



**La Porte**  
Independent School District

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**OF THE**

**LA PORTE**  
**INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**BOARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

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## **OPERATING PROTOCOL – TEAM COMMITMENT**

We, the members of the Board of Trustees (School Board) of the La Porte Independent School District (LPISD or the District), are committed to serving the children, staff, and citizens of this school district. We strive to provide a high quality public education to meet the needs of our students and our community.

We believe the success of the District depends upon a shared vision held by the school board, LPISD staff, parents, and community, and we will strive, to the best of our ability, to uphold these aspirations.

Written and agreed upon team procedures provide a common framework and shared understanding, and serve to:

- Clarify expectations;
- Minimize confusion and discord;
- Maximize efficiency and effectiveness;
- Tell the who, what, when, where, and how of various situations and practices;
- Improve working relationships;
- Ease new members' transition;
- Keep agreements clear to all;
- Identify best practices for effective teamwork;
- Share procedures with community and staff; and
- Align Board operations with district policy, and local, state, and national law.

### **Standards of Professional Practice (SOPP)**

We adopt these operating procedures to guide our actions and assist us in our role as trustees. We further commit to review these operating procedures annually and to update, adopt or reaffirm them, as appropriate, at or near the annual Board reorganization. (*Refer to Appendix for the annual adoption Action Item.*) These procedures are intended to align with the local policies adopted by the Board to govern District operations. In the event of a conflict between these procedures and any legal or local Board policy, the applicable rule of law and/or Board policy shall control.

*Policy Ref: BBE (Local)*

## **BOARD GOVERNANCE**

The Board of Trustees is the corporate body elected by the voters of the LPISD to govern and oversee the management of the District.

All decisions made by the Board of Trustees shall be guided by:

- Local, state, and national laws;
- Best educational and governance practices; and
- District policy as adopted by the Board;
- District Mission, Vision, Beliefs, Goals and;
- Board Standards of Professional Practice;
- Board Continuing Education efforts;
- Active communications with Superintendent and staff;
- Community standards and expectations determined through active community engagement;
- Commitment to Team of Eight concept.

*Policy Ref: BBE (Local)*

## **BOARD VISION, BELIEFS, AND GOALS**

The Board will annually review and reaffirm or revise the Vision, Mission, and Goals. The Board President may appoint a subcommittee of the Board to conduct an initial review of the Vision, Mission, and Goals and report recommendations to the Board.

At the time the Board reviews its Vision, Mission, and Goals, the Board also shall review its governance policies and make any and all appropriate changes. *(Refer to Appendix for current Vision, Mission, and District Goals.)*

*Policy Ref: BQ (Local)*

## **BOARD EVALUATION**

The Board will annually evaluate its performance using the TASB Effective Board Practices: An Inventory for School Boards or another evaluation format agreed upon.

## **BOARD MEETINGS**

The Board generally holds its regular business meetings on the second Tuesday of each month. Additional called meetings, usually work sessions held for the purpose of studying various topics, may be scheduled by consensus of the Board or used as a replacement for the traditional board meeting. The Board administrative secretary shall prepare a proposed meeting schedule prior to the beginning of each school year.

All Board meetings are held for the purpose of conducting the business of the District in public. While meetings are held in public, they are not public forums for the purpose of engaging in interactions with the public. To allow for meaningful public participation in Board meetings, the Board provides a public forum section on the agenda for each regular business meeting. The Board intends that all meetings shall be conducted in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and all applicable law.

*Policy Ref: BE (Local), BBE (Local)*

### **Developing the Board Agenda**

- To ensure that the agenda for each Board meeting includes topics that are necessary for the operations of the District and to assist the Board and Administration in preparing for Board meetings, the Board's administrative secretary will maintain an annual Board Agenda Planning Calendar that includes not only recurring matters the Board may consider, but also matters that are anticipated to come before the Board and other topics that the Board has requested.
- The Superintendent (or administrative designee) will develop a draft agenda for each meeting and present it to the Board President for approval at least one day before the agenda is posted and distributed to the Board and/or staff.
- The draft agenda will include those items reflected on the Board Agenda Planning Calendar, any items required by law, routine items and other items necessary for District operations, and any other items requested in accordance with operational procedures.
- Any 2 members of the Board of Trustees may request that a subject be included on the agenda. That request shall be forwarded to the Superintendent and President of the Board as soon as possible but not less than noon of the sixth day prior to the meeting.
- Items submitted for inclusion after the deadline or that require preparation time may, at the discretion of the Board President, be deferred to a later meeting. This decision is based on the time needed to prepare supporting information and to abide by legal posting requirements. (The Texas Open Meetings Act requires a governmental body to post the agenda for a meeting no later than 72 hours before the meeting is scheduled to begin except in an emergency, as defined by Texas law.)
- Use of a consent agenda to present items for a single vote without discussion will conform to the following guidelines:
  - Placement of items on the consent agenda will be at the discretion of the Board President.
  - In compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, the public notice for meetings will include the list of all Consent Agenda items; and the Board will be provided ample information about these items in advance.
  - Any individual Board member may ask questions or discuss an item on the consent agenda by identifying it and asking for individual consideration before the consent agenda is called for a vote. Following action on the

consent agenda, the Board President will allow discussion on any item(s) that were removed for individual consideration.

- Examples of items routinely included on the consent agenda:
  - Out-of-state field trips, election and termination of personnel, regular bid and purchase items
  - Minutes of regular and special Board meetings
  - Acceptance of financial reports
  - Approval of personnel contracts that comply with district policies

*Policy Ref: BE (Local)*

### **Notification of Board Meetings**

- Board members will be notified at least 72 hours prior to a regular or special Board meeting and at least two hours prior to an emergency meeting.
- The Texas Open Meetings Act requires the District to post the agenda at least 72 hours in advance of any meeting. In an emergency, a meeting may be posted on two hours' notice.
- The Superintendent will forward the meeting agenda and any Board Agenda Packet of supporting information on the Friday prior to the meeting to each Board member. Board Agenda Packets are available on the TASB Boardbook website, and can be delivered to each Board member at his or her residence unless an alternate delivery location has been requested in advance.
- Items appearing on the Agenda should be supported by an Executive Summary containing Background Information about the item, and the Administration's recommendation regarding the agenda item.
- Board member questions regarding the information in the Board Packet should be directed to the Superintendent or his designee as far in advance of the meeting as possible to provide sufficient time for response.
- The Board Meeting calendar prepared at the beginning of the each year shall serve as notice to Board members of the dates of regular meetings and study sessions over the course of the year. The Board's administrative secretary will attempt to schedule called meetings at times when all Board members can attend.

