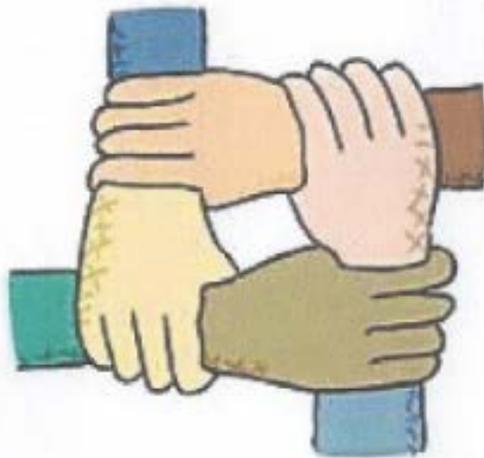


LAFOURCHE PARISH SCHOOL DISTRICT



BOARD MEMBER HANDBOOK

Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.

--John Dewey --

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Preamble

The Lafourche Parish School Board understands that access to a quality public education is not just a constitutional requirement, but is also a moral imperative to ensure that all individuals have an opportunity to fully develop their talents, moral imagination and essential humanity. Accordingly, all Lafourche Parish public school students are entitled to a quality educational experience that prepares them to be lifelong learners.

In order to provide the necessary and appropriate leadership for the Lafourche Parish public schools, the Lafourche Parish School Board, both collectively and individually, is committed to governing as a professional board of directors. This means a commitment to the principles and practice of professional governance, the sharing of a common understanding of Board policies, practices, procedures and principles, a focus on continuous learning and improvement, and a willingness to serve as a model of effective moral leadership to students, staff and the community. This handbook is an attempt to set down in writing the Board's procedures and principles for the benefit of current and future members of the Lafourche Parish School Board in an effort to establish best practices in the governance of the Lafourche Parish school system. It is not intended to amend or replace policies and procedures enacted by the Board.

Mission, Vision, Belief, Goals, Values, Key Works

Mission Statement

Lafourche Parish public schools strive to offer exemplary academic, career, co-curricular and extra-curricular programs to develop in all students a strong sense of responsibility, citizenship, and respect for others in a safe and nurturing environment.

Vision Statement

Lafourche Parish public schools are committed to helping all students become lifelong learners, realize their full potential, appreciate the relevance of their education, and become empowered for success.

Belief Statements

1. Education is the first priority.
2. All children can learn.
3. Open and honest communication builds trust.
4. High expectations must be set for everyone.
5. Efficient and effective fiscal management is imperative.
6. Collaboration with parents and community agencies reduces barriers to learning.
7. Early childhood programs enable students to come to school prepared to learn.
8. Shared decision-making and accountability enhance school effectiveness and increases student achievement.

Board Goals

Student Achievement

Each and every student in the Lafourche Parish public schools will achieve established, rigorous performance standards in all areas of student learning by becoming independent strategic readers, problem solvers, and critical thinkers.

Communication

The Lafourche Parish School Board will establish reciprocal communication that is accessible and understandable, and that unites all citizens around the belief that high-quality public education is a community's most valuable asset.

Facilities and Educational Adequacy

The Lafourche Parish School Board will ensure all students have the opportunity to learn and achieve in safe and educationally adequate facilities by meeting the needs of the district with respect to adequate space and the quality of learning environments.

Board Governance

The Lafourche Parish School Board will institutionalize a focus on continuous improvement leading to student achievement and student success through its development of policy, ongoing evaluation, and commitment to individual and Board professional growth.

Core Values

The Board will:

1. Deliberate in many voices, but govern in one.
2. Cultivate a sense of group responsibility; understanding that it is the Board, not the staff or administration, which is responsible for excellence in governance.
3. Be an active part of the school district's leadership team, striving to lead the district through a clear mission statement, an articulated vision for the district, shared and commonly understood goals, broad and clearly written policies, and a continual monitoring of the school and student performance.
4. Be willing to hold itself to high standards of excellence in governance and professional responsibility, including a willingness to hold individual Board members and the Board itself accountable for its actions.
5. Continually monitor its own process, performance and progress.
6. Vigorously and intelligently advocate for the school district and its students on the local, state and national level.
7. Commit, both individually and collectively, to being well-informed and educated on local, state and national educational issues, initiatives and practices.
8. Regularly communicate with all stakeholders about school district performance, direction, initiatives, issues and ideas.
9. Formally and informally recognize and celebrate school, staff and student success.
10. Insist on the pursuit of excellence on the part of all with a role in the school district, including, but not limited to, staff, students and board members.
11. Always strive to act in the interest of what is best for all students, believing that all students can learn and succeed at a high level.
12. Serve as a model of positive professional and ethical conduct.

