Board of Education Handbook

The Board of Education of Anne Arundel County

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Introduction

This Board of Education Handbook has been developed to capture, in one place and in plain language, the governing guideposts and operating procedures of the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County. The Handbook is intended to serve as a resource for Members of the Board as they assume their office and fulfill their responsibilities.

The Handbook will be posted on the Board's website, reviewed annually, and updated as warranted. Limited print copies will be available for distribution as determined by the Board.

The Board of Education of Anne Arundel County Mission Statement

The mission of the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County is to provide leadership, vision, and support to Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) that expects and fosters:

- instructional excellence
- student achievement
- educational equity
- lifelong learning
- community collaboration
- responsive policies and regulations
- fiscal efficiency
- effectiveness and accountability

DEFINITIONS

Administrative Function
For the purposes of the Maryland Open Meetings Act (OMA), an administrative function is an action or activity of the Board that involves the administration of a law of the State; a law of a political subdivision of the State; or a rule, regulation, or bylaw of the Board, the State Board, or another public body, but that does not fall within another function defined by the Act, such as advisory, legislative, or judicial. Topics under this exemption could include an update from the school system's internal auditor; the scheduling of an appeal hearing or graduation assignments; a review of pending public information requests; or a discussion of how to conduct a particular meeting in accordance with a health officer's advice, Governor's order, and the OMA.

Conference
A convention, seminar, assembly, or similar event where Board members' attendance involves education, exposure, and networking with other school board members, such as a conference sponsored by the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), National School Boards Association (NSBA) or similar educational association. Conferences usually take place over a 2 to 3-day period and could take place in Maryland or another location. No official business of the Board is conducted at conferences.

Hearing
A public hearing is an open Board meeting where individuals provide direct and extensive citizen input to the Board on a particular issue, such as budget adoption or proposed redistricting. The purpose of a hearing is for citizens to inform the Board of their views, as opposed to a back-and-forth conversation between Board Members and speakers. Hearings will usually take place at the AACPS Central Office or in a school auditorium. No official business of the Board is conducted at such hearings.

The Board may hold a hearing that is closed to the public in accordance with State law or otherwise consistent with the Board's quasi-judicial authority in order protect the privacy or reputation of a student, employee or other individual regarding a private matter that is not related to public business.

Retreat
A Board retreat is a meeting of the Board where Members receive information, training, and/or legal advice about such matters as intra-Board relations, team building, administrative functions, self-evaluation, and parliamentary procedure. A retreat may be open or closed to the public depending upon the nature of the topics(s) involved, but regardless of format, no official business of the Board is conducted during retreats, and no public comment is taken.

Scheduled Meetings
A scheduled meeting is any official, scheduled convening of the Members of the Board for any length of time with no significant break in the proceedings. This may include regular business sessions, special sessions, workshops, and public hearings. Each spring the Board will adopt and publish a master calendar of meetings that determines its schedule from July through June of each year. This meeting calendar can be amended by the Board at any time throughout the year, with notice of the amended calendar provided to the public.

Session
A session refers to a Board meeting or series of meetings working completely through an entire agenda or order of business. If the session covers more than one meeting, each meeting picks up where the previous one left off.

Special Session
A session called by the Board to discuss a specific topic or necessitated by specific circumstances, such as a school system or other public emergency.

Workshop
A Board workshop is a meeting scheduled in advance by the Board in order for the Superintendent and his staff to advise the Board and answer Member questions on a particular topic, such as the capital budget, key legislation, or school start times. Workshops are often held in advance of the Board's possible action on a particular topic, but no actions are taken during them. The public is welcome to attend workshops, but there is no public comment.

Board Governance

Authority And Responsibilities Of The Board Of Education

§4-108 of Education Article – Duties in General

The powers and mandatory duties of the Board of Education are defined in the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and Title 13A of the Code of Maryland Regulations. They are divided among executive, legislative, and quasi-judicial responsibilities, as follows:

Executive

1. Selecting and appointing the Superintendent of Schools
2. Appointing personnel, including school-based administrators
3. Appointing Board counsel
4. Making a continuous appraisal of the educational and administrative management of the school system, through the evaluation of the Superintendent
5. Periodically adopting a multi-year strategic plan
6. Communicating and meeting with community members, staff, and students as to Board views on educational issues (not in law or statute see Board Policy BAC)7. Ratifying collective bargaining agreements

Legislative

1. Adopting and interpreting policies
2. Adopting operating and capital budgets
3. Establishing curriculum guides and courses of study
4. Establishing school boundaries
5. Advancing a legislative agenda
6. Making decisions on facility, procurement, and financial matters
7. Authorizing legal settlements

Quasi-Judicial

1. Deciding appeals of the Superintendent's administrative decisions
2. Deciding appeals of long-term student suspensions and expulsions
3. Considering recommendations of the Superintendent to suspend or dismiss a certificated employee.

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Key Work Of School Boards

The Board is committed to the "Key Work of Schools Boards," developed by the National School Boards Association, encompassing the following five key areas:

Vision	Effective school boards establish a clear vision with high expectations for quality teaching and learning that supports strong student outcomes. They establish clear and specific goals to move districts forward.
Accountability	High academic standards, transparency, and accountability undergird a world-class education. True accountability depends on open decision making, community engagement and support, and receptivity to new ideas and constructive criticism.
Policy	Policy is how a board sustainably exercises power to serve students. Through policy, school boards establish a set of cohesive guidelines able to transform vision into reality.
Community Leadership	Through public advocacy and community engagement, school boards share their concerns and actions with the public. Community leadership that builds public support is vital to implement the board's vision.
Board/Superintendent Relationships	Both the school board and the superintendent have essential leadership roles that are interconnected but different. Effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each in their respective roles with strong collaboration and mutual trust.

