

**EDEN PRAIRIE SCHOOL BOARD
HANDBOOK**



EDEN PRAIRIE SCHOOLS
Inspiring each student every day



2020-2021

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WELCOME TO THE BOARD!

Congratulations on being elected as an Eden Prairie School Board Director! You and your fellow Directors each bring a unique perspective and a wealth of life skills to the Board. Together, we seven Board Directors are the governing body of **Independent School District #272**.

We are accountable to our Eden Prairie taxpayers to ensure that “each student obtains an outstanding education that prepares them for their next stage of life in a manner that justifies the resources expended” (EPSB Ends Policy 1.0). We are also accountable to the State of Minnesota for improving equitable education that results in high achievement for each student in our district (MN Department of Education, ESSA Update, 2018).

This HANDBOOK serves as a guide for assuming your role as an Eden Prairie School Board Director, and as an ongoing resource throughout your term.

Thank you for willingness to serve as an Eden Prairie School Board Director!

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KEY CONCEPTS AND TERMS

As you assume your role as a Director, it is helpful to review some key concepts and terms as used by the Eden Prairie School Board.

What does it mean to *govern* as a Minnesota School Board

Director? Altbach (2015) states that educational *governance* is “The exercise of authority in controlling the system of public education for the private and public good.” Our Board’s authority is granted by the State of Minnesota and is only in force when we are acting as a whole board. Individual Board Members have no authority.

What *governance structure* does the Eden Prairie School Board use?

We have chosen to do our job within the *governance structure* known as [Policy Governance](#)® (John & Miriam Carver, 2016). This form of governance clearly states the difference between the roles and responsibilities of the Board (to govern) and the Superintendent (to manage). When the Board and Superintendent work collaboratively while maintaining their distinct roles, the whole District benefits.

What is the difference between *governance* and *management*?

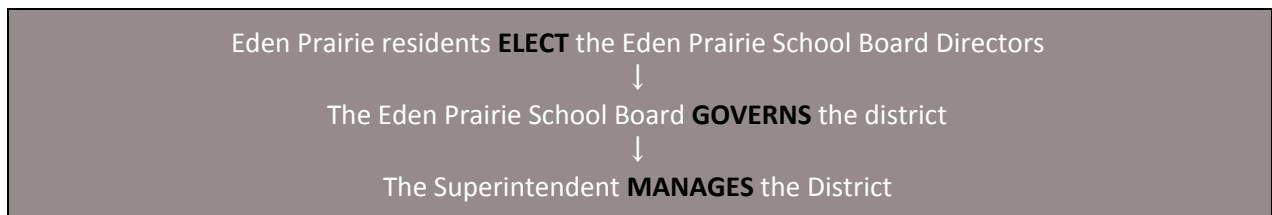
As **GOVERNORS**, the Board complies with all Minnesota State School Board Statutes:

- Sets a vision for the district based on community values
- Hires a superintendent who shares that vision and works to bring it about
- Writes and monitors policies that clearly state:
 - ✓ End goals of education in the district (**ENDs**)
 - ✓ Limitations within which the Superintendent must stay while accomplishing the ends (**ELs**)
 - ✓ Board work delegated to the Superintendent (**BMDs**)
 - ✓ How the Board does its job (**GP**s)
- Approves a district budget in line with the Board’s Ends
- Advocates for the District with the State Legislature
- Engages in intentional ongoing dialog with the community
- Evaluates the Superintendent’s accomplishment of the Ends

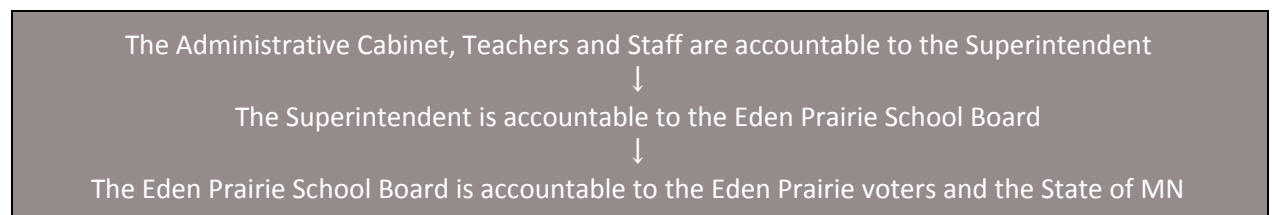
As a **MANAGER**, the Superintendent complies with State Statute, Board Policies and District Policies:

- The Superintendent serves as the Board’s **sole point of connection** with the District
- Reasonably interprets each Board written Ends and Executive Limitations policy, describing what evidence will show compliance with the policy, and how that evidence will be measured.
 - The Superintendent’s Operational Interpretation (OI) of the policy, Evidence, and Measurement Plan must be approved by the Board.
 - Once approved, the outcomes are monitored for compliance, usually on an annual basis, but they may be monitored more frequently.
- Uses whatever means necessary, within the Board’s limitations, to accomplish the Ends. The Superintendent manages the District which has approximately 9,000 enrolled students in grades PreK-12. District Programs and Schools include:
 - Community Education: Early Childhood, Little Eagles Preschool, Youth and Adult enrichment
 - Elementary schools: Cedar Ridge, Eagle Heights Spanish Immersion, Eden Lake, Forest Hills, Oak Point, and Prairie View
 - Central Middle School
 - Eden Prairie High School
 - Tassel Transition Program (18-21 year old students with special needs)

What is the flow of *responsibility* within the District?



What is the flow of *accountability* within the District?



What is the *term length* and *compensation* of an Eden Prairie School Board Director? Each School Board Director serves a term of four years.

Directors receive *compensation* for Board Service in an amount approved annually by the Board. Twice monthly compensation payments may be deposited directly into a Board Member's personally designated bank account; the Executive Assistant has the necessary forms for you to complete. A Board Member may also elect to open a Public Employees' Retirement Association (PERA) account and designate an amount to be routinely deducted from your compensation and deposited into the pension account. See the Executive Assistant for necessary enrollment forms. No other district benefits are extended to Board Directors.

Learning opportunities: Throughout your term, you will have the opportunity to learn continually. Initially your learning will be a combination of self learning and orientation meetings with the Board Chair and District Administration. Print resources furnished by the School Board include *Policy Governance™RealBoard Toolkit* (4 book series); Alsbury, T. (2015). *A Balanced Governance Approach*; *Robert's Rules of Order*. You may elect to have a peer mentor.

Soon after being sworn in, you will complete *training mandated by the State of Minnesota*, and conducted by the Minnesota School Board Association. You will also gain skills through "on the job" practice at the Board table during workshops and monthly business meetings. The District Executive Assistant will send you invitations to Board related meetings, trainings and District and community events. Eden Prairie School Board members commit to *ongoing self learning and periodic whole board learning* in accordance with Governance Process (GP) policy 4.9. The cost of state mandated and Board required individual board member and whole board training is covered by the Board Budget. Additional training, subject to prior approval, may be covered by the Board Budget.

Below is a list of learning and activity benchmarks with suggested completion times. If you have questions about anything on this list, ask the Board Chair or Board Development Committee Chair.

| Eden Prairie School Board Member Learning Path and Responsibilities | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|----------|----------|---------------------|
| | Suggested Completion Date | | | |
| | Member Elect | Year One | Year Two | Year Three (& Four) |
| <i>Action: *Italics denote optional action</i> | | | | |
| Meet with Board Chair | x | | | |
| <i>Select and meet with Mentor</i> | x | x | x | |
| Read through Board Manual | x | x | x | x |
| Read through Board Policies | x | x | x | x |
| Read through RealBoard Toolkits (Moore) | x | x | x | x |
| Access district website, Community-School Board page | x | x | x | x |
| Prepare for and attend Board Meetings and workshops | x | x | x | x |
| Be sworn in at first January meeting | x | x | x | x |
| Receive district computer, access, training on use | | x | | |
| Access Board e-mail, respond promptly to meeting invites | | x | x | x |
| Access BoardBook® for meeting agendas, supporting documents | | x | x | x |
| Meet and greet with Superintendent, staff | | x | | |
| Meet and greet with fellow Board Directors individually | | x | | |
| Serve on appointed school board committee(s) | | x | x | x |
| <i>Serve as Chair of board committee</i> | | | x | x |
| Serve as appointed board rep for outside organization | | x | x | x |
| <i>Serve as Board Officer</i> | | | x | x |
| <i>Serve as Board Director Peer Mentor</i> | | | | x |
| Attend Policy Governance Training | | x | | |
| Attend Minnesota School Board Assn. Training I | | x | | |
| Attend Minnesota School Board Assn. Training II | | x | | |
| Attend Minnesota School Board Assn. Training III or Chair Approved Alternative | | | x | |
| Attend Minnesota School Board Assn. Training IV or Chair Approved Alternative | | | x | |
| Attend Minnesota School Board Assn. Convention | | x | x | x |
| Participate in other scheduled Board development training | | x | x | x |
| Participate in periodic Board discussions or surveys to check for understanding | | x | x | x |
| Monitor Policies | | x | x | x |
| Monitor Superintendent | | x | x | x |
| Monitor Board Governance | | x | x | x |
| Attend Community Linkage meetings | | x | x | x |
| Attend School Site visits | | x | x | x |
| Attend School recognition events | | x | x | x |
| <i>Attend School recreational events</i> | | x | x | x |
| Attend High School Graduation | | x | x | x |
| Attend community organization events | | x | x | x |