Key Work of School Boards

In addition to its Mission Statement and Board Goals, as well as responsibilities defined by law, the Board subscribes to the *Key Work of School Boards*. This framework for planning and action, developed by the National School Boards Association, is based on the system's concept that no action or progress is accomplished in isolation. The essential areas for Board focus and action

are as follows:

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 – Effective school boards insure high academic standards, transparency, and accountability. True accountability depends on open decision making, community engagement and support, and receptivity to new ideas and constructive criticism.

Policy – Effective school boards use policy to sustainably exercise power to serve students. Through policy, school boards establish a set of cohesive guidelines to transform vision into reality.

Community Leadership – Effective school boards recognize public schooling’s impact on the community by governing through public advocacy, community engagement, and sharing their concerns and actions with the public. Public support is vital to implementing the Board’s vision.

Board/Superintendent Relationships – Effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each in their respective roles with strong collaboration and mutual trust. Both the school board and the superintendent have essential leadership roles that are interconnected, but unique.

Board Governance

Board Authority and Responsibility

The Lafourche Parish School Board is the local educational agency for the Parish of Lafourche, charged with the responsibility of carrying out the duties associated with the education of students in the Parish of Lafourche, all in accordance with State and Federal law and BESE regulations. The Board endeavors to provide for its residents access to a free, quality education from Pre-K through high school. The Board recognizes that it represents all students and all facets of the community.

Among its varied responsibilities, the Board owns school buildings and property and is responsible for the maintenance of existing facilities and construction of new facilities; it employs and supervises the superintendent of schools; it adopts, manages and oversees the annual operating budget of the district; it adopts and approves policies and procedures for the effective education of the students of this parish; and engages in long-term and short-term strategic planning. A lengthier and more specific listing of the Board's authority can be found in La. R.S. 17:81.

While the Board has broad authority over public schools in Lafourche Parish, much of this authority is delegated to the superintendent of schools and other district employees. The Board functions, not as management responsible for the administration of the school district, but as a board of directors responsible for establishing a vision for Lafourche's schools, and monitoring its progress in reaching that vision.

By comparison, the superintendent of schools, pursuant to state law, is the CEO of the Lafourche Parish school system. He/she is responsible for leading and managing the school district, hiring and supervising personnel, developing and administering the budget, and advising the Board on educational developments, Board policies and applicable laws. Board members shall endeavor to regularly communicate with the superintendent to keep abreast on matters of educational, fiscal, or general concern.

Board members should strive to work cooperatively with the superintendent in developing goals and initiatives for the school system. Although the superintendent of schools is directly employed and supervised by the Board, his/her working relationship with the Board is such that he/she is generally considered the Board's "sixteenth member."

Authority of Individual Board Members

Individual Board members have no authority except when they are meeting as a School Board in a duly called and properly noticed public meeting. The School Board is a collective body and, by statute, can only act when a quorum is assembled in a legally constituted meeting. The statements or actions of individual Board members do not bind the Board, except when that statement or action has been authorized by an official act of the Board, i.e., by a vote of the Board at a duly called and properly noticed public meeting. Board members are mindful not to act or speak in a manner that suggests they are speaking or acting on behalf of the Board or the school district when they have not been so authorized by the Board.

An individual Board member exercises the authority of his/her position only when the Board is in legal session.

Board members will advise the public that the proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline or learning material is as follows:

1. Teacher
2. Building principal
3. Appropriate district level administration
4. Superintendent
5. Board

Board members will not intervene in the administration of the district or its schools.

