

# WATERBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Meeting Agenda

<b>Group/Team:</b>	<b>BOE Policy &amp; Legislation Committee</b>			
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>Start Time:</b>	<b>Finish Time:</b>	
Virtual Meeting via ZOOM 1-646-876-9923 Meeting ID: 91646851970	Thursday January 28, 2021	5:30 p.m.		

## Team Norms:

1. All meetings will start on time
2. All issues will be approached with a positive attitude
3. A specific agenda will be set for all meetings
4. All teams members will agree to stay on specific agenda topics
5. Decisions regarding future directions will be based upon actual data

### Purpose of Meeting – Instructional Focus:

### Agenda Items – (Items should reflect next steps from previous meeting.)

[illegible]

**Powers, Purposes, and Duties**

The Board of Education shall be responsible for the maintenance and operation of the public schools as required by law and by the Charter of the City of Waterbury. The Board shall be responsible for carrying out the following duties:

- Interpret the needs of the community and the desired educational requirements to its professional organization.
- Elect the Superintendent of Schools, and approve the appointment of principals and anyone above the rank of principal.
- Work with the Superintendent of Schools to draft a proposed budget for transmittal to the Mayor.
- Provide the Board of Aldermen with statements of the need for additional school facilities, including proposed additions to or extensions of existing school buildings, and set forth such information as the Board of Education may deem appropriate.
- Approve preliminary and final plans and specifications for all new buildings and additions.
- Evaluate the total program of the schools in Waterbury and appraise the efficiency of executive personnel.
- Keep people intelligently informed of purposes, values, conditions and need of public education in Waterbury.
- Consider any other specific actions recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.
- Take any other actions required by law.

**Legal Reference:**

Connecticut General Statutes  
10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules  
10-240 Control of schools  
10-241 Powers of school districts

**Resignation/Censure**

**Resignation**

If for reasons of health, change in domicile, or any other compelling reason a member does decide to terminate service, the Board requests as early as possible notification of intent to resign so that the Board may plan appropriately. When a member of a Board of Education shall cease to be a bona fide resident of the City of Waterbury, membership in the Board shall immediately cease.

**Censure**

The Board may vote to censure or reprimand a member by a two-thirds majority vote of the membership of the whole board.

(cf. 9120 - Officers and Auxiliary Personnel)  
(cf. 9221 - Filling Vacancies).

**Conflict of Interest/Code of Ethics**

The Board desires its members not only to adhere to all laws regarding conflict of interest, but to be continually aware of situations which have the appearance of conflict of interest and to avoid actions that might embarrass themselves or the Board.

Board members shall comply with all statutes and ordinances governing conflicts of interest, including, but not limited to the provisions of Chapter 39 of the Waterbury Code of Ordinances, which sets forth the City's Code of Ethics and the rules regarding Conflicts of Interest for persons elected to City Boards.

**Legal Reference:**

Connecticut General Statutes:

7-479 Conflicts of Interest

10-156e Employees of boards of education permitted to serve as elected officials; exception.

10-232 Restrictions on employment of members of the board of education.

Chapter 39 of the Waterbury Code of Ordinances

**Suspension of Policies**

The Board sets policy. The Superintendent's administration develops regulations to carry out said policies. The Board may review regulations at its discretion.

Policies, bylaws, and Board-adopted regulations may be suspended for a specified purpose, and for a limited time, by a majority vote of all voting members of the Board.

Reference: Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised

## Policy 9325

### **Quorum/Parliamentary Procedure/Rules of Order**

A majority of the voting Board membership shall constitute a quorum of the Board of Education. A quorum of any Board committee is defined as a majority of the assigned committee members.

The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall govern the proceedings of the Board of Education in all instances in which they are not inconsistent with the bylaws of the Board, state and local law.

The President shall preserve order and decorum, may speak to points of order in preference to other members, and shall decide all such questions, subject to an appeal to the Board by motion made and seconded; and no other business shall be in order until the question on the appeal shall have been decided.

Reference: Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised at Article VII, §43.  
Board Policy No. 9010.

## **Electronic Mail Communications**

Board member assigned e-mail addresses are intended to facilitate the expeditious distribution of information. Communication among Board members via e-mail should conform to the same standards as other forms of communication. (i.e., committee meetings, etc.) as directed by the Freedom of Information Act.