Composition Of The Board And Board Member Qualifications

§3-2A-01, 3-2A-02 and 3-2A-04 of the Education Article; Board Policy BB — Appointments, Qualifications, and Term of Office

The composition of the Board of Education consists of seven Members elected through nonpartisan elections (one Member from each of the seven councilmanic districts in Anne Arundel County) and one student member. The elected Board Members must be residents of Anne Arundel County and a Member elected from a councilmanic district must be a resident of that district. If at any time, a county member ceases to live within that county or within a specific district of the county from which they were selected, then they are not permitted to continue their service on the county board. However, if the boundary line of a councilmanic district is changed, the term of an incumbent Member of the Board who no longer resides in that councilmanic district because of the change is not affected during that term.

The term of 4 years begins on the first Monday in December after the member's election and until a successor is elected and qualifies. Each selected member of the county is eligible for reelection for a second consecutive term but may not serve for more than two consecutive terms. The County Council of Anne Arundel County shall select a qualified individual to fill any vacancy in the office of an elected member of the Board for the remainder of the term and until a successor is elected and qualifies.

Student Board Member

§3-2A-05 of the Education Article

The qualifications, election, and provisions relating to the Student Member of the Board are set forth in State law. The Student Member has the same voting rights and privileges as the other Members of the Board. The Student Member must be a resident of Anne Arundel County and a regularly enrolled senior-year student of good character and in good standing (in law) in an Anne Arundel County public high school. The Student Board Member is elected for a one-year term each year by the Chesapeake Regional Association of Student Councils (CRASC). The student's term of office begins on July 1 after the election upon confirmation and appointment by the Governor and shall continue until a successor is appointed and qualifies. A Student Member who completes a full term on the Board shall be granted a scholarship of $15,000, to be applied toward the student's higher education costs.

Oath Of Office/Swearing In

Maryland Constitution, Article I, Section 9

Each new Board Member, upon being elected or selected shall appear before the Clerk of the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County, at a time to be arranged by the Executive Assistant to the Board of Education, to take the Oath of Office, upon being advised that the Clerk of the Court is in possession of the Board Member's Commission declaring the individual's eligibility in meeting the qualifications for holding office.

Authority Of Individual Board Members

Board Policy BAC — Board Member Authority

Power belongs not to individual Members of a Board of Education but to the Board of Education acting as a corporate body through collective action. Board Members have authority only when acting as a Board of Education in a legally constituted session, with a quorum being present, with the exception of conferring diplomas at commencement ceremonies or executing legal documents as authorized on behalf of the Board. The statement or action of an individual Member or group of Members of the Board of Education shall not bind the Board of Education itself, except when that statement or action is specifically authorized by an official act of the Board. This does not preclude the Board President (or Vice President in the President's absence) from exercising their duties in accordance with the law, Board policy or other action of the Board. Further, this does not preclude individual Board Members from representing the Board at meetings and ceremonial events or speaking to constituent groups in their capacity as Board Members.

If a Board Member is invited to speak on a Board topic in the community, the Board Member shall notify the Board Office and/or the Board leadership about the engagement in advance. When speaking at events, such as meetings of PTAs, PTOs, community organizations and special interest groups, the Board Member shall be mindful to refrain from speaking on behalf of the entire Board. Any comments and opinions shall be those of the individual Board Member and not on behalf of the entire Board, unless otherwise previously agreed upon by the Board..

New Board Member Orientation

Following the election or selection of new Members, the Board Office and Superintendent's Office will provide for an orientation as to the Board's operation and processes, the working relationships with the Superintendent and the staff of Anne Arundel County Public Schools, and substantive background information pertaining to school system issues and procedures. A copy of this Handbook will be provided. New Board Members shall attend at least one of the orientation sessions organized by the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE). Additional orientation with respect to pending litigation, legal issues and/or other privileged or confidential matters may occur after the new Members are sworn into office.

Removal Of Board Member

§3-2A-8 of the Education Article; Board Policy BAD — Board Member Removal From Office

Pursuant to statute, the State Board may remove a member of the county board for immorality, misconduct in office, incompetency, willful neglect of duty, or failure to attend, without good cause, at least 75% of the scheduled meetings of the county board in any one calendar year. Before removing a member, the State Board must send the member a copy of the charges against the member and give the member an opportunity to request a hearing within 10 days. If the member requests a hearing within the 10-day period, the State Board promptly shall hold a hearing, but a hearing may not be set within 10 days after the State Board sends the member notice of the hearing. The member shall have an opportunity to be heard publicly before the State Board in the member's own defense in person or by counsel. A member removed under this section has the right to a de novo review of the removal by the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County.

Duties Of Board Officers

§ 3-2A-06.1 of the Education Article; Policy BAB — Board Powers and Duties

The officers of the Board of Education are the President and Vice President.

The President calls Board sessions, presides at all sessions, determines Board agendas (Board Policy BCA), executes authorized or approved contracts and other documents on behalf of the Board, represents the views of the Board in all communications and correspondence, and performs other duties prescribed by law or by the Board. The President may appoint committees to hear appeals of decisions of the Superintendent, appoint ad hoc or special committees of the Board and/or staff members to assist the Board with its work, study specific issues, or undertake Board projects, and serve as ex-officio members of all committees appointed. The President, with input from Board Members, determines seating on the dais and in the caucus room.

In the absence of the President, the Vice President functions as Board parliamentarian. If both the President and Vice President are temporarily unavailable to acquit the above responsibilities, the remaining Members may designate another Member by a majority vote to serve in such a capacity. At its annual meeting, the Board shall elect a president and vice president from among its elected members. The president and vice president shall serve a term of 1 year. An individual who fills a vacancy in the office of an elected member of the board may be elected to serve as president or vice president.

The Vice President shall have charge of coordinating Board retreats and the agenda for these retreats, in consultation with the Superintendent and Board President.

