

Board of Directors

Handbook

TACÔMA

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EVERY STUDENT. EVERY DAY.

November 2021

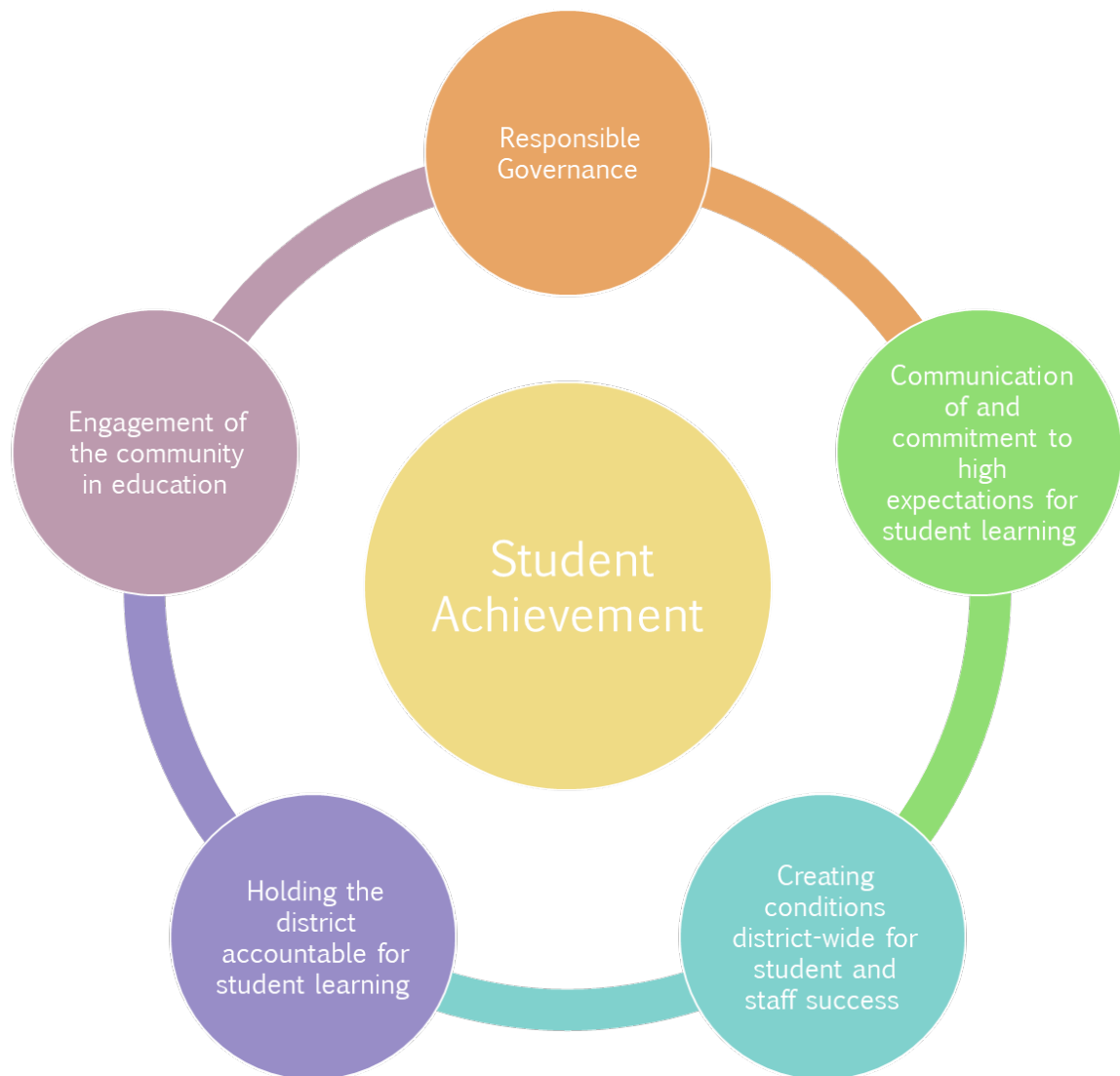
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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is provided as an introductory summary of many key policies, procedures, and operations of the district. District policy is referenced throughout, but it is not intended to reiterate district policy verbatim. Other sources of information include the [Washington State School Directors Association](#) (WSSDA) and the [National School Board Association](#) (NSBA). WSSDA encourages school boards to focus on 5 core principles to meet their primary responsibility of focusing on student achievement:



BEING A SCHOOL BOARD DIRECTOR

Dedicating your time and talents to become an elected official in your local school district is an undertaking that is both challenging and rewarding. Serving as the governing body of a public school district is an incredible responsibility for citizens. Think about reforms like the [Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#) (ESEA) and [No Child Left Behind Act](#) (NCLB). Consider the implications of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). And who can forget the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL)? There are 295 public school districts in the state of Washington. Welcome to the leadership of Tacoma Public Schools, one of the state's largest districts.

