Operating Protocols

Lansing Central School District

Board of Education

The New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) selected these particular procedures for the guide because, based on NYSSBA's experience working with governance teams, these are areas of potential board conflict and the procedures reflect our understanding of how successful boards have addressed these issues. This guide is not intended to be exhaustive. Boards are encouraged to develop similar procedures for other challenging areas.

Adapted by LCSD Board, 2019-2020

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New York State School Boards Association

Team Communication

3. Adding an item to a board meeting agenda
4. Communicating with each other between board meetings and/or using email
5. Visiting schools as a board member
6. Responding to community or employee complaints
7. Communicating with the media
8. Communicating with the school attorney

Board Meetings

9. Preparing for meetings
10. Requesting information about an agenda item
11. Managing public comment sessions
12. Participating in discussion, debate and voting
13. Disclosing confidential information related to an executive session
14. Electing board officers
15. Selecting and operating board committees

Team Development

16. Orienting new members
17. Planning professional development for the board
19. Conducting a board self-evaluation
20. Expressing opinions about another board member's performance or behavior

Planning

21. Requesting information about a non-agenda item
22. Establishing and reviewing the district's vision, mission and annual goals
23. Developing a process for adopting the district budget
25. Developing and/or reviewing district policy

Team Communication: Adding an item to a board meeting agenda

1. An agenda will be mutually developed by the superintendent and board president in sufficient time to allow the full board to receive it **three days** prior to the meeting for which the agenda is being prepared. The superintendent and other administrative staff members will make every reasonable effort to provide sufficient information to support agenda items prior to the meeting so that board members can make informed decisions. All parties recognize that individuals have different levels of expertise, interest and aptitudes. Supporting materials will be provided, along with the agenda, **three days** prior to the meeting.

2. The agenda will include previously scheduled items, new business and any items required by law.

3. Any board member may request that an item be placed on the agenda for board consideration by contacting the board president or superintendent **ten business days** prior to the meeting. The superintendent and board president will jointly determine whether to include the item.

4. In the event that exigent circumstances require that an item be added to an agenda after its distribution, the superintendent, in consultation with the board president, will distribute an updated agenda and appropriate supporting materials will be provided as soon as possible.

5. Board members may also introduce potential agenda items during board discussion. Each meeting agenda will provide a brief period of time for board members to offer comment or raise an issue to see if it is the will of the board to consider the issue at a future meeting. The board will not respond but will review as stated in number 3.

6. Use of a consent agenda to present items for a single vote without discussion will conform to the following guidelines:
    a. Placement of items on the consent agenda will be at the discretion of the board president and superintendent.
    b. Any individual board member may ask questions or discuss an item on the consent agenda by asking the president to remove it from the consent agenda for individual consideration.
    c. Following action on the consent agenda, the president will allow discussion on any item requested for removal from the agenda by a board member.
    d. Examples of items that may be included on the consent agenda:
        i. Routine items, including personnel actions such as hiring.
        ii. Minutes of regular and special board meetings.
        iii. Acceptance of financial reports.
        iv. Routine bid recommendations in alignment with district policy.
        v. Requests for use of facilities.

7. Support material, records/information that will be discussed at the board meeting will be released to the public two days prior to the board meeting in compliance with the Open Meetings Law, except for those documents made confidential by law or not subject to release by law.

8. A running list of future board of education agenda items will be maintained by the district clerk, and 4 reviewed by the superintendent and board president when creating the agenda for a meeting. The board will periodically (2x annually) assess the status of the list.

Related Policies: 2342, AGENDA PREPARATION AND DISSEMINATION

Team Communication: Visiting schools as a board member

1. Board members are encouraged to attend as many school events as their time permits. Board members are required to follow the board policy for visitors.

2. When attending scheduled events within a building during the school day, board members should announce their presence to the principal. The principal should take the opportunity to introduce the board member to those in attendance

3. When board members, in their official capacity, plan to visit any school building or athletic field, at times other than special events, they are required to get permission and notify the principal of their intentions prior to arrival.

4. Unless the visit is board-sanctioned, board members may interact with any staff member or student in the same manner as any other visitor. If the member's visit is board-sanctioned, then the member will make every effort to manage interactions so they do not disrupt the learning process.