Board Committees

Board Policy BBE — Board Committees

The Board of Education has three standing committees, the Board Budget Committee, the Board Equity Committee, and the Board Policy Committee. Each committee is composed of no more than four Board Members, who meet once a month or as needed with appropriate staff members. At certain times, special or ad hoc committees may be created by the Board for a specific assignment. Those special committees shall be appointed by the president and terminated either upon completion of their assignments or by a vote of the Board. It is expected that each Board Member, with the exception of the President, will serve on at least one standing committee of the Board each school year.

The Board Budget Committee typically meets monthly. Duties of the Board Budget Committee include assisting the building of the annual AACPS operating and capital budgets via gathering and presenting Board budget priorities to the School Superintendent; gathering revenue and expenditure information throughout each budget cycle; and communicating Board expectations regarding formatting and information to be included in the budget book and monthly financial documents, as well as the frequency with which the Board receives this information. The Board Budget Committee, in coordination with the Board President, also directs the budget amendment process throughout the budget cycle. Ad hoc duties of the committee include evaluation of audit recommendations and examines issues related to the preparation of the Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) operating and capital budgets, as submitted to the County Executive and County Council as well as the Board's departmental budget offering recommendations for Board action to the full Board.

The Board Equity Committee typically meets monthly. The mission and role of the Equity Committee is to equip AACPS to foster a viably structured, equitable education for all students. The Equity Committee supports AACPS' operational governance in identifying areas within and through policy to connect the Board's commitment to equity in education with the focused decision-making, resource allocation, and staff, student, and community engagement. We are promoting equity through institutional change. The committee values embracing diverse and inclusive experiences, creating thriving environments, fostering equicentricity into practice systemically by guarding equity in our schools.

The Policy Committee typically meets monthly. Duties of the committee include working with staff to review all Board policies on a regular schedule in order to ensure that policies remain aligned with statutes and the current needs of the school system, In addition the committee works with staff to craft new policies either as warranted by changes to state law or as requested by individual members of the board. It is then the responsibility of the Policy Committee to recommend revised and new policies to the full board for public review and comment, and approval of the board.

Ad Hoc Committees

The Handbook Committee meets at least once per year consisting of no more than four members to review and update the Handbook as needed.

Community Committees

From time to time Board Members may serve as representatives on community committees subject to the discretion of the President.

MABE Committees

Board Members are encouraged to join their colleagues from other counties in serving on various MABE committees, specifically, Budget, Legislative, Conference Program, Educational Equity, Federal Advocacy, Nominating, Policies and Procedures, Resolutions, and MABE Awards as well as ad hoc committees as needed. The duration of committee membership is one year. Members shall report back, as needed, to the full Board.

Board Community Outreach

In an effort to promote community collaboration, the Board endeavors to keep community members informed of the activities of the Board of Education and the school system. One way to achieve this is Board outreach events, which may be held in libraries, community centers, places of worship, or other venues in diverse areas of the county. The format should be informal, and all outreach events must be open to the public.

Ethics Policies And Financial Disclosure

§15-815 of the State Government Article; Board Policy BAF – Ethics and Conflict of Interest; Board Policy BK - Board Member Ethics and Professional Standards

Board policy and State law require that each Board Member complete an annual financial disclosure form for the preceding calendar year. These statements will be made available during normal office hours for examination and copying by the public, subject to whatever reasonable fees and administrative procedures are established.

The Board of Education has established a five-member Ethics Panel, responsible for reviewing all financial disclosure statements for completeness of form and for determination of any existing or potential conflicts of interest consistent with school system policies and regulations; providing advisory opinions on ethics matters, making determinations as to complaints filed by any person alleging violations of policies or regulations; referring findings regarding complaints and other enforcement matters to the Board for action; and conducting an information program regarding the purposes and application of regulations.

By August 1 of each year, Board Counsel will review Policies BAF, Ethics and Conflict of Interest, and Policy BK, Board Member Ethics and Professional Standards, and any changes in ethics laws with the Members of the Board. An appropriate time for this review would be the annual meeting or as soon thereafter as practicable.

Board Operations

Board of Education Correspondence Procedures

Board Policy BAC – Board Member Authority

Board Members receive numerous e-mails and letters per week from constituents regarding matters relating to the school system. The Executive Assistant serves as the coordinator of Board correspondence. Correspondence received by a Board Member or e-mails sent to the "Board Office" link on the school system website are typically acknowledged by the Board's Executive Assistant and forwarded to the Board Members or the Superintendent's Office, where they are assigned to the appropriate staff member to prepare a timely response. The Board Office is copied on the response to the constituent, if requested.

Individual Board Members have the option of responding directly to correspondence addressed to the Members; however, the correspondence must clearly reflect that the views expressed therein are those of the individual Member and not necessarily those of the entire Board of Education. As identical e-mails are often personalized to each Board Member, Board Members may contact the Executive Assistant to ascertain if the same one has been received by all, and to determine whether it it would be appropriate for consistency for a response to be sent by the President on behalf of the Board. If the Board receives numerous e-mails on a particular topic, the Executive Assistant will send out automatic acknowledgements at the direction of the Board.

Board Member Requests for Information

Board Policy – BAC—Board Member Authority

Board Members may make requests for specific information, data, and/or reports from Administration staff, whether as a follow-up to an item discussed at a prior Board session or a separate matter of interest to an individual Member. Such a request may be made to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's office through the Board President or the Board Office, or directly by an individual Member. If the Member (or the President) makes a request for information, it must be copied to the Executive Assistant so the request may be coordinated, and duplication avoided.