*Policy Ref: BE (Local)*

### **Conducting Board Meetings**

- A quorum (four or more members must be physically present) is required before a Board meeting may be convened. When a committee comprising one or more members of the Board of Trustees convenes to discuss school district business, it is considered a meeting and must be posted in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.  
*(Policy Ref: BE(LEGAL))*
- The Texas Education Code requires a school board to hold its meetings within the boundaries of the school district except in limited circumstances.

- The Board expects that Board members will attend every meeting except where unavoidable conflict prevents a member's attendance.
- The Superintendent shall attend all Board meetings unless his/her attendance has been excused in advance by the Board President or presiding officer.
- Parliamentary Procedure
  - The Board President serves as the Presiding Officer at Board Meetings. In the absence of the President, the Vice President will preside. If both are absent, the Board Secretary will preside.
  - The Board shall be guided by the procedures detailed in *Roberts Rules of Order, Revised* (or as identified in adopted procedures).
  - The Presiding Officer has the responsibility to keep the discussion to the matter at hand and shall restrain discussion that is not pertinent to the business presently before the Board.
- Open and Closed (Executive) Session Format
  - The Open Session of every meeting shall begin at the time designated on the Agenda.
  - The Board may meet in Closed Session to address agenda items as allowed by the Texas Open Meetings Act.
  - Prior to entering a Closed Session, the Presiding Officer shall announce in Open Session that a Closed Session will occur and cite the applicable provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act that authorize the Closed Session.
  - No action will be taken in closed session. Any and all action taken by the Board shall be taken and only will be taken in Open Session.
  - The Superintendent shall attend all Closed Sessions except when the Board is deliberating the Superintendent's performance or as otherwise requested by the Board.
  - It is the responsibility of each person who attends a Closed Session to maintain the information discussed in Closed Session in strict confidence.
  - No person other than board members, the superintendent and those persons invited by the Board President and Superintendent, grievants and their representatives is entitled to attend or participate in Closed Sessions.
- Transacting Business:
  - When an agenda item is presented for consideration, the Board shall deliberate as necessary before a vote is called.
  - The Board should work toward a consensus model of decision-making, which may not always be possible.
  - Once a decision has been made by the majority of the Board, all Board members should respect the majority vote, recognizing that it carries the full authority of the Board, and respect that decision.

*Policy Ref: (BE (Local))*

## **Trustee Participation in Board Meetings**

- The Superintendent will supply each Board member with supporting information required for informed decision-making via the Board Meeting Agenda Packet or as a carry-in item with approval of Board President.
- The Superintendent will post (unless special or unique circumstances occur) the Board Meeting Agenda Packet by the Friday before the Board meeting in order for Board members to have adequate time to prepare for the meeting.
- All participants will be prepared to address items on the Agenda.
  - Board members will read Agenda Packet materials before each Board meeting and be prepared to ask agenda-related questions and to deliberate the items as needed.
  - The ability to ask agenda-related questions during a meeting should not and does not serve as an excuse for lack of preparation by any Board member.
  - Voting shall be by the electronic voting board or voice vote, as directed by the President. Any member may abstain from voting and a member's vote or failure to vote shall be recorded.
  - Board members will strive to submit posted agenda item questions to the Superintendent 48 hours ahead of time.
- Board members shall not comment on or disclose personally identifiable information about any student in public session except when announcing student awards or recognition, unless the parent has requested that the discussion be held in public pursuant to the Texas Open Meetings Act.
- Board members shall not comment on personnel matters related to a specific employee in public session unless the employee has requested, pursuant to the Texas Open Meetings Act, discussion of the information in public.
- Except in the case of an emergency, no Board member shall engage in any electronic communication (i.e. e-mail, text message) with anyone else during a Board meeting.

## **Board Member Participation in "Public Forum"**

- The Board provides time for comments from the public at its regular business meetings under the agenda item, "Public Forum." Persons wishing to address the Board during Public Forum must comply with the Board's policy and guidelines for audience for guest during Board meetings that are available at the meeting.
- During the Public Forum section of the meeting, Board members will listen to comments, but only the Presiding Officer, as the designated spokesperson, or the Superintendent may respond if a response to the speaker is required. Those responses are limited to:
  - Correcting misstatements of fact presented by the speaker.
  - Referring the speaker to applicable Board policy.
  - Placing the item on a future Board Agenda for discussion if not listed on the current Board Agenda.



- Referring the speaker to a member of the administration for further information and/or follow-up.
- With the approval of the Board, the Presiding Officer may direct the Superintendent to investigate matters brought forward during Public Forum and report findings to the Board at a later meeting.
- If a member of the public has been afforded an opportunity to speak and his or her comments reflect a complaint about an individual district staff or board member, the Presiding Officer will refer the speaker to the appropriate formal grievance policy.
- Persons who speak during Public Forum have First Amendment rights.
- The total time for Public Forum shall be limited to 30 minutes during regular Board meetings. If all speakers who have requested to speak during Public Forum have not had the opportunity to speak, the Board by majority vote may enlarge the time allowed or designate a future meeting as a public hearing to address specific issues.

*Policy Ref: BED (Local)*

### **Visitor Participation at Board Meetings**

The LPISD Board is pleased to conduct its business meetings in public and public comments are welcomed.