SCHOOL BOARD SERVICE

We each have a unique background and motivation to serve on the Eden Prairie School Board. Together we strive to govern effectively to positively impact equitable and high student achievement within our District.

Eden Prairie School Board Directors:

Fulfil the responsibilities of a Board Director (to govern) and understand how this role differs from that of the Superintendent (to manage).

Are prepared for Board service: An EPSB Director spends about 10-20 hours per month on Board related business including training, preparation for meetings, Board Meetings and Workshops, Committee Meetings, Board District Meetings and District/Community Events. Time commitments may increase during the final two months of the school year, and during a year in which the District places a referendum question on the ballot. Board Directors attendance is required at every scheduled Board and Committee Meeting, and arrival is expected prior to the start of each meeting. Directors are prepared to participate in meaningful and informed deliberation on important issues for the Board and District.

Cultivate trusting, professional relationships with fellow Board Directors, Superintendent and the community within the limitations of the role of a Board Director.

Abide by Board policies, processes and procedures: When working together at the board table or in committee, the Board follows its policies including the Ends, Executive limitations, Governance Processes and Board Management Delegation. Board members may not always agree, and deliberation is encouraged. On any issue, a member may present their viewpoint and ask questions to understand another's views. Each Director is free to vote on a motion based on their conviction of what is **best for the District** (“What good, for whom, at what cost”). However, **once the Board reaches a decision on a specific topic, the Board speaks with one voice, supporting the decision publicly and privately.**

Are aware of the Board Work Plan, and understand its cyclical nature: According to Policy 4.3, the Board drafts and routinely updates an evolving yearly Board Work Plan of Board actions for each Board Business Meeting and Workshop. Some of these actions follow roughly the same cycle annually, others are unique and placed on the plan as needs arise. Proposed changes and additions to the plan are discussed at workshops and business meetings, and approved by the Board at regular Board business meetings. The most current Work Plan is included in the final pages of the BoardBook® Board Packet that you receive prior to each meeting, or from the District Website School Board Information Page.

Understand Board Officer Roles: There are four Officer Roles on the Board: Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Clerk. Officers serve for one year. The **process of Officer nomination** can be found in the “Eden Prairie School Board Officer Election Process.” **Board Officer specific duties** can be found in Policy GP 4.4.

Serve on Board Committees, District Committees and other organizations as appointed by the Board Chair: Each committee consists of 3 Board Members, one of whom is the Chair of the Committee. Committee meetings are posted and subject to the “Open Meeting Law.” (See 4.8 School Board Committee Structure, 4.7 School Board Committee Principles, and Eden Prairie School Board Committee Business Process.)

Board Committees and their responsibilities:

4.8.1 Community Linkage Committee: This committee facilitates multiple methods of School Board communication with owners that provide input and inform the School Board of ownership values as they relate to School Board policies, as well as provide valuable information to owners.

4.8.2 Policy Committee: This committee meets at the request of the School Board to create and recommend new School Board policies and/or School Board policy revisions for School Board consideration. The Policy Committee may bring forward additional recommendations on reordering or re-wording related policies to ensure consistency. In addition, this committee will maintain the necessary processes and procedures for the School Board's review of the Ends and Executive Limitation policies.

4.8.3 Board Development Committee: This committee ensures ongoing School Board development and oversees self-monitoring of the School Board's performance related to Governance Process and Board-Management Delegation policies.

4.8.4 Negotiations Committee:

This committee, which is defined as at least one member of the three member committee, observes selected bargaining unit contract negotiations to ensure the School Board's parameters are applied to all settlements.

