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New Board Member Orientation

- 1) Orientation will be scheduled to 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 will participate in the orientation¹. Additional administrative staff members may also be included to present specific information about the district.
- 3) New board members will be provided the opportunity to fulfill the mandated training within the first year of holding office, as well as to participate in other training opportunities that enhance boardsmanship.
- 4) Orientation will include but is not limited to:
 - a) General district information such as²:
 - 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
 - (a) District planning and evaluation process and board activity calendar³
 - (b) Most recent school reports, report cards, and district annual financial report
 - District budget overview including:
 - (a) Current adopted budget summary
 - (b) Recent trends in revenue, appropriations, tax rates, property values
 - Overview of district curriculum objectives, standards, and instructional programs
 - Copy of policy manual or link to online access
 - Superintendent performance goals, current superintendent evaluation instrument, process, and calendar
 - Copy of district's strategic plan³

c) Information about team operations, including:

- Overview of roles and responsibilities of the board and superintendent
- Calendar of training opportunities
- Current team improvement goals and continuing education targets
- Calendar of district events
- Current team operating procedures³

5) The board president will meet with the new member to walk through and explain a typical board meeting and the board packet.

Related Policies: 2510, NEW BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION

¹The board may choose to have a mentor program for new board members. If so, this can be included here.

²The team may wish to reduce or expand this list.

³Include if applicable.

Board Meeting Agenda Preparation

- 1) A draft agenda will be mutually developed by the superintendent, the board president and the board vice-president in sufficient time to allow the full board to receive it **ONE WEEK** prior to the meeting for which the agenda is being prepared.
- 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 **SIX 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 practicable.
- 5) Board members may also introduce potential agenda items during board discussion **INCLUDING SCHEDULED WORKSHOPS**. 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.
- 6) 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.
- 7) 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 certain personnel actions
 - 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

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

Related Policies: 2342, AGENDA PREPARATION AND DISSEMINATION

Board Meeting Preparation

- 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 **ONE WEEK** before scheduled board meetings¹.
- 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 BUSINESS DAY** before the scheduled board meetings², in conformance with “Information Requests for Meeting Agenda Items,” page 8.
 - 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.

Related Policies: 2342 AGENDA PREPARATION AND DISSEMINATION

The governance team may modify this schedule to meet its needs.

²The team may specify how far in advance of the meeting agenda item questions should be addressed to the superintendent. This keeps several board members from showing up to ask questions at the same time just prior to the meeting when the superintendent may have other duties.

Information Requests for Meeting Agenda Items

- 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 will be made at least **ONE BUSINESS 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 about them will be directed to the **SUPERINTENDENT** and 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 report prior to the opening of the meeting.
- 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

This procedure is intended to outline how the board wishes to conduct business as a body. A violation of any provision of this procedure does not necessarily affect the validity or legality of any board action otherwise properly adopted.

Board Member Participation in “Public Comment”

NOTE: Although a public comment period is not legally required, NYSSBA recommends including one as part of the meeting agenda. Before reviewing this procedure, the board should determine whether nonresidents are permitted to address the board during the public comment session. The commissioner of education and the Committee on Open Government differ in their respective opinions on this. Please note, however, that Committee on Open Government opinions are advisory, while the commissioner’s opinions are legally binding.

- 1) Persons wishing to address the board during open public comment will comply with the provisions of board policy (NYSSBA Policy #1230, Public Participation at Board Meetings) that outlines the specific times and procedures applicable to public comments during board meetings.
- 2) A copy of the board’s policy (NYSSBA Policy #1230, Public Participation at Board Meetings) will be available for public review at the meeting site. The board president will explain the rules for public participation prior to each session.
 - a) **ON A TRAIL BASIS, THE FIRST PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD WILL NOT BE LIMITED TO QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS PERTAINING TO THE PUBLIC AGENDA FOR THE CURRENT MEETING FOR A MAXIMUM OF 20 MINUTES.**
- 3) During the public comment section(s) of the meeting, board members will listen to comments, **AND MAY INDIVIDUALLY RESPOND** if a response if necessary. Those responses are limited to:
 - 4) Correcting misstatements of fact presented by the speaker.
 - 5) Referring the speaker to applicable board policy, which relates to his or her comments.
 - 6) With the agreement of the board, placing the item on a future board agenda for discussion if not listed on the current board agenda.
 - 7) 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.
 - 8) 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 him/her to the appropriate complaint policy.
 - 9) The board must bear in mind that generally persons who speak during public comment have First Amendment rights, though these rights can be conditioned 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