By submitting requests directly to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's Office, requests can be more efficiently coordinated, duplication can be avoided, and the Superintendent can best determine the appropriate use of staff in providing a timely response to such requests. Within reason, and excluding individual student or personnel records, the Superintendent will be responsive to Board Member requests. If a request is deemed overly time-consuming or unreasonable, the matter will be brought to the attention of the Board President for consideration by the full Board. Materials and information requested by individual Members will be shared electronically with the entire Board.

Individual Board Members shall not make requests for printing, PowerPoint presentations, or media work of the Communications Office, the Design and Print Services, or the Superintendent, entailing labor and materials, whether for use in their capacity as Board Members or in the community, without bringing such request to the full Board for its approval.

Board Member Engagement

Board Members are strongly encouraged to meet regularly with the Superintendent, visit schools throughout the county, and attend community and school system events to better understand the individuality of schools and the communities in which they are located. Board Members should work through the Board Office and/or the Superintendent's Office to schedule school visits so as to provide the school principal the courtesy of optimum advance notice and to avoid potential conflicts with student testing, staff evaluations, or other critical activity requiring the principal's attention or presence. In the event a scheduling conflict arises for the principal, the Member will work with the Board Office or Superintendent's Office to reschedule the visit for a mutually convenient time.

Board Members attend various non-professional development activities during the year, such as the County Arts Council Gala, Teacher of the Year banquets, the Anne Arundel County Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast and Maryland Hall's Arts Alive. Board Members are welcome to bring a guest to an event but shall be responsible for reimbursing the Board for any expenses incurred on behalf of that guest.

Communication Protocols

Board Members should endeavor to respond to emails, correspondence and phone calls in a timely manner, especially in response to those from other Board Members, the Superintendent, and elected officials.

Board Member Compensation, Expenses, And Equipment: Procedures And Guidelines

§3-2A-07 of the Education Article

The following procedures and guidelines govern the compensation and expenses provided to Board Members in the course of discharging their responsibilities, with the goal of ensuring that as such expenditures are made, they are done in a reasonable and cost-effective manner:

1. Pursuant § 3-2A-07 and the Maryland Constitution, the following compensation will apply to members elected. The president will receive $17,000 annually as compensation, the vice president will receive $16,000 annually as compensation, and, except for the student member, the other adult board members are entitled to receive $15,000 each annually as compensation.
2. The Student Member of the Board, authorized by State law, is entitled to receive a scholarship of $15,000 upon the completion of a full term on the Board of Education, to be applied toward higher education costs.
3. When a Board Member takes office, the Executive Assistant shall arrange for an AACPS computer and a smartphone to be provided to the Board Member for use at Board sessions and conduct Board business. These devices remain the property of AACPS and revert to AACPS at the end of the Board Member's term of office.

4. As authorized by State law, Board Members receive a monthly allowance toward reimbursement for local travel and other expenses incidental to attending sessions and transacting Board business and attending local events in the course of a month.
5. For travel outside of the county, Board Members may be reimbursed for actual mileage, tolls, and parking; and reasonable meal expenses upon submission of dated, itemized receipts to the Executive Assistant to the Board of Education, annotated with the numbers and names of those covered by any expenses. The cost for alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed. Minor expenses such as bus or subway fares or parking meter fees may be allowed without a receipt where obtaining one would not be practical.
6. Expenses related to Board Member attendance at approved conferences (e.g., Maryland Association of Boards of Education or National School Boards Association), such as registration, and hotel, shall be handled exclusively by the Executive Assistant to the Board in advance. Airfare shall be at a reasonable coach class rate.
7. No travel or meal expenses will be paid for spouses or family members who accompany Board Members to conferences or events. In the event that such expenses are co-mingled, Board Members shall reimburse AACPS for their spouse's/family member's additional expense.
8. Expenses for long-term airport or equivalent parking costs are covered as well as transportation costs to offsite Board events during conferences.
9. Non-Reimbursable Expenses include, without limitation:
   - Entertainment while in attendance at a conference (e.g., movies; plays; concerts; tours)
   - In-room movies at hotel
   - Mini bars
   - Laundry and related services
   - Membership fees for airline/frequent flier clubs
   - Pet care
   - Air flight/travel insurance
   - Parking tickets/traffic violations
   - Clothing/personal items
   - Hourly/Daily airport parking fees
   - Airline upgrades

   Any questions about such expenses should be directed to the Executive Assistant in advance.
10. Members may be reimbursed for other expenses incurred in the performance of their duties, including special accommodations, excluding personal expenses,as approved by the Board Leadership and facilitated by the Executive Assistant consistent with applicable policy and subject to final determination in accordance with the procedures below.
11. Members may be reimbursed for use of their personal credit cards.
12. Should a question arise whether an expense is covered under these provisions, the matter shall be referred to the Board President (or Vice President, if the President is unavailable) to make a determination. If the matter remains unresolved, in consultation with Board Counsel the matter may be referred to the Board's Ethics Panel for an opinion. The Board Member in question may provide evidence as to the nature of the challenged expenses to the Ethics Panel. The opinion of the Ethics Panel shall be accepted as final and binding by the Member and the Board.

School Board Memberships

To ensure that Board Members are aware of best practices, trends in education, and issues facing school boards and districts statewide and nationwide, the Board of Education has maintained memberships in organizations that magnify its influence and knowledge. From time to time, the Board determines which organizations can best serve its purposes. Currently, the Board has memberships in the Maryland Association of Boards of Education, the Legal Services Association, and the National School Boards Association.

Policy Adoption

Board Policy BF — Policy Setting

The Board of Education has a policy that provides a process for policy development. Discussion of a new or revised policy usually occurs over the course of four sessions: review by the Board's Policy Committee of a draft policy prepared by the Superintendent's staff; the scheduling and first reading of a draft policy at a public Board session after which the policy will be posted on the Board's website for a 30-day comment period; a second reading and consideration of the draft policy at a subsequent public meeting session of the Board; third reading and adoption of the policy at a public Board of Education session.