District Committees:

Core Planning Team: A group of parents, staff and community members who have developed and annually monitor the District's Strategic Five Year Plan. A board member may participate at the invitation of the Superintendent.

Financial Advisory Committee: To assist the Eden Prairie School District in financial analysis and long range financial planning. The Board Treasurer is a member of this committee.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) Presidents Council: Each Eden Prairie school has its own Parent Teacher Organization. The PTO Council is a district-wide umbrella organization that connects all of the school PTOs. The PTO Council, along with each school's PTO, are separate 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations. A board member may attend the monthly meeting **as an observer**.

Outside Educational Organizations:

In addition to serving on a Board or District Committee, there is an opportunity to serve as a representative of Eden Prairie School District to the organizations listed below. The role of the representative is to "attend and participate at scheduled organization meetings, and to share information gathered at the meetings with the Eden Prairie School Board and interested district staff."

Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD): An organization of metropolitan school districts to "advocate for metropolitan school districts and advance legislation that supports student achievement." AMSD is governed by one superintendent and one appointed representative from each participating district.

Independent School District 287: Consists of member school districts with a goal to address shared challenges and provide educational resources tailored to meet the needs of at-risk learners, and their teachers, to help students earn a high school diploma.

Minnesota School Board Association (MSBA): The Minnesota School Boards Association is the leading advocate for public education by supporting, promoting and

strengthening the work of public school boards. All board members are invited to attend MSBA meetings and training opportunities throughout the year.

[Minnesota State High School League](#): A voluntary, nonprofit association of public and private schools with a history of service to Minnesota's high school youth since 1916.

Community Organizations: (Optional)

As an elected official and leader in the community of Eden Prairie, you might consider joining Eden Prairie philanthropic and leadership organizations. Membership expenses for these organizations are not paid for by the Board; they are the personal responsibility of each member. Some organizations in which school board members have participated include the Eden Prairie Community Foundation, Eden Prairie Chamber of Commerce, Eden Prairie Rotary, Eden Prairie Optimists, Eden Prairie Lions, etc.

Approve the District Budget: The District Budget is drafted by the Superintendent and his cabinet, within the parameters set by the State of Minnesota and the School Board. The Budget is approved annually by the Board and monitored throughout the year.

Monitor policies, results and the overall performance of the School Board and the Superintendent:

Policy and results monitoring:

Is done according to the Board Work Plan. Depending on the type of monitoring, it may be done at each meeting, bi-annually, or annually. The Board reserves the right to monitor more often, as it deems necessary.

School Board governance monitoring:

Governance Process, Governing style Policy 4.16 states:

“The School Board will monitor and discuss the School Board's process and performance at each meeting. Self-monitoring will include comparison of School Board activity and discipline to policies in the Governance Process (GPs) and Board-Management Delegation (BMDs) categories.”

Individual School Board Member governance monitoring:

Board Directors Govern in accordance with Governance Process Policy 4.1 “Governing Style.” They meet a stated Code of Conduct in compliance with Governance Process Policy 4.5 “School Board Members’ Code of Conduct,” and comply with policy on an ongoing basis. Violations of policy are managed according to Governance Process Policy

4.6 “Process for Addressing School Board Member Violations.” Directors also complete State of Minnesota mandated and Board required training.

Evaluate the Superintendent’s performance, approve Superintendent’s contract: The Superintendent is evaluated annually (or more frequently as deemed necessary by the Board) in a state approved closed session, and in accordance with Board-Management Delegation Policy 3.3 “Superintendent Accountability and Performance.” Evaluation is based solely on the results of Ends and the Executive Limitations (ELs) monitoring and any agreed upon specific performance goals as stated in a Memorandum of Understanding.

MN STATE SCHOOL BOARD STATUTES

The Eden Prairie School Board operates in accordance with the laws of the State of Minnesota and in an orderly manner in compliance with Governance Process (GP) Policy 4.10 “Operation of the School Board Governing Rules.” You are responsible for reading these regulations and policies, and you are accountable to them.

Minnesota State regulations for School Board Meetings:

The state has determined regulations and mandates by which all Districts must comply, regardless of their governance structure. Some of those are:

Quorum: A quorum is the minimum number of members of an assembly that must be present at any of its meetings to make the proceedings of that meeting valid. Since there are seven Eden Prairie School Board Directors, a quorum is met whenever four or more Directors are gathered in an official capacity.