Tacoma Public Schools operates under the mandate of the Washington State Constitution, as prescribed in Article IX: "It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders, without distinction or preference on account of race, color, caste or sex. The legislature shall provide for a general and uniform system of public schools."

The Washington legislature has adopted statutes and regulations that govern public schools; see [RCW chapter 28A](#) (Common School Manual) and [WAC chapter 392](#) (Superintendent of Public Instruction). OSPI (the [Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction](#)) is the primary agency charged with overseeing public K-12 education in Washington state.

BOARD MEMBER PERSONAL COMMITMENTS

Three important principles to remember are:

- The board works as a group
- The board works in public meetings
- The board works under the law

As an individual board member, you are expected to uphold these personal commitments:

- Actively support the District's mission
- Be knowledgeable about the district and education issues
- Attend meetings prepared
- Participate in annual retreat
- Attend community meetings and district events
- Improve board skills
- Lead by example
- Avoid words and actions that create a negative impression
- Respectful discourse
- Accept decisions made by a majority vote

Board members are also expected to uphold confidentiality. This includes preserving information kept under attorney-client privilege and information discussed in executive or closed sessions.

An additional personal commitment is that board members must ensure that they do not use their positions in a way that could be perceived as or create an actual conflict of interest ([Policy 1610](#), RCW 28A.632.050, RCW 42.23.030).

BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP

The successful operation of schools requires a close, effective working relationship between the board and the superintendent. The relationship must be one of trust, good will and candor. As the legally designated governing body, the board retains final authority within the district.

The superintendent is the board's professional advisor to whom the board delegates executive responsibility and such powers as may be required to manage the district in a manner consistent with board policy and state and federal law. The superintendent, as executive officer of the board, shall be responsible for the administration of the schools under applicable laws and policies of the district.

The board will establish the vision, create policies, and ensure accountability. The superintendent will manage the schools. If board members would like to request information or materials from the District, the request should be made to the Superintendent, not to District staff members.

Source: *Trustee Handbook: A guide for effective governance* by Mary Hundley DeKuyper

Action	Time and Attention
Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission • Strategic Plan • Policies 	Board's Decisions Superintendent's Advice
Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal Setting • Finance decisions • Employment terms 	Shared Decisions: Board and Superintendent
Operational <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing • Programs • Systems 	Board's Advice Superintendent's Decisions

BOARD MEETINGS AND PREPARATION

TIME AND LOCATION

School Board meetings begin at 6:00pm and are held in the 4th Floor Auditorium at the Central Administration Building at 601 South 8th Street in Tacoma, unless otherwise posted. All meetings are open to the public except for executive and closed sessions. Executive sessions are noted on the agenda, but closed sessions are not.

Occasionally the board will hold meetings off-site. This could be at a school building or a community partner location. Constituent listening sessions are usually held at high schools, and they are repeated strategically throughout the city to provide fair coverage. Board retreats are usually held twice per year, spring and fall, and are held at a community partner location.

TYPES OF MEETINGS

Business Meetings are held the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month, except for once monthly meetings in July/August/December. Business meetings require a quorum to vote and carry motions on proposed district business items. The District uses Robert's Rules to govern its Business Meetings.

Study Sessions are held the 3rd Thursday of the month, as needed. These meetings are used to study and discuss one or two topics more in-depth than is appropriate for a regular business meeting agenda. No voting occurs at a study session.

Committee of the Whole Meetings provide board members an opportunity to discuss specific topics while staying in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. These meetings are conversational, and no board action is taken. Committee of the Whole meetings are scheduled in advance by agreement of the board.

SPECIAL MEETINGS

A special meeting can be called by the president or by a majority of the board and can take place outside school district boundaries.

MEETING MATERIAL

Agendas are prepared by the board executive assistant. Board meetings are paperless and agendas are accessed using laptops which are provided at the meeting. Agendas with hyperlinks to detailed agenda items are emailed to school board members and are published to the school board webpage generally the Tuesday prior to the board meeting. Each board member is expected to review in detail the agenda and any study materials distributed prior to the meeting and be prepared to participate in the discussion and decision-making for each agenda item.

