



## BOARD WORKING AGREEMENTS

This document reflects ongoing discussions by the Board of Education (the Board) about the roles and responsibilities; working agreements and communication; expectations and relationships; meeting structure and protocols; duties, and election of officers.

The Board and the Superintendent constitute a leadership team with all working toward effective governance, responsible management, supportive interaction, respectful communication, and establishment of clear direction.

### Section I: Board of Education's Role and Responsibilities

1. Identify community values and stakeholder expectations
2. Clarify the district direction and goals through a strategic plan
3. Adopt, approve, and ensure implementation of policies
4. Operate openly within the framework of the Board meetings
5. Encourage collective decision-making and respect diverse viewpoints
6. Determine how goals will be measured and what information is required for understandable reporting
7. Adopt formal procedures to monitor and evaluate district programs
8. Use monitoring parameters and established financial performance principles and guidelines to budget for district spending and revenue
9. Respect the differences between the roles of Board Members and the Superintendent
10. Provide opportunities for our community (parents, staff, students, tax payers) involvement

### Section II: Working Agreements & Communication

1. The Board of Education is a group of seven equal members.
2. The Superintendent is accountable to the full Board of Education not to individual board members. Direction to the Superintendent is given only at a legally convened meeting of the Board of Education.
3. All Board of Education members will respect the differences between the Board members; and between Board and Superintendent/staff roles.
4. The Board has one employee, the Superintendent. The Board does not direct or oversee other district staff.
5. Expectations for the Superintendent should be clear and concise.
6. The Superintendent should exhibit shared and supportive leadership toward the Board of Education and individual board members.



7. When individual Board Members request information she/he will email the Superintendent and copy the Board President. Any information resulting from the request will be provided to all Board members.
8. If a Board member requests information from the Superintendent which is estimated to take longer than 60 minutes of cumulative time to prepare, the Superintendent has the option of placing the request as a discussion item on the next Board meeting agenda.
9. When possible, any requests regarding information contained in a Board packet should be made prior to a meeting to allow staff time to prepare thorough answers. If requests regarding information contained in a Board packet are not made in advance, there should not be an expectation that ALL questions can be answered during open session. In the event that a board member's question is not answered in open session, the superintendent will facilitate a response in the aftermath of the meeting in a timely manner.
10. Board members will include the Superintendent in any pertinent conversations or questions with district staff by copying the Superintendent in the email.
11. If decorum is not maintained during a meeting, the Board President should attempt to reestablish decorum using the gavel to quiet all present, move to the next agenda item, or call for a recess. If Board discussions are not exhibiting respectful behavior, any Board member may make a motion for a recess.
12. Board members who have items to be put on the agenda should email the Superintendent and the Board president.
13. External Correspondence:
  - a. When the Board (not the Superintendent) is contacted (this includes in person, via email, social media, or any communication medium), the Board President will respond to the individual. Individual Board members may reply to the individual to acknowledge the inquiry; however, the response should not imply future action on behalf of the Board.
  - b. When the Board and the Superintendent are contacted, the Superintendent and Board President will coordinate a response. Individual Board members may reply to the individual to acknowledge the inquiry; however, the response should not imply future action on behalf of the Board.
  - c. When the Superintendent receives an external communication regarding a specific Board member, the Superintendent will contact that Board member for clarification of the issue before any further action.
  - d. If a Board member feels any inquiry or comment received (or observed) from any communication medium (email, social media, etc.) requires a response, an email should be sent to the superintendent with a copy to the Board president making them aware of the issue. It will be the responsibility of the superintendent to determine "if " and "how" a response will be provided.
14. As it pertains to being a Board member, we believe that:
  - a. The Board speaks with one voice



- b. Social media, while having positive and negative consequences, may violate the Open Meetings Act if more than two board members comment on the same post
  - c. Board members responding to District issues on social media or other means of communication may be intending to be responsive to an individual; however, the public often perceives a comment from an individual board member as a belief (or fact) from the full seven-member Board.
  - d. Board members are not District employees, however, we should abide by all District 59 policies.
  - e. District policy 5:120 Employee Ethics; Conduct; and Conflict of Interest / Professional and Appropriate Conduct states that “All District employees are expected to maintain high standards in their school relationships, to demonstrate integrity and honesty, to be considerate and cooperative, and to maintain professional and appropriate relationships with students, parents, staff members, and others.”
  - f. Based on the above beliefs, Board members should not respond on social media to substantive District 59 issues. Rather, if a Board member feels a social media post requires a response, an email should be sent to the superintendent with a copy to the Board president making them aware of the issue. It will be the responsibility of the superintendent to determine “if “ and “how” a response will be provided. This will not restrict board members from offering simple congratulatory statements on District 59 social media.
15. When a board member wishes to visit a school, the Superintendent should be notified in advance.
16. A comprehensive email update from the Superintendent to the Board is shared via email on a weekly basis.
17. The Board president is the designated liaison to the Board attorney. In the president’s absence the vice-president assumes this responsibility. The Board attorney’s response will be shared with all board members.
18. Board members will use only their District email account when communicating on District business.