If a Board member receives a complaint, he/she will refer the complainant to the appropriate staff member. Board members will be knowledgeable of the complaint policies along with the accompanying administrative rules. While Board members may listen to complaints from staff or community members regarding policies or procedures, members must be careful to permit such matters to proceed through the proper administrative channels in order to comply with such procedures and chain of command. Board members are encouraged to refrain from providing opinions or advice in such cases other than to direct the complainant to the proper central office administrator or staff member, since the Board member may be called upon at a later date to decide the matter brought to the entire Board on appeal. Such involvement may result in their need to recuse themselves from any decision-making process concerning the complaint.

With regard to the Board's Court of Appeals role, Board members will not listen or respond to complaints against personnel. Board members will notify the superintendent of all complaints they receive.

Board Committees

The Board understands that not all of its work can be accomplished at regularly scheduled meetings of the entire Board, and that in order to dedicate the necessary time, expertise and focus on individual issues, it is necessary to utilize committees of the Board. The Board's committee structure was developed so that it is aligned with the Board's goals to better focus Board activity and action on its stated priorities.

The president, with Lafourche Parish School Board approval, shall authorize the creation of standing Board committees, to be charged with deliberations of certain issues as deemed necessary. Such committees shall be composed of members of the Board whose chairperson shall be appointed by the president, and the president shall be given the option to change committee membership.

The Lafourche Parish School Board shall have eight standing committees, as follows:

1. Advisory Committee
2. Finance Committee
3. Insurance Committee
4. Policy and Procedure Committee

5. Superintendent Evaluation Committee
6. Transportation Committee
7. Land and Facilities Management Committee
8. Academics Committee

Committees of the Board shall endeavor to meet at least quarterly, provided that the President, Superintendent, or committee chairpersons have the authority to call special meetings should the need arise. The Board President shall appoint committee members and designate chairpersons for the Finance, Insurance, Policy and Procedure, Superintendent Evaluation, Transportation, Land and Facilities Management, and Academics Committees. All Board members shall be considered non-voting ex officio members of each committee to which they are not otherwise appointed by the President as committee members. The attendance of ex officio committee members shall not count towards the constitution of a quorum, nor their absence count against it. Ex officio committee members shall have the right to attend and participate in any executive session duly and properly called by a committee.

Special committees may from time to time be appointed by the Board to study specific issues. The membership of any special committees need not be restricted to members of the Board, but shall include such persons who may have knowledge or interest in the subject studied.

The Lafourche Parish School Board shall elect from its membership an Advisory Committee of five (5) members that shall include the President, Vice-President, and three (3) others, and shall fix the terms of office not to exceed two (2) years. At least one member from each area of the parish (north, central and south) shall be elected to serve on the Advisory Committee, with no more than two (2) representatives on the committee elected from one area. (The north area shall encompass Districts 1-6; the central area shall encompass Districts 7-11; and the south area shall encompass Districts 12-15).

Board members may request that items be placed on a committee agenda by following the procedure defined on Page 17 (Requesting an Agenda Item).

Board Member Qualifications

Each member of a parish school board, in addition to the qualifications otherwise prescribed by law, shall be able to read and write.

To be eligible, at the time of qualification as a candidate for the school board, a person must have attained the age of eighteen, resided in the state for the preceding two years, and have been actually domiciled for the preceding year in the district from which he/she seeks election. However, at the next regular election for members of the school board following a reapportionment, an elector may qualify as a candidate from any district created in whole or in part from a district existing prior to reapportionment if he/she was domiciled in the prior district for at least one year immediately preceding his/her qualification and was a resident of the state for the two years preceding his/her qualification.

The seat of any member who changes his/her domicile from the district he/she represents or, if elected after reapportionment, whose domicile is not within the district he/she represents at the time he/she is sworn into office, shall be vacated thereby, any declaration of retention of domicile to the contrary notwithstanding. For purposes of this Section, "domicile" means a person's principal or habitual place of residence.

Resignation of Board Members

Board members who wish to resign or retire from the Board must file a notice of retirement or resignation with the Secretary of State. A notice of retirement or resignation shall be in writing, shall be dated, may specify a prospective date on which the retirement or resignation is to be effective, and shall be signed by the official and duly acknowledged by him/her before an officer authorized to administer oaths.