The Superintendent may be asked to provide a recommendation on a policy. The Superintendent shall be authorized to promulgate regulations to implement policies. All adopted policies and regulations will be posted on the Board's website.

Policy review and revision shall be in accordance with Board policy. The Board shall endeavor to follow the policy schedule established each school year. A request for the review or revision of a policy that is not on the policy schedule for a given school year shall be considered by the Policy Committee.

Budget Adoption

Operating Budget — Board Policy DBB

1. Consistent with state law, the Board's operating budget includes salaries and benefits for staff, stipends, materials of instruction, supplies, instructional equipment, contractual services, and other expenditures and funds necessary for the daily operation of the school system.
2. The Superintendent usually recommends his or her operating budget for the following fiscal year at a December board session.
3. The Budget Committee shall be involved in the budget development, amendment and adoption process, as further discussed in the Committees section above.
4. During the month of January, the Board usually conducts at least two public hearings on the Superintendent's proposed operating budget – one to be held at a school and one to be held at the Parham Building, in the evening, at which budget testimony or other public comment will be received.
5. Usually at the second Board session in February but no later than March 1, the Board of Education must adopt a proposed operating budget for the following fiscal year and submit it to the County Government for its consideration.

6. Upon action by the County Council on the proposed operating budget no later than June 15, the Board shall adopt its final approved budget, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, no later than June 30, usually at the second Board session in June.

Capital Budget – Board Policy DBA

1. The capital budget includes funding for the planning and construction funds for new facilities, modifications, renovations, and revitalizations; furniture and equipment associated with these projects; countywide maintenance; roof replacements; and related expenditures and costs.
2. For purposes of state funding, the Superintendent shall recommend a Capital Budget and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to the Board at its first session in September, after which the Board shall hold a public workshop with staff.
3. Following a public hearing at which budget testimony or other public comment will be taken, the Board will adopt at its second session in September a Capital Budget and CIP to be submitted to the Interagency Committee for Public School Construction for state funding.
4. At the December session at which the proposed Operating Budget is submitted, the Superintendent shall also submit the entire recommended Capital Budget.
5. Usually at the second session in February, but no later than March 1, the Board shall approve a recommended Capital Budget to be submitted to the County Government for its consideration as part of the overall budget request for the following fiscal year.
6. Upon action by the County Council on the proposed capital budget no later than June 15, the Board shall adopt its final approved budget, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, no later than June 30, but usually at the second Board session in June.

Graduation Ceremonies

Two Board Members are expected to attend graduation ceremonies at each of our high schools, charter schools, and our special schools. Although each school maintains its own traditions, the ceremonies are conducted within the framework of protocols established by the Division of Instruction and School Performance.

On an annual basis, working through the Executive Assistant to the Board, one Board Member shall be assigned to each graduation ceremony to speak on behalf of the Board and to award the diplomas and certificates. At least one other Board Member must participate by being on stage. Board Member attendance at graduations should be scheduled far enough in advance that the appropriate logistics (seating, parking, placement in the processional and recessional, etc.) can be arranged.

Those Board Members speaking at the graduation ceremony shall bring brief remarks, appropriate to the occasion. Schools may ask to invite the assigned Board Member to the school to meet with or be briefed by the senior class officers and class sponsor in advance of graduation so as to assist the Board Member in the preparation of his or her remarks at the ceremony.

The designated Board Member shall follow the principal's introduction, in recommending the candidates for diploma or certificates, with the following statement, certifying the graduation of the students:

"By virtue of the authority vested in the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County, under the laws of the State of Maryland, I do now award diplomas [and certificates] evidencing the satisfactory completion of the prescribed course of studies to the students of _____ School, who have been recommended for graduation by the faculty of this school."

Board Attendance At Conferences/ Professional Development

Funds are earmarked in the school system operating budget for professional development activities in support of Board Members' service to Anne Arundel County Public Schools. If their schedules permit, Board Members typically attend two conferences per year: the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) conference and the National School Boards Association (NSBA) conference. The cost of registration, lodging and travel associated with the conference is the responsibility of the Board of Education. Attendance at any conference must be approved, budget permitting, by the Board President.

In lieu of the above conferences, a Board Member may participate in an alternative education-related opportunity if the Board Member chooses to do so. The alternative professional development opportunity must begin and end during the Board Member's term of service on the Board and must be approved by the Board President in advance of enrollment.

Board Members are required to file a written report to the Executive Assistant within 14 days of completion of the professional development, whether it be attendance at the MABE conference, NSBA conference or any other professional development opportunity. The report must detail how the Board Member's participation in the event enhanced his or her service to the Board. Once the report is submitted, an expense reimbursement form will be filed for expenses incurred during the event.

Should a Board Member resign from the Board while engaged in professional development that has been paid for by the Board, that Board Member shall reimburse the Board for any unattended sessions. Should a Board Member resign from the Board prior to attending a conference or event that has been paid for by the Board of Education, the Board Member will reimburse the Board for all otherwise non-reimbursable or non-transferrable expenditures.

When attending a conference, the Board Member is expected to attend and fully participate in the workshops and other professional development opportunities. Should a Board Member not participate in the majority of the professional development activities, that Member shall reimburse the Board for unattended sessions.

Financial Responsibilities Of Board Members

Members of the Board of Education are offered the opportunity for continuing education and attendance at diverse community functions. These opportunities represent a financial investment from the school system's operating budget. When Board Members voluntarily accept participation in a professional development opportunity or a community function, they acknowledge that they have entered into a financial commitment. Accordingly, Board members shall be financially responsible for the cost of their participation if they must cancel and cannot find a replacement for their attendance, unless the Board approves an exception.