- The Board offers two opportunities during regular business meetings for members of the public to convey information to the Board.
- The first opportunity is during Public Forum for speakers who wish to comment on matters not posted on the Agenda. The second opportunity is for speakers who wish to comment on matters posted on the Agenda and is available at the time that the agenda item is addressed by the Board.
- These public comment periods are not the appropriate forum for presentation of complaints or discussions of individual personnel or students. The Board will only consider complaints that remain unresolved after they have been addressed through proper channels and when they have been placed on the Agenda. Specific information or reference to an existing policy may be furnished in response to inquiries.
- The Board cannot deliberate or make a decision on any subject that is not on the Agenda and the Board will not engage in extended dialogue with the speakers.
- A person who wishes to address the Board must complete a form at the opening of the meeting, indicate the section in which he or she wishes to speak, and place it in the designated box.
- Each speaker should clearly state his or her name and the topic being addressed before beginning to comment.
- Each speaker is limited to five minutes and a speaker may not use time of other speakers to extend his or her comment period. The Board Vice President will keep time for each speaker. Any person who fails to stop speaking and yield the podium at the end of his or her allotted time is considered out of order and may be escorted from the podium and/or asked to leave the meeting. The Presiding Officer may extend the speakers time if appropriate.

- Delegations of more than five persons are encouraged to appoint a spokesperson to present their comments. Persons representing a delegation must identify the group they represent at the beginning of the presentation. Individuals speaking on behalf of a delegation about the same topic should confine their comments to different aspects of the topic. The Presiding Officer may use his/her discretion to limit or cease visitor comments that do not comply with the Board's guidelines on visitor comments.
- The Board will not tolerate disruption of the meeting by audience members. Any person who continues to disrupt the meeting by words or actions, after having been warned, may be removed from the meeting by District officials or law enforcement.

*Policy Ref: BED (Local)*

## **PERSONNEL**

### **Superintendent**

- Hiring a Superintendent
  - The Superintendent is the only District employee that the Board directly hires.
  - If a vacancy for the Superintendent occurs or is anticipated, the Board will determine the process it desires to follow to fill the vacancy.
  - The Board will follow all applicable law in the hiring process.
- Evaluating the Superintendent (*Policy Ref: BJCD (Local)*)
  - The Board will evaluate the performance of the Superintendent at least annually. The evaluation shall be discussed during a Closed Meeting using the evaluation instrument that the Board has developed.
  - The Board, or a subcommittee designated by the Board President, will regularly review the Superintendent's evaluation instrument to ensure it continues to be appropriate.
  - Prior to the annual evaluation, each Board member may complete an approved written instrument to independently evaluate the Superintendent's performance. A Board member must provide the individual assessment to the Board President (or President's designee) by an agreed-upon date before the scheduled evaluation so the ratings and comments may be consolidated into a single evaluation document to be provided to the Superintendent during the evaluation.
  - Interim performance evaluations may be conducted at such times as the Board determines will be beneficial. The Board shall provide the Superintendent with adequate notice of any evaluation and the Superintendent and Board President shall confer to develop the format.
    - A Board member who has a concern about the professional performance of the Superintendent shall discuss such concern with the Board President who shall determine the most appropriate manner to bring the concern to the Superintendent's and the Board's attention.
- The Board President shall have the authority to approve reasonable out-of-state travel for the Superintendent. At any time the Board President questions the

appropriateness of the Superintendent's travel, he/she should place the item on the Board's agenda to seek approval from the Board

### **Other Personnel** (*Policy Ref: DC (Local)*)

- The Board reserves the right to approve or disapprove the hiring, discharge, or nonrenewal of personnel who are employed under Chapter 21 contracts.
- The Board has delegated to the Superintendent the authority to hire and discharge non-certified, at-will personnel.
- Board members may serve as ambassadors to educate potential employees about employment with the District, but should refrain from lobbying the Superintendent or other Board members for the employment of specific individuals

## **ELECTIONS**

Board Members serve three-year terms that expire on a rotating basis. A Trustee election is held each May, or as otherwise required by law, to fill seats that are or will become vacant. If all seats are uncontested, the election may be cancelled.

Board members strive to govern the District in a nonpartisan manner and to work with all elected officials in the other governmental entities with which LPISD interacts. To support that goal, the Board will not endorse any candidate running for public office. Individual Board members may participate in the electoral process according to their individual consciences but should refrain from using their influence as a Board member as a forum for endorsing candidates.

*Policy Ref: BBB (Local)*

### **Board Members Seeking Reelection**

- Board members shall follow applicable law in all campaign activities.
- Candidates shall not solicit District employees during District work hours for endorsement.
- Neither Board members nor employees may use any District resources, materials, or systems for any campaign activities or political advertising. (*Ref: Tex. Educ. Code § 11.168; Tex. Election Code §§ 255.003, 255.0031*)

### **Board Officer Elections**

- The Board has developed a process for officer elections. The Board shall review the process each year before the annual Trustee election and make changes to the process as desired.
- The Board elects officers to facilitate effective operations and governance. Officer designations are not intended to single out members for special recognition except as necessary for operational purposes.
- The Board elects the following officers each year at the first regular meeting following board elections:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- No Board member shall maintain the same board office position for more than three consecutive years. There is no automatic progression of board positions. This does not preclude that same Board member from occupying that same office at a later time.
- The Board also elects members to fill the following responsibilities each year:
  - TASB Delegate
  - TASB Delegate Alternate

*Policy Ref: BDAA (Local)*

### **Board Vacancies**

If a Board vacancy occurs, the remaining Trustees will determine whether to fill the vacancy immediately by appointment or special election or leave the vacancy open until the next scheduled election. The Board will follow all applicable law in its decision making regarding a Board vacancy.

*Policy Ref: BBC (Legal)*

### **Board Committees**

The Board maintains two standing committees: the Board Naming Committee and the Board Audit Committee. The Naming Committee addresses the naming of District and school buildings. The Audit Committee addresses issues surrounding the annual audit of District finances and the annual District Financial Report. The Board President will appoint members to work collaboratively to address the particular area and to prepare draft documents or other work product for the Board's review and adoption. Other committees may be formed on an as-needed basis and will be appointed by the Board President.