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Discussion, Debate and Voting

- 1) The board shall generally observe the parliamentary procedures in *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* [or insert other parliamentary authority], 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* [or other parliamentary guide] will be available to the board president at every meeting.
- 3) Individuals wishing to speak during the board meeting must first be recognized by the board president. All communications throughout the meeting will be directed to the board president.
- 4) Generally, board members shall direct comments solely to the business currently under deliberation.
- 5) The board president shall:
 - a) Allow each board member to speak on each issue being considered *for three minutes*¹.
 - b) Allow opposing viewpoints to be heard in turn².
 - 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, 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 before the board unless a conflict of interest exists.³
- 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

¹Some boards find it useful to set a time limit, others do not impose any limitations.

²NYSSBA offers this approach as a suggestion to facilitate an even-handed discussion. If there aren't opposing views or if the Board doesn't find this beneficial, this guideline need not be included.

³After notifying fellow board members of the conflict of interest, the member must recuse him/herself from deliberations and voting.

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Response to Executive Session- or School Attorney-related Inquiries

- 1) Board members will not disclose confidential information that is either provided in confidential memoranda, in meetings with the school attorney or properly discussed in 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 their inability to answer questions, members may state that the board is restricted both by law and its Code of Ethics from disclosing any such information, including information about medical situations, student records, personal identification data, evaluations, investigations, and performance plans or sanctions.
- 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.

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

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Communication Between Meetings With Team Members

- 1) The superintendent will communicate with each board member by *weekly* board information packets that may include information such as:
 - a) Schedule of or report on district events
 - b) Progress reports on board 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 him or her of district issues that may need to come before the board for information or action.
- 3) **IF A SENTINEL EVENT OCCURS, THE SUPERINTENDENT WILL IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY EACH MEMBER OF THE BOARD. SENTINEL EVENTS ARE DEFINED AS BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING:**
 - a) **INCIDENTS THAT ARE LIKELY TO END UP ON THE NEWS, IN THE LOCAL PAPER OR THAT "EVERYONE" IN SCHOOL IS TALKING ABOUT (WELL OUTSIDE THE NORM OR CONTROVERSIAL)**
 - b) **SIGNIFICANT HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE ISSUES**
 - c) **SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL ITEMS/ISSUES/MATTERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE THAT VARY FROM WHAT HAS BEEN DISCUSSED OR PROJECTED**
 - d) **LEGAL ISSUES THAT ARE TIME SENSITIVE**
 - e) **PERSONNEL MATTERS THAT ARE TIME SENSITIVE**
- 4) The board president may direct the superintendent to distribute relevant documents to each board member for information. Such additional materials will be included in the **weekly** board information packet, unless unusual circumstances dictate a faster delivery.
- 5) Board members may communicate with each other to ask questions and gather clarifying information to enable greater participation and meaningful discussion at board meetings. 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.
- 6) Consistent with the provisions of the Open Meetings Law, board members may not communicate with each other to secure or influence votes in support of or opposition to items of business that may come before the board.

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- 7) 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 superintendent for distribution to all members in the weekly 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

¹The board and superintendent may adjust this interval as desired and/or needed.

²Board information packets may be hard copy, electronic or a combination of both.

³The board may specify a regular time or frequency for meeting, or leave it flexible.

Opinions about Board Members' Performance

- 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 this¹.] 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.
 - 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 discuss how the questionable behavior does not comply with the code. 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 put 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 vote on a motion to approve the scheduling of a retreat at a board meeting.
- 3) Members will 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 will not speak negatively (for example, personal attacks or character assassination) about another member, superintendent, or staff in the community.
- 5) If the issue is so problematic as to raise a question about the member's ability to serve, the board may consult with the district's attorney to determine if removal proceedings should be considered.