5. If allowed by either board policy, board directive and/or negotiated agreement, board members may go into teachers' classrooms or individual buildings to observe. They may not evaluate the teacher's performance and may require permission based on contractual language. Teacher evaluation is an administrative responsibility.

6. Board members may not give any directive to any staff or students. When visiting with teachers, coaches, advisors or guidance counselors of their own children, board members will make it clear that they are acting as parents/guardians rather than as board members.

7. Board members will not request or accept favors from any district employee that could lead to the perception (or reality) that the district's code of ethics has been violated.

Related Policies:
2111.1, BOARD MEMBER SCHOOL VISITS
5300, CODE OF CONDUCT (VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS)
2160.1, SCHOOL BOARD OFFICER AND EMPLOYEE CODE OF ETHICS

Team Communication: Communicating with each other between board meetings and/or using email

1. The superintendent may communicate with the board through board information packets that may include information such as:
    a. Schedule of, or report on, district events.
    b. Progress reports on district goals, policy initiatives and strategic directives.
    c. Follow-up reports prepared in response to questions of the board.
    d. Updates on significant administrative matters.
    e. Meeting agenda and supporting materials, when applicable.

2. The superintendent will meet or communicate with the board president **as needed** to inform of district issues that may need to come before the board for information or action.

3. The board president may request the superintendent to distribute relevant documents to each board member for information. Such additional materials will be included in the board information packet, unless extraordinary circumstances dictate an alternative delivery.

4. Board members may communicate directly or electronically with each other to ask questions and gather clarifying information to enable greater participation and meaningful discussion at board meetings. It is district practice to include all board members when seeking information or to respond to all when sharing information. Board members are also not precluded from socializing with each other. However, communications must not conflict with or circumvent the Open Meetings Law, or give the appearance of impropriety.

5. Consistent with the provisions of the Open Meetings Law, board members may not communicate 3 with each other to secure or influence votes in support of, or opposition to, items of business that may come before the board. This would include the use of email or social media to secure votes or influence fellow board members.

6. The preferred method for board members who wish to share information relevant to district business or issues scheduled to come before the board is to relay the information to the board president for placement on a future agenda or to the president and the superintendent for distribution to all members in the board information packets. Board members are not precluded from sending relevant information directly to each other, but should also provide the superintendent and the full board with this information. Board members should refrain from encouraging electronic or other discussion about such information in a manner that would violate the Open Meetings Law.

Related Policies: 2710, COMMUNICATION AMONG BOARD MEMBERS

Team Communication: Responding to community or employee complaints

NOTE: The following procedure is **not** *intended to address complaints regarding a particular board decision.*

1. A board member who is approached with a complaint outside of a board meeting is expected to listen 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. Board members should determine if the complainant desires a specific action be taken to resolve the issue.

3. Complainants who desire a particular action to be taken should be referred to the appropriate board policy and informed of the steps listed in policy which are necessary to protect everyone's rights while following an orderly process.

4. Board members will 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, the board member will 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 complainant disagrees with the superintendent's decision, the formal complaint may be brought to the board in accordance with the applicable policy.

6. Board members should remind the complainant that they can get back in touch with the district if they have further questions about the process.

7. Board members will inform the superintendent of all complaints from staff and community, but will not direct the superintendent to take specific actions. Board members may ask the superintendent for clarification of existing policies relevant to the complaint to determine if the policies are adequate and appropriate.

8. The superintendent shall inform the board of the resolution of complaints referred by board members if the complaint requires superintendent intervention.

Related Policies:
1400, PUBLIC COMPLAINTS
1420, COMPLAINTS ABOUT CURRICULUM OR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Team Communication: Communicating with the media

1. The board president or, in their 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, a specified designee, shall be the official district spokesperson to the media on district administrative matters.

3. In the event of an emergency or special circumstance, such as litigation, the board may designate another spokesperson, such as the school attorney.

4. Any board member receiving an inquiry from the media requesting information, comments or an interview regarding board actions or administrative matters will direct the media representative to the superintendent or to the board president, as applicable.

5. When speaking to a media representative, the board member will remind media representatives of the official position or action already taken on the issue by the board of education and refer them to the spokesperson for further information.

6. If a board member wishes to speak to a media representative, but the board member is not the designated spokesperson, the board member should clarify at the beginning of the interview that they are speaking as individuals rather than as authorized representatives of the board of education.

