

Stafford Municipal School District

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stafford Municipal School District  
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Approved 01/12/15



**Stafford Municipal School District**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES OPERATING PROCEDURES**

SMSD Board meetings are held on the second Monday of each month  
unless otherwise rescheduled by the Board

**I. Board Meeting Agenda**

- A. Board draft agendas are created by the Superintendent, Board President, and prepared by the Coordinator for Board and Community Relations. The draft agenda will generally be sent to the Board for review on the Tuesday preceding the web posting of the Monday Board meeting.
- B. Trustees may submit agenda items to the Superintendent no later than two weeks before the board meeting.
- C. Before the official agenda is finalized for any meeting, the Superintendent consults with the Board President to ensure that the agenda and the topics included meet with the President's approval. In reviewing the preliminary agenda, the President shall ensure that any topics the Board or individual Trustees have requested to be addressed are either on that agenda or scheduled for deliberation at another appropriate time in the near future. If the item cannot be included on the current agenda, the President will inform the requestor of that fact. The Superintendent shall not have authority to postpone or remove from the agenda a subject requested by a Trustee without that Trustee's specific authorization.
- D. In accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Law, no member can place an item on the agenda less than 72 hours in advance of the posted meeting, except in an emergency, as per the Texas Open Meetings Act.

**II. Consent Agenda**

A consent agenda shall include items of a routine or recurring nature grouped together under one action item. For each item listed as part of a consent agenda, the Board shall be furnished with background material. All such items shall be acted upon by one vote without separate discussion, unless a Board member or the Superintendent requests that an item be withdrawn for individual consideration. The remaining items shall be adopted by one vote. Examples include:

- Routine items
- Annual renewals of Region 4 and TEA items
- Budget amendments
- Gifts, donations, and bequests
- Financial information
- Minutes of regular and called Board meetings
- Updates of Board Policy

- Routine personnel items
  - Section for approval
  - Section for information only
- Routine bid considerations

### **III. Executive (Closed) Session (BEC Legal)**

- A. Executive Sessions shall include only items allowed by law and policy.
- B. All personnel issues will be conducted in Executive Session unless otherwise required by law.
- C. All other issues that violate the right to privacy or specific legal issues will be conducted in Executive Session unless otherwise required by the Texas Open Meetings Act.
- D. No vote may be taken in Executive Session.
- E. All information provided and opinions shared shall remain confidential unless otherwise agreed upon by the Board.

### **IV. Community, Citizens Addressing the Board**

- A. Citizens may address the Board on any item during the Citizen/Community Participation portion of the agenda by registering prior to the meeting and completing the audience participation request form. The Coordinator for Board and Community Relations will be responsible for ensuring that the request form is completed and submitted to the Board.
- B. Guidelines for addressing the Board will be adhered to and the President will emphasize the guidelines to the public.
  - 1. Comments are limited to five minutes - time will be kept by the Board Secretary.
  - 2. The Board will accept written, as well as oral, information
  - 3. Delegations of more than five people shall appoint one person to present their views before the Board.
  - 4. The Board will not entertain negative comments on individual personnel in public session.
  - 5. The Board will not entertain negative comments on individual students in public session.
  - 6. Citizens should use appropriate campus and administration channels before bringing concerns to the attention of the Board.

7. Procedural rules may be suspended at any Board meeting by majority vote of the members present.

**V. Board Response to Citizens Addressing the Board**

- A. Administration team members may present specific facts or existing policy.
- B. The Board shall not deliberate, discuss, or make a decision on any subject that is not on the meeting agenda.
- C. Board President should direct the Superintendent to have items investigated and report back to the Board in the Superintendents Friday report.

**VI. Voting**

- A. The Board shall observe the parliamentary procedures as found in *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, except as otherwise provided in Board procedural rules or by law. Procedural rules may be suspended at any Board meeting by majority vote of the members present.
- B. The Board President will request a motion, a second, and any discussion on agenda action items. After all discussion, a vote is requested by the President.
- C. Discussion of motions
  1. All discussions shall be directed solely to the business currently under deliberation.
  2. The Board President has the responsibility to keep the discussion to the motion at hand and shall halt discussion that does not apply to the business before the Board.
- D. The Board President shall recognize Board members prior to giving their comments.
- E. The Board President will vote on all action items.
- F. Majority vote wins. When tie votes occur, the agenda item will return on the next agenda as an action item.
- G. All Board members are expected to present and conduct themselves in a dignified and professional manner.

**VII. Role/Authority of Board Members and Board Officers**

- A. No Board member or officer has authority outside the Board meeting.
- B. No Board member can direct employees regarding performance of employees' duties.
- C. President
  1. Shall preside at all Board meetings.

