policy without getting frustrated. We will also discuss the role educational equity advisory committees (a new requirement for most districts in September) can play in policy work.

### LI - BRONZE LEVEL

#### Speaker



**Spencer Lewis**

Director of Policy Services | Oregon School Boards Association

## Administrative Professionals Preconference Session 3: Welcoming New Board Members - Tools and Timelines

1:15 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Croisan B & C

### ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS PRECONFERENCE

Explore tools and timelines to support the successful onboarding of new board members, from appointment through their first 90 days. Learn how to manage vacancy protocols, organize resources and guide your board through a smooth orientation process.

#### Speakers



**Jenn Nelson**

Board Development Specialist & Executive Search Consultant | Oregon School Boards Association



**Vincent Adams**

Board Development Specialist | Oregon School Boards Association

#### Break

2:30 PM – 2:45 PM | Location: Willamette Foyer

## Preconference Session 4: Public Meetings (Required Training)

2:45 PM – 4:00 PM | Location: Willamette Ballroom

### PRECONFERENCE

School board members are required by law to attend public meeting law training once per term of office. OSBA's training is approved by the Oregon Government Ethics Commission to meet this obligation.

### LI - BRONZE LEVEL

#### Speakers



**Michael Miller**

Interim Director of Legal Services | Oregon School Boards Association



**Brian Kernan**

Senior Assistant Legal Counsel | OSBA

2:45 PM – 4:00 PM | Location: Croisan B & C

### ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS PRECONFERENCE

When conflict arises between the board and superintendent, within leadership teams, or from the community, board clerks and executive assistants are often caught in the middle. This workshop begins with strategies for setting boundaries and maintaining professionalism and then introduces practical tools rooted in conflict mediation to manage tension and uphold effective board operations, all while keeping students at the center.

#### Speakers



**Vincent Adams**

Board Development Specialist | Oregon School Boards Association



**Jenn Nelson**

Board Development Specialist & Executive Search Consultant | Oregon School Boards Association

### OSBA Legislative Policy Committee Meeting

4:30 PM – 6:00 PM | Location: Willamette Ballroom

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## Saturday, August 09, 2025

### Registration

7:30 AM – 4:00 PM | Location: Santiam Gallery

### Visit with Exhibitors

7:30 AM – 4:00 PM | Location: Santiam Gallery and Willamette Foyer

### Oregon Rural School Board Members Caucus Meeting

7:45 AM – 8:45 AM | Location: Croisan A

### Board Chair Café

7:45 AM – 8:45 AM | Location: Croisan B

Join us face to face for a special summer edition of the Board Chair Café. With the new school year just around the corner, we'll focus on vision-directed planning and how board chairs can set the tone and retain focus on what matters most. Bring your questions, your insights and your favorite morning beverage as we share conversation and strategies in real time — no screens, just chairs talking shop.

#### Speaker



**Vincent Adams**

Board Development Specialist | Oregon School Boards Association

### Coffee and Pastries

8:00 AM – 8:45 AM | Location: Santiam Gallery and Willamette Foyer

Overnight guests at the Grand Hotel will receive a continental breakfast at the hotel and may enjoy complimentary coffee and pastries each morning at the Salem Convention Center with other attendees.

### Welcome – Conference Kickoff by OSBA Executive Director and 2025 Legislative update

9:00 AM – 9:30 AM | Location: Willamette Ballroom

The long session brought loads of sweeping legislation that affects schools, sometimes helping and sometimes adding challenges. Hear what happened and how it will affect you.

#### Speakers



**Adrienne Anderson**

Legislative Specialist | Oregon School Boards Association



**Stacy Michaelson**

Oregon School Boards Association



**Emielle Nischik**

OSBA Executive Director | Oregon School Boards Association

### Hot Topics Roundtable Session

9:30 AM – 10:30 AM | Location: Willamette Ballroom

## Break

10:30 AM – 10:45 AM | Location: Willamette Foyer

## Vision-directed Planning: A North Star for Student Success

10:45 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: Willamette Ballroom

Creating an inspiring and aspirational district vision sets the stage for student success. The board's role in setting high expectations and establishing the direction for the district includes measuring progress, collaborating with the superintendent and community to set priorities, and aligning resources with goals. This session will dive into research about the importance of an empowering vision for student success and provide concrete action steps such as how to draft strategic priorities and how to create a monitoring plan to measure progress.