*Policy Ref: BDB (Local)*

## **DISTRICT COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION**

Annually before the end of August, the Board President shall assign, after consultation with Board members and the Superintendent, members to represent the Board of Trustees on various District committees and at District events including but not limited to:

- District Improvement Council (annual) *(Policy REF: BQA (Local))*
- District Technology Committee (annual)
- District Student Health Advisory Committee (SHAC)
- District Safety Committee
- Council of PTAs General Membership Meetings (rotated monthly)
- La Porte ISD Education Foundation Board (annual)

- Other special committees or events as assigned

*Policy Ref: BDB (Local)*

## **COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**

- Board members are expected to comply with these Standards and other best practices to serve the best interests of the District.
- A Board member who believes another Board member repeatedly has failed to comply with these procedures shall first discuss the concern personally with the Board member.
- If personal discussion between the individual Board members fails to satisfactorily resolve the concern, the concerned Board member should seek assistance from the Board President who will engage in further discussions with the Board members or attempt other informal measures to assist the members in resolving the concern.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Board members are the leaders of the LPISD and must always strive to serve the best interests of the District in their actions and communications. In carrying out this important role, Board members must always be mindful of their actions and words. A Board member shall take no action that would impugn the reputation of the District, its employees, or other trustees in any manner. When communicating, orally or in writing, or otherwise in representing the District in any activity, Board members are expected to:

- Interact in a positive and professional manner and serve as ambassadors for the District;
- Promote understanding of the District's vision, beliefs, and goals;
- Understand that no comment or statement is "off the record;"
- Treat employees, students, and community members in a polite and respectful manner;
- Avoid criticism of fellow Trustees, employees, students, and community members;
- Avoid disclosing any confidential information about District operations, employees, or students;
- Respect all Board decisions;
- Align communications with District and Board official positions and Board decisions;
- Disclose only accurate information and refer questions that he or she is unable to accurately answer to the Superintendent for further response;
- Clarify the Board member's authority, limitations, responsibilities, and obligations when speaking or acting as a member of the Board
- Copy the Board President on all communications to the Superintendent and/or staff.

### **REQUESTING INFORMATION ABOUT MEETING AGENDA ITEMS**

- Members are encouraged to seek such information as they reasonably require to participate in meaningful deliberation about the agenda item and to carry out the business of the District.
- Board members shall direct all questions about agenda items or requests for additional information about them to the Superintendent or his/her designee within a reasonable time prior to the Board meeting so as to allow the Administration to be prepared.
- If a written report is provided in response to the request, the Superintendent will provide all members with a copy.
- Provided the matter is on the agenda, Board members may discuss the provided information in the meeting if necessary.
- Board members may ask additional questions about agenda items in the meeting.

*Policy Ref: BBE (Local)*

## **COMMUNICATING WITH BOARD MEMBERS BETWEEN MEETINGS**

- Board members may communicate with other individual members for purposes of asking questions, clarifying factual information, attending approved training, or socializing under circumstances that do not conflict with or circumvent the requirements of the Texas Open Meetings Act. (*Ref: Tex. Gov't Code, Ch. 551*)
- The Superintendent will communicate with Board members regularly and on an as-needed basis to inform Board members of all pertinent District information, including such items as:
  - District events
  - District operational matters related to students, personnel, or facilities
  - Progress reports on directives
  - Follow-up reports in answer to Board member questions
  - Updates on administrative matters or District operations
  - Other matters as may be required to ensure that Board members remain well-informed
- The Superintendent will meet with the Board President as needed, or communicate by telephone, fax, and/or email to inform him or her of District issues that may need to come before the Board for information or action.
- The Board President may direct the Superintendent to distribute copies of documents to each Board member for information.
- The Superintendent will promptly communicate information requested by a Board Member to all Board members. If requested information is not readily available so that it can be provided no later than the next Board Packet without unduly interfering with the regular conduct of District business, the Superintendent shall inform Board members when the information can be provided.
- Board members may not and shall not communicate with any other Board members for purposes of soliciting votes with respect to items of business that may come before the Board.
- Board members who wish to share information relevant to District business will relay the information to the Superintendent's office for distribution to all members or distribute to Board members via voice mail or e-mail.

## **REQUESTING INFORMATION OR DOCUMENTS**

Board members sometimes feel the need for information in addition to that provided by the administration that is related to a pending meeting agenda item. Likewise, they sometimes would like information about the District that is not directly related to a pending meeting agenda item.

Members are encouraged to seek such information as they reasonably require to participate in meaningful deliberation about agenda items and to carry out the business of the District. However, requests for information and records by individual Board members can easily become burdensome to staff who are asked to gather the information, especially if the requests do not pertain to pending agenda items.

### **To ensure access to information without creating burdens, the Board has developed the following protocols:**

- Board members shall direct all questions about agenda items or requests for additional information about them to the Superintendent or his/her designee within a reasonable time prior to the Board meeting, so as to give the Administration an opportunity to provide the information without negatively impacting preparations for the meeting.
- Members should request information not related to a meeting agenda item directly from the Superintendent with a copy of the request to the Board President. Members normally should not seek such information directly from other staff members.
- 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.
- If the requested information can be provided from readily available data with no diversion of staff time, then it normally will be provided within five business days after the request. Responses to requests for information or documents that are made shortly before a board meeting but that are not related to a meeting agenda item may be delayed until after the board meeting, to allow the Administration to focus on preparing for the board meeting.
- Information and/or documents will be provided in a reasonable manner determined by the Superintendent to be most efficient and expedient, without creating any unnecessary additional burden on staff time or expense to the District. Such methods may include directing the board member to the appropriate location on the District's website, or requesting that the Board member set up a meeting with the Superintendent or an appropriate staff member.
- The Superintendent may redirect a Board member's request to the full Board for authorization if, in the Superintendent's opinion, the request requires a material amount of staff time or resources, would require the creation of a special report that would divert staff time from established priorities, or is otherwise disruptive or unreasonable.