In general, there are 7 main categories on regular business meeting agendas:

- *Recognitions*: These are celebrations of students, schools, staff, families, community members, or community partners.
- *Consent Agenda*: These are multiple routine business items that get approved with one motion, such as minutes of prior meetings, travel requests, and personnel recommendations.
- *Policy Matters*: These are either first readings of new policies or proposed policy revisions or second readings/adoptions.
- *Curriculum and Instruction*: These are grant approvals, curriculum adoptions, and contracts or agreements related to instruction.
- *Business Matters*: These are anything having to do with the business operations of the district such as contracts for dairy or approving the budget. Each item is read, considered, and voted on individually.
- *Other Business*: These are matters outside of normal everyday business operations such as collective bargaining agreements, the superintendent contract, and annual board reorganization.

- *Report to the Board:* These are mostly reports from executive leadership on the Strategic Benchmarks as well as school year start-up and legislative session wrap-up.

At the end of the agenda, board members are given an opportunity to provide a short report. Generally, board members use this time to report on their assigned committee meetings and activities such as school visits or participation in a community event.

Board members are invited to seek out clarification on any agenda item prior to the meeting, either by contacting the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, or the board executive assistant.

Additions or changes in the presented agenda may be requested by the superintendent or a board member and must be approved by majority vote of the board members present. If a board member wishes to place a meeting item on the board's agenda, he/she does so by contacting the board president and superintendent.

If a board member would like follow-up from an item raised during a board meeting, the board member can ask from the dais for the Superintendent to follow-up or the board member can follow-up after the meeting.

BOARD MEMBER COMPENSATION & TIMEKEEPING

TIME COMMITMENT

Serving as a school board director requires approximately 20-30 hours per month. In addition to the preparation required for each business meeting, board members are expected to represent the District at school and community events, participate in governmental relations, complete required training on the Open Public Meeting and Open Public Records Acts, serve on committees, and other various obligations on behalf of the District.

REIMBURSEMENT

A board member is eligible to receive compensation at the rate of fifty dollars (\$50) per day, or for a portion of a day, for approved activities, not to exceed four thousand eight hundred dollars (\$4,800.00) for a fiscal year, plus reasonable expenses incurred for travel, meals and lodging. Payroll taxes will be deducted, and board members will receive an annual W-2 statement to account for the income.

TIMEKEEPING

Twice per month the board EA will send an email request to board members for dates qualifying for reimbursement. Those dates will be entered into the district Time Input Processing (TIP) system, and the reimbursement will be issued to the board member.

BOARD OFFICE/EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

The board office is staffed with a full-time Executive Assistant (Classified-Exempt).

The duties of the EA for the board are:

- Attend all board meetings and record board minutes; transcribe, summarize, and distribute minutes; maintain official records of minutes and related documentation for auditing purposes
- Prepare and post Board meeting notices; coordinate and format final agenda for Board meetings in accordance with bylaws; inform appropriate parties
- Answer telephone; respond to inquiries as knowledge and expertise permit, or direct calls to appropriate staff members; screen calls which can be handled by other offices and make referrals as appropriate
- Compose, edit, and type correspondence, reports, briefs, investigative information, and memoranda from notes, rough drafts, or dictation
- Schedule and coordinate activities for the Legal Advisor and Board members as directed
- Maintain calendar and schedule of appointments
- Organize materials for meetings, reserve room and amenities
- Make travel and conference arrangements; coordinate special activities
- Perform background research and data collection in response to various inquiries
- Prepare and maintain accurate and complete records and reports as required by law, state directives, District policy, and administrative regulations
- Participate in District committees as requested
- Perform bookkeeping tasks
- Attend meetings, conferences, workshops, and other in-service education activities related to assigned duties

COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

DISTRICT COMMITTEES

There are several committees throughout the district and the community that Board members have an opportunity to serve on. Annually, the Board President and Vice President will review committee assignments and make necessary adjustments. Board members are encouraged to rotate through the various committees.

CAREER & TECHNICAL ADVISORY GENERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Lead Department: Career & Technical Education

The General Advisory Committee (GAC) is composed of school district administrators, business and community members and CTE instructors and works to carry out long-term planning and implementation of district goals. Some of the duties assigned to the General Advisory Committee include: assist in the facilitation of the program renewal process; make facilities and equipment recommendations; provide business and industry guidance to the CTE Director; and help implement the district's strategic plan.

