

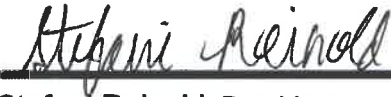
DRIPPING SPRINGS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

PREFACE

Dripping Springs Independent School District Board of Trustees shall function as a body corporate in accordance with applicable state and federal laws as well as its own officially adopted policies. The operating procedures described in this manual are a series of recorded routine procedures the Board will follow to conduct the business of the Board. They are not law or policy, but reflect the team's commitment to operate with mutual respect and in an effective and efficient manner in support of the vision, mission, and goals of the District.

The board, in official action on August 29, 2023 approved the document, and signatures indicate each member's agreement to be bound by these procedures. Procedures are to be reviewed annually following the school board elections and serve as part of the new school board member orientation.



Stefani Reinold, President



Mary Jane Hetrick, Vice President



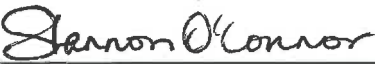
Olivia Barnard, Secretary



Kim Cousins, Board Member



Rob McClelland, Board Member



Shannon O'Connor, Board Member



Tricia Quintero, Board Member

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DRIPPING SPRINGS ISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES CODE OF ETHICS

Reference Policy: BBF (Local)

As a member of the board, I shall promote the best interests of the district as a whole and, to that end, shall adhere to the following ethical standards:

EQUITY IN ATTITUDE

- I will be fair, just, and impartial in all my decisions and actions.
- I will accord others the respect I wish for myself.
- I will encourage expressions of different opinions and listen with an open mind to others' ideas.

TRUSTWORTHINESS IN STEWARDSHIP

- I will be accountable to the public by representing district policies, programs, priorities, and progress accurately.
- I will be responsive to the community by seeking its involvement in district affairs and by communicating its priorities and concerns.
- I will work to ensure prudent and accountable use of district resources.
- I will make no personal promise or take private action that may compromise my performance or my responsibilities.

HONOR IN CONDUCT

- I will tell the truth.
- I will share my views while working for consensus.
- I will respect the majority decision as the decision of the board.
- I will base my decisions on fact rather than supposition, opinion, or public favor.

INTEGRITY OF CHARACTER

- I will refuse to surrender judgment to any individual or group at the expense of the district as a whole.
- I will consistently uphold all applicable laws, rules, policies, and governance procedures.
- I will not disclose information that is confidential by law or that will needlessly harm the district if disclosed.

COMMITMENT TO SERVICE

- I will focus my attention on fulfilling the board's responsibilities of goal setting, policymaking, and evaluation.
- I will diligently prepare for and attend board meetings.
- I will avoid personal involvement in activities the Board has delegated to the superintendent.
- I will seek continuing education that will enhance my ability to fulfill my duties effectively.

STUDENT-CENTERED FOCUS

- I will be continuously guided by what is best for all students of the district.

DEVELOPING BOARD MEETING AGENDAS

We believe that:

- Agenda preparation is critical to effective board meetings.
- An agenda review meeting helps ensure that there will be no surprises for board members or administration and helps ensure that the board meeting will be productive and efficient.

See *What School Boards Can Do*, Chapter 6.

1. A draft agenda for regular meetings will be developed by the superintendent and presented to the board president, vice president, and the board secretary 48 hours before posting. All agenda items shall be directly related to district goals as set by the board. Each agenda item requiring board discussion or action will be accompanied by an “action sheet” that includes the purpose of the item, the administrator responsible, any attachments, any necessary background information, any relevant legal or statutory foundation, any recommendation of administration, and a sample motion.
2. Any board member may request that an item be placed on the regular meeting agenda for board consideration at the agenda review meeting or by contacting the president or superintendent prior to the agenda review meeting.
3. Requested agenda items requiring significant preparation time might, at the discretion of the president, be deferred to a later meeting. This decision is based on the time needed to prepare supporting information.
4. Use of a consent agenda to present items for a single vote without discussion will conform to the following guidelines:
 - a. Initial placement of items on the consent agenda will be at the discretion of the board president.
 - b. At the agenda review meeting, any individual board member may request that an item on the consent agenda be removed from the consent agenda and placed as an action item for individual consideration. Additional agenda items may be moved to the consent agenda by agreement of the board.
 - c. Examples of items that may be included on the consent agenda include:
 - i. Routine items
 - ii. Minutes of regular and special board meetings
 - iii. Routine bid recommendations in alignment with district policy
 - iv. Second reading of district policies
5. Special meetings and emergency meetings may be called by the president or two members of the board. The requirements are addressed in Board Policy BE (LEGAL and LOCAL).

Related Policies: BE (LEGAL and LOCAL), BJA (LOCAL)

CONDUCTING BOARD MEETINGS

We believe that:

- Quality information presented to the board in a timely manner is key to management oversight, policy oversight and the board's ultimate responsibility for district performance.
- It is important for individual trustees to be knowledgeable and up to date on major issues in order for our meetings to be efficient and effective.
- It is important that board members avoid surprising staff in meetings. It is equally important that the superintendent ensures that the board is not surprised.
- Public comment is welcome and an important part of our meetings.