7. When speaking as an individual and expressing an opinion on a matter that will be coming before the board, board members retain their right to free expression, but will also be mindful of the importance of communicating that they remain open to discussion and new information at the board table.

8. Board members are also free to participate in social media; however, it is essential that board members take care not to reveal confidential information or to appear to be speaking on behalf of the full board. Before posting on a social media site, board members should consider the impact of their posts on the school community and fellow board members.

Related Policies: 1130, NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS

Team Communication: Communicating with the school attorney

1. The purpose of this procedure is to provide requested legal information to board members while avoiding duplication of efforts, controlling costs associated with legal counsel and ensuring that all board members are equally well-informed.

2. The selection of the school attorney should follow the school's policy for contracting for professional services. A retainer agreement will define the terms of the services provided and specify who is authorized to contact the school attorney.

3. The board of education shall appoint the school attorney at the annual organizational meeting. This appointment is for purposes of establishing the public record; it may or may not correspond to the dates of the retainer agreement that governs the relationship with the school attorney.

4. The school attorney will be consulted regarding activities, such as, contracts, employee discipline, litigation, review of policies and other matters that would benefit from legal guidance consistent with the terms of the retainer agreement. Contact with the school attorney will be initiated by the superintendent or the board president.

5. If a member of the board of education, other than the board president, has a question or concern that he/she believes warrants the input of the school attorney, he/she shall contact the superintendent and/or board president. The superintendent and/or board president may:
    a. Forward the question to the school attorney and inform the entire board of the question and any subsequent response.
    b. Determine if the question is truly a legal inquiry or if it can be handled by district staff, consulting with NYSSBA or another professional association.
    c. Decline to follow up on the issue and notify the board member that raised the question or concern.

6. If the superintendent and/or the board president declines to follow up on an issue, the board member, depending on the nature of the matter, may raise it with the full board. This can be in public, or if confidential in executive session. The board member may also request that the school attorney be contacted. The board as a whole can then determine if the school attorney should be contacted. If the board agrees, then the board president or superintendent initiates the inquiry and all information provided by the school attorney is shared with the entire board. If the board determines the question does not warrant the time and expense of contacting the school attorney, the board member is not authorized to contact the school attorney.

7. If the issue raised by a board member implicates the superintendent or board president, the board member shall contact the board vice president to share his/her concerns. In the absence of the president, or if the issue involves the president, then the vice president is authorized to contact the school attorney if they deem it appropriate.

Related Policies:
2270, SCHOOL ATTORNEY
6741, CONTRACTING FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Board Meetings: Preparing for meetings

1. District administrative staff will ensure that appropriate supporting information required for informed decision-making is supplied to each board member in the board meeting agenda packet.

2. Agenda packets will be distributed to board members at least **three** days prior to scheduled board meetings. Agendas and supporting material may also be made available electronically if using a paperless process.

3. All participants are expected to be prepared to address relevant agenda items.
    a. Board members are expected to read and be familiar with agenda packet materials before each board meeting.
    b. Board members who have questions will be expected to ask agenda-item-related questions of the superintendent at least **one day** prior to scheduled board meetings, as described in “Requesting information about an agenda item.”
    c. Board members are not precluded from asking relevant questions about agenda items during board meetings. However, the right to ask questions should not serve as an excuse for not being prepared and may not lead to an immediate answer.

Related Policies:
2342, AGENDA PREPARATION AND DISSEMINATION

Board Meetings: Requesting information about an agenda item

1. In order to be prepared and productively participate in board meetings, members are encouraged to ask for information related to meeting agenda items prior to the scheduled meeting. Requests for information or questions about any agenda item should be made at least **one day** prior to the scheduled meeting or with sufficient time to allow for preparation of a response.

2. Any questions about agenda items or requests for additional information will be directed to the **superintendent**, the question and response will be copied to all the members of the board.

3. If a written report is provided in response to the request, all board members will receive a copy of both the request and the report prior to the opening of the meeting, if the request is deemed appropriate and the timeframe in which the request is made permits such a response to be completed.

4. Board members maintain the right to ask questions at the board table. After being properly recognized by the chair, board members may discuss the provided information or ask additional questions as they arise during the meeting.