LI - SILVER LEVEL

### Speakers



**Kristen Miles**

Board Development Director | Oregon School Boards Association



**Janet Avila-Medina**

Board Development Specialist | OSBA

## Parliamentary Procedure

10:45 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: Santiam 4 & 5

Tired of the confusion and clunky motions? This fast-paced session cuts through the noise and focuses on the essential moves every school board needs to govern effectively. No fluff — just the tools to help your board stay on track, make confident decisions, run efficient meetings and ensure every voice is heard. Whether you're new to board work or ready for a refresher, this practical training will sharpen your skills and strengthen your meetings.

### Speaker



**Vincent Adams**

Board Development Specialist | Oregon School Boards Association

## Policy Update

10:45 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: Santiam 2 & 3

Learn about recent and upcoming policy updates. This will include some of the bigger changes, the reason for the change and what options the board has with some of the policies.

### Speaker



**Spencer Lewis**

Director of Policy Services | Oregon School Boards Association

## Complaint Procedures and Hearings

10:45 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: Santiam 1

OSBA attorneys will give an in-depth look at the arcane world of handling complaints and how to avoid common pitfalls.

### Speaker



**Amy Lopez**

Senior Assistant Legal Counsel | Oregon School Boards Association

## Documenting Governance: Managing Minutes, Media, and More

10:45 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: Croisan B & C

ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS CONFERENCE TRACK

This session dives into what's required by law — and what it looks like in practice — when managing board meeting records. Topics include best practices for recording, streaming, minute-taking, publishing packets and responding to public records requests related to notices, agendas, minutes and video archives.

### Speakers



**Kara Parker**

Assistant Legal Counsel | OSBA



**Jenn Nelson**

Board Development Specialist & Executive Search Consultant | Oregon School Boards Association

12:15 PM – 1:45 PM | Location: Willamette Foyer and Willamette Ballroom

Program from 12:30 - 1 pm: Interactive Board Do's & Don'ts presentation

### Board Governance Jeopardy is coming to the Summer Board Conference!

Six board members will take the stage to test their governance knowledge in a fun, fast-paced game. Participants will compete for a **25% discount on Annual Convention registration** for their entire board.

Networking from 1 - 1:45 pm

#### Speakers



**Kristen Miles**

Board Development Director | Oregon School Boards Association



**Vincent Adams**

Board Development Specialist | Oregon School Boards Association



**Janet Avila-Medina**

Board Development Specialist | OSBA



**Jenn Nelson**

Board Development Specialist & Executive Search Consultant | Oregon School Boards Association

### Vision-directed Planning: A North Star for Student Success

1:45 PM – 3:00 PM | Location: Willamette Ballroom

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#### Speakers



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Assistant Legal Counsel | OSBA



**Jenn Nelson**

Board Development Specialist & Executive Search Consultant | Oregon School Boards Association

#### Break

3:00 PM – 3:15 PM | Location: Santiam Gallery and Willamette Foyer

#### Region Roundtable Discussions

3:15 PM – 4:30 PM

All regions will meet in the Willamette Ballroom unless your region is assigned differently within the sub session below.

Join us at your OSBA Region Roundtable, led by your region’s OSBA Board representative. It’s your chance to connect, share insights and champion solutions tailored to your local educational landscape. Together, let’s ignite meaningful conversations and lift student success.

##### Region Roundtable - Clackamas

3:15 PM – 4:30 PM

##### Region roundtable - Lane

3:15 PM – 4:30 PM

##### Region Roundtable - Linn/Benton/Lincoln

3:15 PM – 4:30 PM

##### Region Roundtable - Multnomah

3:15 PM – 4:30 PM

##### Region Roundtable - Southern

3:15 PM – 4:30 PM

##### Region Roundtable - Washington

3:15 PM – 4:30 PM

#### The Oregon School Board Members of Color Caucus Meeting

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM | Location: Croisan B & C

## Sunday, August 10, 2025

#### Registration

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM | Location: Santiam Gallery

#### Coffee and Pastries

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM | Location: Santiam Gallery and Willamette Foyer

Overnight guests at the Grand Hotel will receive a continental breakfast at the hotel and may enjoy complimentary coffee and pastries each morning at the Salem Convention Center with other attendees.