See *The Governance Core*, Appendix I; *What School Boards Can Do*, Chapters 5 & 6.

1. Board Member Participation

- a. Administration will ensure that supporting information required for informed decision-making is supplied to each member in the board meeting agenda packet.
- b. Agenda packets will be posted in BoardBook at least three days before scheduled board meetings. Board members will not begin discussion of agenda items until any information provided to them in a board meeting is available in BoardBook.
- c. Board members will read agenda packet materials before each board meeting and be prepared to address items of the agenda.
- d. Board members are encouraged to ask agenda related questions of the superintendent or administrative staff at any time prior to the agenda review meeting and by the Friday prior to the regular meeting. In the event supporting materials for an agenda topic are not available until later, questions should be asked as soon as possible upon receipt of the information.
- e. All BoardBook attachments should be submitted by Friday prior to the regular meeting. Board members will be notified via email and/or text message of any late changes to BoardBook. Any agenda item for which an attachment has been received after the Friday prior to the regular meeting may be postponed if a consensus of the board decides they cannot adequately make an informed decision.

Related Policies: BE (LEGAL and LOCAL)

2. Board Response to Public Comment

- a. Pursuant to policy BED, public comment is permitted at every board meeting, including workshops. Persons seeking to participate in Public Forum must complete the form describing the agenda item or non-agenda topic to be presented to the board by either 1) submitting the form in person at the meeting prior to the meeting's posted start time, or 2) submitting the form online no later than three hours before the meeting's posted start time.

- b. A copy of policy BED (LEGAL) and BED (LOCAL) will be available for public review at the posted meeting site. For regular meetings, public comment will be scheduled at the beginning of the meeting for both agenda and non-agenda items. For agenda review, workshop, and special meetings, public comment will be scheduled at the beginning of the meeting only for posted agenda items. Time limits will be given for individual comments, comments on behalf of delegations and for speakers requiring translation. The overall amount of time dedicated to public comment on agenda items will not be limited. The president may move public comments on agenda items to occur immediately before that agenda item is considered by the board. The overall amount of time dedicated to public comment on non-agenda items will be determined at the discretion of the board. The board may move the placement of public comment on non-agenda items to later in the meeting at their discretion.
- c. The board supports the free speech nature of public comments and acknowledges that criticism of the school district and board of trustees, including its acts or omissions, policy, procedure, program, or service is allowed. The board should consult with legal counsel before disallowing any public comment.
- d. Board members will listen respectfully but not respond to public comments. Only the president may respond to a speaker on behalf of the board and only in accordance with board policy.

Related Policies: BED (LEGAL and LOCAL)

3. Participation in Discussion, Debate and Voting

- a. The board shall observe the parliamentary guidelines in *Robert's Rules of Order* (Newly Revised).
 - i. A copy of *Robert's Rules of Order* (Newly Revised) will be available to the board president at every meeting.
 - ii. The board may operate generally under the "Rules for Small Boards and Committees" with the exception that a motion and a second are required before a vote. In particular situations, the president may determine there is a need to follow the more formal rules to efficiently conduct business.
- b. The president will recognize board members, staff members, or advisors wishing to speak. Board members shall direct comments solely to the business currently under deliberation.
- c. The president shall:
 - i. Allow each board member to speak on each issue being considered
 - ii. Allow opposing viewpoints to be heard in turn
 - iii. Ensure that discussion pertains to the current agenda item being addressed and shall halt discussion that does not apply to the business of the board
 - iv. Halt discussion on issues raised that are not on the agenda - the president will ask if the issue should be placed on a future agenda for discussion and note if a board member and/or the board desire the item to be included in a later discussion

- v. Have the same right as any board member to make motions and vote, and will first provide an opportunity for other board members to make a motion before offering his or her own motion
- d. Voting will be by show of hands.
- e. Each board member will exercise his or her right and obligation as an elected official to participate in deliberations and vote on each item before the board unless a conflict of interest exists.

Related Policies: BE (LEGAL), BBFA (LEGAL)

4. Closed Session

- a. The board decides who attends closed session.
- b. Certified agendas will be used and only board members shall be permitted to see the certified agenda. The presiding officer will announce at call of order that an agenda is being kept.
- c. All discussion in executive session shall remain confidential except as authorized by the board. Notes taken by board members in closed session will be collected and included in the certified agenda.
- d. The superintendent shall attend all closed sessions of the board, except when the board desires to meet without the superintendent to consider the superintendent's contract evaluation or performance, or to resolve conflicts between individual board members, or to act as a tribunal.

Related Policy: BEC (LEGAL)

5. Tele-meetings/Remote Meetings

- a. When allowed by law, board members may meet remotely or join live meetings via a remote platform. Board members must use a remote platform that complies with the Open Meetings Act and other applicable laws.
- b. When meeting remotely, board members will follow the same procedures for in-person meetings.

Related Policy: BE (LEGAL)

BOARD MEMBER REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION OR REPORTS

We believe that:

- It is important for the board to make informed decisions.
- Quality information helps the board move forward.
- It is important that individual trustees' requests are made with mindful awareness of the time and attention required of staff and that trustees do not unnecessarily overwhelm staff resources by such requests.