CITIZEN'S FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

Lead Department: Chief Financial Officer

The Citizens Finance & Audit Committee is a permanent public advisory committee. CFAC citizen members are experts in finance and internal controls. The committee is composed of two school board directors, the superintendent, and a minimum of three citizens. Quarterly meetings are held at the district's Central Administration Building.

HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL

Lead Department: Early Learning

The School Board works in partnership with Head Start's Policy Council (PC). Policy Council consists of parents and/or guardians elected at the Parent Center Committee meetings at each Head Start site, along with elected community representatives and past parents. Each site elects a Representative and an Alternate to serve on the Council.

Members who serve on the Council participate in the decision-making process regarding program goals and objectives, procedures, grant applications, budgets, personnel, recruitment, selection, and enrollment criteria of the Head Start program.

TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Lead Department: Safety & Security

The Traffic Safety Committee is a collaborative team consisting of Tacoma Public School employees, City of Tacoma traffic engineers, and the Tacoma Police Department. This team meets monthly to discuss best practices regarding traffic safety around schools. Common topics include crosswalk locations, crossing guards, street lighting/signage, school zones, and drop-off/pick-up areas.

COMMUNITY PARTNER COMMITTEES & BOARDS

FOUNDATION FOR TACOMA STUDENTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Foundation for Tacoma Students is the backbone organization to the Graduate Tacoma community movement, serving as a convener, helping to align organizations, institutions, and individuals around positive outcomes for students. We collaborate with community partners to build a data-informed support system for young people. And we promote and connect strategic partnerships for a stronger Tacoma.

JOINT MUNICIPAL ACTION COMMITTEE

The Joint Municipal Action Committee (JMAC) provides structure for public entities the City of Tacoma, Tacoma Public Schools, Pierce County, Pierce Transit, Metro Parks Tacoma, the Port of Tacoma, the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, the Puyallup Tribe of Indians and other municipal or legislative bodies, when applicable, to work together on issues of a cooperative nature and bring those issues back to their governmental bodies for further action.

SAFE STREETS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Safe Streets is made up of thousands of community volunteers who engage in crime intervention, prevention activities, resident empowerment, and more. The Board of Directors provides overall governance of Safe Streets by monitoring policies and programs and establishing the organization's strategic purpose and direction.

TACOMA COUNCIL PTA

Tacoma Council PTA is governed by a board of directors and the voting representatives its member units. Washington State PTA has chartered Tacoma PTA Council to support, coordinate, facilitate and serve the needs of the independently-chartered local PTA and PTSA units within the area of the Tacoma School District. Goals include empowering each unit with a voice in the decision-making process on issues concerning children and youth; increasing contact with local units and increasing awareness of what Council can do for their unit; and better communicating PTA issues, activities and accomplishments to members and the community at large.

COMMUNICATION: EMAIL, VOICE MAIL, INTERDISTRICT MAIL, STAFF E-PUBLICATIONS, CONSTITUENTS, SOCIAL MEDIA

EMAIL

INDIVIDUAL EMAIL ADDRESS

You will be provided with an individual Tacoma Public Schools email account. Please use this account for all board and district business. Do not use your personal email account or any other email account.

Email is a Public Record and subject to disclosure under the Washington Public Records Act. Please be mindful that any email you write could end up on the front page of the New York Times.

Email will account for approximately 75% of the communication to board members. Directors can expect to receive a moderate amount of steady email from district staff and schools on a variety of topics and, therefore, it is highly recommended that consistent monitoring be done.

Invitations to district as well as community events will come via email and should be responded to promptly. It's best practice to copy or inform the EA on scheduling matters to help avoid conflicts, etc.

Email from constituents should be forwarded to the superintendent as appropriate and copied to the Board email. See additional information under Constituents.

SHARED BOARD EMAIL ADDRESS: CORRESPONDENCE PROTOCOL

Board directors have access to the shared email (board@tacoma.k12.wa.us) that allows constituents to email directors collectively rather than having to send individual emails.

EA will review the board inbox regularly and respond to emails with the appropriate *initial* acknowledgment of receipt and proposed course of action:

- “Thank you for your email. It has been forwarded to the Superintendent for action since this is an administrative/operational issue” **or**
- “Thank you for your email. Board members have received your request/input/etc. and appreciate hearing your perspective/views/questions/etc. You can anticipate receiving a reply from the Board President within a week.”
- EA will reply to informational emails, with a cc: to the board inbox.

The board president, vice president, and EA will meet weekly to review board correspondence and discuss appropriate responses/courses of action.

The Superintendent (or designee) shall copy all board members individually as well as the Board inbox on any replies to emails originating from the Board inbox.

