Tuesday, August 25, 2026
Special Board of Education Meeting

Special Board of Education Meeting, District 26 Administration Center, 2115 Crystal Lake Rd., Cary, IL 60013, 6:00 PM

1. **Organization**
   1.1. Call to Order
   1.2. Pledge of Allegiance
   1.3. Roll Call
2. **Community Input**
   Members of the public and District employees may take public comments at this time. Please identify yourself and limit your comments to 3 (three) minutes.
3. **Disccusion**
   3.1. Coming to Order Training for the purpose of self-evaluation, practice, procedures and professional ethics
4. **Adjournment**

WELCOME

Special Board of Education Meeting 8/25/2026

AGENDA-

Call Meeting to Order

- **Pledge of Allegiance**
- **Roll call**
- **Community Input**

Discussion Topic

3.1 Coming to Order Training

Adjourn meeting

Tonight's Outcome:

Create a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities for the Board and Cabinet

CARY CCSD 26 • BOARD OF EDUCATION

Governance in Practice

A Working Session on Board Roles, Communication & Community Trust

Board Training Meeting | 3-Hour Session with Dinner Provided

Grounded in the Cary CCSD 26 Board Policy Manual & Administrative Procedures

Why We're Building This Together

Goal: building shared habits of governance the Board and Cabinet can both count on

- Build, don't destroy.
- Move together, not alone.
- Create clear key messages — and use them everywhere.

Tonight's Outcome:

Create a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities for the Board and Cabinet

TONIGHT'S FLOW

Agenda — 3 Hours, Seven Topics

Dinner & Welcome	**15 min**	*Whole Group*
Governance Foundations Refresher	**10 min**	*Whole Group*
1. Contract & Purchasing Approval	**20 min**	*Small Group*
2. Purpose of Executive Session	**15 min**	*Whole Group*
3. Managing Public Comment	**20 min**	*Small Group*
— Break —	**10 min**	
4. Chain of Command: Parent Emails	**15 min**	*Discussion*
5. Board Members & Building Principals	**15 min**	*Whole Group*
6. Admin Updates: Weekly vs. Monthly	**20 min**	*Small Group*
7. Addressing PRESS & Media Relations	**20 min**	*Small Group*
8. Commitments & Closing	**20 min**	*Whole Group*

The Oath That Frames Everything Tonight

> *I shall recognize that a Board member has no legal authority as an individual and that decisions can be made only by a majority vote at a public Board meeting.*