See *What School Boards Can Do*, Chapter 5

1. Request Information About Meeting Agenda Items

- a. Board members are encouraged to ask for additional and/or clarifying information related to meeting agenda items prior to the scheduled meeting.
- b. Any questions about agenda items or requests for additional information about them will be directed to the superintendent, copying the president.
- c. If information, documents or records are provided in response to the request, all board members will receive a copy of both the request and information prior to the opening of the meeting. Information provided to all board members pursuant to this procedure shall not be considered information subject to reporting for the purpose of Texas Education Code Section 11.1512(d) and (e).
- d. Board members may discuss the provided information or ask additional questions about the agenda item in the meeting.
- e. Board members will make every attempt to request additional materials or information relating to the board meeting agenda as soon as possible before the scheduled meeting.
- f. The superintendent will ensure that any additional materials or information that is provided to one board member is provided to all board members. This operating procedure will not limit a board member's ability to ask questions during the board meeting.

Related Policies: *BBE (LEGAL), BBE (LOCAL), BE (LOCAL) and BJA (LOCAL)*

2. Request Information Not Related to Agenda Items

- a. Board members should request information not related to a meeting agenda item directly from the superintendent, copying the president.
- b. The superintendent will determine if the information requested can be provided from readily available data with no diversion of staff time, then will provide it to all board members as soon as reasonable. Information provided to all board members pursuant to this procedure shall not be considered information subject to reporting for the purpose of Texas Education Code Section 11.1512(d) and (e).
- c. In the event the request requires the assembly of information, documents and records that will divert staff time from established priorities, the superintendent will notify the requestor and the president of this fact. The president will place the

request for information on the next meeting agenda to determine if a majority of the board agrees that the requested information is important for its future decision-making.

- d. If the board does agree that the information is important for future decision-making, then the superintendent will direct that the information, documents or records be made available to all board members in the manner requested by the board. Information provided to all board members pursuant to this procedure shall not be considered information subject to reporting for the purpose of Texas Education Code Section 11.1512(d) and (e).
- e. If the board does not agree that the information is important for future decision-making and the board member still requests the information, the board will make a determination at the meeting whether the board member is requesting the information in his or her official capacity or otherwise. If it is determined by the board to be a request in the board member's official capacity, the information, documents or records will be provided and reported pursuant to Texas Education Code Section 11.1512(d) and (e). If it is determined by the board not to be a request in the board member's official capacity, the board member may submit a public information request under Chapter 552, Government Code.

Related Policy: BBE (LOCAL)

3. Request Legal Advice

- a. Board member requests for legal advice related to board business should be directed to the superintendent or to the president.
- b. Board members may contact TASB Legal Services directly for legal questions pursuant to the terms of TASB membership benefits. Board member's discussions with TASB Legal Services are not confidential between the member and TASB Legal Services. Attorney-client privilege exists between the district and TASB Legal Services, not the individual member. TASB Legal Services can be reached at 800-580-5345.

ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF BOARD MEMBERS

We believe that:

- It is important for board members and the superintendent to understand the board's governance and management oversight functions.
- Purposeful, well-organized, and well-intentioned campus visits are one of the board members' most valuable activities.
- It is important for the board to demonstrate support of staff and students through attending and participating in district events.

See *The Governance Core*, Chapter 2 & 3.

1. The board, corporately, governs and oversees the district management, and evaluates and employs the superintendent. **Ref:** BAA (LEGAL)
2. Unless authorized by the board, no board member or officer has authority outside of a properly convened and conducted board meeting.
3. Campus Visits
 - a. Board members shall make requests for campus visits to the board president and superintendent.
 - b. Board members may visit any campus after checking with the principal about the best time to visit.
 - c. Board members are required to check in with the principal's office and to follow campus guidelines for visitors.
 - d. Board members may visit teacher classrooms with prior arrangements made by the superintendent.
 - e. Board members may not give any direction to any staff or students.
 - f. When visiting with teachers of their own children, board members will act as parents rather than as board members.
 - g. Board members will not request or accept extraordinary consideration or "favors" from any district employee.

Related Policies: BAA (LEGAL), GKA (LEGAL), GKA (LOCAL) BBF (LOCAL), BBFA (LEGAL), BBE (LOCAL)

4. Participation in Ceremonial Activities and School Events
 - a. Board members are encouraged to attend as many ceremonial activities and school events as their time permits.
Ref: Board Member Training and Activity Calendar.
 - b. Former board members are extended the opportunity to hand diplomas to graduates who are their children, provided the current board members and campus principal are informed in advance.

INTERNAL AUDIT

We believe that:

- All internal audits must begin and end with the board.
- Internal audits are essential to the board's governance and management oversight functions as well as its fiduciary duties.
- Internal audits demonstrate to the community that the board is fulfilling its management oversight function by enlisting an independent and objective assessment of the district's operations and programs and identifying opportunities for improvement.
- Internal audits help the board identify and effectively manage risk.
- Tracking the implementation of an internal auditor's recommendations increases accountability.