- Board members, however, will not be refused information that the District would be obligated to provide to a member of the public
- The Board President shall 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.
- If the Board agrees that the information is important for future decision-making, then the Superintendent will direct that a report be developed and provided as requested by the Board and commit to a time frame for providing the information.
- All Board members will receive a copy of any report generated by a Board member's request in accordance with this procedure.

*Policy Ref: BBE (Local)*

### **BOARD MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE MEDIA**

- The Board President or designee will serve as the Board's spokesperson to the media on issues regarding board actions.
- The Superintendent or, in his or her absence, a specified designee shall be the official District spokesperson to the media on issues of District operations or activities.
- Any Board member who receives a call from the media requesting information, comments, or an interview will direct the media representative to the Superintendent (or Superintendent's communications department designee) for District business and to the Board President for Board-specific issues.
- A Board member who chooses to speak to a media representative should clarify at the beginning of the interview that he or she is speaking only as an individual and not as an authorized representative of the Board of Trustees. Along with the Board member's personal comments, the Board member will remind media representatives of any official position or action already taken on the issue by the Board of Trustees and refer media to the spokesperson for further information.
- Written communications dealing with school district issues submitted for media publication (such as letters to the editor, magazines, blogs, etc.), with the exception of Board member campaign material, should be coordinated with the Board President and then communicated to other Trustees.
- It is inappropriate for a Board member to state an opinion on an upcoming issue that is scheduled for discussion at a board meeting.
- Board members shall be bound by all provisions of the open government laws concerning discussion during any closed session.
- Members will not speak negatively about another member, superintendent, or staff in the community.

### **BOARD MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY**

- Board members are encouraged to participate in community activities as liaisons between the public and the District. When doing so, Board members are expected to:
  - Accurately relay information about District mission, vision, beliefs, and goals.
  - Clarify a Trustee's limitations, obligations, and responsibilities as a member of the Board.
  - Respect Board decisions.
  - Interact in a positive manner.
  - Listen politely and respectfully to comments.
  - Make no commitment on behalf of the Board or District.
  - Avoid criticism of District personnel and fellow Board members.
  - Refer questions about specific District activities to the appropriate staff person if he/she does not know the answers.
  - Be cognizant that the Board member is seen and perceived as a Board member. Comments or statements are not made "off the record."
- While the Board of Trustees encourages community input, it will not take action on the basis of anonymous calls or letters.
- Communications received by the Board or a Board member may be forwarded to the Superintendent for review.

## **MEMBER-TO-MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS**

- General Communications
  - Board members are expected to communicate with each other and with District staff in a professional and collegial manner to support the mission of the District.
  - Board members should be respectful of fellow Board members' opinions offered during deliberations.
  - Board members may communicate information to one another provided all such communications are consistent with the member's obligations under the Texas Open Meetings Act (*Ref: Tex. Gov't Code, Ch. 551*).
  - Written communications dealing with the business of the District constitute public information under the Texas Public Information Act and may be subject to disclosure upon request (*Ref: Tex. Gov't Code, Ch. 552*).
- Conflict Resolution
  - It is expected that Board members will attempt to informally work out any personal or professional conflicts with each other such that the members continue to work in a collaborative and effective manner to serve the best interests of the District.
  - If conflicts arise between Board members related to Board business that cannot be resolved through personal communications between the members, the Board President will attempt to informally mediate the conflict and achieve resolution.

## **BOARD MEMBER VISITS TO CAMPUSES OR DISTRICT FACILITIES**

- Board members are encouraged to attend as many school events or to accept any invitations as their time permits.
- Board members will notify the Superintendent of their intent to visit a campus excluding public events or parent-related activities.
- Board members may visit any campus. To avoid disruption of the learning process, Board members are to confer with the campus principal about the best time to visit.
- Board members shall check in with the principal's office upon arrival and follow all campus guidelines for visitors. Board members are strongly encouraged to display their badge identifying them as a Board member at all times.
- Board members may not give any direction to any staff or students, except when safety or liability is immediately at risk.
- When visiting with teachers or administrators of their own children, Board members will make it clear that they are acting as parents rather than as Board members.
- Board members will not request or accept extraordinary consideration nor "favors" from any District employee.

*Policy Ref: GKC (Local)*

# **BOARD DEVELOPMENT AND ADVOCACY**

## **CONTINUING EDUCATION**

- The Board places a high priority on continuing education and continuously seeks to improve Board and individual member effectiveness through intentional and deliberate participation in continuing education programs.
- Each Board member commits to completing all legal requirements for continuing education.
- Beginning June 1, 2013, Board Training Hours will be announced by the Board President at each regular Board meeting before any other action is taken. The announcement will include the name of Board members who have met, exceeded, or have not met the state-required annual number of Board Training Hours at that time. *Reference: Board Policy BBD (LOCAL).*
- The Board shall determine priority areas for continuing education for each member during the upcoming year with the use of an Annual Continuing Education Calendar. Considerations should include:
  - Training for the Board of Trustees as a Team;
  - Board member individual growth; and
  - Financial constraints and travel required for various programs
  - Approved board member continuing education programs
- Board members have typically participated in one or more of the following development opportunities each year:
  - TASB On-line Training
  - TASB Conferences, Conventions and Summer Leadership Institute
  - Team Building (Conducted in District)
  - Region IV Workshops
  - In-house educational updates provided by staff or invited guests
  - Leadership TASB

*(Note: Any continuing education not listed above requires prior approval by the Board President and should accrue TASB Board Training credit.)*
- The Board will strive to attend a minimum of one of the following events each year as a team:
  - TASB/TASA Convention
  - TASB Summer Leadership Institute
- To ensure the most effective use of District funds, the Board President will coordinate the training activities that Board members will attend where travel or large enrollment fees are required.