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

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

Non-Agenda Item Information Requests

- 1) Generally, board members have no greater rights to information unrelated to matters before the board than does the public.
- 2) Members should request information not related to a meeting agenda item directly from the superintendent¹.
- 3) The superintendent will determine 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 reasonable.
- 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 does agree 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.²
- 7) All team members will 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

¹The 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 specific position such as the board secretary (or clerk).
²If the board doesn't agree that the information merits a special report, the board member can still initiate a FOIL request. While NYSSBA doesn't recommend this, it is important to note that the option is available.

Board Member Campus Visits

- 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, board members should announce their presence to the principal. The principal should take the opportunity to introduce the board member to those in attendance¹.
- 3) When board members plan to visit any school building, they are required to call the principal 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. Teacher evaluation is an administrative responsibility.
- 6) Board members may not give any directive to any staff or students.
- 7) When visiting with teachers of their own children, board members will make it clear that they are acting as parents rather than as board members.
- 8) 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, SCHOOL BOARD OFFICER AND EMPLOYEE CODE OF ETHICS

¹Some boards assign liaisons to each school building. If the board has that practice in place, this procedure may be amended to explain and reflect how that impacts visits.

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 appeal¹.
- 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 information²:
 - 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

This procedure is intended to outline how the board wishes to conduct business as a body. A violation of any provision of this procedure does not necessarily affect the validity or legality of any board action otherwise properly adopted.

¹It may be appropriate to add a sentence or more that reminds board members to mention to a complainant that only the board, not individual board members, can take action to correct a situation.

²Because chains of command sometimes vary between districts, the information in steps 5a-5d should accurately reflect the levels of appeal associated with your district's chain of command.

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Board Officer Election

- 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 (NYSSBA Policy #2210, Board Organization Meeting, and #2220, Board Officers).
- 4) Generally members nominated for office will be experienced (having served more than one year on the board)¹.
- 5) 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.
- 6) 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.
- 7) The vote for officers must occur in open session; no vote will be taken by secret ballot.

Related Policies: 2210, BOARD ORGANIZATION MEETING; 2220, BOARD OFFICERS

¹This is not a legal requirement. However, the board may decide to impose this restriction and modify the time frame as desired. The intent is not to have the inexperienced members in leadership positions until they have experienced at least one yearly cycle of events as a board member.

Board Committee Selection and Operation

NOTE: This procedure is not intended to address committees required by law, which may have their own legal or regulatory procedures associated with their membership and duties.

- 1) Committees may be established by the board 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 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. He or she 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 time line for the committee's work and for reporting to the board.
- 3) The board votes to approve the charge and composition of the committee. The membership of the committee may be comprised of board members only, board members and others (staff and/or community members), or only others (without board representation).
- 4) The superintendent will provide appropriate staff and/or data support to permit the effective functioning of the committee.
- 5) The committee chair will extend an invitation by letter or phone to those members of the community whose service is desired.
- 6) 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 applicable¹.
 - 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.

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- d) An agenda listing the time, location, and specific subjects to be discussed will be prepared for each meeting. The agenda will be posted at least 72 hours before the meeting in the same location that district board meeting agendas are posted, if applicable.
- 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 form and time specified by the original charge or board president.
- g) The board receives the report and may ask clarifying questions, but no motion to accept or approve the report is required. Boards generally 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.

7) Members of standing committees will be appointed annually at the organizational meeting.

Related Policies: 2250, BOARD COMMITTEES; 2260, CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEES

¹Meetings of a committee or subcommittee consisting solely of board members that discusses or conducts public business are subject to the Open Meetings Law. Meetings of advisory committees that do not consist exclusively of board members, and are created solely to advise and make recommendations to the board are not subject to the Open Meetings Law because they have no authority to take final action. An exception would exist if the core membership of the advisory group consists of board members.

Board Self-Assessment

- 1) The board¹ will 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 process². The instrument should be agreed upon on an annual basis.
- 3) The superintendent will facilitate the distribution of the selected instrument, with instructions, to each board member a week in advance of a scheduled workshop. Board members will 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) The purpose of the workshop is to enhance the effectiveness of the team.
- 5) During the workshop, the board will focus its discussion on those items in the instrument where individual 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 will schedule a review of progress at least every six months as part of a regularly scheduled meeting or workshop. The dates for the reviews will be entered in the board activity calendar.