The original emails will remain in the main Board inbox section for 2-3 weeks, after which the EA will move them individually into their appropriate sub-folder (forwarded to the Superintendent for response; board responded; no further action needed, etc.).

If board members would like to discuss potential issues raised by public correspondence, contact the president or vice president rather than responding directly to the individual member of the public.

As a reminder, the board president (or designee) will take the lead on responding to all correspondence sent to the Board of Directors as a group. Individual board members can feel free to respond to messages sent to them exclusively, but should refrain from taking positions on issues that have yet been discussed as a group.

VOICE MAIL

Each board member is assigned a telephone number that is set-up to receive voice mail. These numbers are published on the district website, and constituents may leave messages. Voice mail should be checked frequently and forwarded to the superintendent as appropriate.

New board members, your voice mailbox password and outgoing message will initially be set for you by the EA. You will be able to reset those yourself.

Messages can be retrieved two ways:

Via Phone: Call the district voice mail system at (253) 571-1600, press # and enter your mailbox number. Enter your security code when prompted, and follow the prompts to retrieve your new messages.

Via Email: The system can be set up to send new voice mail messages as email to your district email address. The recording will be an attachment to an email that you can access at any time. You can save it, replay it, forward it and delete it like any other email message.

INTERDISTRICT MAIL

Board members have a physical mailbox at the Central Administration Building (CAB). Any mail that comes in from schools or other departments will get sorted to the mailbox and then picked up daily by the district mail courier for that region.

Board members that opt-out of having a TPS Mailbox at their personal home address can instead retrieve their Interdistrict mail at CAB.

E-PUBLICATIONS

Board members are automatically subscribed to the following district e-publications:

- *Friday Report:* A weekly email report from the superintendent directly to the board that includes updates, critical information, and weekly activity reports. Items are hyperlinked for additional detailed information.
- *Innovator:* A periodic newsletter sent to all TPS employees with the latest district news, published by the Public Information Office.
- *District News:* A periodic newsletter for parents and the community.

- *Whole Child Newsletter*: A periodic newsletter that provides updates and highlights on the Whole Child Initiative work.

CONSTITUENTS

As the only local officials focused exclusively on pre-K-12 education, school board members represent the community's values and beliefs. Education is not one of many competing priorities: it is the school board members' only priority.

By representing the public's voice in public education, school boards are accountable to the taxpayers footing the bills as well as to the parents of those benefiting most directly from the services public schools provide.

Operating in a transparent manner, school boards manage the public's business in the public's eye, engaging parents, students, employees, senior citizens, and other community members in important discussions regarding public policy.¹

Board members will receive various types of communication from constituents. As the superintendent is responsible for the district's day-to-day operations, communication regarding district operations should be forwarded to the superintendent for response.

Complaints are regularly sent to board members from constituents. When you receive a complaint, (via letter, email, voice mail, or in-person), the board member should acknowledge receipt and notify the individual that the matter is being referred to the Superintendent for follow-up and then actually forward or notify the superintendent (Policies 1620 and 4220). Board members should not assume responsibilities of administrators or other staff members (Policy 1220).

Board members should not commit to any action in response to a comment or complaint as board members must act collectively in public (Open Public Meetings Act,

¹ NSBA, *Telling Your Story-A Communications Guide for School Boards*, 2012

Policy 1220). Board members can always ask the Superintendent about the resolution of the complaint.

SOCIAL MEDIA

TPS has a top-notch public information department staffed with a team of experts trained to handle the district-owned social media accounts. They are also available to answer questions or provide guidance.

Today's technology makes it easier than ever to engage with your constituents in a variety of ways. Depending on your preferred social media tool, if any, you can quickly provide an important update or share a legislative hot topic.

Here are some other quick tips²:

- Board ethics and conflict of interest policies apply to social media outlets. Don't use social media to leak closed session materials and/or information that is protected by law.
- Keep the tone conversational and informal but use proper grammar and show the same sensitivity regarding word choice you would in other venues. If this is difficult for you, have someone proofread behind you before you hit "send."
- Social media is a commitment. If you don't want to keep sites updated, it's better not to start them in the first place. Content aggregators, such as Hoot Suite, can help update all social media sites simultaneously.
- Snarky doesn't play well if you're not a teenager. Keep your communications professional, albeit more informal in tone and manner.
- Connect your site to the official district website, social media outlets, etc.
- Be transparent—let people know who you are and what you stand for. Don't hide behind the anonymity afforded by social media.