- Board Members who desire to attend a workshop or convention should inform and seek approval from the Board President prior to making plans or financial commitments. A Board member may receive reimbursement for legitimate business expenses incurred in attending approved continuing education programs in accordance with District policies and procedures and applicable law. In order to be reimbursed, the continuing education should receive continuing education credit hours from TASB.
- A Board Member who is not seeking re-election shall not attend the NSBA Annual Convention or the Federal Relations Network (FRN) annual convention just prior to the end of his or her term, and shall seek Board approval for out-of-state continuing education efforts during the final year of service.
- Great value is placed on Board member participation in TASB ISD and Leadership TASB.

*Policy Ref: BBD (Local)*

## **BOARD TRAVEL EXPENSES**

Expenses incurred by Board members related to these activities are generally reimbursable by the District. Such reimbursable expenses would include:

- Basic travel in accordance with standard district employee travel including standard fares on a commercial carrier or mileage based on the current District mileage rates; receipts required.
- Lodging up to a maximum of actual costs; receipts required.
- Meals up to a maximum of actual costs. Expenses exceeding \$36/day require receipts.
- Registration and memberships – cost of registration for directly related activities are reimbursable. Cost of membership in organizations directly related to district activities is reimbursable.
- Spouse/guest – if a spouse travels with a Board member, the District will only reimburse those costs which would have been incurred for the Board member alone. An exception may be made for events where the Board member and spouse/guest are expected and invited to represent the District.
- Annual training should be scheduled that fits within Board's training budget.

## **NEW BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION**

The Board has developed orientation materials to ensure new Trustees have adequate information as they begin Board service. The Board shall periodically review the new Trustee Orientation materials to ensure they remain current and complete. When a new Trustee is seated, the Board President may appoint Trustees to work with the new member to assist him/her to work through the orientation materials.

## **BOARD ADVOCACY**

The Board places a high priority on advocacy at the local, state and national level for the specific interests of the District and for public education in general.

- The Board shall create District Legislative Priorities prior to the opening of the bi-annual session of the Texas Legislature and communicate those priorities to area legislators. Those priorities may be updated as necessary to remain current and responsive.
- The Board shall annually determine a process for organized engagement between Trustees and local, state and federal community and elected leaders.
- The Board will coordinate advocacy efforts with the District's Director of Communications and Public Affairs, and will utilize resources from TASB and NSBA.
- Board members are encouraged to maintain membership in TASB's School Board Advocacy Network (SBAN).

## **APPENDIX**

**MISSION, VISION, BELIEFS, AND DISTRICT GOALS**

**BOARD MEMBERS: ETHICS (BBF LOCAL)**

**BOARD LEGAL STATUS: POWERS AND DUTIES (BAA LEGAL)**

**FRAMEWORK FOR GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP**

**ANNUAL ADOPTION OF OPERATING PROCEDURES**

# **La Porte ISD**

## **MISSION, VISION, BELIEFS, AND DISTRICT GOALS**

### ***Vision Statement***

All students will meet the standards of The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) and graduate college-ready and/or workforce ready without remediation.

### ***We Believe That . . .***

The economic, political and societal success of our country depends upon a quality education for all.

Diversity strengthens the community and enriches the fabric of our society. It is the responsibility of the entire community to partner in the educational process. Learning occurs best in a safe, orderly and nurturing environment. Belonging to a family, to a school and to a community is vital, and this sense of belonging advances learning.

People learn at different rates, have different capacities and that each person's educational path deserves to be valued equally.

Learning empowers people to reach their full potential: physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally.

Everyone is a teacher, everyone is a learner.

### ***District Goals***

**Goal 1**- Increase achievement and success for every student through rigorous, broad-based academic programs and expanded opportunities

**Goal 2** - Provide a safe, secure, and disciplined learning environment

**Goal 3** - Attract, develop, and retain excellent staff

**Goal 4** - Promote family engagement and active involvement of the community in the education of our students

**Goal 5** - Ensure and demonstrate efficient and effective use of district resources

*Policy Ref: BQ (Local)*



## Portrait of La Porte Graduate

*The La Porte ISD Portrait of a Graduate presents a set of attributes that reflect our district's high expectations and commitment to provide our students with pride, loyalty, academic and social accomplishment, citizenship, curiosity, and a lifelong desire to contribute back to the greater community. This portrait serves as a framework for developing a coherent set of competencies for all La Porte ISD students.*

*A La Porte ISD graduate is*

### ***Bulldog Proud...***

- Possesses confidence about the future
- Values the total educational experience--academic, extra-curricular, and social
- Stays connected to the LPISD family
- Commits to lifelong support of LPISD programs

### ***Prepared...***

- Possesses academic and technological proficiencies
- Transitions to college and/or career equipped with the skills, goals, and plans for success
- Values honesty and integrity
- Demonstrates effective communication and collaboration skills

### ***A Citizen...***

- Participates in the democratic process
- Exhibits environmental responsibility
- Respects cultural diversity
- Recognizes and responds to community needs

### ***An Explorer...***

- Thinks critically
- Embraces productive membership in the global community
- Values lifelong learning
- Welcomes challenge and innovation

### ***A Producer...***

- Recognizes the importance of systems thinking
- Utilizes data and analysis to pragmatically solve problems
- Exhibits courage to take risks and make tough decisions
- Balances achievement and growth in both personal and professional life

## BOARD MEMBERS: ETHICS (BBF LOCAL)

### EQUITY IN ATTITUDE

- I will be fair, just, and impartial in all my decisions and actions.
- I will accord others the respect I wish for myself.
- I will encourage expressions of different opinions and listen with an open mind to others' ideas.

### TRUSTWORTHINESS IN STEWARDSHIP

- I will be accountable to the public by representing District policies, programs, priorities, and progress accurately.
- I will be responsive to the community by seeking its involvement in District affairs and by communicating its priorities and concerns.
- I will work to ensure prudent and accountable use of District resources.
- I will make no personal promise or take private action that may compromise my performance or my responsibilities.

### HONOR IN CONDUCT

- I will tell the truth.
- I will share my views while working for consensus.
- I will respect the majority decision as the decision of the Board.
- I will base my decisions on fact rather than supposition, opinion, or public favor.