Related Policies:
2342, AGENDA PREPARATION AND DISSEMINATION
2110.1, SCHOOL BOARD ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND REPORTS

Board Meetings: Managing public comment sessions

1. Persons wishing to address the board during open public comment will comply with the provisions of board policy that outlines the specific times and procedures applicable to public comments during board meetings.

2. A copy of the board's policy or public comment procedures should be available for public review at the meeting site. The board president will explain the rules for public participation prior to each session If deemed necessary.

3. During the public comment section(s) of the meeting, board members will listen to comments, but only the president, as the designated spokesperson, may respond if a response is necessary. The board president should always notify the community member of the proper follow up process, if necessary. If a response is indicated, it should be limited to:
    a. Correcting misstatements of fact presented by the speaker.
    b. Referring the speaker to applicable board policy and/or appropriate school official which relates to his or her comments.
    c. Considering the item for a future board agenda item for discussion, if the board agrees.

4. With board approval, 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. Members of the public will be cautioned that personnel matters and individual student matters are not proper subjects for public comment. If the speaker's comments reflect a complaint about personnel, the president will prohibit the speaker from continuing and refer them to the appropriate complaint policy.

6. The board must bear in mind that generally, persons who speak during public comment have First Amendment rights, though these rights can be impacted based upon the subject matter. The board should seek legal advice before disallowing a speaker's contribution to public comment based solely on the viewpoint expressed.

Related Policies:
1230, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS
1400, PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

Board Meetings: Participating in discussion, debate and voting

1. The board shall generally observe the parliamentary procedures in *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, using it as a guideline in the conduct of the meeting, unless it conflicts with state law.

2. A copy of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* must be available to the board president at every meeting.

3. Board members wishing to speak during the board meeting must first be recognized by the board president.

4. Generally, board members shall make comments solely on the business currently under deliberation.

5. The board president shall if deemed necessary:
    a. Allow each board member to speak on each issue being considered for **three minutes**.
    b. Allow opposing viewpoints to be heard in turn.
    c. Ensure that before a member is allowed to speak to an issue for a second time (for no more than two minutes), each member who has not spoken is provided an opportunity.
    d. Ensure that discussion pertains to the current agenda item being addressed and halt discussion that does not apply to the business at hand.
    e. Generally 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, if so, direct the district clerk to make a note to do so.
    f. Have the same right as any board member to make motions and vote. The president will first provide an opportunity for other board members to make a motion before offering his or her own motion.

6. Voting will be by show of hands, roll call or voice.

7. Generally, each board member will exercise his or her right and obligation as an elected official to participate in deliberations and vote on each item brought before the board unless a conflict of interest exists.

8. Board members will bear in mind that it is not helpful to repeat points that have already been made. Reasonable effort will be made to balance the need to express one's opinion with the goal of conducting an efficient and effective public meeting.

Related Policies:
2352, RULES OF ORDER

Board Meetings: Disclosing confidential information related to an executive session

1. Board members should not disclose confidential information that is either:
    a. Provided in a confidential memorandum.
    b. Discussed with the school attorney.
    c. Properly discussed in an executive session.

2. Members may confirm that the board discussed a particular topic during executive session if that topic was listed on the agenda and the presiding officer announced the board would discuss it in executive session as allowed by law.

3. In explaining a board member's inability to answer questions, members may state that the board is restricted by both law and its Code of Ethics from disclosing information relating to:
    a. Student records.
    b. Personally identifiable data.
    c. Personnel-related issues, including specific staff member evaluations and discipline.
    d. Investigations.
    e. Preparation, grading, or administration of exams.
    f. Proposed, pending, or current litigation.
    g. Collective bargaining negotiations.
    h. Real estate transactions where publicity would affect the value.
    i. Any additional confidential information.

4. Members should be familiar with the requirements of the Open Meetings Law so that they can explain to constituents the limitations on information that can appropriately be shared.

5. Members should be aware that public disclosure of information shared at a meeting with the school attorney may result in violating attorney-client privilege and open the board to liability. Disclosure of information from any executive session may be grounds for removal.

Related Policies:
2330, EXECUTIVE SESSION
2160, SCHOOL BOARD OFFICER AND EMPLOYEE ETHICS

Board Meetings: Electing board officers

1. Generally, election of officers will be held at the annual organizational meeting.

2. Board members are encouraged to announce their interest in holding office prior to the meeting. The board may ask that candidates offer a public statement at the meeting in support of their nomination.