² NSBA, Telling Your Story-A Communications Guide for School Boards, 2012

- Take the high road. You'll take some unfair hits—that comes with the territory. Don't get into fights with parents, students, teachers, and other bloggers. You will lose.
- Let people know what the rules of the game are for your sites. As the "editor," you have the right to remove profane comments or other material that could be offensive to others. But often you build more credibility by responding professionally and courteously.

DISTRICT POLICY & REGULATION: WHO, WHAT, WHERE

The district policy and regulation manual is intended both as a tool for district management as well as a source of information to community members, staff and others about how the district operates. Policies are principles adopted by the board to chart a course of action, while regulations are the detailed directions that put policy into practice.

The manual is hosted on the district public website. The policies are separated into 7 categories:

Section 0000 - Strategic Planning

Section 1000 - Board of Directors

Section 2000 - Instruction

Section 3000 - Students

Section 4000 - Community Relations

Section 5000 - Personnel

Section 6000 - Management Support

The district has a detailed process for policy and regulation revision, which includes review by the Equity Policy Review Team, a committee that includes two Board members, two Tacoma Public Schools staff members, and fourteen community members from various backgrounds and organizations who have committed to review policies as they go through the review process. Feedback received from staff and the Equity Policy Review Team then undergoes a legal and administrative review, first reading at a school board business meeting for review and comment, and a second reading at a business meeting for further review and comment prior to adoption. The board may bring a policy or regulation to a study session for more in-depth analysis as necessary. The District also seeks community feedback as appropriate in the policy and regulation development process.

GRADUATION RESPONSIBILITIES

When school assignments are made at the beginning of each school year, there will be graduation responsibilities for each assigned high school(s). Along with the superintendent, the board member pronounces the graduating class at the graduation ceremony. A script for the pronouncement is provided. A gown and hood (for those holding doctorates) can be provided as well.

The ceremonies for the comprehensive high schools are usually held at the Tacoma Dome. Parking passes are provided the week of the ceremonies.

Board members remain on stage for the duration of the ceremony and assist with dispersing diplomas to the graduates.

HEARINGS & APPEALS: DISCIPLINE, DISCRIMINATION AND EMPLOYMENT

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

The board has a statutory obligation to review student discipline decisions when appropriately requested. The timelines and guidelines for these appeals are written in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC).

The board has delegated authority for discipline review to a Discipline Appeal Council (DAC), which consists of a board member, a district administrator and a community member. The district administrator and community members are appointed by the school board and receive required training by the legal department.

The DAC is tasked with deciding to either uphold, overturn or amend the decision of the school regarding the discipline decision.

When the board office receives a request for review and reconsideration, a legal time clock begins a countdown. The council must hold its first meeting within 10 school business days or 5 days in the case of an emergency expulsion. The board EA will send a scheduling request for availability, and it's imperative for all members to respond in a timely manner.

District general counsel will advise the DAC through each appeal. The school that issued the discipline will participate in each meeting, along with the family. The family can be represented by their own legal counsel and, if they do, the district will provide legal counsel for the school. Generally, each discipline appeal case will require a 1-hour meeting with an additional 30-minutes for deliberation/decision.

The board EA will coordinate the meetings and distribute meeting material. General counsel will assist with the final determination letter.

DISCRIMINATION

Students and staff have the right to appeal a discrimination determination made by the superintendent, per Revised Code of Washington (RCW).

These appeals must be heard by at least a quorum of the board. When the board office receives a request for an appeal, a legal time clock begins a countdown. The board must hold the hearing within 20 calendar days. The board EA will send out a scheduling request for availability, and it's imperative for all members to respond in a timely manner.

General Counsel will assist the board through the appeal. In addition to the staff member and their legal counsel (if any), the district's outside investigator and human resources representative will also participate.

Generally, each appeal case will require one 1-hour meeting with an additional 30-minutes for deliberation/decision.

The board EA will coordinate the meetings and distribute meeting material. General counsel will assist with the final determination letter.

EMPLOYMENT

As part of the grievance process, an employee may ask to have the board review an employment decision made by the District. The rules for this hearing will be governed by the applicable policy or collective bargaining agreement.

One of the reasons it is important for board members to not address complaints by (or about) employees is because the board may ultimately hear the matter in a hearing.

The board EA will coordinate employment hearings and distribute meeting material. General Counsel will moderate the hearing and assist with the determination letter.

MEETINGS WITH SUPERINTENDENT

Board members are invited to schedule bi-weekly or monthly touch-base meetings with the superintendent to get clarification on district initiatives and operations to better respond to constituent questions and share the district's messages.