— Board Member Oath and Conduct

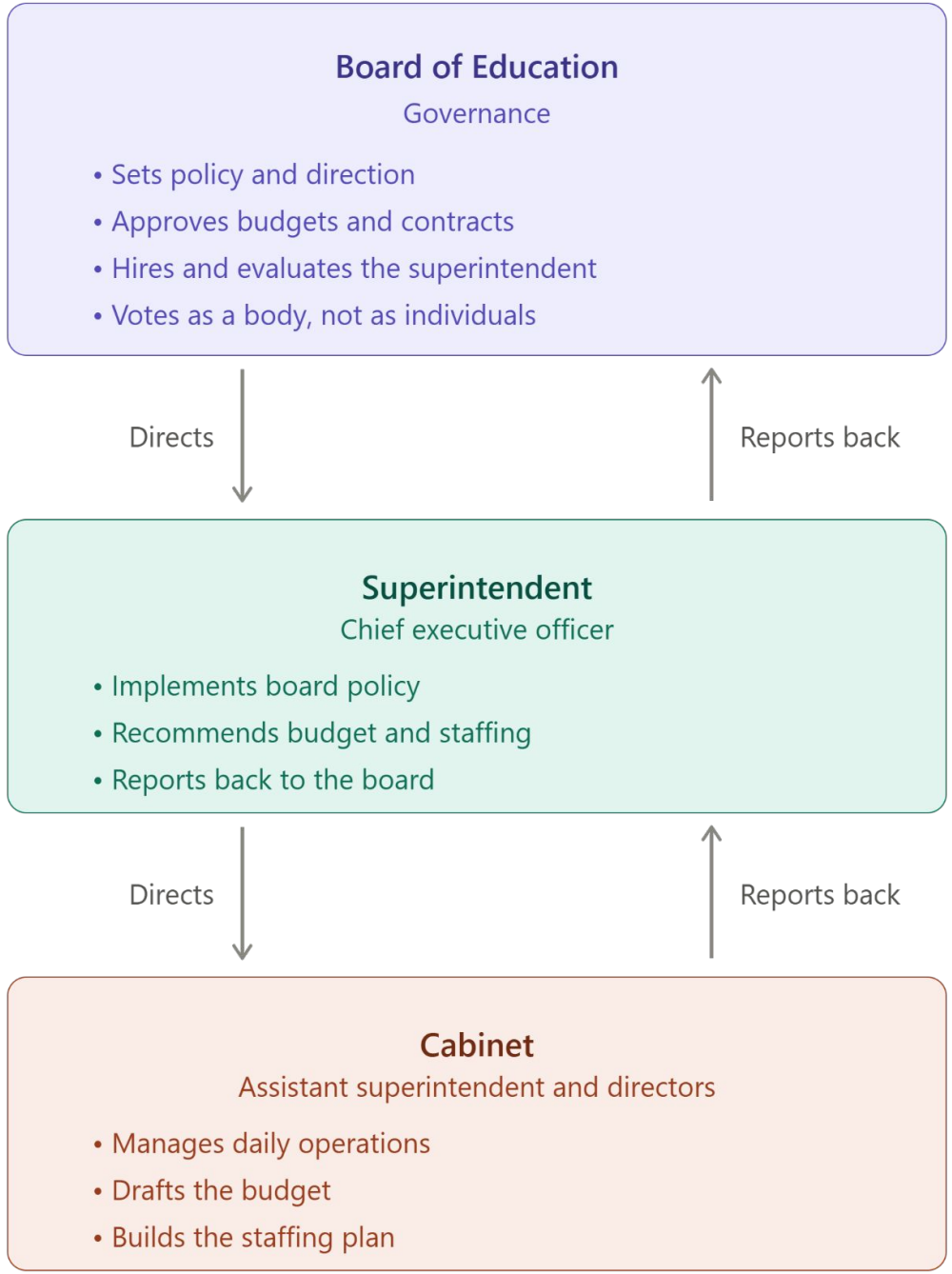
Policy 2:80, Board Member Oath and Conduct

Discuss at Your Table

Every topic tonight — contracts, executive session, public comment, emails, building visits, updates, and media — comes back to this one idea.

Where have we, individually or as a Board, blurred that line in the past? Where did it work well?

The Board decides what and why, the cabinet decides how and carries it out.



BOARD OF EDUCATION

Governance: The Board's powers and duties include the authority to adopt, enforce, and monitor all policies for the management and governance of the District's schools.

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Under 105 ILCS 5/2-3.25f, sound governance includes the board's responsibility to:

- **Protect district assets**
- **Direct sound administrative and academic policy**
- Follow **basic governance principles**
- Ensure that official board action occurs **only through a properly called and legally conducted board meeting**
- **Abide by majority decisions** of the board
- Respect student privacy
- Ensure decisions conform to **defined roles and responsibilities**
- Respect the administration's responsibility for **day-to-day operation** of the school system
- Maintain the distinction between the **board's role and the administration's role**
- Conduct itself in a **legally, ethically, and financially responsible manner**
- Comply with the School Code, Open Meetings Act, FOIA, and other applicable laws.

District Administration

District Administration: The work of professional educators and staff responsible for the day-to-day administration, operation, and leadership of the District's schools.

District Administration is responsible for implementing Board policies, managing school operations and personnel, supporting student learning and safety, and ensuring that District programs and services are carried out effectively and in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and Board direction.

Alignment Activity: Governance & Administration

1

Review Definitions

What does this look like in practice?

What does this look like for you?

2

Partner Up

Create a response that incorporates both answers

3

Quad Up

Create a response that incorporates both answers

4

Team Up

Create a common understanding.