Exit Interview

Board members who leave the Board, either through retirement, resignation or election, will be asked to complete an exit interview questionnaire. It is hoped that the honest and thoughtful reflections of departing members will provide valuable information and ideas for Board self-evaluation and improvement efforts.

Filling a Vacancy on the Board

When a vacancy occurs in the membership of the Board, the remaining members of the Board shall within twenty days declare that the vacancy has occurred and proceed to appoint a person who meets the qualifications of the office to fill the vacancy. However, if the deadline for making the appointment falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or other legal holiday, then the next day which is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday shall be deemed to be the final day for making such appointment. For the purposes of this Subsection, in addition to the definition of "vacancy" provided in R.S. 18:581, a "vacancy" exists when a member changes his/her domicile from the district he/she represents or, if elected after reapportionment, is domiciled outside the district he/she represents at the time he/she is sworn into office, any declaration of retention of domicile to the contrary notwithstanding. If a vacancy is not filled within the time specified above, the governor shall fill the vacancy.

If the unexpired term of an office exceeds one year, the board, when the vacancy occurs in its membership within twenty days after the vacancy occurs, shall issue a proclamation ordering a special election to fill the vacancy and shall specify in the proclamation, in accordance with R.S. 18:402, the dates on which the primary and general elections shall be held. See La. R.S. 18:602.

Board Member Ethics

As public officials, Board Members are held in high public esteem and should aspire to the highest ethical standards. Each Board Member shall be familiar with the Louisiana Code of Governmental Ethics and shall meet all requirements for training and review of the Code as may be mandated by law.

Discipline of Board Members

Board members who violate the rules, regulations or policies of the Board, interfere with the orderly and efficient operation of the Board, or act in ways that are contrary to the best interests of the school district can be subject to a vote of censure by the Board for conduct detrimental to the Board. Such a vote shall of censure be by two-thirds approval of the elected membership. A censure vote is an expression of disapproval concerning an individual member by the Board and should be used only in circumstances of willful disregard of Board rules, regulations or policies.

Since service as a Board officer is a privilege and not a right, Board officers can be removed

from their position as an officer by a majority vote of the membership of the Board.

New Board Member Orientation

As part of its commitment to having highly-trained individuals as part of a professional governing board, the Board will provide orientation opportunities for new members. As part of the orientation, new members will be provided a package of materials including the Board member handbook, the Board of Education budget document, a copy of the most recent Board self-evaluation, and other appropriate materials.

Upon their election to the Board, newly elected Board members will be provided an additional orientation opportunity (including professional development such as the LSBA/NSBA conventions).

Board Member Professional Development

The Board is committed, both individually and as an organization, to the principles of continuous improvement and ongoing education, and understands that in order to perform as a high-functioning professional organization its members must be well educated about Lafourche Parish schools, board governance and educational best practices.

Training and professional development for School Board members should aim to increase Board members' knowledge and awareness of (1) federal, state, and local legislation and judicial decisions that affect the operation of local districts and schools, and (2) new educational reform initiatives and research-based instructional strategies that enhance student achievement.

The Board will look to identify and provide professional development opportunities for Board members, and Board members will be encouraged to participate in these learning opportunities. The Board will reimburse members for reasonable, pre-approved expenses for professional development.

Examples of these professional development opportunities, but by no means the only opportunities, are the LSBA/NSBA Annual Conventions, as well as seminars conducted by the Louisiana School Boards Association.

Board members are also expected to read the same professional articles that are utilized by school administrators, as well as share and exchange professional articles among themselves.

Board Officers

The Board of Education has two officers, president and vice-president. The Board elects officers biannually in the month of January in odd numbered years. Officers are elected by a majority vote of those members present and voting.

The Board president:

- Presides over all Board meetings and abides by Louisiana's Open Meetings Law and Robert's Rules of Order, and keeps the discussion and Board focus on agenda items;

- Appoints Board committee memberships which best uses the particular skills and background of each Board member;
- Serves as Board spokesperson;
- Signs documents, contracts and checks on behalf of the Board;
- Works closely with the superintendent to plan meeting agendas;
- May call special meetings of the Board;
- Oversees new Board member orientation;
- Ensures information is provided to all Board members prior to meetings and that questions and uncertainties are addressed ahead of time;
- Leads by example and should be willing to devote the time necessary to the position of president;
- Should be a capable facilitator and gracious listener to fellow Board members and the general public;
- Develops and maintains a constructive working relationship with the superintendent and act as a sounding board for the superintendent;
- Should be familiar with district policies and procedures.