3. The board will elect a president and vice president in accordance with board policy.

4. Generally members nominated for office are encouraged to have served at least one year on the board.

5. Board members must avoid violating the Open Meetings Law by informally gathering a quorum of members to discuss member qualifications in preparation for the election of officers.

6. The vote for officers must occur in open session; no vote will be taken by secret ballot.

7. Elections will be conducted in accordance with the parliamentary procedures in place, most commonly, *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.*
    a. Any board member may make a nomination.
    b. Nominations will not be closed until all who wish to make a nomination have done so.
    c. More than one person may be nominated for a given office.

Related Policies:
2210, BOARD ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING
2220, BOARD OFFICERS

NOTE: This is not a legal requirement. However, the board may encourage board members to gain experience prior to serving as officers. The intent is not to have inexperienced members in leadership positions until they have experienced at least one yearly cycle of events as a board member.

Board Meetings: Selecting and operating board committees

NOTE: This procedure is not intended to address committees required by law, such as the Audit Committee or the Committee on Special Education, which may have their own legal or regulatory procedures associated with their membership and duties.

1. The board may establish a committee any time an issue arises that requires more time and attention than the board feels can be provided during the course of a board meeting. They are established in response to a successful motion to refer the issue to a committee.

2. When appointing the committee, the board president provides the following guidance to the committee and ensures it is recorded in the meeting minutes. They will:
    a. Designate the committee as either a standing or special (ad hoc) committee. Standing committees are ongoing and special committees dissolve upon completion of their appointed task.
    b. Designate a committee chairperson and specify the committee membership.
    c. Define the committee's fact-finding, deliberative, or advisory role and outline the outcome of the committee.
    d. Provide a general timeline for the committee's work and for reporting to the board. 3. The board votes to approve the purpose.

3. The superintendent will provide appropriate staff and/or data support to permit the effective functioning of the committee.

4. The committee chair will extend an invitation by letter, email or phone to those members of the community whose service is desired.

5. Committee meetings will be conducted in the following manner:
    a. The committee chair, with the assistance of assigned district staff, is responsible for setting a meeting time, preparing the agenda, arranging for a meeting site with necessary equipment, and notifying all members of the time and place for the meeting.
    b. Committee meetings will be conducted in compliance with the Open Meetings Law and open to the public, if applicable.
    c. Meetings will generally be conducted in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (§49, Procedures for Small Boards), using it as a guideline for the meeting.
    d. An agenda listing the time, location, and specific subjects to be discussed will be prepared for each meeting. If applicable, the agenda and applicable supporting materials that must be made public shall be posted at least 72 hours prior to the meeting in the same location that the district board meeting agendas are posted.
    e. The committee chair will coordinate with the superintendent to obtain district information required to complete the committee's task. The chair may designate committee members to obtain information that the committee needs to complete its job.
    f. The chair will notify the board president when committee recommendations or reports are ready and arrange to deliver a final report in the format and time determined when the committee was formed.
    g. The board receives the report and may ask clarifying questions, but no motion to accept or approve the report is required. Typically, boards will make a motion to receive the report so it is noted in the minutes.
    h. If the report contains committee recommendations, the board will discuss and take action to accept any or all of the recommendations.

Related Policies:
2250, BOARD COMMITTEES

Team Development: Orienting new members

1. New board member orientation should take place within 60 days of the date a new board member is elected.

2. The superintendent, the board president, and/or at least one incumbent board member participates in the orientation. Additional administrative staff members may also be included to present specific information about the district.

3. New board members are provided the opportunity to fulfill the legally mandated training within the first year of holding office, as well as the option to participate in other training opportunities to enhance boardsmanship.

4. The board president will meet with new members to explain a typical board meeting and the board packet.

5. Orientation includes, but is not limited to:
    a. **General district information, such as:**
        - Geographic area included and number of square miles.
        - Campus attendance boundaries.
        - Number of students, teachers, and other employees.
        - Number of campuses and their enrollments.
        - Student demographics, including trend data.
        - Administrative structure and directory of key personnel.
        - Ongoing issues of interest to residents.
        - Organization chart.

    b. **Overview of district programs and operations, such as:**
        - **District vision, mission, goals, and plans including:**
          District planning and evaluation process and board activity calendar
          Most recent school reports, report cards, and district annual financial report.