01

Contract & Purchasing Approval

How district contracts move from need to Board vote

What the Policy Requires

1

$25,000 Threshold

The Superintendent may not commit to any single non-customary purchase over $25,000 without prior Board approval.

2

Budget Adoption ≠ Blanket Approval

Adopting the annual budget authorizes only budgeted purchases within State law — not open-ended spending.

3

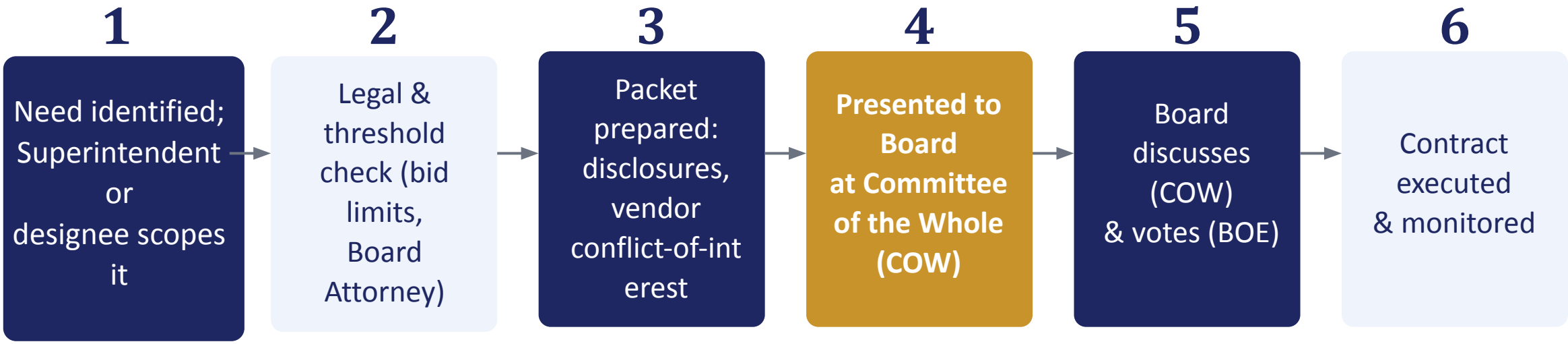
$35,000 Bid Threshold

Supplies, materials, or work over $35,000 must follow State law bidding procedures (105 ILCS 5/10-20.21), unless exempted.

No purchase or contract may result from favoritism, extravagance, fraud, or corruption — every purchase must support a recognized District function at fair value.

Source: Policy 4:60, Purchases and Contracts

From Need to Signed Contract



Board's Job in Step 4–5

Ask about function/purpose, cost reasonableness, vendor conflicts of interest, and legal compliance then vote as a full Board. Individual members do not pre-approve or negotiate terms outside the meeting.

Source: Administrative Procedure 4:60-AP1, Purchases; Policy 4:60

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

SMALL GROUP • 15 MIN

Does This Go Into Section 7 or Section 8 For Board Approval?

Form groups of 3–4. For each scenario, decide:

Scenario A

A $18,000 classroom technology purchase, fully within the adopted budget line.

Scenario B

A $40,000 emergency roof-repair contract not anticipated when the budget was adopted.

Scenario C

A $2,000 vending-machine agreement that will generate revenue for the District.

Report out: one group per scenario, 1 minute each. Facilitator confirms the correct threshold using Policy 4:60 and AP1.

02

Purpose of Executive Session

Using closed session for what it's actually for

What Executive Session Is — and Isn't

It IS for:

- Personnel matters (appointment, discipline, evaluation of specific employees)
- Student discipline hearings
- Security procedures and safety planning
- Pending, probable, or imminent litigation
- Sale or purchase of securities, investments, or property
- Collective bargaining / Superintendent contract discussions

It is NOT for:

- Taking final action or votes — final votes happen in open session
- General policy debate that doesn't fit a statutory exception
- Avoiding public accountability on a routine matter
- Sharing outside the room — confidentiality travels with every member

Source: 5 ILCS 120/2.06, Open Meetings Act; District practice under Policy 2:80

WHOLE GROUP DISCUSSION

WHOLE GROUP • 10 MIN

Protecting What Happens Behind the Closed Door

Confidentiality isn't a formality — it's what allows honest, difficult conversations to happen at all. Once a Board member shares session content outside the room, that trust is very hard to rebuild.

