

BOARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

I. Board Meeting Agenda

A. How to Prepare the Board Meeting Agenda

- 1) Any board member may request an item to be placed on the agenda for board consideration by contacting the board president or superintendent six business days prior to the meeting.
- 2) Items submitted for inclusion after the deadline or those requiring significant preparation time might, at the discretion of the board president, be deferred to a later meeting. This decision is based on the time needed to prepare supporting information.
- 3) A draft agenda will be developed by the superintendent and presented to the board president for approval five working days prior to the meeting for which the agenda is being prepared.
- 4) The draft agenda will include previously scheduled items from the board activity calendar and any items required by law.
- 5) The board will use a consent agenda for items that can be voted on jointly without discussion.
 - a) Placement of items on the consent agenda will be at the discretion of the board president and superintendent.
 - b) Items such as the following may be included on the consent agenda:
 - Routine items
 - Minutes of regular and special board meetings
 - Acceptance of financial reports
 - Routine bid recommendations in alignment with district policy
 - Second reading of district policies
 - Approval of personnel contracts that comply with district policies
 - Use of facilities

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

Adopted: 8/10/04

B. How to Request Information About Meeting Agenda Items

- 1) Members are encouraged to ask for information related to meeting agenda items prior to the scheduled meeting.
- 2) Any questions about agenda items or requests for additional information about them will be directed to the superintendent.
- 3) Requests for information or questions about any agenda item should be made at least one business day prior to the scheduled meeting.
- 4) If a written report is provided in response to the request, all board members will receive a copy of both the request and report prior to the opening of the meeting.
- 5) Board members may discuss the provided information or ask additional questions about the agenda item in the meeting.

Adopted: 8/10/04

C. How to Request Information Not Related to Agenda Items

- 1) Members should request information not related to a meeting agenda item directly from the superintendent or other designated custodian of records if the superintendent is unavailable.
- 2) The superintendent will determine if the information requested is available from existing sources or records or if it requires a special, one-time-only report to be developed.
- 3) If the requested information can be provided from readily available data with no diversion of staff time, then it will be provided as soon as reasonable.
- 4) In the event the request requires a special report that will divert staff time from established priorities, the superintendent will notify the requestor and the board president of this fact.
- 5) The board president will place the request for information (ref.#4) on the next meeting agenda to determine if a majority of the board agrees the requested information is important for its future decision-making.
- 6) If the board does agree that the information is important for future decision-making, then the superintendent will direct that a report be developed and provided as requested by the board.
- 7) All team members will receive a copy of any report generated by a board member's request in accordance with this procedure.

Related Policies: BBE(LOCAL)

Adopted: 8/10/04

II. Board Participation

A. How to Participate in Discussion, Debate, and Voting

- 1) The board shall observe the parliamentary guidelines in *Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised)*, designated in policy as the board's parliamentary authority. (see #3 below)
 - a) A copy of *Robert's Rules of Order* will be available to the board president at every meeting.
 - b) The board may operate under the "*Rules for Small Boards and Communities*" unless the president determines there is a need to follow the more formal rules to efficiently conduct business at a given time.
- 2) The board may adopt additional meeting rules to supplement *Robert's Rules of Order* by majority vote after placing the issue on an agenda for discussion. The locally adopted procedures shall supersede *Robert's Rules* when the two conflict. Locally adopted rules must be in compliance with law.
- 3) The board president will have full authority to follow and enforce *Robert's Rules*, this procedure, and any other rules established by the board including the following:
 - a) The president may limit time of debate by individual members to allow each member an opportunity to speak. If time is limited, the president will ensure that each individual receives equal time to speak.
 - b) Board members shall direct comments solely to the business currently under deliberation.
- 4) The board president shall:
 - a) Allow each board member to speak on each issue being considered.
 - b) Allow opposing viewpoints to be heard in turn if applicable.
 - c) 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.
 - d) 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 not if a board member and/or the board desire the item were included in a later discussion.

- 5) The consent agenda will be addressed in the following way:
 - a) When the president announces the consent agenda for voting, any individual board member may ask the president to remove a particular item from the consent agenda for individual consideration.
 - b) When a member makes such a request, the president, will announce that the requested item is removed from the consent agenda.
 - c) Following action on the consent agenda, the president will allow questions or discussion on any items removed from the agenda at the request of a board member.
- 6) Voting will be verbally or by a show of hands as needed.
- 7) 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), BBRA(LEGAL)

Adopted: 9/14/04

B. How to Participate as a Trustee in “Public Comment”

- 1) Persons wishing to address the board during open public comment will comply with the provisions of policy BED(LOCAL) that outlines the specific times and procedures applicable to public comments during board meetings.
- 2) A copy of policy BED(LOCAL) will be available for public review at the posted meeting site.
- 3) During the “public comment” section of the meeting, board members will listen to comments but, as the designated spokesperson, only the president may respond if a response to the speaker is required. Those responses are limited to:
 - a) Correcting misstatements of fact presented by the speaker.
 - b) Referring the speaker to applicable board policy.
 - c) Placing the item on a future agenda for discussion if not listed on the current board agenda.
- 4) With the approval of the board, the president may direct the superintendent to investigate matters brought forward during public comment and report findings to the board at a later meeting.
- 5) If a member of the public has been afforded an opportunity to speak and his or her comments reflect a complaint about an individual district staff or board member, the president will refer the speaker to the appropriate formal grievance policy.