#### Public Meetings - Required Training

9:00 AM – 10:15 AM | Location: Santiam 1

School board members are required by law to attend public meeting law training once per term of office. OSBA's training is approved by the Oregon Government Ethics Commission to meet this obligation.

## Speakers



**Michael Miller**

Interim Director of Legal Services | Oregon School Boards Association



**Brian Kernan**

Senior Assistant Legal Counsel | OSBA

## Introduction to Educational Equity

9:00 AM – 10:15 AM | Location: Santiam 4 & 5

Every student deserves the opportunity to succeed, yet we know that not all students start from the same place or face the same barriers. Explore how school boards can support their districts in creating conditions where every child can thrive, regardless of background, ZIP code or life circumstance. This is not about politics; it's about outcomes. Together, we'll look at practical ways boards can help track progress and make sure success isn't predictable based on the conditions of a child's birth. Whether you're just starting this conversation in your community or deep into the work, this session is for you.

## Speakers



**Vincent Adams**

Board Development Specialist | Oregon School Boards Association



**Janet Avila-Medina**

Board Development Specialist | OSBA

## Policy Fundamentals

9:00 AM – 10:15 AM | Location: Santiam 2 & 3

Learn the basics of school board policy work. We will talk about the process, organization and tips to work through the stacks of policy without getting frustrated.

LI - BRONZE LEVEL

## Speaker



**Spencer Lewis**

Director of Policy Services | Oregon School Boards Association

## Behind the Executive Evaluation: Supporting a Timely, Fair and Effective Process

9:00 AM – 10:15 AM | Location: Croisan B & C

ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS CONFERENCE TRACK

Help your board succeed in conducting meaningful executive evaluations by understanding your role in developing timelines, coordinating tools and templates, and maintaining process integrity. Learn how to stay neutral and grounded — even when pulled into sensitive or high-stakes conversations.

## Speakers



**Jenn Nelson**

Board Development Specialist & Executive Search Consultant | Oregon School Boards Association



**Kristen Miles**

Board Development Director | Oregon School Boards Association

## Panelists



**Sandra Segura**

Administrative Assistant | Gervais School District



**Julie Hinkle**

Executive Assistant/Board Secretary | Scappoose School District

## Break

10:15 AM – 10:45 AM | Location: Santiam Gallery and Willamette Foyer

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Administrative Assistant | Gervais School District



**Julie Hinkle**

Executive Assistant/Board Secretary | Scappoose School District

### Adjourn

12:00 PM – 12:00 PM

### LGBTQIA2S+ Advisory Committee Meeting

12:30 PM – 2:00 PM | Location: Croisan B & C

## The First 90 Days on the School Board

*By Del Stover*

John Pennycuff tells the story of a new school board member who, at the very first meeting after taking office, introduced a handful of motions without warning the rest of the board.

All went down in defeat.

"It was well-intentioned," says Pennycuff, a 20-year board veteran in Ohio's Winston Woods City School District. "The new member was just trying to hit the ground running."

But, as one board member advised this overeager colleague, "This might be a good idea, but you should have worked with me before tonight."

It was a rookie mistake that underscores the challenge confronting thousands of newly elected and appointed school board members: Just how do you "hit the ground running" and become as effective as you can, as quickly as you can?

Talk to board members -- both veterans and those still relatively new to the job -- and you'll hear a variety of opinions. Still, most agree that you can make a good start in your first 90 days.

That's when, they say, you lay the groundwork for effective board tenure. It's when you study the budget in depth, become better acquainted with the senior administration, and brush up on board policies and parliamentary procedures. It's also a good time to dig deeper into issues expected to come before the board in the months ahead.

Yet other tasks should be tackled as well, including building a good working relationship with board colleagues, studying how other members conduct their business, and developing a better understanding of your role. Each is critical to your success, but often they deserve more attention than they receive.

In short, you need to become a quick student of the art of "boardmanship."

### **Policies and procedures**

Most early boardmanship studies focus on the basics: How does one make a motion? What's the process for adding an issue to the next meeting agenda? To whom do you turn for information? What must you do -- and not do -- to comply with state open records and open meetings laws?

These are only the most obvious questions. Chris Maricle, governance consultant for the California School Boards Association, suggests new members study the process used to make decisions. That process can include the most obvious to the most subtle of practices.