See Texas Education Code Section 11.170; Texas Association of School Boards, "What is the Board's Role in Internal Audit?"

1. The board defines internal auditing as an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organization's operations. It helps an organization accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes. See *Texas Internal Auditing Act* and *The Institute of Internal Auditors*. Any review or evaluation by a third party of a component of the district's operation may fit within the definition of an internal audit, even if it is commonly referred to as a "review" or "evaluation." Internal audits can include:
 - a. Academic evaluations
 - b. Operational evaluations
 - c. Administrative evaluations
2. It is the board's statutory obligation to monitor the internal audit function. Internal audits are subject to Texas Education Code Section 11.170 which requires school boards to select an internal auditor. The superintendent may recommend an internal audit, including an auditor and the potential scope, through a process directed by the board. The auditor and scope of the audit must be approved by the board prior to the execution of any contract for services.
3. Texas Education Code Section 11.170 also requires that an internal auditor report directly to the board. An internal auditor shall submit any audit reports, including drafts, to the president and superintendent contemporaneously. The internal auditor shall provide any presentation to the board of its report at an appropriate meeting.
4. After receiving the internal auditor's report, the board shall implement a process to track the administration's progress in implementing the report's recommendations. In the case

that the board determines not to implement any recommendations in a report, the board shall direct the superintendent to document why such recommendations were not implemented.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

We believe that:

- Clearly defined roles help build trust and facilitate the functioning of an effective team.
- Diverse viewpoints enhance decision making.
- Positive intraboard relationships are the starting point for effective governance.

See *What School Boards Can Do*, Chapters 5 & 6.

1. Seating New Board Members

- a. Following board elections, the board will canvass votes, swear in new board members and recognize outgoing board members. The canvass must occur within the legally required time frame.
- b. New members shall be sworn in at a special meeting in the first week of June.

2. Board Officers

- a. Officers are selected annually at the first meeting after each election per Texas Education Code Section 11.061(c). However, the board retains authority to reorganize at any time.
- b. The board shall annually elect a president, vice president, and secretary. Their duties are set forth in Board Policy BDAA (LEGAL and LOCAL).
- c. Board members are responsible for reviewing board officer characteristics and responsibilities found in TASB documentation or defined by the board in its annual work session.

3. President - The board president shall:

- a. Preside at all board meetings and ensure that meetings are conducted efficiently and that all decisions are guided by data;
- b. Appoint board members to committee participation;
- c. Call special meetings;
- d. Sign all legal documents required by law;
- e. Keep the board focused on governance, the goals of the district and on student success;
- f. Help to build and maintain positive relationships among board members; and
- g. Help to build and maintain positive relationships between the superintendent and board members

4. Vice President - The board vice president shall:

- a. Act in capacity of Board President in his/her absence;
- b. Work with board president to appoint board members to committee participation
- c. Facilitate and encourage active participation of board members in their appointed committee or liaison positions

- d. Support the president in keeping the board focused on the goals of the district and on student success;
 - e. Support the president in building and maintaining positive relationships among board members;
 - f. Support the president in building and maintaining positive relationships between superintendent and board members; and
 - g. Perform other duties as directed by the board.
5. Secretary - The board secretary shall:
- a. Keep, or cause to be kept, an accurate recording of the proceedings of each board meeting;
 - b. In the absence of the President and Vice President, the secretary shall call the meeting to order and conduct an election of a President pro-tem;
 - c. Ensure that notices of Board meetings are posted and sent as required by law;
 - d. Sign and countersign documents as requested by the Board; and
 - e. Perform other duties as directed by the Board.
6. Officer Election Procedures
- a. A board member may individually express his or her desire to serve in a particular board officer role either at the meeting or prior to the meeting by requesting that the superintendent email all board members conveying the desire of a board member to serve in a particular officer role.
 - b. The election of a new president shall be facilitated by the secretary, unless the secretary is not re-elected, in which case a facilitator will be appointed.
 - c. Officers are nominated by individual board members. Nominations do not require a second.
 - d. The board may choose to go into closed session to discuss the merits of nominees for a given office before returning to open session to take a vote.
Ref: Texas Government Code Section 551.074.
 - e. Officer elections must take place in open session. If more than one board member is nominated, the candidate who receives a majority of the votes for a particular officer position shall be elected to that officer position.
 - f. Training for new officers will be conducted by outgoing members and/or the superintendent.

Related Policy: BDAA (LEGAL)

7. Committees

- a. Ad Hoc Committees: The board may, at its discretion, designate ad hoc committees for specific purposes. Members shall be appointed by the president after consultation with the board. Examples may include Board Operating Procedures Review Committee, Superintendent Evaluation Instrument Committee, etc.
- b. External Committees: Board members serve as liaisons to a number of external committees. Members shall be appointed to these roles by the president after

consultation with the board. Factors to be considered for appointment include interest in the subject matter of the committee, the experience level of the board member, and the ability of the board member to attend the meetings of the committee. Board members serving on those committees are responsible for representing the board rather than their personal opinions or views. They are also responsible for taking notes of meetings they attend and providing updates to the board through the superintendent's weekly communication to the board or in any other manner determined by the board. A current list of external committees and the representatives to each committee shall be maintained by the executive assistant to the board.