### INTEGRITY OF CHARACTER

- I will refuse to surrender judgment to any individual or group at the expense of the District as a whole.
- I will consistently uphold all applicable laws, rules, policies, and governance procedures.
- I will not disclose information that is confidential by law or that will needlessly harm the District if disclosed.

### COMMITMENT TO SERVICE

- I will focus my attention on fulfilling the Board's responsibilities of goal setting, policymaking, and evaluation.
- I will diligently prepare for and attend Board meetings.
- I will avoid personal involvement in activities the Board has delegated to the Superintendent.
- I will seek continuing education that will enhance my ability to fulfill my duties effectively.

### STUDENT-CENTERED FOCUS

- I will be continuously guided by what is best for all students of the District.

## BOARD LEGAL STATUS: POWERS AND DUTIES (BAA LEGAL)

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**Note:** This policy addresses the powers and duties of the Board set forth in Education Code Chapter 11, Subchapter D. For other powers and duties of the Board not listed below, see the applicable policy codes.

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The Trustees, as a body corporate, have the exclusive power and duty to govern and oversee the management of the public schools of the District. The Trustees may adopt rules and bylaws necessary to carry out these powers and duties.

All powers and duties not specifically delegated by statute to TEA or the State Board of Education are reserved for the Board.

*Education Code 11.151(b), (d)*

### MANDATORY POWERS AND DUTIES

The Board shall:

1. Seek to establish working relationships with other public entities to make effective use of community resources and to serve the needs of public school students in the community.
2. Adopt a vision statement and comprehensive goals for the District and the Superintendent, and monitor progress toward those goals. [See AE]
3. Establish performance goals for the District concerning the academic and fiscal performance indicators under Education Code Chapter 39, Subchapters C, D, and J, and any performance indicators adopted by the District. [See AI series]
4. Ensure that the Superintendent is accountable for achieving performance results, recognizes performance accomplishments, and takes action as necessary to meet performance goals. [See BJA]
5. Collaborate with the Superintendent as set forth at Education Code 11.1512(b). [See BJA]
6. Adopt a policy to establish a District- and campus-level planning and decision-making process as required under Education Code 11.251. [See BQ series]
7. Publish an annual educational performance report as required under Education Code 39.306. [See AIB, BQ series]
8. Adopt an annual budget for the District as required under Education Code 44.004. [See CE]
9. Adopt a tax rate each fiscal year as required by Tax Code 26.05. [See CCG]

10. Monitor District finances to ensure that the Superintendent is properly maintaining the District's financial procedures and records. [See CF series]
11. Ensure that District fiscal accounts are audited annually as required by Education Code 44.008. [See CFC]
12. Publish an end-of-year financial report for distribution to the community. [See CFA]
13. Conduct elections as required by law. [See BBB]
14. By rule, adopt a process through which District personnel, students or the parents or guardians of students, and members of the public may obtain a hearing from the District administrators and the Board regarding a complaint. [See DGBA, FNG, and GF]
15. Make decisions relating to terminating the employment of District employees employed under a contract to which Education Code Chapter 21 applies, including terminating or not renewing an employment contract to which that chapter applies. [See DF series]
16. Select the internal auditor if the District employs an internal auditor. The internal auditor shall report directly to the Board. Education Code 11.170 [See DC]
17. Adopt a policy providing for the employment and duties of District personnel. Education Code 11.1513 [See BJ series, DC series, and DEA series]
18. Limit redundant requests for information and the number and length of written reports that a classroom teacher is required to prepare. The Board shall review paperwork requirements imposed on classroom teachers and transfer to existing non-instructional staff a reporting task that can reasonably be accomplished by that staff. Education Code 11.164 [See DLB]
19. Carry out other powers and duties as provided by the Education Code or other law.

*Education Code 11.1511(b), except as noted*

**DISCRETIONARY  
POWERS AND DUTIES**

The Board may:

1. Issue bonds and levy, pledge, assess, and collect an annual ad valorem tax to pay the principal and interest on the bonds as authorized under Education Code 45.001 and 45.003.

2. Levy, assess, and collect an annual ad valorem tax for maintenance and operation of the District as authorized under Education Code 45.002 and 45.003.
3. Education Code 11.1511(c)(1), (2) [See CCA and CCG]
4. Employ a person to assess or collect the District's taxes as authorized under Education Code 45.231. Education Code 11.1511(c)(3) [See BDAF]
5. Enter into contracts as authorized under the Education Code or other law and delegate contractual authority to the Superintendent as appropriate. Education Code 11.1511(c)(4)
6. Sue and be sued in the name of the District. Education Code 11.151(a)
7. Receive bequests and donations or other moneys or funds coming legally into its hands in the name of the District. A conveyance, devise, or bequest of property for the benefit of the public schools, if not otherwise directed by the donor, vests the property in the Board or their successors in office. Education Code 11.151(a), .156 [See CDC]
8. Contract with a public or private entity for that entity to provide educational services for the District. Education Code 11.157 [See EEL]
9. Charge fees as set forth at Education Code 11.158. Education Code 11.158 [See FP]
10. Change the name of the District. Education Code 11.160 [See AB]
11. Adopt rules that require students at a school in the District to wear school uniforms as set forth at Education Code 11.162. Education Code 11.162 [See FNCA]
12. Adopt rules to keep school campuses, including school libraries, open for recreational activities, latchkey programs, and tutoring after school hours. Education Code 11.165
13. Operate a school or program or hold a class on the campus of an institution of higher education as set forth at Education Code 11.166. Education Code 11.166 [See GNC]
14. Operate a school or program, including an extracurricular program, or hold a class outside the boundaries of the District. Education Code 11.167 [See GNA]

**DISTRICT  
PROPERTY**

The Board may acquire and hold real and personal property in the name of the District. All rights and titles to the school property of the District, whether real or personal, shall be vested in the Trustees and their successors in office. Education Code 11.151(a), (c) [See CHG]