Most boards want plenty of advance notice and background information before issues are put on the agenda. Some reach a general consensus through informal, one-on-one discussions outside board meetings, while others wait to debate in open session. Some presidents are strict in enforcing respectful discourse, while others are more indulgent or less capable of maintaining the board's decorum.



Understanding these dynamics certainly will help guide you in sitting through a board meeting. But, Maricle says, it also can help you weather occasions when controversial issues put a strain on board relationships.

“A big mistake is letting issues become more important than the board itself,” he says. “Issues come and go. But if your process for making decisions is clear, and everyone supports that process, then the issues get the response they deserve.” And your school board is still a strong team when the next issue comes along.

Your studies also might help you avoid innocent mistakes that sometimes ruffle feathers. Angela Peifer, associate executive director of board development for the Illinois Association of School Boards, recalls working with one board that found its relationship with a new member undermined early when the newcomer shared confidential information with the public.

It turned out to be a big misunderstanding, Peifer says. The new board member thought the information was covered by the state’s public records laws and didn’t know the board’s procedure was to release it at the next meeting. In fact, the board member “felt really badly” about the misunderstanding.

“It was something that she didn’t know, and it was something that didn’t occur to the superintendent or rest of the school board to tell her,” Peifer says. “And because there already was some tension between the new and old board members, the assumption made on the part of the old board [members] was that she was deliberately releasing documents to undermine their work.”

That’s not to suggest new members should feel like they’re walking through a minefield until they master board policies and procedures. You usually can trust that your colleagues expect you to make some mistakes at first. But it can’t hurt to pull out the policy manual and do your homework.

### **Getting oriented**

If you’re fortunate, your district won’t leave you to figure out all of this on your own. In Pennycuff’s district, for example, new members are invited to an orientation session where top administrators explain everything from budget intricacies to the policy implications of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Some briefings are conducted by veteran board members who meet individually with newcomers, says Pennycuff, president-elect of the Ohio School Boards Association. Half of the agenda of those meetings, he says, is simply to allow newcomers to get to know their new colleagues.

“Most of our new board members didn’t know the other board members when they started,” he says. “They’ve heard their names, seen them at PTA meetings, but there was no working relationship. But it takes a working relationship to handle the tough issues that come along ... that really test the teamwork of the board. So you have to practice that.”

Not every board is as well organized, and new members might need to fend for themselves. If that’s the case, say board veterans, take the initiative. Pick up the telephone and arrange meetings with your superintendent and board president.

“Let [them] know you’re an eager learner, that you will be grateful for any help they can give you in learning about this important job,” suggests Mary Jane Vens, board development director for the Association of Iowa School Boards. “Ask them about appropriate procedures to follow.”

Another invaluable resource is training offered by organizations such as your state school boards association. Many sponsor workshops specifically targeted to new board members. Dana Smith, a board member in New York’s Madrid-Waddington Central School District, teaches such workshops for a county association, and he says you can’t go wrong attending a program that “gives people the opportunity to see how others function, to see and listen to what the experiences of other board members are.”

If history is any guide, however, some will dismiss the need or urgency for such training, even though most board members insist that attitude is a mistake. School districts are a far more complex organization than a new member realizes, and few come to the job with the professional experience necessary for the scope of work facing them.

“Being a board member requires a set of professional skills like many professional disciplines,” Maricle says. “If you believe professional development is good for teachers and the principal and superintendent, then you must believe professional development is good for the board.”

## Collegial relations

Joining the board means you've joined a team. As with any team, you need to learn how to work well together. You don't have to agree on every issue, or even like each other, but you need to treat one another with respect -- and it doesn't hurt if your colleagues understand your values, hopes, and ideas for the district. It's even better when you find common ground on some issues.

So it's worth the effort to reach out. For Laurie McCaulley, the first new board member in Huntsville, Ala., in more than a decade, that began with a series of conversations over coffee or a meal with each new colleague. Or, as Maricle suggests, you can simply initiate a friendly hallway chat with colleagues before a meeting or talk in the parking lot afterward.

"A little honest interest in other people's lives is a very welcoming thing," Maricle says. "You don't have to be intrusive. Just ask how the family is doing. People can respond or not." And, as for inviting out a colleague for a cup of coffee, he says, "I'm a big fan of Starbucks."