These meetings are a great opportunity to bring a topic or question to the superintendent's attention that you plan to share at an upcoming open public meeting that would be of interest to students, staff and community. This gives the superintendent an opportunity to gather the data or research in advance and provide a concise response along with the board.

As chief executive officer of the district, the superintendent serves as the conduit for board member requests, directives and communications to staff, per board policy.

The board EA will work with the superintendent to schedule these meetings on a recurring or as-needed basis.

NEW BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION

Board policy states that existing board members will help newly-elected or appointed directors to understand the policies and procedures of the board.

New board members will need the following:

- Operating principles;
- Procedures and protocol for school visitations;
- Procedures for requesting information;
- Procedures relating to personnel issues;
- The proper handling of confidential information.

New board members will need the following documents with an accompanying orientation to them:

- New Board Member Information Manual;
- New Board Member Orientation Schedule;
- District and board goals for the current year;
- Policies and Regulations;
- Student Rights, Responsibilities and Regulations brochure;
- Administrative structure;
- Collective bargaining agreements;
- Current budget;
- Latest financial report;
- Final report of any committee established by the board for the previous twelve months;
- Latest student and school performance reports;
- Official board minutes and agendas for the previous six months, upon request.

The general overview of your first 30-60-90 Days in Office is provided in the appendix.

OPEN GOVERNMENT TRAINING

The Open Government Trainings Act was enacted by the 2014 Washington State Legislature to improve trust in government and at the same time help prevent costly lawsuits to government agencies.

Every board member must complete training on the Open Public Meetings Act and Open Public Records Act no later than ninety days after taking the oath of office and every four years while in office.

The district general counsel provides the required training to the board.

A quorum of Board Members should not meet (in-person or via email) unless it is a public meeting, duly noticed.

SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

At the beginning of each school year, school assignments will be distributed. Assignments are made based on a rotating list.

Per board policy, individual board members interested in visiting schools or classrooms will make arrangements for visitations through the principals of the various schools. Such visits shall be regarded as expressions of interest in school affairs and not as "inspections" or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes.

SPECIAL EVENTS, RIBBON CUTTINGS, GRAND OPENINGS

A coordinated effort is made between the board office, public information office, and the superintendent's office to prepare speeches, timelines, and other vital tasks for board members' involvement in special events.

Generally, the current Board President will be invited to speak on behalf of the board at an event, but all board members are invited and encouraged to attend and to be recognized.

SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION CYCLE

The superintendent's evaluation cycle runs from July 1st to June 30th.

The superintendent will develop district goals for the year and will publish quarterly reports on the status of each goal in a Friday Report.

In early June the board will meet in Executive Session to begin the superintendent's evaluation. The superintendent will attend the beginning of the meeting to offer reflections on the year. Each board member will have the opportunity to review all the evidence submitted throughout the year and prepare individual draft summative scores. The board will meet in another executive session, allowing the superintendent to address any clarifications needed at the beginning, before finalizing the evaluation.

The board president will review the final evaluation with the superintendent in a closed meeting at a future date.

TACOMA SCHOOL BOARD OPERATING PROTOCOL

For the purpose of enhancing teamwork among members of the board and between the board and the administration, we, the members of the Tacoma School Board, do hereby publicly commit ourselves collectively and individually to the following operating protocol:

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The board will represent the needs and interests of ALL the children in our district.

The board will establish the vision, create policies and assure accountability. The superintendent will manage the schools. Together, the board and superintendent will set goals for the school district.

Individual board members do not have authority. Only the board as a whole has authority. We agree that an individual board member will not take unilateral action. An individual board member will not direct the Superintendent to take action that has not been approved by the board as a whole.

The board will lead by example. We agree to avoid words and actions that create or perpetuate a negative impression on an individual, the board, or the district. While we encourage debate and differing points of view, we will do it with care and respect.

Individual board members will uphold Federal and Washington law as well as District policies and regulations. Board members will not misuse their position and will disclose and disqualify themselves from potential conflicts of interest.

SUPERINTENDENT & STAFF

Surprises to the board or the superintendent will be the exception, not the rule. Board members will notify the superintendent 24 hours in advance when planning to amend or oppose a board action item.

Communications between staff and the board are encouraged. However, board requests of staff are to be directed to the superintendent.

All personnel and student complaints and criticisms received by the board or its individual members will be directed to the superintendent. As board members may be asked to hear an appeal of personnel or student actions, the board will encourage staff, students, families and community to give the appropriate staff person the opportunity to resolve any issues in their school/department.