Related Policies: 0310, BOARD SELF-EVALUATION

¹ Although not required by law, successful boards engage in ongoing self assessment. The board may decide the self-assessment process will include the Superintendent. In that event, "team" should replace the term "board" in paragraphs 1-6.
²NYSSBA has sample self-evaluation instruments available upon request.

Board Professional Development Plan

- 1) On an annual basis, **AND PREFERABLY DURING THE BUDGET DEVELOPMENT PROCESS** the board will assess its current professional development needs and consider the following, in the context of budget constraints:
 - a) What kind of professional development activity or subjects would be of most benefit to the board or board-superintendent team? Professional development opportunities can be scheduled either as team activities or activities for individual members. Board members are encouraged to consider continuing education opportunities.
 - b) When should the professional development activities and workshops be scheduled?
 - c) What is the best source or location for the training? 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 a single member to a training with the expectation that the information gathered will be shared with the full team subsequent to attendance at the session(s)
- 3) Based upon the board's identified needs, the administration will develop an estimate of expenses. The board will ensure that resources to support board development are discussed during the budget development process and included in the annual budget.
- 4) The board officers will ensure:
 - a) Selected professional development workshops are entered on the activity calendar. If exact dates are unknown, they will be added to the calendar as soon as the board decides to attend an activity or workshop.
 - b) A list of all team and individual professional development activities for the year is compiled and furnished to each board member and filed for future reference. This list constitutes the board's professional development plan for the year.
- 5) As the year progresses, the superintendent will advise the board regarding the availability of funds for board training being considered and provide supporting information the board needs to decide whether to continue as planned.
- 6) 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 but will be included in the final budget only if more cost-effective training events are unavailable.
- 7) 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 will be authorized by the board via the consent agenda.

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- 8) The district will pay reasonable and necessary expenses, in accordance with board policy (NYSSBA Policy #6830, Expense Reimbursement) for mileage, commercial transportation, parking, lodging, meals, tuition, and other incidental expenses but will not reimburse for items prohibited in policy. Reimbursement of reasonable expenses will occur 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.
- 9) Members will follow these procedures when seeking to attend continuing education events not reflected in the budget.
 - a) Members desiring to attend training which will result in expenditures in excess of the amount approved as part of the budget, will need prior approval of the board before registering for the event.
 - b) The administration prepares an estimate of funds required to support the action item, and the board will discuss and then vote whether to provide additional funds to support the request.
 - c) If the funds for an unplanned event are approved, the individual making the request will contact the district clerk to make arrangements.
- 10) Expense reports with supporting receipts shall be submitted in a timely manner in accordance with district policy.
- 11) Except in family emergency cases, expenses incurred due to a member's failure to attend a planned event are the responsibility of the board member.
- 12) The board is the final authority for resolving any dispute regarding expenses related to professional development.

Related Policies: 6830, EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

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Annual School Board Activity Calendar

- 1) Annually, in the month immediately following board reorganization, the board officers will meet with the superintendent and establish a tentative board activity calendar.
- 2) The purpose of the board activity calendar is to identify in one document all important board tasks and schedule them at appropriate times during the year.
- 3) The format of the annual board calendar will be selected and may be modified by a majority of the board so that it best meets their needs.
- 4) Tasks included on the activity calendar may include but are not limited to the following board activities and actions:
 - a) Activities and actions required by law or policy (listed in no particular order)
 - Review of district mission statement
 - Approval of the district goals
 - Public meeting on district achievement after receipt of results on district report card from the State
 - Superintendent evaluation
 - Approval of superintendent performance goals
 - Renewal of administrative, teaching and other staff contracts
 - Budget workshops, budget hearing and setting of the tax rate
 - Review of annual district audit
 - New board member orientation
 - Review of policies that require annual examination, including the Code of Conduct, Investment and Purchasing policies.
 - Review of required plans, such as the Professional Development Plan and the Professional Performance Review Plan.
 - b) Additional activities desired for effective governance and oversight, which may include:
 - Board or team self-assessment workshop
 - District goal progress reports
 - District-wide planning session
- 5) The board officers will present the annual board activity calendar to the board for review and approval.
- 6) Dates and events entered on the annual board calendar may be modified during the year by a majority vote of the board.