If this all sounds "touchy-feely," remember that relationships play a significant role in how the school board functions, board veterans say. All human beings respond better to mutual respect and trust. As a board member, you won't change a vote based on whether someone likes you, but it's more likely your arguments will receive serious consideration if others know you have a commitment to serve schoolchildren.

Don't be shy about sharing opinions, but listen more than you talk at first. It's worth learning how much time your fellow board members invested in that school boundary plan you dislike. And it might not be wise to suggest school uniforms to improve student discipline, only to discover the board dropped such a policy five years ago because it failed to deliver on its promise.

"Ask why something is the way it is before you criticize or try and change it, and really listen to the answers," says Kathy Pettiss, a board member in Pennsylvania's Great Valley School District.

Also, don't take it personally if some colleagues don't instantly warm up to your ideas. "It's human nature, in any organization, for veterans to have a sense that the new guys need to pay their dues," Peifer says. "Whether that's fair or responsible, it's human nature. When they are feeling new folks are overstepping their boundaries, without having taken the time to listen or learn, it causes a whole lot of resentment and hard feelings."

## Know your limits

Time and time again, you hear the refrain: The board sets policy, and the superintendent manages the district's day-to-day operations. School boards aren't supposed to micromanage. An individual board member has no authority except his or her vote at a board meeting.

It sounds simple enough. Yet, every year, tales arise of board members who repeatedly challenge administrative decisions, interfere in hiring matters, or call up central office staff because they promised angry parents that they'd "check into their problem." That can lead to friction with the superintendent, staff, and board colleagues.

That's not to say that new members should stay silent when they see problems. "Of course the superintendent is the CEO, but he or she should not expect a rubber-stamp board," says Tim Lamb, a board member in Grand Forks, N.D. "But new board members need to learn to operate within this delicate balance of two extremes on a continuum of practices in boardsmanship. As a 10-year board veteran, I ask a lot of questions and give my advice, while I support the administration's recommendations by and large."

Once that lesson is learned, new members will find they have to teach it to their constituents. Some parents who have voiced complaints are quick to turn to new board members, hoping for a more welcoming reception. Having a copy of the policy manual near your telephone can be of some help.

"New board members get bombarded by the squeaky wheels, and they need to ... be careful how they respond, so they don't find themselves committing to something they can't legitimately follow through on," says Bill Nemir, director of leadership team services with the Texas Association of School Boards. "When someone calls you, you should refer them [to the appropriate administrator] and say, 'We've got a policy to help you get your problem resolved as quickly as possible. Here's what the policy says to do.'"

Your superintendent and board president can help you find where many boundaries lie. A case in point: More than one novice board member has dropped by a school unannounced, only to have the superintendent or board president call them later to say the visit was intrusive or disruptive. Savvy newcomers ask about the protocols of such visits before they act.

"Every district is a little different," notes Kathy Hayes, executive director of the Michigan School Boards Association. "Some of these things are just not seen in written policy. For example, in some districts, it's just fine to pop in after a quick call to the building administrator. In other cases, you'll want to talk to the superintendent, and let the superintendent get the OK."

### **Untapped opportunities**

One reality for school boards is that there aren't enough hours or bodies to accomplish everything. But you can turn that to your advantage. Sometimes the fastest way to carve out an influential role on the board -- and win points with your colleagues -- is to offer to help out where needed.

So it can't hurt to volunteer to serve on a board committee or act as a liaison with the state school board association's legislative advocacy program, Pennycuff says. In smaller districts, offering to attend after-school events or volunteer in a school can help the board demonstrate its support for students and staff.

"In your first month or two, really watch to see what other board members do, and what is left to do," Pennycuff says. "I can guarantee there will be plenty left to do. Move over into something that you and your board colleagues can agree upon."

For Dana Smith, the school board's policy committee is a good starting point. It helps you get up to speed on how the board should function, and it helps your board colleagues. "People don't like to go through those dry, dull policies, but they need to be updated. My experience tells me that the board president is always looking for someone to fill the slack on those committees. Don't be afraid to step up."

Finally, say board veterans, be patient. It can take a year or more before a new board member gets fully up to speed. During that time, just keep learning everything you can -- and demonstrate that your board colleagues can count on you, Peifer says.