The Board vice-president:

- Presides over meetings when the president is absent;
- Has the power to exercise the duties of the president in the case of his/her absence for reasons such as illness, work or family commitments, or a vacancy in the position.

The Board secretary (superintendent) is responsible for the minutes of Board meetings and shall attend to the official correspondence of the Board.

Board Operations

Board Policies

One of the primary responsibilities of the Board is to develop/approve policies to govern the school district and the Board, which will serve as guideposts and guidelines for the effective and efficient operation of a school district committed to providing an exceptional educational experience for each student. Board policies are developed according to requirements set forth in Louisiana Statutes, State Department of Education Bulletins and regulations, and the Board's policies and mission statement. In order for Board policies to effectively perform their stated purpose, it is important that they are regularly reviewed and updated. In order to ensure that Board policies are current and in compliance with statutory requirements, the Board may utilize attorneys or other outside consultants. While the Board may be advised concerning its policies by the superintendent of schools, its attorney or other consultants, the adoption of new policies, or the revision or repeal of existing policies is the sole responsibility of the Board.

Search, Selection and Appointment of Superintendent

The Board is responsible for the appointment of the superintendent of schools. When conducting a search for a superintendent, the Board may vote itself as the personnel search committee.

The search for, and selection of, a superintendent of schools is one of the most important decisions that a School Board can make. Accordingly, this process should be thoughtful and informed, made with a clear understanding of the needs of the school district and the corresponding characteristics of an ideal superintendent, as well as an awareness of the availability of potential candidates. Although each search process is unique, generally the Board would be well advised to consult with the public and other informed individuals, both in and outside the district, when conducting a superintendent search.

Board Role in Hiring Process

The number of teachers and other school personnel to be employed in the school district shall be determined by the Board. It is the intent of the Board to activate a sufficient number of positions to accomplish the district's goals and objectives. The superintendent shall be delegated the authority to make recommendations to the Board for adding new positions and for making revisions and/or adaptations to existing job titles and/or descriptions. Teachers and all other personnel shall be selected for employment by the superintendent. It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to ensure that all persons recommended have proper certification where applicable, and are qualified for the position.

Budget Process

The Board is responsible for the adoption of a budget for the school district. The budget process is governed by State law and Section D of the Board's policy and procedures.

Superintendent Evaluation

As the superintendent of schools is the only school district employee directly supervised by the School Board, the Board is responsible for evaluating the superintendent's performance, as well as making decisions concerning his/her contract of employment, such as compensation and extending the term of the contract. Following the conclusion of the school year, the Board shall conduct an evaluation of the superintendent's performance, utilizing a process and standards of performance that has been agreed upon in advance with the superintendent of schools.

Board Self-Evaluation

Following the conclusion of the school year, the Board shall meet to conduct a self-evaluation of its own performance. The self-evaluation shall be based, in large part, on the Board's success in making progress towards meeting its stated goals. As part of the self-evaluation process, the Board will solicit input from the district administrators as to the Board's performance over the past year.

An essential part of the self-evaluation process is a focus on board governance. It is expected that the Board will look carefully at its conduct at Board meetings, its adherence to policy, its treatment of the public, staff and one another, the Board's focus on student achievement, and the Board's ability to distinguish between governance and management.

Board Retreat

The Board recognizes that in order to properly develop a long range and in-depth plan for school improvement, it will be necessary to regularly meet in a retreat setting to allow for a more focused discussion of school district performance and initiatives. Although they are considered special meetings of the Board, retreats are generally held at times and/or locations that are different from regularly scheduled meetings. In addition to the attendance of all Board members, the Board may invite the superintendent of schools, school administrators or other individuals to participate in its retreat.

Board Members Visiting Schools

Board members are encouraged to be informed about Lafourche Parish schools, and visits to our schools can be part of that process. When visiting any of our schools, Board members must be mindful that they do not serve in an administrative function and should not attempt to direct, criticize or discipline staff members.