8. Vacant Board Positions: If a vacancy occurs on the board, the remaining board members may fill the vacancy by appointment (through a mutually agreed upon process at the time of the vacancy) until the next board election or may order a special election to fill the vacancy. If more than one year remains in the term of the position vacated, the vacancy shall be filled not later than the 180th day after the date the vacancy occurs.

Related Policy: BBC (LEGAL)

NEW BOARD MEMBER ONBOARDING

We believe that:

- It is the responsibility of the team to orient new board members to the governance mindset and culture.
- Onboarding new board members provides a valuable opportunity for the team to reinforce the focus of existing board members.
- Providing new board members with an experienced mentor is critical to their success.

See *The Governance Core*, Chapter 4.

1. [A New Board Member Packet / Checklist](#) will be provided to new board members immediately following the election.
2. Board president will appoint informal mentors to new board members. Mentors shall be incumbent, experienced board members.
3. Orientation:
 - a. Local district orientation will be scheduled to take place within three weeks of the date a new board member takes the oath of office, if the orientation has not occurred prior to the new member's swearing in.
 - b. The superintendent and board president will participate in the orientation. Board members serving in mentor roles are encouraged, though not required, to attend. Additional administrative staff members may also be included to present specific information about the district.
 - c. Orientation shall be at least three hours in length.
 - d. Orientation led by the superintendent will include but is not limited to:
 - i. General district information such as:
 1. Geographic area included and number of square miles
 2. Campus attendance boundaries
 3. Number of students, teachers, and other employees
 4. Number of campuses and their enrollments
 5. Student demographics
 6. Administrative structure and directory of key personnel
 7. Ongoing issues of interest to patrons
 - ii. Overview of district programs and operations such as:
 1. District vision, mission, goals, and plans including
 - a. District planning and evaluation process and calendar
 - b. Most recent TAPR report, campus report cards, and district annual report
 2. District budget overview including
 - a. Current adopted budget summary
 - b. Recent trends in revenue, appropriations, tax rates, and property values
 - c. Annual financial audit

- d. Development process and calendar
- 3. Overview of district curriculum objectives, standards, and instructional programs
- 4. Policy development and review process and location of manuals with emphasis on *Board Policy Manual* sections “A. Basic District Foundations” and “B. Local Governance”
- 5. Personnel hiring practices and salary schedule
- 6.
- iii. Annual board activity calendar
- iv. Calendar of district and board events
- v. Central office tour and introductions
- e. Orientation led by the board president or president’s designee will include but is not limited to:
 - 1. Overview of roles and responsibilities of the board and superintendent
 - 2. Required continuing education and calendar of training opportunities
 - 3. Current team improvement goals and continuing education targets
 - 4. Current board operating procedures
 - 5. Overview of the budget process
 - 6. Board Advocacy Plan
 - 7. Superintendent performance goals, current superintendent evaluation instrument, process, and evaluation calendar
- 4. In advance of the new board member orientation, the superintendent shall notify the entire board of the time and place of the orientation. Any additional incumbent board member may participate in the orientation. See BBD (LEGAL) and Administrative Code.
- 5. The superintendent shall report to the board during the next regularly scheduled board meeting that the orientation occurred.

Related Policies: BBD (LEGAL)

BOARD MEMBER TRAINING AND EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

We believe that:

- Board members should model life-long learning.
- Ongoing education is critical to the development of a high functioning governance team.
- It is important that trustees continue to develop and reinforce the governance mindset and engage in deep learning.

See *The Governance Core*, Chapter 2.

1. Continuing Education Requirements

- a. Board members are required to satisfy minimum annual continuing education requirements. However, the board encourages and expects members to obtain education above and beyond the minimum requirements.

Ref: *TASB Education Requirements*

<https://www.tasb.org/trustees/expand-your-knowledge/training/current-trustee-training-requirements.aspx>

- b. The board strives to attend one training event annually as a team (e.g., TASB Summer Leadership Institute in San Antonio/Ft. Worth).
- c. The president is encouraged and expected to attend board president training at Summer Leadership Institute immediately following installation. The vice president is encouraged to attend board president training as well.
- d. New board members are encouraged to read *What School Boards Can Do* and *The Governance Core*.
- e. Where a new board committee chair or staff liaison to a board committee may be assigned, the president or superintendent will arrange a meeting with the staff member and the board committee chair to review the responsibilities of the committee, as well as issues or projects still pending, as deemed necessary.