Talk it through:

- What makes it hard, in practice, to keep executive session content confidential even with good intentions?
- How should a Board member respond if a community member asks, “What did you all talk about in closed session?”
- What's one habit we could adopt to reinforce this norm going forward?

Grounded in Board Member Oath and Conduct, Policy 2:80

03

Managing Public Comment

Welcoming input while protecting the Board's business

The Rules That Keep Comment Fair and Orderly

Total time	Up to 45 minutes for public comment, unless adjusted by the presiding officer
Individual time	Ordinarily 3 minutes; up to 5 minutes if requested in advance, at the presiding officer's discretion
When to speak	Only at the designated agenda time, and only when recognized by the presiding officer
No engagement	Public requests to speak or debate between speakers and Board members or staff is not permitted
Conduct	Respect and civility are expected, per Policy 8:30, Visitors to and Conduct on School Property
Written correspondence	Board or Superintendent must issue a formal written response within 60 days of receipt

Source: Policy 2:230, Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings and Petitions to the Board

The Presiding Officer's Toolkit for Public Comment

1 Set the tone early

Briefly restate the ground rules before comment begins, every meeting, every time.

2 Redirect, don't engage

If a speaker tries to debate, calmly redirect: “We hear your comment; the Board doesn't respond during public comment.”

3 Enforce time evenly

Apply the same time limit to every speaker, regardless of topic or tone.

4 Decide gray areas

The presiding officer has authority to resolve procedural questions policy doesn't spell out.

Source: Policy 2:230, Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings and Petitions to the Board

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

SMALL GROUP • 15 MIN

Role-Play: Handling Difficult Public Comment

In groups of 3 or 4

Role 1: Presiding Officer Role 2: Speaker Role 3 & 4: Observer(s)

Card A

The speaker goes past 3 minutes and won't stop when asked.

Card B

The speaker names and criticizes a specific staff member or student.

Card C

The speaker asks the Board to respond right now, live.

Card D

More speakers signed up than fit in the 45-minute window.

Debrief as a whole group: which phrases kept things calm and on-policy?

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

WHOLE GROUP • 15 MIN

Board Agenda Section 3 “Open Forum”

3.1 Board

- What is purpose?
- How can we share out as one Board voice?
- Is this the best title for this section?

10-MINUTE BREAK

04

Chain of Command for Communication

What to do when a parent emails you directly

POLICY 3:30 & POLICY 2:140

Where a Message Goes — and Where It Doesn't Stop

Key rule: if contacted individually, refer the person to the appropriate level of authority. Board members' questions to staff also route through the Superintendent's office.

Also remember:

- No expectation of privacy for any communication sent to the Board, by any method
- Emails among a Board quorum may share information, but never deliberate, debate, or decide District business
- No individual member replies on behalf of the whole Board

Source: Policy 3:30, Chain of Command; Policy 2:140, Communications To and From the Board

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PAIRED DISCUSSION

PAIR-SHARE • 10 MIN

“Can You Just Fix This for Me?”

“A parent emails you directly, upset about a teacher's grading practice, and asks you personally to intervene.”

With a partner (5 minutes), then whole group:

- What's your first reply — in one or two sentences?
- Who do you loop in, and how quickly?
- What would cross the line into “individual action that compromises the Board or District”?

Grounded in Policy 3:30, Chain of Command and Policy 2:140, Communications To and From the Board

05

Board Members & Building Principals

Setting a shared norm for building visits and meetings

WHOLE GROUP NORM-SETTING

SMALL/WHOLE GROUP • 15 MIN

Building Visits: What Should Our Practice Be?

The Policy Manual doesn't spell out a specific visit protocol — this is a norm we set for ourselves, anchored in the same principles as everything else tonight: chain of command and no individual authority.