Board Member Request for Information

It is important for Board members to be informed about the school district and the performance of our students. The superintendent of schools and school administrators regularly provide Board members with data and information via electronic communication and presentations at Board meetings and committee meetings. Board members who seek additional information are encouraged to work through the standing Board committees to obtain this information. If the information sought by individual Board members is not readily available through the work of the committees, Board members are to coordinate their information

requests with the Board president to ensure that the information requests submitted to the superintendent of schools and schools do not overwhelm them so as to distract them from their primary responsibilities.

Student Information

Except for statutorily mandated exceptions, such as expulsion appeal reviews, Board members do not get involved with individual student matters. Individual student information is confidential, and Board members only have access to this information when that information is necessary for Board members to perform a function in their official capacity.

Reviewing and Amending Handbook

The Lafourche Parish School Board Member Handbook will be reviewed every four years; more specifically, the third year of each term.

The handbook committee will be appointed by the Board president with Board attorney oversight.

Board Member Compensation and Expense Reimbursement

School Board member compensation and expenses shall be governed by Policy BBBE. Reimbursement for expenses incurred by members while on official Board business shall be governed by Policy DJD.

Board Meetings

Meeting Schedule

The School Board establishes its annual meeting schedule at its meeting in January. The Board meets on the first Wednesday of each month.

Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the School Board are those meetings listed on its annual schedule of meetings voted on at the January meeting. Board meetings start at 7:00 p.m. and are generally held in the board room at the Lafourche Parish School Board office.

Special Meetings

Meetings of the entire Board that are not on the annual schedule of meetings are special meetings. At a special meeting, the Board cannot add items to the meeting agenda for discussion or action.

Meeting Agendas

The superintendent of schools, in conjunction with the Board president, develops an agenda for each Board meeting. Meeting agendas, along with necessary documents and materials, are distributed electronically to Board members prior to the meeting. Board agendas are designed to minimize votes and discussion on matters that are unnecessary, trivial, or are best addressed at the non-board level. Ideally, Board agendas are designed so that meeting time is dedicated to a focused, informed discussion on student achievement and educational priorities. (refer to committee meetings)

Board members agree to call or contact the superintendent with questions or to gain clarification on items in the Board packet, as early as possible prior to the Board meeting.

To the extent possible, Board members agree to provide the superintendent and staff with advance notice of questions they plan to ask at a Board meeting.

Board members recognize the concept of “Nice-to-Know vs. Need-to-Know” information and will seek information only necessary for effective decision-making.

Requesting an Agenda Item

Generally, any Board member may request that a matter within the jurisdiction of the Board or a Committee be placed on the agenda of a Committee or Board agenda. (See LPSD Policy BCBD). The request should be in writing and should be submitted to the Superintendent who shall notify the Board President and Committee Chairperson (if for placement on a Committee agenda). The request should be accompanied by any supporting documents and information which the member wishes the Committee or Board to consider.

This request and accompanying information should be submitted at least five (5) working days before the scheduled meeting date. Items submitted less than five (5) working days before the scheduled meeting date may be postponed to a later meeting in order to allow sufficient time for consideration and research of the issue at the discretion of the President.

The Board President, or Committee chairperson where appropriate, shall contact the Board member(s), requesting the agenda item to ensure clarity of the agenda item if it is not clear, and to insure that the matter is germane to the business of the Committee or the Board.

The Board President shall communicate the nature of the requested item along with any supporting documents and information to all Board members prior to the dissemination of the committee or Board meeting agenda.

Robert's Rules of Order

The Board conducts its meetings utilizing the Robert's Rules of Order, 11th Edition, for the conduct of its meetings, except when these rules are in conflict with Board policy or Louisiana law. The Board president serves as the Board parliamentarian, unless another Board member is chosen as parliamentarian by the Board president.

Board Quorum

Eight members of the Board shall constitute a quorum. Unless otherwise specified by Board policy, a majority of Board members voting on a particular item is sufficient for approval.