MEETINGS

The board will strive to be efficient and effective in its meetings. If a board member needs more information, either the superintendent or board chair is to be contacted in a timely manner prior to the meeting date, whenever possible, to allow for responsive information to be obtained and disseminated to all board members.

Audience participation protocol will be consistently practiced, subject to the Guidelines for Public Comments at Board Meetings.

The board will consider research, best practice, public input and financial impacts in their decision making.

The superintendent is the chief executive officer and should recommend, propose or suggest items that go before the board. We agree to ask the board chair or the superintendent to place an item on the agenda instead of bringing it up unexpectedly at the meeting.

The board will speak to the issues on the agenda, not engage in inappropriate debate. Facts and information needed from the administration will be referred to the superintendent.

BOARDSMANSHIP

The board will function through the following public forums:

- *Regular Business Meetings:* For formal district business on matters requiring a quorum of the board
- *Regular Study Sessions:* For in-depth discussion and direction on one or two agreed upon topics
- *Special Meetings or Committee of the Whole:* For an open exchange of views and informal discussion on one or two agreed upon topics
- *Retreat:* For professional development as a team and individual directors, goal and priority setting

The board is mindful of its obligations under RCW Chapter 42.30, the Open Public Meetings Act, and will not hold private meetings involving more than two (2) board members or send emails which could be considered a “meeting.” The Board may take action privately under:

- *Executive Session:* For matters specifically outlined in RCW 42.30.110, such as litigation, sale or lease price of real estate, performance of a public employee, which are exempt from the Open Public Meetings Act rules.
- *Closed Session:* For matters specifically outlined in RCW 42.30.14 such as quasi-judicial hearings or discussing collective bargaining.

Participants have a duty to maintain confidentiality of both the topic and the subject matter of an executive or closed session.

The board commits itself to continuous improvement through board retreats, board training and networking opportunities, professional development opportunities, and self-assessment. Individual board members commit to attending and fully participating in board meetings, study sessions, retreats, committee meetings, and other board activities.

The board president or designee will be the board spokesperson.

When board members serve on various district or community committees or attend committee meetings, their role shall be as liaison to the board and they shall report back to the school board. In these meetings the directors' first priority will be aligned with Tacoma School District goals and the well-being of Tacoma students.

TRAVEL PROCEDURES

The board EA will coordinate travel arrangements for board members.

Each board member is issued a district credit card for use when traveling. In general, the credit card can be used for expenses such as hotels, airline baggage fees, parking, tolls, and taxis but not for meals and gas. Meals that are included in a conference are not allowable for reimbursement, regardless if not taken.

The board EA completes the reconciliation for the credit card as well as any travel associated reimbursement due. Reconciliation and/or reimbursement is delayed when receipts are not submitted in a timely manner.

For out-of-state travel, board policy requires approval on the consent agenda prior to any costs being incurred. Generally, out-of-state travel is allotted at least 30-days for processing for this reason.

Board members are asked to follow District Policies, Regulations, and Guidelines on travel, including following travel per diem rates and only incurring “reasonable” expenses (District Policy 1731 and RCW 43.03.150).

WA SCHOOL BOARD STANDARDS

The Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) created the Washington School Board Standards for districts to use voluntarily as a common framework for governance.

The voluntary standards identify the elements of good governance and effective board leadership as drawn from best practices and current research. They provide shared understanding of what constitutes good governance. They also validate and affirm the importance of the school board's role in ensuring student success.

One set of standards address the school board's leadership role in governing through researched best practices that are proven to promote high levels of district and student performance. Areas covered include responsible governance, expectations for student learning, conditions for student and staff success, accountability, and community engagement.

The other set addresses professional standards for individual school directors. Areas covered include values and ethical behavior, leadership, communication, growth and learning, and accountability.

The full set of standards can be found on WSSDA's website, www.wssda.org.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Collective bargaining is the process in which District employees, through their unions, negotiate contracts to determine their terms of employment. The District maintains nine Collective Bargaining Agreements, one Association Agreement (principals), and the exempt admin group (no agreement, but a compensation handbook). The District works to maintain positive relationships with the bargaining units. The District will update board members about collective bargaining issues in closed sessions.

There are many laws surrounding collective bargaining. Unfair labor practice is a term that is used to describe violations of labor law. Board members should seek advice from General Counsel before making public statements about collective bargaining or meeting with union leaders.

APPENDIX

30-60-90 DAYS IN OFFICE