        - **District budget overview including:**
          Current adopted budget summary.
          Recent trends in revenue, appropriations, tax rates, property values.

        - **Copy of the policy manual or link to online access. c. Information about board operations, including:**
          Overview of roles and responsibilities of the board and superintendent.
          Calendar of training opportunities.
          Current board goals.
          Calendar of district events.

Related Policies:
2510, NEW BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION

Team Development: Planning professional development for the board

1. On an annual basis, the board assesses its current professional development needs and considers the following, in the context of budget constraints:
    a. How will mandated training requirements for new board members be met?

    b. What kind of professional development activity or subjects are most beneficial to the board or board-superintendent team? Professional development opportunities can be scheduled either as team activities or for individual members.

    c. When should professional development activities and workshops be scheduled?

    d. What is the best source or location for the training?

    e. Who will be responsible for scheduling the professional development activities and workshops or making travel arrangements if the workshops are not local?

2. The board may choose to send one member to a training with the expectation that the information gathered will be shared with the full team after attending the session. Any time a board member attends a training, the expectation is that the board member will share the information in a timely fashion via email to the Board of Education.

3. Based upon the board's identified needs, the administration develops an estimate of expenses. The board ensures that resources to support board development are discussed during the budget development process and included in the annual budget.

4. As the year progresses, the superintendent advises the board regarding the availability of funds for board training being considered and provides supporting information the board needs to decide whether to continue as planned.

5. Members are encouraged to attend training opportunities provided by the New York State School Boards Association and other entities. Training events located outside the state may be considered, and included in the final budget only if more cost-effective training events are unavailable.

6. Members planning to attend continuing education events reflected in the budget should contact the board clerk to make arrangements. Expenditures for those training sessions that fall within the approved budget.

7. The district pays reasonable and necessary expenses, in accordance with board policy for mileage, commercial transportation, parking, lodging, meals, tuition, and other incidental expenses, but will not reimburse for items prohibited in the policy. Reimbursement of reasonable expenses occurs when attendance is authorized either as part of the budget approval process or as an unplanned exception to meet a specific training need that was recognized after budget approval.

8. Members requesting to attend continuing education events not reflected in the budget need to:
    a. Contact the district clerk to make arrangements once an unplanned event has been approved.
    b. The administration prepares an estimate of funds required to support the action item, and the board discusses and votes whether to provide additional funds to support the request.

9. Expense reports, along with receipts, shall be submitted in a timely manner in accordance with district policy.

10. Board members are expected to be in attendance at training events for which they are registered, barring a family emergency. If an emergency occurs, or if a board member becomes aware that they have a conflict, every effort should be made to find a replacement to attend the session.

11. The board is the final authority for resolving any dispute regarding expenses related to professional development.

Related Policies:
6830, EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT
2520, BOARD MEMBER TRAINING
2521, SCHOOL BOARD CONFERENCES, CONVENTIONS, WORKSHOP

Team Development: Conducting a board self-evaluation

1. The board should conduct an annual evaluation of its own performance in governing, overseeing district management, and conducting its business.

2. The board may use criteria contained in existing instruments or develop a local instrument to support the self-assessment process. The instrument should be agreed upon on an annual basis.

3. The board president or designee facilitates the distribution of the selected instrument, with instructions, to each board member a week in advance of a workshop/retreat scheduled for a board self-assessment. Board members complete the instrument in accordance with the instructions and either bring it to the workshop or send it to an identified point of contact for scoring prior to the workshop.

4. Depending on the results of the survey, the board considers whether it would be advantageous to have the workshop/retreat facilitated by a consultant. The process of conducting a board self-assessment and discussing the path forward can be difficult. If the board discovers it is struggling, it is wise to consider assistance from experts, such as staff from NYSSBA, BOCES, the school attorney or other resources.

5. During the workshop, the board focuses its discussion on those items in the instrument where responses indicate either a comparatively weak performance or there is disagreement about the board's current performance. The intent of the discussion is to identify areas requiring additional attention to improve board performance.

6. Based upon the results of the self-assessment workshop, the board may identify goals for improvement. The board should schedule a review of progress toward self-improvement goals **every six months** as part of a regularly scheduled meeting or workshop. The dates for the reviews are entered in the board activity calendar.