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District Mission, Vision and Annual Goals

- 1) Recognizing that a mission statement and goals are powerful governance tools, the Board will annually review the mission statement and either affirm its continued value, or change it to reflect a new direction. In either case, to accomplish this, the Board will periodically engage the community, including staff, parents, and district residents, in this process.
- 2) The superintendent will propose for board approval a method by which input from the school community will be gathered.
- 3) Based upon this review, the board will set new or continuing district goals annually in September.
- 4) The board will review progress toward achievement of the annual goals in January.
- 5) The board will review the status of the annual goals at its final meeting in June.

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

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Budget Development and Adoption

- 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, revise, and approve the district goals for the coming year.¹ The board will 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.
- 3) At this time, the board will also establish 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:
 - 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
- 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 will ensure that the budget aligns with district goals.
- 6) In *February*, the board will appoint a citizens budget advisory committee.²
- 7) During the budget development process, the board will review 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 (trends)
 - e) State aid estimates
 - f) Other changes that occur following the establishment of funding priorities and targets that

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may affect budget assumptions

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- 8) The complete proposed budget package will be presented to the board and citizen's budget committee no later than *March 1*¹ and will include the following components at a minimum:
 - a) A budget overview that provides a summary of revenue and expenditures by major object code for the current, next and previous three 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 affect on the district fund balance.
- 9) At the conclusion of the advisory committee's work, the board will hold **at least one workshop in March to review** the proposed budget and the superintendent's estimate of the tax rate required to fund it. The board may request additional information related to the proposed budget and make adjustments to balance estimated revenue and expenditures according to funding priorities. The board may also schedule additional meetings as needed to review changes requested by staff or other members of the school community.
- 10) The board will conduct a meeting in *April* to hear public comment on the proposed budget, in accordance with law and policy.
- 11) The board will 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.
- 12) The board will direct the superintendent to publish a summary of the adopted budget and the priorities it is intended to fund for distribution to the public following the adoption of the budget, in accordance with state law and regulation.

Related Policies: 2260, CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEES; 6110, BUDGET PLANNING; 6120, BUDGET HEARING

¹This 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.

²The structure and process of convening a citizen's budget advisory committee varies among districts. The committee is often comprised of a broad spectrum of community members. The board's procedure should reflect its desired approach.

Media Relations

- 1) The board president or, in his or her 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 designee¹ 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 a call 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 members wishes to speak to a media representative but the board members is not the designated spokesperson, such 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.

Related Policies: 1130, NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS

¹The board may want to have the designee specified as to their title in this document (e.g., the district communications director).

District Policy Review

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

- 1) Comprehensive, periodic review of the policy manual:
 - a) At least every five years and no less frequently than seven years, the superintendent will enter into an agreement with NYSSBA Policy Services or other entity to conduct a policy review project.
 - b) The superintendent or designee will provide to NYSSBA Policy Services or other entity a copy of the official district policy manual, student handbooks and other relevant policy material.
 - c) NYSSBA Policy Services staff or other entity will 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 or good practice.
 - d) The board will take appropriate action on policy recommendations arising from this review. Policy manuals will be 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 will be provided with appropriate background information by the superintendent and/or administrative team. The superintendent will consult the current policy manual for any relevant policies to guide board discussion and provide those as part of the board packet.
 - b) The board will evaluate the agenda item and make its decision within the framework of the relevant policies. If the circumstances warrant an exception to the policy, the board may act accordingly. If, however, the board believes that changes are appropriate in policy, it may refer the issue to the policy committee or request that the superintendent² take appropriate steps to develop and recommend revised policy for its review.
- 3) Routine governance in accordance with recurring annual cycles (e.g., budget development, recruiting and hiring, adoption of district goals and objectives).
 - a) Agenda items (such as approving the budget calendar, appointing committees or setting district goals) will reference the appropriate policies and administrative processes underpinning the superintendent's recommendations.
 - b) The board will make its decisions within the framework of these policies. If changes in either policy or administrative procedures are desired before the next cycle, the board will request that the superintendent and/or policy committee² take appropriate steps to develop and

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recommend revised policy for its review.