BOARD NORMS

Board Members are expected to:

- Focus on decision making based on student achievement, student well-being, and system-wide morale;
- Respect all stakeholders by listening to all points of view and communicating our opinions, concerns, and questions without disparaging other Board Members, the Superintendent, staff or community members;
- Be prepared to take action on items on the closed and open session agendas, by reading the materials, including those sent or posted electronically, in advance;
- Maintain confidentiality and expect others to do so;
- Maintain high standards of professional and ethical behavior at all times;
- Respect and abide by the law, State Board by-laws, and local policies and regulations;
- Avoid surprising fellow Board Members or the Superintendent by articulating concerns in advance of public sessions;
- Keep their comments brief (no longer than 10 minutes total on each agenda item as suggested by Robert's Rules of Order) and refrain from monopolizing a discussion; and
- Abide by and support publicly the decisions of the majority of the Board;
- Respond in a reasonable time to invitations, emails, and telephone calls from Board colleagues, Board staff, the Superintendent and staff and executive team members; and
- Continually strive to expand their knowledge of public education and skills in governance through:
  - Conferences
  - Workshops
  - Seminars
  - Books and publications
  - Retreats
- Familiarize yourself with all sections of this Board Handbook.

Staff To The Board Of Education

School Board Attorney

§ 4-104 of the Education Article; Board Policy BBB – Board Attorney

Pursuant to State law, the Board has hired legal counsel to represent its interests in legal matters that affect the Board. Pursuant to policy, the Board appoints legal counsel at its annual meeting at the end of their contract for payment of reasonable legal fees. The Board attorney represents the Board's interests working in tandem with the Superintendent and the Superintendent's in-house legal counsel.

The Board President and Vice President are the primary contacts with the attorney when appropriate regarding legal issues. Unless requested to do so by the Board President, individual Board Members are encouraged to limit contact with Board counsel outside of regular business sessions, with the exception of review of motions for upcoming meetings and other pressing legal questions.

Executive Assistant and Internal Auditor

Board Policy BBD – Assistant(s) to the Board of Education; Board Policy BBF Board Internal Auditor

Other than the Superintendent, the only staff reporting directly to the Board shall be the Executive Assistant to the Board of Education and the Board Internal Auditor. Both serve at the pleasure of the Board and receive specific assignments from the Board President and the Board. Both will perform the responsibilities of their position as spelled out in policy and pursuant to Board direction. They will provide general support to the Board of Education and its Members to facilitate the discharge of statutory responsibilities, working in tandem with the Superintendent. With the approval of the Board, additional support staff, who would report to the Board Executive Assistant, may be hired for the Board Office. The Board shall share input regarding the performance of the Executive Assistant and Internal Auditor prior to the final annual performance review in May and August of each year.

Superintendent of Schools

Appointment Of The Superintendent Of Schools

§ 4-102 of the Education Article

Maryland state law governs the appointment, term, qualifications, vacancy, and removal of the Superintendent of Schools. In accordance with State law, the term of the Superintendent is four years, beginning on July 1. The Superintendent serves until a successor is appointed and qualifies. By February 1 of the year in which a term ends, the Superintendent must notify the Board whether or not the Superintendent is a candidate for reappointment.

In the year in which a term begins, the Board of Education appoints the Superintendent of Schools between February 1 and June 30. Should the Board decide to reappoint the incumbent Superintendent, the Board must take final action at a public session no later than March 1 of that year.

The appointment of the Superintendent is subject to written approval of the State Superintendent of Schools. If there is a vacancy in the office, the Board may appoint an interim Superintendent who serves until July 1 after the appointment.

Responsibilities And Duties Of The Superintendent Of Schools

§ 4-102, Board Policy — BBA — Superintendent - Secretary/Treasurer, Executive Officer of the Board; CBB — Powers, Duties, and Responsibilities - Superintendent, And Superintendent Contract

The Superintendent of Schools is responsible for the administration of the school system and carries out the laws of the State of Maryland, the bylaws and policies of the Maryland State Board of Education, and the policies, directives and decisions of the Board of Education, as well as Administrative Regulations that implement them.

In accordance with State law, the Superintendent of Schools:

- May advise the Board of Education on educational policies;
- Recommends contracts, to the extent required by law, and other documents for Board approval;
- Informs the Board in advance of administrative reorganizations, including transfers of functions, establishment of positions and offices, and consolidations of positions and offices;
- Proposes annual operating and capital budgets to the Board of Education;
- Attends all sessions of the Board, as well as committee meetings as requested, except when the Board is considering appeals in its quasi-judicial role in closed session, or when the Superintendent's tenure, salary, or the administration of his/her office is under consideration;

- Recommends and/or advises of the appointment and/or transfer of administrative and supervisory personnel to the Board for its approval (where appropriate) whether by discrete personnel actions or by way of a monthly personnel report approved by the Board;
- Administers disciplinary actions involving AACPS personnel and students;
- Implements State law and State Board of Education regulations insofar as they govern local school system operations;
- Provides leadership and direction with planning, coordination, and evaluation of all aspects of the operations of AACPS and is responsible for day-to-day operations and management of the public schools; and
- Promotes an awareness of, and advocacy for, matters involving public education in Anne Arundel County including reaching out to professional organizations, civic groups, and public officials of the national, state, and local levels.

BOARD SESSIONS

Annual Organizational Session

§ 3-2A-06.1 and § 4-107 of the Education Article; Board Policy BBC — Board Organizational Meeting and Board Officers

State law provides, "At its annual meeting, the county board shall elect a president and vice president from among its elected members. The president and vice president shall serve a term of 1 year." An individual who fills a vacancy in the office of an elected member of the county board under § 3-2A-04 of this subtitle may be elected to serve as president or vice president. The Board traditionally conducts its election of officers as the first order of business at its business session in December. The annual organizational session is traditionally combined with a regular business session.