- 6) The board must bear in mind that residents who speak during comments have First Amendment rights. The board should seek legal advice before disallowing a resident's contribution to public comment based solely on the content of the speaker's comments.

Related Policies: BED(LEGAL)(LOCAL), FNAG(LOCAL)
Adopted: 9/14/04

III. Communication

A. How to Communicate with the Media

- 1) The board president, or in his or her absence, the vice president will serve as the board spokesperson to the media on issues regarding board actions.
- 2) The superintendent or, in his or her absence, the communications specialist shall be the official district spokesperson to the media on issues of district attention.
- 3) Any board member receiving a call from the media requesting information, comments, or an interview should direct the media representative to the superintendent for district business and to the board president for board-specific issues.
- 4) The spokesperson will attempt to express responses in a balanced and diplomatic fashion when speaking on behalf of the board.
- 5) Spokespersons will request that questions from the media about controversial issues be presented in writing.
- 6) If speaking to a media representative, board members should clarify at the beginning of the interview that they are expressing personal opinions rather than speaking as authorized representatives of the board of trustees, making every attempt to show support for the board's decision.

Related Policies: BBF(LOCAL),BDAB(LOCAL),BJA(LOCAL),GBB(LOCAL), and GBBA
(LCOAL)
Adopted: 8/3/04

B. How to Communicate with the Community

- 1) Board members are encouraged to participate in community activities as liaisons between the public and the school district. When doing so, board members are expected to:
 - a) Relay information about district goals.

- b) Clarify a trustee's limitations, obligations, and responsibilities as a member of the board.
 - c) Support board decisions.
 - d) Interact in a positive manner.
 - e) Listen politely and respectfully to comments.
 - f) Make no commitment on behalf of the board or district.
 - g) Not criticize district personnel.
 - h) Refer questions about specific district activities to the appropriate staff person when they do not know the answers.
 - i) Refer complaints about personnel to the appropriate staff person.
- 2) Board members will inform the superintendent about any anonymous communications they receive, to act on at his or her discretion.
 - 3) Information received in signed letters addressed to the board or a board member will be forwarded to the president or the superintendent for action if needed.
 - 4) The board will communicate to the community collectively through district communication vehicles authorized by the board in policy or the district communication plan.

Adopted: 8/3/04

C. How to Communicate with Team Members Between Meetings.

- 1) The superintendent will communicate with each board member by periodic board information delivered as needed or as required.
- 2) The superintendent will meet with the board president as needed, or communicate by telephone, fax, and/or e-mail to inform him or her of district issues that may need to come before the board for information or action.
- 3) The board president may direct the superintendent to distribute copies of documents to each member of the board for information.
- 4) 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.
- 5) Individual board members may meet with the superintendent for the purpose of requesting information or clarification as needed without interfering with the regular conduct of district business.
- 6) 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.

- 7) Board members may not communicate with other individual members for purposes of soliciting votes in support or opposition to items of business that may come before the board.
- 8) 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.

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

Adopted: 8/3/04

D. How to Express Concern About Another Member's Performance

- 1) Individual board members are encouraged to express their concerns about another member's performance directly to that member.
- 2) If addressing the issue directly with the member does not resolve the concern, then discussion with the board president is appropriate.
- 3) If the concern involves the board president, a member may discuss his or her concerns with the board vice-president.
- 4) Members will not take concerns about fellow board members to the superintendent.
- 5) Members will not speak negatively about another member, superintendent, or staff in the community.

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

Adopted: 8/3/04

IV. New Board Members

- 1) New board members will be presented with an orientation manual that included, but is not limited to the information listed below.
- 2) Local district orientation will be scheduled to take place within 60 days of the date a new board member takes the oath of office as required by law.
- 3) The superintendent and at least one incumbent board member will participate in the orientation. Additional administrative staff members may also be included to present specific information about the district.
- 4) Orientation will include but is not limited to:
 - a) General district information such as
 - Geographical area included and number of square miles
 - Number of students, teachers, and other employees