Unintentional quorums: Care must be taken to ensure that unintentional Board quorums do not occur due to ad hoc gatherings of more than three of the School Board Directors. Board Directors of any number may appear together in an official capacity at various community events, unofficially (as private citizens) at District or community gatherings, at meetings of organizations in which they hold common membership.

Open Meeting Law: Minnesota’s Open Meeting Law (M.S. Ch. 13D) requires all school board meetings to be open to the public with few exceptions. Scheduled public Board meetings are posted on the District Website and announced in the local papers, in a timely fashion so that possible attendees are adequately informed of the date, time, place and agenda of the meetings. To learn more about Open Meeting Law: [MSBA website](#).

Minnesota Department of Education (DOE) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): In 2015, the federal government enacted the Every Student Succeeds Act which ensures equitable and high quality education for each student. Each state submitted their own plan to

the federal government for approval describing how the state planned to work with local educational governance (school boards and Superintendents) to achieve those results. Minnesota's plan was approved, and communicated to School Boards and Superintendents throughout the state. It is the responsibility of each school district to demonstrate achievement of the Act's requirements. Districts not meeting the benchmarks are offered guidance to develop and implement strategies toward achievement. Use this [MN Department of Education](#) link for additional information regarding this important piece of legislation.

QUICK GUIDE TO BOARD MEETING PREP

Check Board Email:

It is possible to **set up your mobile devices to receive District email alerts and meeting invites**. For assistance with this, or any technology concerns, contact the Technology Desk at the Administrative Services Center.

Respond to Calendar invites:

Invitations for Board related meetings and events are sent by the Administration (to avoid violating open meeting law). Prompt replies are appreciated. If you wish to send an invite to committee members or to the board, send a request through the Board Administrative Assistant and copy both the Superintendent and the Board Chair.

Access BoardBook®: Use your personal user ID and password. This site is a repository for the Board Packet which contains the agenda and supporting documents needed for Board Business Meetings and Workshops.

Prior to the Board Meeting:

Read through the Board Packet which includes agendas for the prior meeting/workshop and for the upcoming meeting, assertions of policy compliance written by the Superintendent, and additional presentations, committee meeting minutes, proposals, etc. The Policy Monitoring Protocol resource can be a helpful guide for evaluating an assertion, and drafting motions you wish to make at the meeting.

If you have a question regarding a Superintendent's assertions, you may email a **clarifying** question to them. To comply with "Open Meeting" law, **do not include other Board Members in your email**.

The day of a Board Business Meeting and/or Workshop:

Arrive prior to the start of the meeting to connect with fellow Board Members, and review any handouts at your seat at the Board table. Be mindful that Board Business Meetings and Workshops are open to the public, and there is generally a member of the Press in attendance. Business meetings are videotaped, and workshops may be audio recorded.

EXITING BOARD SERVICE

Voluntary exit from Board service:

A Board Director may, for personal reasons, leave Board Service mid-term (moving out of the District, etc.).

At the end of their elected term, a Board Director may decide not to run for re-election.

Involuntary exit from Board Service:

A Board Director may fail to win re-election to their seat.

A Board Director may be removed from the Board based on disciplinary action as stated in Board policy GP 4.5 and 4.6.

Complete these actions at least **one day prior to your last day of Board Service:**

Inform the District Administrative Assistant of your current contact information:

It is important for the District to have this information to send tax documents and any other items to you in a timely manner.

Return Board Materials to the District Administrative Assistant:

- The RealBoard® toolkit series of 4 books
- Book: Alsbury, T. (2015). *A Balanced Governance Approach*.
- Book: *Robert's Rules of Order*

Return District issued items to the District Administrative Assistant:

- District issued laptop (wiped), cord and charger
- District ID badge and lanyard
- District School Board magnetic name tag
- School Board business cards

Complete your outstanding Committee Work

- Complete unfinished committee work or compile a list of unfinished items and share it with your Committee chair.
- Share Committee documents stored on your computer with the Administrative Assistant and your Committee Chair.

OPTIONAL: You are invited to participate in exit interviews with the Board Chair and the Superintendent. Sharing your valuable experience as a Board Director can inform the ongoing effectiveness of the Board. Contact the Administrative Assistant to schedule your exit interview(s).

The District thanks you for your dedicated service as a School Board Director!