Consent Agenda

Agenda items that require a vote by the Board, but may not require discussion, are to be placed on the consent agenda. The consent agenda is an item on the meeting agenda in which voting items that do not require Board discussion or debate are listed. A vote to approve the consent agenda by the Board shall approve all items listed on the consent agenda. If a Board member wishes to discuss an item, he/she shall request that the item be taken off the consent agenda, and it will be discussed and voted on separately following a vote on the consent agenda.

Board Votes

The Board of Education is a collective body and as such, can only act via a vote by its members. Board votes must be in public at a properly noticed meeting of the Board and recorded. Pursuant to Robert's Rules, all motions must be made by one Board member and seconded by another. Members may vote in favor, against or abstain from voting. Members may explain their vote, but are not required to explain it. A Board member who abstains from voting shall not be prohibited from participating in discussion and debate concerning the matter, provided that he/she makes the disclosure of his/her conflict or potential conflict a part of the record prior to his/her participation in the discussion or debate and prior to the vote that is the subject of discussion or debate (La. R.S. 42:1120).

If a member of the Board cannot support the decision of the Board because it offends a moral/personal code, the member is expected, at a minimum, to refrain from undermining the

decision or directive.

The above commitment to either support or refrain from undermining majority decisions does not preclude the member from asking for consideration at a future time of a more acceptable alternative; however, the decision of the Board should be considered final.

Board Member Attendance

Board members are expected to attend meetings of the Board, including meetings of their assigned committee. While it is almost inevitable that, on occasion, an individual member will have a personal or professional conflict that prevents him/her from attending a meeting, ideally this is a rare and unavoidable circumstance. Service on the School Board is a public trust on behalf of the community and children of Lafourche Parish, and it is expected that School Board members will make this service a priority. The School Board functions best when all fifteen members devote the time, energy, preparation and seriousness of purpose necessary to accomplish exceptional work and that is called for by public service. Board members are encouraged to attend committee meetings regardless of committee assignment.

Executive Session

Although, as a public agency, the Board must meet and conduct its business in public, under certain narrowly-defined exceptions, the Board may exclude the public from a portion of its meeting by calling an executive session. The Board may hold an executive session by a two-thirds vote of those members in attendance and voting. Although the law allows for discussion in executive session, any action by the Board must be taken in open session.

The permissible reasons for holding an executive session are limited and, when in doubt, the Board should consult with its counsel. Some reasons are to discuss documents with respect to collective bargaining, personnel matters (with the permission of the individual who is the subject of the discussion), pending claims and litigation, confidential documents and student matters.

Open Meetings

All Board meetings and committee meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Louisiana's Open Meetings Law. Board members are to timely receive and review meeting agendas and relevant documents and materials prior to meetings.

Discussion among Board members in person or via texting, email, etc., outside of Board/committee meetings regarding Board business can be considered a violation of the Open Meetings Law. If done with a quorum or majority of the Board membership participating, such would be a violation of the law.

The public has a right to observe the public deliberations of the Board on matters related to the operations of the school system, except in circumstances where executive session is specifically provided. (See La. R.S. 42:17.) Similarly, texting or electronic communication between Board members during a meeting regarding an agenda item is considered a violation of the Open Meetings Law by the State's Attorney General since any such discussion should be conducted openly, and any such deliberation should be conducted in a fashion so that it is accessible to the

public.

Public Comment at Meetings

The School Board has adopted policies for public participation at its meeting in accordance with State law. The public comment is not an opportunity for Board members to engage in discussion or debate with members of the public. Board members are discouraged from engaging in debate and/or argument with a commenter, and, where appropriate, should direct the individual to the appropriate administrative resource to address a legitimate concern.

Meeting Norms

It is the expectation that the School Board is a professional organization whose meetings model appropriate behavior for the school district.