The session is called to order by the current President. A motion is made and seconded to place a name in nomination for President and, subsequently, for Vice President. Through an individually recorded vote, the President and Vice President shall be elected with a vote of at least five Members. The election for President shall precede the election for Vice President. Immediately upon their election, the President and Vice President shall assume the duties of their office. An individual who fills a vacancy in the office of an elected member of the county board under 3-2A-04 of this subtitle may be elected to serve as president or vice president."

Master Calendar Of Sessions

Prior to July of each year, the Board of Education approves a master calendar of Board sessions, including meetings, hearings and workshops for the ensuing school year. The calendar shall be posted on the Board's website. A table detailing information regarding changes to regularly scheduled Board sessions, hearings, and workshops due to inclement weather, can be found before the conclusion of this Handbook.

Agenda Development and Session Materials

Board Policy BCA — Agenda Preparation and Distribution

Board agendas are developed through coordinated efforts of key staff and the Executive Assistant with guidance from the Board of Education. consistent with Policy BCA. A request for an item to be placed on the agenda must be submitted in writing by two Board Members. The request shall be submitted no later than one week prior to the Board meeting at which the item is being placed on the agenda.

Before every business session, packets of Board agenda materials are prepared for Board Members and key staff. Board materials are not released to the public until Board Members have received them. Board session packets for the open sessions are normally available online (in the BoardDocs™ section of the Board's website) on the Fridays prior to regular Board meetings. Previous minutes, agendas, and documents from prior sessions dating back to 2003, may also be found on the BoardDocs™ section of the website.

Protocols

It is expected that Board Members will:

- Refrain from taking personal calls during a Board meeting.
- Endeavor to be on time so as to participate fully in all closed and open sessions.
- With as much advance notice as reasonably practicable, notify the Board President and Executive Assistant if the Board Member's personal commitments will interfere with attendance at any scheduled Board sessions(s), workshop(s), or hearing(s), or any portion thereof.
- Per the Superintendent's contract, Members and Superintendent agree to notify each other, as appropriate, of criticisms, complaints, and suggestions.

Open Public Sessions And Notice

Title 3 of the General Provisions article; Board Policies BCB — Public comment – and BCC — Board Executive Sessions

Sessions of the Board of Education, including its standing committees, are open to the public, except when held in closed session pursuant to the Maryland Open Meetings Act (see below). The public must be provided with adequate notice of the time and location of sessions. When the Board meets in open session, the general public and media are entitled to attend.

Under State law, the Board of Education has the authority to adopt and enforce reasonable policies and rules regarding the conduct of persons attending its sessions, the opportunity to provide public comment, and the videotaping, televising, photographing, broadcasting, or recording of its sessions. With respect to public comment, the President or presiding officer shall be guided by Policy BCB. This includes, in particular, the prohibition against speakers addressing personnel matters, student-specific matters, and matters that are on appeal or may come before the Board on appeal; the expectation that speakers will maintain civility and appropriate conduct; and the prohibition against verbal outbursts, personal attacks on individuals, obscene or profane language, threats of violence, intimidation, harassment, or any other actions that disrupt the meeting. If the President or presiding officer believes that the behavior of an individual is disrupting an open session, the President or presiding officer may ask the Board to make a determination to have the individual removed.

In carrying out its duties, including with respect to the conduct of meetings as set forth herein, the Board of Education, its Members, and its agents shall have immunity from liability as provided in Section 4-106 of the Education Article, Section 5-518 of the Courts Article and other applicable law.

Closed Sessions

§ 3-305 of the General Provisions Article; Board Policy BCC — Board Executive Sessions

Under the Maryland Open Meetings Act, the Board of Education is authorized to meet in closed session and retreats to discuss one or more of the 15 statutorily-authorized circumstances, such as personnel matters, acquisition of real estate, pending litigation, collective bargaining issues, matters protected from public disclosure by law, and legal advice. The Open Meetings Act also requires that, before meeting in closed session, the Board must give reasonable advance notice of the closed session and the planned agenda of the meeting. Immediately prior to convening a closed session for the current Board meeting, the President shall conduct a recorded vote on closing the session. Further, after a closed session is held, the Board, as part of its minutes, must also provide a report concerning the closed session's topic(s) of discussion.

Additional items may be added to the closed session agenda at the request of two Board Members within a reasonable amount of time prior to the closed session. Board Members and staff are always expected to maintain the confidentiality of closed session discussions. Administrative functions and quasi-judicial functions are exempt from the Open Meetings Act.

Closed session shall usually be held in the Caucus Room at the Parham Building in Annapolis, Maryland. The Caucus Room shall not be utilized by individual Board Members to conduct meetings with non-AACPS personnel or meetings with constituents and is off-limits to outside groups.

Regular Business Sessions

Title 3 of The General Provisions Article

1. The Board usually conducts two business sessions per month, except for the months of July and August when the Board usually meets once a month. A daytime business session is usually held on the first Wednesday of the month, and an evening business session is usually held on the third Wednesday of the month. If a holiday or school break interferes with the bimonthly session schedule, the Board may opt to meet just once during that month or conduct the meeting on a weekday other than on a Wednesday. Regular business sessions are held at the offices of the Board of Education at the Parham Building in Annapolis, Maryland, unless otherwise designated.
2. The AACPS Communications Office routinely announces all open and closed sessions of the Board of Education. Such notices are communicated via news releases, emails to parents, announcements on the AACPS website, and postings on individual school and school system social media pages. Notices include the date, time and location of the session as well as a link to the full agenda and supporting documents. Information regarding live web streaming, cablecasting, and rebroadcasting of Board sessions is also provided.
3. The Board is committed to designating time during regularly scheduled public meetings of the Board to receive public comment on agenda items consistent with Board Policy BCB. Information regarding public comment at Board meetings can be referenced by visiting the Board section of the AACPS website to reflect policy and current practices.
4. The advance session agenda shall indicate if an item is intended for review (R) or action (A). Notwithstanding the designation, any Member can make a motion germane to an agenda item before the Board. Additional items may be added to the open session agenda at the written request of two Board Members within a week prior to the session.