Draft norm — react & refine:

- Notify the Superintendent in advance of any building visit or principal meeting
- Visits are informational — for listening and learning, not directing staff
- No individual member gives instructions to a principal or building staff
- Follow-up items or concerns route through the Superintendent's office

Talk it through:

- Does this match how visits actually happen today?
- What's the right amount of notice to the Superintendent?
- How do we handle a principal's informal invitation (e.g., a school event)?

Anchored in Policy 3:30, Chain of Command and Policy 2:80, Board Member Oath and Conduct

06

Administrative Updates: Weekly vs. Monthly

Right-sizing what the Board hears, and how often

PROPOSED COMMUNICATION CADENCE

What Belongs at Each Level: EXAMPLE

WEEKLY

How last week went
Upcoming events the Board can attend or support

MONTHLY

1:1 check-ins between Board President and Superintendent (especially valuable in the first 6 months)

QUARTERLY

Review of Board agendas: how much time is focused on student-outcome goals?

ANNUALLY

Strategic plan progress and transition dashboard review

Proposed cadence for Board–Superintendent communication

What Belongs at Each Level: CARY SD 26

WEEKLY

What's essential? Don't need details.
Continue building updates for construction. Like the narrative. Keep the initials for each section.

- skip the email reminder, assume 4 pm post.

MONTHLY

Follow policy to ensure monthly topics.

QUARTERLY

Follow calendar, aligned to policy.

ANNUALLY

Follow calendar, aligned to policy.

Proposed cadence for Board–Superintendent communication

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

SMALL GROUP • 20 MIN

Sort It: Weekly, Monthly, or Immediate?

As a group, sort each item below into Weekly Update, Monthly Update, or Notify Immediately. Be ready to defend a tricky one.

1. A new grant award
2. A routine facility repair
3. A bus accident with injuries
4. A media inquiry about a rumor
5. A personnel investigation opening
6. A well-attended student event recap

Report out: which item split your group, and where did you land?

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

SMALL GROUP • 20 MIN

Board Committee Members

1. Insurance
   Mindy/Stacey
2. Professional Growth
   Julie
3. Parent-Teacher Advisory (discipline)
   Stacey
4. Technology
   Kathryn/Bridgette

07

Addressing Press & Media Relations

Speaking with one voice to build community trust

Who Speaks for the Board — and When

Board President

Official spokesperson for the Board of Education. Communicates on the Board's behalf to news media and community.

Superintendent

The District's chief spokesperson, coordinating media relations efforts with the Board President.

Every other Board member:

Unauthorized statements are considered personal opinions — not the Board's position. Members are encouraged to say so explicitly when speaking publicly on District matters.

Source: Policy 8:10, Connection with the Community

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Draft a Response Protocol

SMALL GROUP • 15 MIN

Groups of 3–4, one scenario each. Draft a 3-step response: what you say, who you loop in, and how fast.

Scenario A

A reporter contacts a Board member directly about a controversial vote, wanting a quote tonight.

Scenario B

A rumor spreads on social media faster than the District's official statement can go out.

Scenario C

A Board member is quoted in the paper giving a personal opinion on a District decision.

Goal: Agree to a common process for the full team.

08

Commitments & Closing

Speaking with one voice to build community trust

Start - Stop - Keep

1

What do we want to start as a BOE/Cabinet team?

2

What do we want to stop as a BOE/Cabinet team?

3

What do we want to keep as a BOE/Cabinet team?

Summary: BOE–Cabinet Norms

1. Contract approval thresholds & process
2. Executive session discipline & confidentiality
3. Consistent public comment facilitation
4. Chain-of-command for parent communication
5. Shared norms for building visits
6. A clear weekly/monthly update cadence
7. One-voice media & PRESS protocol

WHOLE GROUP

One Commitment Each

WHOLE GROUP • 15 MIN

Before we close, each Board member shares one specific commitment for the next 30 days.

Consider a commitment tied to:

- How I'll respond the next time a resident emails me directly
- How I'll prepare for or ask about a contract before voting
- How I'll protect confidentiality after executive session
- How I'll represent the Board — or flag that I'm speaking personally — if a reporter calls

Thank You

Session notes will follow before our next meeting.

Cary CCSD 26 Board of Education