Related Policies:
0310, BOARD SELF-EVALUATION

Team Development: Expressing opinions about another board member's performance or behavior

1. A board member who has an issue with a colleague's performance is encouraged to express those concerns directly to that individual. [If the matter relates to harassment or criminal activity, then the member should not attempt this[1].] If the concern involves the board president, a member may discuss the issue with the board vice president.

2. If addressing the issue directly with the member does not resolve the concern, then discussion with the board president is appropriate. During such discussions:
    a. The board 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.

    b. If appropriate, the president shall remind the board member whose behavior is in question about the adopted code of ethics and the district's code of conduct and discuss how the questionable behavior does not comply with the codes. The discussion may also 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.

    c. If the board member in question does not believe his or her behavior is in conflict with the board's code of ethics, an item may be placed on the agenda to discuss the parameters of acceptable board behavior for an upcoming board meeting.

    d. The board president may believe that the nature of the issue would best be addressed by scheduling a retreat for the entire board. The board as a whole would reach a consensus on the scheduling of a retreat.

3. Members should not take concerns about fellow board members to the superintendent for purposes of attempting to resolve disputes.

4. In order to preserve the integrity and credibility of the school district as a whole, members shall not speak negatively (for example, personal attacks or character assassination) about another member, superintendent, or staff in the community.

5. If the issue affects the member's ability to serve, the board may consult with the school's attorney to determine if removal proceedings should be considered.

Related Policies:
0310, BOARD SELF-EVALUATION
2140, BOARD MEMBER REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

[1] In this instance, the member should seek assistance from an attorney or law enforcement.

Planning: Requesting information about a non-agenda item

1. Board members do not have greater rights to access information unrelated to matters before the board than the general public.

2. Members should request information not related to a meeting agenda item directly from the superintendent.

3. The superintendent determines if the information requested is available from existing sources or records or if it requires that a special, one-time-only report be developed.

4. 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 reasonably possible.

5. 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 of this fact. The board president will place the request for information 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 agrees that the information is important for future decision-making, then the superintendent will direct that a report be developed and provide it as requested by the board.

7. All team members receive a copy of any report generated by a board member's request in accordance with this procedure.

Related Policies:
2110.1, SCHOOL BOARD ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND REPORTS

The superintendent may allow designated subordinates to respond directly to requests for information from board members. In that case, this paragraph would be modified to reflect "…superintendent or a designated representative." The superintendent also may decide to delegate this authority to a specific position such as the board secretary (or clerk). [2]If the board doesn't agree that the information merits a special report, the board member can still initiate a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request. While NYSSBA doesn't recommend this, it is important to note that the option is available.

Planning: Establishing and reviewing the district's vision, mission, and annual goals

1. Recognizing that a vision and/or mission statement and district goals are powerful governance tools, the board annually reviews the mission and vision statement and either affirms its continued value, or changes it to reflect a new direction. In either case, to accomplish this, the board periodically engages the community, including staff, parents, and district residents, in this process (every 3-5 years).

2. The superintendent proposes for board approval a method by which input from the community will be gathered.

3. Based on an agreed upon process, the board sets new or continuing district goals annually by October and receives an action plan by the superintendent shortly thereafter.

Related Policies:
0000, MISSION STATEMENT AND VISION
2000, BOARD OPERATIONAL GOALS

Planning: Developing a process for adopting the district budget

1. To meet the board's statutory obligation to propose a budget in a timely fashion, the board's involvement in developing and adopting the budget begins in **October** when the board meets with administration to review the district's goals for the coming year. The board may offer general parameters (e.g., fiscal constraints, academic priorities, district goals) to the administration to guide budget development for the next school year.

2. In **January**, the board, superintendent, and staff meet to discuss and agree on budget assumptions for the coming year. The administration will, given current information, prepare a report on the estimated impact of the tax cap, assuming such information is available from the state.

3. At this time, given public input and information about current fiscal conditions, the board also establishes relative funding priorities to guide further budget development, balancing earlier adopted district goals and any critical needs identified but not addressed in the district goals.

4. The board will also have discussions with administrative staff in areas such as the following (but not limited to):
    a. Fund balance.
    b. State aid projections.
    c. Tax assessments.
    d. Other local revenue such as fees.
    e. Staffing ratios.
    f. Specific budget categories such as salaries and benefits or other operating expenses
    g. Tax cap implications, including consideration of exceeding the cap.