- Number of campuses and their enrollments
 - Student demographics
 - Administrative structure and directory of key personnel
 - Ongoing issues of interest to patrons
- b) Overview of district programs and operations such as:
- District vision, mission, goals, and plans including : District planning and evaluation process and calendar; most recent AEIS report
 - District budget overview including: Current adopted budget summary, recent trends in revenue, appropriations, tax rates, property values, and annual financial audit
 - Overview of district curriculum objectives and instructional programs
 - Policy development and review process
 - Personnel hiring practices and salary schedule
 - Superintendent performance goals, current superintendent evaluation instrument
- c) Team operations, including:
- Overview of roles and responsibilities of the board and superintendent
 - Required continuing education
 - Annual board activity calendar
 - Calendar of district and board events
 - Current team operating procedures

Related Policies: BBD(LEGAL)
 Adopted: 8/3/04

V. Complaints

A. How to Hear Level III Employee Grievances or Complaints

- 1) The board will review Policy DGBA (Legal) and (Local) before hearing a formal grievance by a school employee. This policy has specific time lines, procedures, and forms that need to be used in the grievance process.
- 2) This procedure and Policy DGBA do not apply to the termination

or nonrenewal of a contract employee. The board should consult the Policy DF Series and the district's lawyer for these situations.

- 3) The proper forum for hearing a level III grievance is an agenda item at a properly posted meeting. Policy DGBA (Legal) states that if an employee's complaint involves another district employee, the meeting will be closed to the public unless the employee who is the subject of the complaint requests an open meeting in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. If the complaint does not involve another district employee, the complaint will be closed to the public unless the employee bringing the complaint requests an open meeting in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act:
 - a) The board president will guide the process of the grievance presentation.
 - b) The board will listen to the presentation of the grievance, the administration's response to the presentation, and any rebuttal to the administration's response.
 - c) Following the rebuttal, the presiding officer will allow board members to ask questions of any party to clarify facts presented at the meeting.
 - d) During the proceedings, the board will act professionally and in a business-like manner.
 - e) Board members who have personal knowledge of the situation or relationships with an employee involved in the complaint should purposefully evaluate their situation and decide whether to recuse themselves to avoid violating district policies regarding nepotism BBFA (Legal) or ethical behavior BBF (Local).
 - f) The president will ensure that the presentation is confined to the issues brought up at lower levels and not permit new or expanded grievances to enter the proceeding.

- 2) Following the process in Step 3, the board should exercise one of the options listed in Policy DGBA (Local).
 - a) Deny the grievance—uphold the lower-decision. This option implies that the board has heard and considered the grievance but considers the grievance unfounded and takes formal action to indicate its choice to deny.
 - b) Grant the grievance—reverse the lower-level decision.
 - c) Grant in part and deny in part—modify specific parts of the lower-level decision.

- d) Take no action—uphold the lower-level decision. This option implies that the board has heard and considered the grievance but takes no other formal action on the issue.
- 3) The board may postpone its decision until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Related Policies: DGBA (Legal) and (Local), BE (Legal), BEC (Legal)
Adopted: 10/11/04

B. How to Respond to Community or Employee Complaints

- 1) Listen briefly and respectfully. Remind the complainant of the board's responsibility to remain impartial and noncommittal because complaints may ultimately be brought to the board on appeal.
- 2) Determine if the complainant wishes to express dissatisfaction or desires some action be taken to resolve the issue.
- 3) Complainants who desire some action be taken should be directed or referred to the appropriate policy outlining grievance procedures and informed that the steps listed in policy are necessary to protect everyone's rights while following an orderly process.
- 4) Ask if the complainant has followed the "Chain of Command" outlined in district policy.
- 5) If the complainant does not know the district's "Chain of Command," provide the following information.
 - a) The complainant should first discuss the problem with the person in authority closest to the problem.
 - b) If not satisfied with the resolution of the problem, the complainant should go to the administrative supervisor of the person noted in "a."
 - c) The administrative supervisor will help the complainant initiate any correspondence or forms required in policy and attempt to resolve the complaint.
 - d) If still not satisfied, the complainant may appeal to the superintendent or designee for resolution.
 - e) 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.
- 6) Board members will inform the superintendent of all complaints from staff and community but will not direct the superintendent to take specific actions.

Related Policies: DGBA (Legal and Local) pertains to employees; FNG (Legal and Local) pertains to parents and students; GF (Local) is for public complaints.
Adopted: 10/11/04

VI. How to Participate in School Board Elections as a Trustee

- 1) Trustees will avoid any actions that may violate district policy BBF (LOCAL). This policy requires trustees to be impartial in their decisions and actions and restricts them from taking private action that may compromise their individual performance.
- 2) All school board members have a First Amendment right to voice their opinions and support the candidate of their choice. Each trustee should weigh the potential damage to working relationships that might occur as a result of sharing personal opinions in a public forum and should act in the best interest of the district.
- 3) Trustees may talk about the general duties of the board, provide information about the school district, or discuss the facts regarding past board meetings for those topics that are not conducted in closed sessions.
- 4) Board members may actively encourage citizens of the district to vote.

Related Policies: BBF(Local)
Adopted 11/08/05