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

¹The following section is written presuming the district uses NYSSBA's Policy Services. If the district uses another services or process, it should be described here.
²This sentence should reflect the board's process. If a policy committee is not utilized, then that reference should be removed.

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Superintendent Evaluation

NOTE: *The superintendent's contract is a critical point of reference when crafting this procedure. The procedure must be consistent with the contract. The Board may wish to factor this procedure into future contracts. Any inconsistencies need to be addressed in either the contract or this procedure.*

- 1) Although evaluation of the superintendent is an on-going process, a formal annual evaluation is legally required. In order to fulfill this responsibility, the board president will schedule a meeting to be held in **June**¹ to conduct the evaluation of the superintendent.
- 2) The president will call a special meeting for purposes of convening executive session and place no other items on the agenda for the evaluation meeting [or place the evaluation on the agenda of a regularly scheduled meeting when there will be sufficient time to devote to discussion].
- 3) The president will distribute blank evaluation instruments [the instrument will have been previously agreed upon by the board and superintendent] to each member at least **two weeks**² in advance of the evaluation meeting along with instructions for completing it.
- 4) The board will direct the superintendent to perform a self-evaluation using the agreed upon evaluation instrument, which will include³:
 - a) Summary results on superintendent performance goals established following the previous year's evaluation
 - b) Summary of progress on the district's current year goals
 - c) Report on student performance (i.e., the district report card issued by the state)
 - d) Any additional district or professional highlights which demonstrates effective performance for the past year
- 5) Members will complete the evaluation instruments and return them to the president, or other board designee, at least **one week**² prior to the board's evaluation meeting. The superintendent will complete the form and hold on to it until the formal evaluation meeting with the board.
- 6) The president or other board designee will collect completed evaluation instruments from each board member and prepare a composite summary of all board members' ratings and comments for each instrument category.
- 7) The composite summary of evaluations will be distributed to each board member at least **three days**² before the evaluation meeting.
- 8) Board members will meet in a properly posted executive session, without the superintendent present⁴, to discuss their ratings and identify:
 - a) Agreements on areas of strength
 - b) Agreements on areas that need improvement
 - c) Specific improvements the board would like to see

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- 9) For areas in which there is no consensus rating on a performance indicator, the board will discuss reasons for their varying ratings and try to reach consensus about what, if any, changes the board would like to see regarding that indicator in the coming year.
- 10) After reaching either a majority or consensus of opinion about the superintendent's performance ratings, the board will prepare a draft summary evaluation that reflects the consensus or majority rating and comments. Written comments of members of the minority will not be included in the final document. If numerical ratings are used, a mean average will reflect the input of the entire board.
- 11) The draft summary evaluation will be shared with the superintendent prior to meeting with the board in a properly posted executive session. Prior to the meeting the board will allow the superintendent to share his/her self-evaluation, and respond to and ask questions about the board's ratings.
- 12) During the meeting in executive session, the board president⁵ will ask individual members to share concerns or ratings that differ from the majority of the board. However, the president will clearly distinguish between those ratings and directives that represent a majority of the board, and those representing individual members. The superintendent is not expected to take action based on individual comments.
- 13) The board will identify areas for superintendent performance goals for the next year at the conclusion of the evaluation meeting and ask the superintendent to develop draft goals to present to the board within **one month**⁶.
- 14) At the conclusion of the meeting, the president will compile a final summative evaluation which reflects any changes/adjustments made based on the meeting with the superintendent in a written document that includes
 - a) A summary of the evaluation
 - b) Areas for developing performance goals
- 15) At a posted meeting, the board and superintendent will discuss the draft superintendent performance goals and identify specific target results to review at the next evaluation.
- 16) The board will approve final superintendent performance goals and update the superintendent evaluation instrument no later than September for the next year's evaluation.
- 17) The board may take action to extend or revise the superintendent's contract following the evaluation, in accordance with the provisions of the superintendent's contract.
- 18) In **February**⁷ the board will conduct an interim evaluation for the purpose of reviewing progress on superintendent performance. The board will meet with the superintendent in executive session to discuss his/her job performance and progress toward goals.
- 19) Board members who have concerns about the superintendent's performance between evaluation meetings may request that the president post an item for interim evaluation on any regular meeting agenda to go into executive session in order to discuss the concern with the full team.