5. These discussions will shape the priorities and targets used by the superintendent and staff in developing district performance objectives, improvement plans, and the draft budget. The board ensures that the budget aligns with district goals.

6. During the budget development process, the board reviews periodic updates from the superintendent and administrative team including information such as the following:
    a. Fiscal impact of district plans on the proposed budget, including proposals for major additions or deletions of programs.
    b. Board-requested comparison or trend studies of various budget categories such as salaries, capital outlay, or other major spending categories.
    c. Property assessment estimates.
    d. Student enrollment updates and/or trends.
    e. State aid estimates.
    f. New federal or state requirements that impact the budget.
    g. Other changes that occur following the establishment of funding priorities and targets that may affect budget assumptions.

7. The complete proposed budget package is presented to the board no later than **mid April** and at a minimum, includes the following components:
    a. A budget overview that provides a summary of revenue and expenditures by major object code for the previous three years, current year and upcoming years current and projected student enrollment, and the town appraisal of district's estimated property values upon which the estimates are based.

b. An education plan that includes adopted district goals and a summary of major changes to instructional programs, staffing, and education support programs.
c. An expenditure plan that includes a list of the board's previously agreed upon funding priorities, a brief narrative summary of funds included to support specific goals and priorities, and proposed expenditures by function and object code compared to the current year projected actual expenditures.
d. A revenue plan that includes a list of revenue from all sources compared to expenditures and reflects the expected effect on the district fund balance. The revenue plan should also address whether the proposed budget is within or exceeds the tax cap.

8. The board conducts a meeting called the Budget Hearing to hear public comment on the proposed budget, in accordance with law and policy.

9. The board shall adopt the budget in a timely manner which allows the district to comply with state law regarding the property tax report card and publication of budget notices.

10. The board then directs the superintendent to publish a summary of the adopted budget and the priorities it intends to fund for distribution to the public following the adoption of the budget, in accordance with state law and regulation.

Related Policies:
6110, BUDGET PLANNING
6120, BUDGET HEARING

[1] This time frame may be modified. The key is to begin early so there is time to thoroughly review all of the material in the many steps to budget approval and give the administration time to react to changes as the budget develops.

Planning: Developing and/or reviewing district policies

Policy review is a continuous cyclical process that takes three forms:

1. Comprehensive, periodic review of the policy manual through NYSSBA:
    a. At least every five years and no less frequently than seven years, the superintendent enters into an agreement with NYSSBA Policy Services or other entity to conduct a policy review project.
    b. The superintendent or designee provides to NYSSBA Policy Services or other entities a copy of the official district policy manual, student handbooks and other relevant policy material.
    c. NYSSBA Policy Services staff or other entities conduct an extensive review of the manual and identify discrepancies between recommendations and the district's policies. The review further identifies internal discrepancies, unresolved legal issues, and the absence of policy required by law, regulation or best practice.
    d. The board takes appropriate action on policy recommendations arising from this review. Policy manuals are adjusted to reflect the outcome of the review and board action.

2. Emergent issue: whenever unanticipated circumstances prompt board action (e.g., changes in state or federal law, receipt of a policy update from policy service provider, emerging technology, a new district initiative; unique circumstance/challenge in the district):
    a. The issue will be placed on a board meeting agenda and board members are provided with appropriate background information by the superintendent and/or administrative team. The superintendent consults the current policy manual for any relevant policies to guide board discussion and provide those as part of the board packet.
    b. The board evaluates the agenda item and makes a decision within the framework of the relevant policies. If the circumstances warrant an exception to the policy, the board may act accordingly. However, if the board believes changes in policy are appropriate, it may refer the issue to the policy committee or request that the superintendent take appropriate steps to develop and recommend revised policy for review.

3. Routine governance in accordance with recurring annual cycles (e.g., budget development, 18 recruiting and hiring, adoption of district goals and objectives):
    a. Agenda items (such as approving the budget calendar, appointing committees or setting district goals) shall reference the appropriate policies and administrative processes underpinning the superintendent's recommendations.
    b. The board makes its decisions within the framework of these policies. Hence, if changes in either policy or administrative procedures are desired before the next cycle, the board should request that the superintendent and/or policy committee take appropriate steps to develop and recommend revised policy for its review.

Related Policies:
2410, FORMULATION, ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF POLICIES