Related Policies: *BBD (LEGAL)*, *BBD (LOCAL)*

TRAVEL FOR BOARD PURPOSES AND REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES

We believe that:

- Board member training and education is a worthwhile investment of district resources.
 - Board members must be good stewards of district resources.
1. During the annual district budget development process, the board will identify events that the board feels warrant attendance (e.g. TASB conferences, school law conferences) and associations that the board feels warrant membership by some or all members (e.g. MASBA). This information will be used by the administration to develop estimates of board training expenses. The adopted budgeted amount for board training shall be reported to the board. Any budget amendments related to board member training shall be reported to the board.
 2. Except in emergency cases, expenses incurred due to a member's failure to attend a planned event are the responsibility of the board member. Additionally, at the board's discretion, a board member that has failed to attend events requiring paid registrations or paid reservations may be required to seek reimbursement for expenses as opposed to the district paying in advance on behalf of the board member.
 3. There are situations when board members may travel outside of the district for reasons other than their own continuing education. Examples include:
 - a. Visiting another district to view new ideas, facilities, or programs
 - b. Lecturing or presenting at a formal gathering or event as a representative of the school board
 - c. Visiting the state legislature or an elected representative who offices outside the districtBoard members are encouraged to participate in these types of activities as long as resources to support the travel are available and do not conflict with other district priorities. Travel will be by the most cost-efficient method readily available.
 4. Reimbursement to board members for reasonable travel expenses while conducting district business outside of the district shall be made by the district only when attendance is authorized in advance by the board as part of the budget approval process or as an unforeseen situation requiring travel that arises after budget approval.
 5. If an unforeseen situation presents itself and time is insufficient to gain prior approval from the board, a member may submit a letter of justification for not gaining prior approval and request reimbursement of related expenses. However, the board is not obligated to approve reimbursement if, in its opinion, there was sufficient time to gain prior approval or the nature of the event did not warrant board attendance.

6. Members will adhere to the following procedures when requesting approval to expend travel funds that are not included in the original budget:
 - a. Members desiring to conduct business outside the district will ask that the issue be included on an upcoming board meeting agenda as an action item in accordance with local procedure.
 - b. The administration will prepare an estimate of funds to support the action item, and the board will discuss and then vote to approve the funds.
 - c. The president will open discussion on the item and determine board interest in attending the event.
 - d. If the funds for travel are approved, the individual board member making the initial request will contact the superintendent's executive assistant to make travel arrangements.
7. The board is the final authority for resolving any dispute regarding expenses related to business travel outside the district.

Related Policies: BBG (LEGAL) & (LOCAL)

BOARD MEMBER CONDUCT

We believe that:

- The successes of any leaders are largely determined by the manner in which they carry out their leadership. It is important that board members model behavior that we want our staff and students to emulate.
- Board members who want to be effective must treat their colleagues with respect and relate honestly. Positive relationships with colleagues are a core component of effective governance and teamwork.

See *The Governance Core*, Chapter 2; *What School Boards Can Do*, Chapter 5.

1. Individual board members are encouraged to express their concerns about another member's performance directly to that member.
 - a. If addressing the issue directly with the member does not resolve the concern, then discussion with the president is appropriate.
 - i. The president shall discuss the concern with the individual in question on behalf of the reporting board member or shall moderate a discussion between the members. If a quorum of the board is involved, the meeting must be posted and conducted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.
 - ii. The president shall remind the board member whose behavior is in question about the adopted code of ethics and discuss whether the questionable behavior complies with the code. The discussion also will identify more appropriate alternatives to the questionable behavior or refer the board member to policies or procedures that outline approved ways to deal with the issue that prompted the questionable behavior.
 - iii. If the board member in question does not believe his or her behavior is in conflict with the board's code of ethics, an agenda item specifying "evaluation of individual board member's performance" may be listed on the agenda for an upcoming board meeting.
 - iv. The matter will be discussed by the full board in closed session in an attempt to clearly identify behavior that may be inappropriate and discuss possible solutions or alternative approaches that may have a more positive impact on team cohesion and effectiveness.
 - v. In the event a board member is absent from more than 30% of regular board meetings and agenda review meetings and special called board meetings (with the exception of grievance hearings) within a six month period, a closed session of the board will be convened.
 - b. If the concern involves the president, a member may discuss his or her concerns with the vice-president.
 - c. Members will not take concerns about fellow board members to the superintendent.

- d. Concerns about individual board members will not be discussed by multiple board members outside of a board meeting.
- e. Members will not speak about concerns with another member, superintendent, or staff in the community.

Related Policies: BBFA (LEGAL), BBF (LOCAL), BE (LEGAL)

2. Re-election Campaigns

- a. Use of district resources is not allowed to discuss or solicit support of a candidate running for re-election to the board.

Ref: Texas Education Code Section 11.168 and 11.169.

- b. Board members campaigning for re-election will not solicit school district employees for endorsement during official work hours.
- c. Board members will not use their district-assigned email addresses for campaign purposes.
- d. The board, as a whole, will not endorse any candidate running for public office.

COMMUNICATIONS

We believe that:

- It is not possible to overestimate the importance of high-quality communication to an effective board of trustees.
- Communication with the community is a key function of the board.
- It is important that the district's communication plan facilitates and supports the board's communication with the community.
- It is the personal responsibility of each board member to communicate in a way that reflects the best interest of the board.
- Individual board members have a unique voice that contributes to the overall health of board operations.