"There has to be this sense among your brother board members that you are competent, that you know what you're talking about, that you bring something of value to the table," she says. "You show that by listening, asking questions, and demonstrating your competence."

Del Stover ([dstover@nsba.org](mailto:dstover@nsba.org)) is a senior editor of American School Board Journal.  
Illustration by [David Julian](#).

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### **Your first board meetings: Is silence golden?**

You talked quite a lot during your election campaign about what the school board should -- and shouldn't -- be doing on behalf of students. Now you're ready to speak up as an elected policymaker. So where do you begin?

If you're smart, you'll keep your mouth shut.

No, not really. But we hope we got your attention.

Board veterans suggest you should, however, show some restraint when tossing out ideas and opinions in your first weeks on the board. There's still quite a bit you don't yet know about how the district works, and there's no point in putting the proverbial foot in your mouth.

"There's some real value in the 'silence is golden' maxim for maybe the first meeting," says Angela Peifer, associate executive director of board development for the Illinois Association of School Boards. "It's not that a school board member doesn't have a right to speak up. But by listening and learning for the first meeting or so, you're demonstrating that you have some respect for what's gone on before, that you want to learn."

That's not to say you should decline to offer an opinion on a new policy up for a vote -- or question administrators after a report to the board.

"When we're sworn in, we hit the ground running," says Pamela Price, director of board development services for the Pennsylvania School Boards Association. "We're required to vote on issues the very first meeting. Sometimes we don't have a lot of time to get up to speed, so it's important to ask questions. There are no stupid questions, especially for new board members."

But a board meeting isn't the best time for a new member to criticize procedures, toss out suggestions, or advocate for new initiatives. You might discover, for example, that your clever idea is prohibited by state law. Or that elements of some heartfelt project already are incorporated into an existing program. Or that a similar idea was tried a few years ago -- and fell flat.

On the other hand, says Mary Jane Vens, director of board development for the Association of Iowa School Boards, there are times when silence is "deadly," particularly when you are called upon to vote on issues.

"You are elected to vote," she notes. "You do not get to abstain for the first six meetings while you 'figure it out.' The public also deserves to know why you voted as you did. This means thoughtful speaking, not silence, is golden."

### **Your agenda, role might need rethinking**

At a new board member workshop that John Pennycuff attended, the meeting's facilitator asked how many in the room were motivated to run for office because of a single issue -- perhaps to fire the superintendent or change a specific board policy.

Three-quarters of those in the room raised their hands.

Those members were soon to learn the harsh realities of board service, says Pennycuff, president-elect of the Ohio School Boards Association. As is so often the case, they were surprised by how little authority they really had.

Pamela Price, director of board development for the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, says this type of reality check is not uncommon. But those who run for office typically are long-standing community volunteers who like to "roll their sleeves up and get the job done."

That's fine if they have the patience to advocate their views, work to build consensus, and accept that compromise -- or even failure -- might follow. Where trouble arises is when new board members lobby too forcefully or express their frustration or resentment when their views aren't instantly embraced.

"Going in with an attitude -- or an ax to grind -- has to do with the board member really not understanding what role they have," Price says. And pushing board colleagues too hard "typically just offends a lot of folks."

And, even if you are successful in getting your way in your first month in office, "what do you do for the next three years and 11 months?" Pennycuff asks. "What do you do for your kids then?"

New board members also can become frustrated when dealing with requests for help from parents and community members. With no authority to take action themselves, and policies that call for complaints to be referred to administrators, they can feel stymied.

Bill Nemir, director of leadership team services for the Texas Association of School Boards, encourages members to think of themselves as a board of trustees -- not as a miniature state legislature. Their role isn't to represent constituents directly. They are entrusted to make decisions in the best interests of the community's schoolchildren.

"You don't get any support from the public on that idea," he says. "But your job is not to reflect or pass on what you hear from folks [to the administration]. Your job is to listen carefully but exercise your own judgment."

### **It's time to do your homework**

To be effective, a school board member must know the lay of the land. And that means doing your research. At state associations, those who train new board members say one of the first things you should do is read, read ... and read some more.

Here are a few documents to peruse:

- Teacher contracts
- Superintendent's contract
- Last six months of board minutes
- Policies related to school board operations
- Strategic plan and mission statement
- Recent student test scores
- State open-meetings laws
- Board or state code of ethics