2. May ask for volunteers for various committee assignments
  - a. Committees shall contain no more than three Board members.
  - b. Individual Board members may serve on various school and community committees as requested. See BDB (LOCAL)
3. Shall call special meetings.
4. Shall sign all legal documents required by law.
5. Shall countersign all warrants for District money drawn upon the depository by order of the Board.
6. Shall have the right to discuss, make motions and resolutions, and vote on all matters coming before the Board.

**D. Vice President**

1. Shall act in the capacity and perform the duties of the President of the Board in the event of the absence or incapacity of the President.
2. Shall automatically become President of the Board if a vacancy in that office occurs.
3. Shall perform other duties as directed by the Board.

If the Vice President becomes President of the Board, a new Vice President shall be chosen by Board election. See BDA (LOCAL)

**E. Secretary**

1. Shall keep, or cause to be kept, an accurate record of the proceedings of each Board meeting.
2. Shall send, or cause to be sent, notices of Board meetings.
3. In the absence of the President and Vice President of the Board, shall call the Board meeting to order and serve as the presiding officer.
4. Shall sign all legal documents required by law.
5. Perform other duties as directed by the Board.

**VIII. Individual Board Member Request for Information or Report**

- A. An individual Board member, acting in the official capacity of a Board member, shall have the right to reasonably seek information pertaining to district fiscal affairs, business transactions, governance, and personnel matters, including information that

may be properly withheld from members of the general public in accordance with the Public Information Chapter of the Government Code.

- B. Individual members shall not have access to confidential student records unless the member is acting in the official capacity of a Board member and has a legitimate educational interest in the records in accordance with policies FL (LEGAL) and FL (LOCAL).
- C. Individual members shall seek access to records or request copies of records from the Superintendent. When a custodian of records other than the Superintendent provides access to records or copies of records to individual Trustees, the provider shall inform the Superintendent of the records provided.
- D. Individual members shall not direct or require District employees to prepare reports derived from an analysis of information in existing District records or to create a new record compiled from information in existing District records. Directives to the Superintendent or custodian of records regarding the preparation of reports shall be by Board action.
- E. District information provided to the Board shall be used for District purposes only.

**IX. Citizen Request or Complaint to Individual Board Member**

- A. The Board member should hear the citizen problem for full understanding of people involved, date and place.
- B. The Board member will remind the citizen of due process and encourage the citizen to communicate with the appropriate district officials while reminding the citizen that each Board member must remain impartial.
- C. The Board member will refer the citizen to the appropriate person and chain of command and notify the Superintendent. The citizen must go through the chain of command. See BBE (LOCAL).
- D. Written requests or complaints will be referred to the Superintendent for appropriate follow-up. See BBE (LOCAL).

**X. Employee Request or Complaint to Individual Board Member**

- A. The Board member will hear the employee's problem for full understanding of people involved, date and place.
- B. The Board member will remind the employee of due process and encourage the employee to communicate with the appropriate district officials while reminding the employee that each Board member must remain impartial.
- C. The Board member will refer the employee to the appropriate person and chain of command and notify the Superintendent. The employee must go through the chain of command. See BBE (LOCAL).

- D. Written requests or complaints will be referred to the Superintendent for appropriate follow-up. See BBE (LOCAL).

**XI. Board Member Visit to School Campus**

- A. All Board members are encouraged to visit schools and attend school events.
- B. Board members may visit any campus after properly checking with the building Principal. Board members are asked to sign-in at the front reception desk of each campus being visited.
- C. Board members may visit teachers' classrooms and interact with the teacher as long as there is no disruption to the instructional process and the visit is not intended to evaluate.
- D. Board members shall not make requests of teachers or school District organizations. Requests of teachers or District organizations shall be made through the Superintendent.

**XII. Board and Superintendent Communications**

- A. The Superintendent will communicate with the Board as a whole or as individual Board members.
- B. The Superintendent will communicate with the Board as soon as possible on emergencies via text, e-mail, phone, or personal contact. The Superintendent may communicate with the Board President and the President communicates with the Board.
- C. The Board will keep the Superintendent informed through text, e-mail, phone, fax, or personal visits.
- D. The Board will communicate with the community through public hearings, presentations, civic clubs, regular Board meetings, and regular publications.
- E. Individual Board members cannot speak in an official capacity for the Board outside the board room or a called Board meeting.

**XIII. Board Members' Standard of Behavior and Code of Conduct**

- A. Any time four or more Board members are gathered to discuss district business, it is considered a meeting which must comply with the Texas Open Meetings Act.
- B. Board members shall be knowledgeable of and abide by the Board of Trustees' Code of Ethics (see Addendum I) and the code's implication of a Trustee's day-to-day actions.