5. At each business session time shall be set aside for consent items, consisting of matters which the Board President or Superintendent of Schools believes will be adopted by a single vote. Approval of the consent agenda shall include the approval of all items included as consent items, provided that any Member may defer to the end any item on which discussion is desired, after which a separate vote shall be taken.
6. Sessions are to begin promptly at the starting time on the agenda, provided a quorum is present. Closed sessions are normally scheduled at the start, lunch hour, and/or end of the meeting. Meeting times can be referenced by visiting the Board section of the AACPS website.
7. The usual order of the agenda for the open session of a regular Board meeting is subject to modification by the President and may include the following:
   - Opening (Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance/ Approval of Minutes)
   - Recognitions
   - Presentations
   - Public Comment
   - Updates/Reports
   - Consent Items
   - Action Items
   - Review Items
   - Adjournment
8. The Board strives to avoid unnecessarily lengthy meetings, in order to encourage public participation, promote sound decision-making ability, and avoid undue burden to staff. As such, the Board intends to adjourn scheduled meetings no later than five hours from the start of the scheduled public meeting, unless extended by a vote of 2/3 of the members present. Board agendas, including time allotted for public testimony and agenda item questions, answers and discussion, will be structured to make certain essential Board business is completed in a timely manner. It is the general practice of the Board to allow 2 questions per Board member per round of questions Members are encouraged to confer with staff, using appropriate channels, in advance of Board meetings to improve Board meeting efficiency.

Board Retreats

The Board endeavors to schedule one or more retreats a year for team building, priority setting, discussion of Board operations, preparation for contract negotiations and/or self-evaluation. The retreats will be held in compliance with the Maryland Open Meetings Act, as required by law.

Special Sessions

Special sessions may be called by the President of the Board, by the Superintendent, or at the written request of a majority of the Board, with the purpose given in the call of the meeting, to be provided as soon as feasible.

Rules Of Order

The Board of Education observes Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised in conducting its sessions, except as provided otherwise either in this Handbook or in Board policy. Moreover, the Board is guided by its own rules, State laws and regulations, and Maryland State Department of Education bylaws, which establish the following:

1. As stipulated by state law 3-2A-06, "the affirmative vote of at last five members of the county board is required for the approval of any action."
2. The Board adopts its agenda at the beginning of a business session. Times listed on the agenda are intended for guidance only. Unless changed by the Board, the order in which items appear on an agenda will be followed. Any changes in the adopted agenda are made by majority vote or by consensus.
3. In the event there is a disqualification or recusal of one or more Members because of a real or perceived conflict of interest, and the disqualification or recusal results in less than a quorum, the disqualified or recused Member(s) shall disclose the nature/circumstances of the conflict and may subsequently participate if necessary for the Board to take action on the item.

Record Of Board Sessions

The Board of Education maintains records of sessions as follows:

1. Records of the Board's business sessions and hearings are retained in the Board Office and online. All Board business sessions are televised, and copies of cablecasts are maintained on file.
2. Minutes of all Board sessions open to the public contain actions taken by the Board and a summary of the Board's discussion. A Board Member may specifically request that a statement on a subject be reflected in the minutes.
3. The minutes of all public sessions are available as a matter of public record on the Board's website, as well as in the Board Office. Minutes of Board committee meetings are available in the Board Office.
4. Minutes of closed sessions include a list of each item considered, the action taken, and each recorded vote.
5. The Board will also maintain copies, available for inspection, of meeting notices and closing statements.

Inclement Weather Statement as it Relates to Board Sessions/Hearings/Workshops

If	*Action*
There is a ***Code Red*** and all buildings are closed	Any Board session/hearing/workshop will be ***cancelled***
There is a ***Code Blue*** with liberal leave (with schools closed but Central Office open)	Any Board session/hearing/workshop scheduled to begin at ***10:00 a.m. or after*** will go on as scheduled Any Board session/hearing/workshop scheduled to begin ***before 10:00 a.m.*** will be rescheduled
If schools are opening two hours late	Any Board session/hearing/workshop scheduled to begin ***10:00 a.m. or after*** will go on as scheduled Any Board session/hearing/workshop scheduled to begin ***before 10:00 a.m.*** will be rescheduled
If schools are closing two hours early and/or all afternoon activities are cancelled	Any Board session/hearing/workshop scheduled to begin ***after 3:00 p.m.*** will be rescheduled

Conclusion

The role of the school board is as important as ever. Its decisions impact the full spectrum of educational matters, such as school boundaries, policies, student health, transportation, curriculum, staff salaries, facilities, contracts, funding for extra-curricular activities. As reflected on page 2 of this Handbook, the Board of Education's authority encompasses a wide range of Executive, Legislative, and Quasi-Judicial responsibilities.

As stated succinctly by the National School Boards Association, in a brochure published by its Center for Public Education, the following are the qualities, skills, and experience that are useful for a school board member to possess:

- A vision and goals for high academic achievement for all students
- An ability to inspire parents and other stakeholders to have confidence in the local public schools
- An understanding that the board's role is about the big picture—that is, setting the direction for the district, and providing oversight and accountability, rather than day-to-day management
- An ability to work effectively with the rest of the board
- The commitment to do what is right for all children, even in the face of opposition.

Hopefully, as individuals aspire to serve on the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County and are fortunate to be chosen to serve, this Handbook will help them better understand their authority and responsibilities so as to display the foregoing qualities, skills, and experience.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I _____ have received the Board of Education Handbook, and I understand its contents and my obligations and responsibilities as a Member of the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County.

_____

Signature *Date*

Notes