1. Communication with the community

- a. Annually at a meeting of the board of trustees, the board and superintendent will discuss how to ensure that the district's communication plan is set to appropriately use the board as a communication channel to the community before the beginning of the new school year.
- b. Board members are encouraged to participate in community activities as liaisons between the community and the school district. When doing so, board members are expected to:
 - i. Relay information about the board and district approved goals
 - ii. Inform the public of a trustee's role and responsibilities as one member of the board
 - iii. Support board decisions
 - iv. Interact in a positive manner
 - v. Listen politely and respectfully to comments
 - vi. Make no commitment on behalf of the board or district
 - vii. Not criticize district personnel or fellow trustees
 - viii. As needed, refer questions about specific district activities requiring follow-up to the superintendent or by reference to policy
- c. As soon as reasonably practicable, the president will respond to communications addressed to two or more board members. At his/her discretion the president may delegate to the vice president or secretary, if the vice-president is unavailable, to respond to such correspondence received provided that the response notes that it is sent on behalf of the board. A copy of such response will be forwarded to all board members to merely inform them of the response but no discussion or deliberation regarding the communication or response will be held based on the Open Meetings Act.
- d. At their individual discretion, board members may respond to one-on-one phone calls, written correspondence, including, but not limited to, e-mail, text messages or social media from members of the public, but should bear in mind that

responses are likely subject to Public Information Act requests and as such should be retained or forwarded to the Custodian of Records.

- e. To prevent misunderstanding, a board member responding individually to a communication from a member of the public will expressly note that the response is made on his or her behalf, **not** on behalf of the board (with the exception of circumstances described in paragraph (c) above), does not constitute an official statement of the board or district or that action on the matter has yet to be taken by the board.
- f. Members are encouraged to share communications they receive with the rest of the board and superintendent if the following applies:
 - i. The information is not of a personal or confidential nature and on a district matter
 - ii. It is not obvious that the individual has contacted the rest of the board members

However, no discussion or deliberation of the communication will take place between any trustees outside a duly called and posted board meeting in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.

- g. If a board member maintains a personal website, Facebook page, or other social media site, the board member will expressly state that the opinions stated therein are the opinions of the individual member and that s/he is not speaking on behalf of the board along with the other disclaimer language listed in paragraph (e) above, as applicable.

Related Policies: BBE (LEGAL), BBE (LOCAL), GBAA (LEGAL) AND GBAA (LOCAL)

2. Communication with the Media

- a. The president or, in his or her absence, the vice president, will serve as the board spokesperson to the media on issues regarding board actions.
- b. The superintendent or designee shall be the official district spokesperson to the media on issues of district attention.
- c. Any board member receiving a call from the media requesting information, comments, or an interview will direct the media representative to the president and superintendent for superintendent response on district business and president response on board-specific issues.

Related Policies: BBF (LOCAL) and BJA (LOCAL)

3. Response to Community or Employee Complaints

- a. Listen respectfully. Remind the complainant of the Policy DGBA and the board's responsibility to remain impartial and noncommittal because complaints may ultimately be brought to the board on appeal.
- b. Determine if the complainant wishes to express dissatisfaction or desires some action be taken to resolve the issue.
- c. As per Policy DGBA, complainants who desire some action be taken should be encouraged to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with the teacher, principal or other appropriate administrator.

Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow resolution at the lowest possible administrative level and allow time for the grievance to stay within grievance process timelines. If the complaint cannot be resolved informally the complainant should consult the superintendent for an explanation of the formal grievance process.

- d. Ask if the complainant has followed the “Chain of Command” outlined in District Policy DGBA and refer them to it for review.
- e. If the complainant does not know the district’s “Chain of Command,” provide the following general information about the grievance process:
 - i. The complainant should first discuss the problem with the person(s) with whom they have a problem or is closest to the problem.
 - ii. If not satisfied with the resolution of the problem, the complainant should go to the administrative supervisor of the person noted in “i.”
 - iii. The administrative supervisor will assist the complainant in resolving the complaint.
 - iv. If still not satisfied, the complainant may appeal to the superintendent or designee for resolution.
 - v. If the superintendent is unable to resolve the issue or the complainant is still not satisfied, the formal complaint is brought to the board following local policy.
- f. Board members should inform the superintendent of significant complaints from staff and community, including those complaints made on social media, but will not direct the superintendent to take specific actions. Complaints against the superintendent received by a board member shall be referred to the president, or in her or his absence, the vice-president for action including engaging the board’s counsel.
- g. The superintendent shall inform the board of the status and resolution of complaints referred by board members.
- h. Only the superintendent or designee shall respond to community or employee complaints made through social media. A board member will refer the complainant to the campus principal or department or program administrator and inform the superintendent.

Related Policies: DGBA (LEGAL and LOCAL) pertains to employees; FNG (LEGAL and LOCAL) pertains to parents and students; GF (LOCAL) is for public complaints

4. Communication with Vendors: Except when under a bid or proposal solicitation, board members may participate in conversations with vendors for informational purposes only, referring them to the superintendent’s office for further conversation.