### **Section III: Individual Board Member Expectations & Relationships**

All board members are to be respectful of each other and will:

1. Demonstrate professionalism and responsible behavior including appropriate body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice.
2. Attend meetings well prepared for district business.
3. Share the common belief that each person brings a different expertise and has good intentions.
4. Solve problems through a collaborative process.
5. Abide by majority decisions of the board, while retaining the right to seek changes in such decisions through ethical and constructive channels.



6. Sincerely listen and seek to understand the viewpoints of others.
7. Serve on various district committees and report back to the full Board on discussions held at committee meetings.

#### **Section IV: Working Together the Superintendent and all Members of the Board Will:**

1. Employ and evaluate one person, the superintendent, and hold that person accountable for district performance and compliance with written board policy,
2. Act in the best interest of all students and stakeholders, and not any particular group,
3. Respect the confidentiality of the closed session,
4. Build trust through open and honest communication.
5. Board members may email or text the superintendent after regular business hours; however, there is no expectation that the superintendent will respond until business hours resume.
6. Direct the superintendent to speak on behalf of the District for media requests.
7. Redirect a concerned parent or community member to the following chain of command: teacher, principal, SLT member, Superintendent. Community members may also address the Board of Education during the agenda item “Comments and Suggestions from the Audience” during a Board of Education meeting.
8. The board does not interact with the public during the Public Comments portion of the meeting. The board president will thank the individual making comments and determine whether further clarification is needed. The board president will direct the speaker to the superintendent if necessary.
9. Inform the superintendent via email or phone call if a Board member is aware of any individual(s) planning to address the Board of Education at a meeting.

#### **Section V: Board of Education Meeting Protocols**

1. Board meetings are meetings of the Board of Education held in public and are generally scheduled for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month, with Committee of the Whole meetings on an as-needed basis. Check the [Board Calendar](#) for actual dates.
2. Robert’s Rules of order will be observed as a guide to facilitate Board of Education meetings.
3. The Board will encourage community involvement by allowing staff and community members to speak at a designated time during the meeting.
4. All persons attending the meeting will be treated fairly and equally.
5. When someone speaks to the Board, members will listen carefully and then direct the Superintendent to help or further direct him/her to the appropriate person.
6. During Board discussions the President directs conversation so all members have equitable opportunity to speak and be heard.



7. Members will wait to speak until others have finished speaking. To help maintain order, the president will call on board members whose hands are raised to determine the order of speakers.
8. Make best efforts to stay on topic and encourage fellow board members to do so.
9. Policies and protocols related to board meetings will be reviewed and revised as needed but at least annually.
10. In any instance where the Board directs the Superintendent to convene a public forum or town hall meeting, the subject of the town hall meeting will be placed on the agenda of at least one subsequent board meeting for discussion and public comment prior to board action.

### Section VI: Duties of Officers

1. The Board president will preside over Board meetings.
2. The Board president will confer with the superintendent on the agenda.
3. The Board vice president will preside over the meeting in the absence of the Board president.
4. The Board secretary will call the roll for all votes.
5. In the absence of the Board secretary, an alternate secretary will be selected by the Board president.

### Section VII: Elections

1. Newly appointed members will recite the IASB ethics statement ([Code of Conduct](#)) at their first board meeting.
2. In accordance with the Illinois School Code and Board policies, the president, vice president, and secretary will be elected annually at the Board of Education organizational meeting.
3. A president pro-tem, selected by consensus of the current Board, will accept nominations for president.
4. Roll call voting will continue until one candidate receives a majority of the votes cast.
5. The newly elected president will continue the same procedure for the offices of vice president and secretary.
6. All board members will reaffirm the IASB ethics statement ([Code of Conduct](#)) at the annual organizational meeting of the Board.