Related Policies: 0320, EVALUATION OF SUPERINTENDENT

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¹This schedule assumes that the board conducts its evaluation in June. The board may choose another month, as long as an evaluation is performed annually and in conformance with the superintendent's contract.

²This schedule may be modified. The board should determine the appropriate schedule.

³The list of items included in the evaluation should be modified to reflect the agreement between the board and superintendent.

⁴The board may choose to allow the superintendent to be present for this discussion. Check the superintendent's employment contract to see if this issue is addressed.

⁵Some boards choose to designate the board officers as spokespersons for the meeting to convey the evaluation results, rather than the whole board. If the Board officers share the evaluation results, they should verbally share the views of the minority members who are not present. Those views will be clearly identified as such, but should be provided as information that may be useful to the superintendent.

⁶Some boards may schedule a separate meeting to develop, through mutual discussion between the board and superintendent, the superintendent performance goals for the following year.

⁷The board may choose to modify this schedule.

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Comments on Superintendant Performance *(Other Than Formal Evaluation)*

- 1) The board-superintendent team will follow board policy (NYSSBA Policy #0310, Superintendent Evaluation) and board procedure concerning the evaluation of the superintendent.
- 2) Direction to the superintendent regarding professional performance will come from the board as a corporate body in an official meeting of the board. Individual board members have no authority to direct the superintendent.
- 3) Board members who have individual concerns about the superintendent's professional performance should express those concerns to the superintendent in a private setting.
- 4) If individual concerns continue to be an issue after private discussions, the board member will address concerns to the board president and request the issue of "superintendent performance" or "interim evaluation" be placed on the agenda for an upcoming board meeting.
- 5) Discussion by the board regarding the superintendent's performance will be in a properly convened executive session.
- 6) Direction from the board to the superintendent regarding professional performance will be as specific as possible, stating the basis for concern and explaining how it isn't in conformity with the superintendent's established goals, its adverse impact on the district or community, and the corrective actions the board desires.

Related Policies: 0320, SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION

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Hiring Other Personnel

NOTE: *This procedure assumes that a vacancy in a position needs to be filled and does not address whether a position should be abolished or left open.*

- 1) Hiring district staff requires joint action by the board and superintendent and is a core responsibility of the governance team. The board will annually review the process and criteria for decisions regarding the hiring of district personnel identified in board policy (NYSSBA Policy #9240, Recruiting and Hiring).¹
- 2) The board may establish supplemental qualifications for key positions, such as assistant superintendents and building principals. For these situations, the superintendent will inform the board of the pending vacancy before the position is posted. The following steps will be taken:
 - a) After the superintendent informs the board of the pending vacancy, the board will meet to review board policy and identify unique qualifications sought for the particular position or additional hiring criteria.
 - b) The superintendent uses the new criteria during the search and hiring process to recommend qualified candidates for board approval.
 - c) In addition, the superintendent will give the board periodic updates regarding the search process and applicant pool.
- 3) In preparing hiring recommendations, the superintendent will apply the board-approved criteria.
- 4) When the superintendent makes a recommendation for appointment, he/she will present, for each position, the name and qualifications of the recommended candidate².
- 5) The superintendent will explain why he/she believes the recommended candidate is best qualified for the position.
- 6) Board members will not interview candidates for any position (other than superintendent), or select a finalist from a list². The Board's role is to set forth hiring criteria and hold the superintendent accountable for the performance of the staff.
- 7) The board may accept the recommendation and direct the superintendent to offer employment, or the board may reject the recommendation.
- 8) If the board rejects the recommendation, the board will provide an explanation for its decision, including, but not limited to, a clarification of previously established job-related criteria so that the next recommendation more closely meets the board's expectations.
- 9) This process continues until the board accepts the superintendent's recommendation.

Related Policies: 9240, RECRUITING AND HIRING

¹The criteria developed to support this procedure supplements those that currently exist in law or policy for some categories of school personnel.

²NYSSBA recommends this approach, but the local governance team may choose a different board role in interviewing candidates. For instance some boards receive the resume/applications as part of their packet. If so, the language of the procedure should reflect that local approach.

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