The Board may, by resolution, authorize the sale of any property, other than minerals, held in trust for public school purposes. The Trustees may, in any appropriate manner, dispose of property that is no longer necessary for the operation of the District. Education Code 11.151(c), .154(a) [See CI]

The Board may, by resolution, authorize the donation of real property and improvements formerly used as a school campus to a municipality, county, state agency, or nonprofit organization as provided at Education Code 11.1541. Education Code 11.1541 [See CDB]

Minerals in land belonging to the District may be sold to any person. The sale must be authorized by a resolution adopted by majority vote of the Board. Education Code 11.153 [See CDB]

**RESTRICTIONS ON  
BOARD POWERS  
AND DUTIES**

The Board may not:

1. Enter into an agreement authorizing the use of District employees, property, or resources for the provision of materials or labor for the design, construction, or renovation of improvements to real property not owned or leased by the District. *Education Code 11.168* [See CE]
2. Impose taxes; issue bonds; use or authorize the use of District employees; use or authorize the use of District property, money, or other resources; or acquire property for the design, construction, renovation, or operation of a hotel. *Education Code 11.178* [See CE]

# **FRAMEWORK FOR GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP (AND SCHOOL BOARD DEVELOPMENT)**

*Adopted by the Texas State Board of Education, January 12, 1996*

**Preamble:** The Board of Trustees is the educational policy-making body for Texas public school districts. To effectively meet the challenges of public education, school boards and superintendents must function together as a leadership team. Each leadership team must annually assess its development needs as a corporate body and as individuals to gain an understanding of the vision, structure, accountability, advocacy, and unity needed to provide educational programs and services that ensure the equity and excellence in performance of all students. The Framework for School Board Development has been approved by the State Board of Education to provide the critical areas of development for all public school boards.

## **VISION**

- The board ensures creation of a shared vision that promotes enhanced student achievement.
- The board keeps the district focus on the educational welfare of all children.
- The board adopts a shared vision based on community beliefs to guide local education.
- The board ensures that the vision supports the state's mission, objectives and goals for education established by law.
- The board ensures that the district vision expresses the present and future needs of the children and community.
- The board demonstrates its commitment to the vision by using the vision to guide all board deliberations, decisions, and actions.

## **STRUCTURE**

- The board provides guidance and direction for accomplishing the vision.
- The board recognizes the respective roles of the Legislature, State Board of Education, the Texas Education Agency, and Local Boards of Trustees in the governance of the public schools.
- The board fulfills the statutory duties of the local board of trustees and upholds all laws, rules, ethical procedures, and court orders pertaining to schools and school employees.
- The board focuses its actions on policy-making, planning, and evaluation.
- The board adopts a planning and decision-making process consistent with state statute that uses participation, information, research, and evaluation to help achieve the district's vision.
- The board ensures that the district planning and decision-making process enables all segments of the community, parents, and professional staff to contribute meaningfully to achieving the district's vision.
- The board develops and adopts policies that provide guidance for accomplishing the district's vision, mission and goals.

- The board adopts a budget that incorporates sound business and fiscal practices and provides resources to achieve the districts vision, mission and goals.
- The board adopts goals, approves student performance objectives, and establishes policies that provide a well-balanced curriculum resulting in improved student learning.
- The board approves goals, policies, and programs that ensure a safe and disciplined environment conducive to learning.
- The board oversees the management of the district by employing a superintendent and evaluating the superintendent's performance in providing education leadership, managing daily operations and performing all duties assigned by law.
- The board adopts policies and standards for hiring, assigning, appraising and compensating school district personnel in compliance with state laws and rules.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

- The board measures and communicates how well the vision is being accomplished.
- The board ensures progress toward achievement of district goals through a systematic, timely, and comprehensive review of reports prepared by or at the direction of the superintendent.
- The board monitors the effectiveness and efficiency of instructional programs by reviewing reports prepared by or at the direction of the superintendent and directs the superintendent to make modifications that promote maximum achievement for all students.
- The board ensures that appropriate assessments are used to measure achievement of all students.
- The board reports district progress to parents and community in compliance with state laws and regulations.
- The board reviews district policies for effective support of the district's vision, mission and goals.
- The board reviews the efficiency and effectiveness of district operations and use of resources supporting the district's vision, mission and goals.
- The board evaluates the superintendent's performance annually in compliance with state laws and regulations.
- The board annually evaluates its performance in fulfilling the board's duties and responsibilities, and the board's ability to work with the superintendent as a team.

### **ADVOCACY**

- The board promotes the vision.
- The board demonstrates its commitment to the shared vision, mission, and goals by clearly communicating them to the superintendent, the staff, and the community.
- The board ensures an effective two-way communication system between the district and its students and employees, the media and the community.
- The board builds partnerships with community, business, and governmental leaders to influence and expand educational opportunities and meet the needs of students.



- The board supports children by establishing partnerships between the district, parents, business leaders and other community members as an integral part of the district's educational program.
- The board leads in recognizing the achievements of students, staff, and others in education.
- The board promotes school board service as a meaningful way to make long-term contributions to the local community and society.

## **UNITY**

- The board works with the superintendent to lead the district toward the vision.
- The board develops skills in teamwork, problem solving and decision-making.
- The board establishes and follows local policies, procedures, and ethical standards governing the conduct and operations of the board.
- The board understands and adheres to laws and local policies regarding the board's responsibility to set policy and the superintendent's responsibility to manage the school district and to direct employees in district and campus matters.
- The board recognizes the leadership role of the board president and adheres to law and local policies regarding the duties and responsibilities of the board president and other officers.
- The board adopts and adheres to established policies and procedures for receiving and addressing ideas and concerns from students, employees, and the community.
- The board makes decisions as a whole only at properly called meetings and recognizes that individual members have no authority to take individual action in policy or district and campus administrative matters.
- The board supports decisions of the majority after honoring the right of individual members to express opposing viewpoints and vote their convictions.

**ANNUAL ADOPTION OF BOARD STANDARDS OF  
PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**

<b>DATE OF BOARD ACTION</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>SIGNATURE</b>