TEAM COMMUNICATIONS

We believe that:

- Regular communication from the superintendent to the board strengthens the Team of Eight.
- Effective communication contributes significantly to successful governance.
- Delaying communication until board meetings increases the likelihood that goals will diverge or priorities will shift in opposite directions.

1. Communication with the Superintendent

- a. The superintendent will communicate with the entire board in a timely manner to maintain a practice of “no surprises.”
- b. The superintendent will communicate in writing at least weekly with information including, but not limited to, recent issues and events, updates on district operations and strategic focus areas, and upcoming district events.
- c. The superintendent will communicate with each board member on sensitive or urgent issues on an as needed basis.
- d. The superintendent will meet with the president as needed, or communicate by telephone, text message, and/or e-mail to inform him or her of district issues.
- e. The president may direct the superintendent to distribute copies of documents to each member of the board for information.
- f. The superintendent will communicate requested information to all board members in as timely a manner as possible without interfering with the regular conduct of district business.

2. Communications Between Board Members

- a. Board members may communicate with other individual members for purposes of asking questions, clarifying information, or socializing under circumstances that do not conflict with or circumvent the Texas Open Meetings Act, being mindful of accidentally creating a walking quorum.
- b. Board members may not communicate with other individual members for purposes of soliciting votes in support of or opposition to items of business that may come before the board.
- c. Board members who wish to share information relevant to district business or issues scheduled to come before the board will relay the information to the board president for placement on a future agenda or to the superintendent for distribution to all members.
- d. Board members will refrain from sending emails using the “reply all” choice of reply.

Related Policies: BE (LEGAL) and BJA (LOCAL)

BOARD REVIEW OF POLICY AND BOARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

We believe that:

- An effective board does more than simply adopt policy and procedures. Effective boards follow them.
- Effective policies and procedures should be living documents that are used, referred to, monitored and updated periodically.

See *The Governance Core*, Chapter 6.

1. New board members should thoroughly review Board Policy and Board Operating Procedures as part of the onboarding process. Board members should regularly review Board Policy and Board Operating Procedures as a resource.
2. Revision of Board Policy is ongoing through the TASB update process. A full policy review is recommended every three to five years. Last full policy review: July 30, 2019.
3. Board Operating Procedures will be reviewed and approved annually in the month of July or August with updates adopted as needed. A full Board Operating Procedure review is recommended every three to five years. A sub-committee of the board may conduct the review. Last full Board Operating Procedures review: July 2023.

ANNUAL TEAM BUILDING, GOAL SETTING, AND BOARD SELF-EVALUATION

We believe that:

- The board must model accountability through engaging annually in a self-evaluation assessment process.
 - We govern most effectively as a Team of Eight.
1. The board will conduct annual team building, board and district goal setting, and self-evaluation in the month of July or August. This session will also include a review of the board's annual activity calendar and planning for workshops for the upcoming year. Team building shall be scheduled for a full day and the board shall engage an appropriately qualified and effective facilitator.
 2. The team building session will include a review of the roles, rights, and responsibilities of a local board, as outlined in the TEA Framework for Governance Leadership.
Ref: *Framework for School Board Development*, Board Policy BBD (Exhibit)
https://www.tasb.org/services/board-development-services/documents/board_assessment_framework_1-08.pdf
 3. The self-evaluation may include:
 - a. Board operating procedures
 - b. Board member training
 - c. Conflict resolution
 - d. Working relationships with the superintendent
 - e. Conduct of board meetings
 - f. Long-range planning and goal setting
 - g. Relationship with the community
 4. The board self-evaluation instrument will be reviewed annually. The instrument utilized in 2015 through 2018 was TASB's Effective Board Practices: An Inventory for School Boards; that version is no longer available. There was no self-evaluation in 2019 due to the superintendent transition. For 2020 through 2021 it was TASB's XG Board Self-Assessment. The instrument utilized in 2022 and 2023 was TASB's Texas School Board Self-Assessment. Other instruments may be considered at the board's discretion.
 5. The board activity calendar shall include the schedule for workshop topics as agreed upon by the board, progress reporting on board and district goals, progress reporting on academic achievement/student success, review of communication plan and progress reporting on its implementation, and other items as required by law.

SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION

We believe that:

- Effective superintendent evaluation is a core function of the board.
 - It is important to provide a fair, honest, thorough, and attainable evaluation.
1. The superintendent will be formally evaluated in writing annually in June (summative) of each year in closed session. At that time, the board will review the contract and salary with the superintendent.
 2. The evaluation instrument shall be developed collaboratively between the superintendent and the board. The annual instrument will be adopted at or before the June superintendent evaluation meeting of the preceding year. The evaluation tool shall be based on observable, measurable, job-related behavior and reflect the district goals and priorities.
 3. The board will meet with the superintendent three times annually to provide formative evaluations. The formative evaluations shall include progress monitoring toward the superintendent evaluation goals.
 4. Superintendent evaluation may be a standing agenda item for closed session. Board members are encouraged to raise performance concerns with the superintendent and president promptly.
 5. The superintendent's evaluation is confidential by law. See Texas Education Code Section 21.355(a).

Ref Policies: BJCD (LEGAL), BJCD (LOCAL)