- C. The Board President shall present a copy of the Code of Ethics to each Board member after each Board election.
- D. Board members shall share with each other and the Superintendent the legal opinions received from training sessions and conferences.
- E. Each Board member shall sign an annual 'Statement of Disclosure' according to Board Policy. See BBFA (LEGAL) and BBFA (LOCAL).
- F. The Board President shall communicate with the Board's attorney, as needed, unless otherwise determined by the entire Board.

**XIV. Board Formative Review, Performance Goal Setting, and Evaluation of the Superintendent**

- A. Superintendent's Contract
  - 1. The Superintendent's contract will be reviewed in April of each year unless otherwise determined by the Board.
  - 2. The Superintendent's term of contract and salary adjustments will be considered in the April review.
- B. Superintendent's Review and Evaluation
  - 1. The Superintendent shall provide Board members a copy of the Superintendent's performance goals and formative review with directions to complete and return to the Board President.
  - 2. The review will be conducted in Executive (Closed) Session.
  - 3. The review will be conducted on an annual basis unless otherwise determined by the Board
- C. Superintendent's Contract Amendments
  - 1. The Board President shall notify all Board members of the items being considered for an amendment prior to formal considerations.
  - 2. All amended terms and conditions of the Superintendent's contract shall be reviewed by the Board's attorney to ensure clarity and understanding of the same.

**XV. Review or Evaluation of the Board**

- A. The Board shall perform a self-review or evaluation in Executive (Closed) Session in May of each year.
- B. The Board review shall take place annually.



- C. The Board of Trustees Operating Procedures and Board Member Code of Ethics shall be included in the review or evaluation.

**XVI. Criteria and Process for Selecting Board Officers**

- A. The Board shall elect a President, a Vice President, and a Secretary who shall be members of the Board. The Board may assign a District employee to provide clerical assistance to the Board. Board Officers shall be elected by majority vote of the members present and voting.
- B. Board Officers shall serve for a term of one year or until a successor is elected. Officers may succeed themselves in office. Each officer shall perform any legal duties of the office and other duties, as required by the Board.
- C. A vacancy among officers of the Board, other than the President, shall be filled by majority action of the Board. A vacancy in the Presidency shall be filled by the Vice President, and a new Vice President shall be elected. See BDAA (LOCAL).
- D. A Board member must serve one year before being eligible to serve in any Board officer position.

**XVII. Media Inquiries**

- A. The Superintendent shall be the official spokesperson for the District.
- B. The President shall be the official spokesperson for the Board.
- C. All Board members who receive calls from the media should direct the calls to the Superintendent or Board President.
- D. All Board members are encouraged to visit with the media on the positive aspects of the district

**XVIII. Phone Calls and Letters**

The SMSD Board of Trustees shall encourage input; however, anonymous communications will not receive Board action.

**XIX. Response to Letters**

The SMSD Board of Trustees shall encourage input. A signed letter will be forwarded to the Superintendent for appropriate follow-up.

**XX. Review of Board Operating Procedures**

The Board Operating Procedures shall be reviewed, updated, and shared with all Board members on an annual basis after each Board election.

**XXI. Violation of Board Operating Procedures**

Any violation or infractions of the Board Operating Procedures will result in the following:

- A. Individual Board Members are encouraged to express their concerns about another member's performance directly to that member.
- B. If addressing the issue directly with the member does not resolve the concern, then discussion with the Board President is appropriate.
  - 1. 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. If a quorum of the Board is involved, the meeting must be posted and conducted in accordance with the Texas Open Meeting Act.
  - 2. The President shall remind the Board member whose behavior is in question about the adopted Code of Ethics and Board Operating Procedures and discuss how the questionable behavior does not comply with the Code. The discussion also will 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.
  - 3. If the Board member in question does not believe his or her behavior is in conflict with the Board's Code of Ethics and/or Operating Procedures an agenda item specifying "evaluation of individual Board member's performance" may be listed on the agenda for an upcoming Board meeting.
  - 4. The Matter will be discussed by the full Board in closed session in an attempt to clearly identify behavior that may be inappropriate and discuss possible solutions or alternative approaches that may have a more positive impact on team cohesion and effectiveness.
- C. If the concern involves the Board President, a member may discuss his or her concerns with the Board Vice-President.
- D. Members will not take concerns about fellow Board Members to the Superintendent.



## STAFFORD MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### Addendum I

## SCHOOL BOARD CODE OF ETHICS

### Ethics for School Board Members

As a member of the Board, I shall promote the best interests of the District as a whole and, to that end, shall adhere to the following ethical standards:

#### 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 of 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 keep confidential information that is privileged 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, policy-making, 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.



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*"Best little school district in Texas"*