Board members will:

- Be on time for meetings
- Come to meetings prepared to participate
- Model expected behaviors
- Ensure that all members have the same information
- Acknowledge all opinions in a positive manner
- Practice open and honest communication
- Accept differences in experience, culture, and value priorities
- Give and receive constructive feedback civilly
- Allow others to speak without interruption
- Listen attentively
- Have no side conversations (including text messages)
- Stay focused on goals and student achievement
- Go the extra mile to support each other in his/her work
- Maintain flexibility in difficult situations
- Refrain from cell phone usage during meeting
- Maintain confidentiality in executive session discussion

In order to ensure that meetings of the Board are as effective and useful as possible, members will avoid surprises by articulating specific concerns in advance. The Board believes that informed, respectful discussion and debate is the best means of arriving at good decisions for the school district. Accordingly, during discussion Board members will listen attentively, consider all points of view, support their positions with facts when possible, be prepared to answer questions from other Board members, focus on the issue at hand, avoid negative and personal comments, and be prepared to compromise, understanding that the goal of debate among Board members is not to prevail but to arrive at the best possible decision for the school district.

Glossary

COMPASS

COMPASS is the State's educator support and evaluation system designed to provide all educators with regular, meaningful feedback on their performance. Under this system, every teacher and school leader in each public school is evaluated annually using a four-tiered rating - - Highly Effective; Effective; Proficient; Effective: Emerging; and Ineffective.

Louisiana School Boards Association (LSBA)

Formed in 1938, the Louisiana School Boards Association (LSBA) is a non-profit service organization representing local school board members in 69 local systems. The association interfaces with other state, regional, and national organizations having the common goal of improving student performances.

National School Boards Association (NSBA)

The National School Boards Association (NSBA) was founded in 1940 as a not-for-profit organization to assist state school boards associations in their efforts to support public education and local school board governance. NSBA and its member state school boards associations represent more than 90,000 local school board members who are committed to leadership for student achievement.

Robert's Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order is designed as a parliamentary guide and it is the most commonly adopted parliamentary authority among societies in the United States. It is a codification of the present-day, general parliamentary law.

School Performance Score (SPS)

School Performance Scores are based on student achievement, academic indicators and measures of career and college readiness, such as Carnegie credits earned through 9th grade, graduation rates, and earning Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Dual Enrollment.

Strategic Plan

A Strategic Plan is used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/results, and assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment.

Teacher Advanced Placement (TAP)

The System for Teacher and Student Advancement created by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) is a comprehensive school-reform. TAP supports teacher effectiveness and student outcomes through four key elements: (1) multiple career paths for teachers, (2) instructionally focused accountability, (3) ongoing, applied professional growth, and (4) performance-based compensation.

Acronyms

AASA – American Association of School Administrators
ADA – American with Disabilities Act; Average Daily Attendance
ADD/ADHD – Attention deficit disorder/Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
AED – Automated external defibrillator
AP courses – Advanced Placement courses
BESE – Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
CTE – Career and technical education
DARE – Drug abuse resistance education
ELA – English language arts
ELL – English language learners
EOY – End of Year
ESEA – Elementary and Secondary Education Act
ESL – English as a Second Language
ESSA – Every Student Succeeds Act
FERPA – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
FINS – Families in Need of Services
FTE – Full-time equivalent
GED – General education diploma
IAP – Individual Accommodation Plan
IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP – Individualized Education Program
LASBO – Louisiana Association of School Business Officials
LASE – Louisiana Association of School Executives
LASERS – Louisiana State Employees’ Retirement System
LASS – Louisiana Association of School Superintendents
LDOE – Louisiana Department of Education
LEP – Limited English proficiency
LPSD – Lafourche Parish School District
LRE – Least restrictive environment
LSBA – Louisiana School Boards Association
MFP – Minimum Foundation Program
MOU – Memorandum of Understanding
NCLB – No Child Left Behind Act
NSBA – National School Boards Association
OCR – Office of Civil Rights
PAC – Pupil Appraisal Center
PPP – Pupil Progression Plan
RTI – Response to Intervention
SBLC – School Building Level Committee
SCLASS – South Central Louisiana Association of School Superintendents
SPS – School Performance Score
TAP – Teacher Advanced Placement
TRSL – Teachers’ Retirement System of Louisiana
USDOE – U. S. Department of Education
VAM – Value Added Model

Resources

Becoming a Better Board Member, National Association of School Boards
Louisiana School Boards Association (www.lsbba.org)
Louisiana Department of Education (www.louisianabelieves.com)
Lafourche Parish School District (lpsd.k12.la.us)
National School Boards Association (www.nsba.org)
Robert's Rules of Order, 11th Edition