

A FEW SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL BOARD OPERATIONS

Self Analysis Exercise for a Local School Board Member

AS A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

1. I listen
2. I am motivated to serve my community.
3. I recognize it is my responsibility with my fellow board members to see schools are properly run, not to run them by myself.
4. I work with the administrative employees for the board, not over or around them.
5. I recognize that school business must be conducted in an open meeting.
6. I avoid playing politics.
7. I try to inform myself about the proper role, duties, and responsibilities of a board member.
8. I try to function in terms of general educational policies rather than in specific and narrow concerns.
9. I function in the meetings as part of a legislative policy-forming body and not as an administrative officer.
10. I consider myself a trustee of public education and attempt to protect and conserve it.

Relationship with Other Board Members

1. I respect others' opinions.
2. I recognize authority exists only with the board while in session, not with an individual board member.
3. I don't make disparaging remarks about other members of the board in or out of the regular meetings.
4. I do not commit myself to vote on issues prior to the board meeting until all facts and points of view are properly presented.
5. I support and encourage the delegation of detailed matters to the board's administrative employees.
6. I insist that special committees are appointed to serve only in an investigative or advisory capacity to the board and that a formal charge be given these committees.

7. encourage that executive sessions be held only in dire emergencies and then only in matters of extreme confidentiality.
8. I do not participate in any secret sessions that may be called by other board members.
9. I insist that the chief executive officer be present at any executive session unless he or she is personally involved.
10. I keep the information discussed with other board members in an executive session in confidence.

Working with the Superintendent and Staff

1. I support and hold that the superintendent is responsible for the administration of the school.
2. I try to give the superintendent authority commensurate with his or her responsibilities.
3. I elect or approve employees for hire only on recommendations of the superintendent.
4. I participate in board legislation only after considering the superintendent's complete information and recommendations.
5. I demand that the superintendent keep the board fully informed through both oral and written records.
6. I spend more time in board meetings on educational problems than on business details.
7. I feel obligated to give the superintendent friendly counsel and advice with no special orders or mandates.
8. I refer all complaints to the proper administrative office as per the board's policies in these matters.
9. I insist that all complaints coming to the board be in writing and signed by the complainant.
10. I present any personal criticisms of employees to the superintendent.

Operational Methods

1. We operate as a board according to written policies
2. Policies are updated yearly.
3. Meetings are regularly scheduled and advertised to the community.
4. Agendas are prepared by the superintendent and distributed in advance of meetings to board members.
5. Procedures for citizens to address the board are clearly defined.

6. Minutes of the meeting are kept in a convenient place and open for public inspection.
7. Staff members frequently make presentations to the board on matters of educational consequence in the school system.
8. The Board has a long-range plan containing clearly developed goals and priorities. These are shared with the community.
9. The Board participates and is actively involved in local, state, and national organizations of common educational interest.
10. The Board strives to improve its own growth through a planned inservice program with the help of its chief executive officer.

A FEW SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL BOARD OPERATIONS

1. Adhere as closely as possible to established meeting dates. Start on time and stop on time.
2. Remember you have authority as a Board member only when meeting is in session. (Unless the Board has officially designated a Board member to a specific task.)
3. Continue the meeting even though all members are not present; however, do not continue the meeting unless a quorum is present.
4. Run the meeting in a businesslike manner and follow a pre-established agenda (Avoid discussing the market, the weather, etc.)
5. Call special meetings only when absolutely necessary. Follow legal regulations for special meetings and try to give as widespread community notice as possible.
6. Make a special point to the community that Board meetings are open to the public and that the public is welcome, in fact needed, for input. But they are a meeting of the Board of Education and not a public meeting.
7. Provide a spot on the agenda for public audiences at a time reasonably early in the meeting. Remind the audience that personnel issues cannot be brought up in open session and that public comments will not be commented on by the Board or become an agenda item but may be placed on the agenda in the future.
8. Set time limit for each person's audience. Make exceptions under unusually extenuating circumstances.
9. When a group(s) of people is interested in the same subject, ask that one or two spokesmen be appointed in the interest of time. Then open to limited discussion. Give pro and con equal time.
10. Provide copies of agenda and other relevant materials on a table near the door in order that visitors may obtain the copies upon arrival at meetings.
11. Keep executive sessions to a minimum.
12. Refuse to consider problems of your constituents unless relief has been attempted through: a.) teacher b.) principal c.) superintendent. If the patron has followed this procedure and is still not satisfied, do not attempt to handle the problem as a single board member. Handle the problem at a board meeting.
13. Do not bring gossip and innuendo to board meetings. Consider patron's problems only when made in writing and signed by the complainant or by a personal appearance of the complainant.
14. Establish a working set of policies and adhere to them. Provide a few extra

copies for community distribution (public library, school libraries, hospital waiting rooms, etc.)

15. Set aside a certain amount of time (30 minutes?) at each board meeting to amend and update policies.
16. Know your lawful duties and responsibilities.
17. Know the difference between policy making and administering.
18. Be a policy making body – not an administrative body.
- 19.** Ascertain that your superintendent is in fact the administrator of the policies you set forth.