### **Guidelines for Board E-Mail Usage**

The Freedom of Information Act (the “Act”) mandates that all meetings of public bodies such as school Boards be open to the public. It is the policy of the Board of Education that e-mail shall not be used in such a manner as to deprive the public of the rights given to it under the Act. To that end, this bylaw sets forth guidelines for e-mail use by Board members when communicating with other Board members.

1. E-mail, like other written forms of communication relating to the conduct of public business is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and subject to disclosure unless otherwise privileged or exempt under the Act.
2. Board members shall not use email as a substitute for deliberations at public Board meetings, and/or shall not discuss policy matters or vote informally on any issues.
3. E-mail should be used to pass along factual information.
4. Discussion of personnel issues and other sensitive subjects should be avoided in e-mail communications. The confidentiality of employee data, student data, and other sensitive subjects must always be maintained.

#### **Legal Reference:**

Connecticut General Statutes  
The Freedom of Information Act.  
1-200 Definitions.  
1-210 Access to public records. Exempt records.  
1-211 Disclosure of computer-stored public records.

## **Appendix A**

### **Board of Education Member Handbook**

#### ***Public Meeting Definitions, Governance Rules and Procedures***

#### **Old Business versus Unfinished Business**

“Old Business” refers to matters that have already been disposed of at a prior meeting. “Old Business” does not refer to matters carried over from previous meeting.

“Unfinished Business” refers to matters carried forward to the current meeting which were left pending at the previous meeting, or matters postponed to the current meeting.

- Matters *left pending* at the previous meeting include:
  1. A matter being discussed at the previous meeting when the meeting adjourned.
  2. A matter on the previous meeting’s agenda as part of unfinished business, but the matter was not addressed before the previous meeting adjourned.
  3. A matter had been postponed *to* the previous meeting, but the matter was not addressed before the previous meeting adjourned.
- Matters NOT *left pending*:
  1. Matters left postponed to the current meeting

#### **Points of Personal Privilege/Points of Order/Points of Inquiry/Point of Information:**

*Members can declare points during the conduct of a meeting. Generally, points so declared by a member do not require a motion, second, debate or voting.*

“**Points of personal privilege**” concern a member’s right as an individual.

- Example 1: if a member is experiencing breathing difficulties because the ventilation system isn’t working properly in the meeting space, the issue should be raised to the President as a point of personal privilege.
- Example 2: if a member cannot hear because of a noise.

“**Points of order**” is used to call out a violation of a rule/procedure to the attention of the President.

- Example: if Robert’s Rules says a particular Motion is not debatable, it is appropriate to use a point of order if the Board is debating the motion.
- Example: Other violations of Robert’s Rules or adopted bylaws

*The President responds to all points of order.*



Points of personal privilege generally do not require a response through the President (Caveat: in the example above regarding ventilation, the President can ask/inquire to correct the problem/issue).

**“Point of inquiry”** is used by a member to ask for clarification in a report in order to make an informed voting decision.

**“Point of information”** is used when a member needs to bring up an additional point or additional information (in the form of a non-debatable statement) so that the other members can make fully informed voting decisions.

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# BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION



## MEMBER HANDBOOK

*Adopted October 2011*

*Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.*

*- John Dewey*

## **Preamble**

The Berlin Board of Education understands that access to a quality public education is not just a constitutional requirement, but is also a moral imperative to ensure that all individuals have an opportunity to fully develop their talents, moral imagination and essential humanity. Accordingly, all Berlin students are entitled to a quality educational experience that prepares them to be lifelong learners.

In order to provide the necessary and appropriate leadership for the Berlin Public Schools, the Berlin Board of Education, both collectively and individually, is committed to governing as a professional board of directors. This means a commitment to the principles and practice of professional governance, the sharing of a common understanding of Board policies, practices, procedures and principles, a focus on continuous learning and improvement, and a willingness to serve as a model of effective moral leadership to students, staff and the community. This handbook is an attempt to set down in writing the Board's procedures and principles for the benefit of current and future members of the Berlin Board of Education.

## **Mission Statement**

The Berlin Board of Education is committed to continuous improvement leading to student achievement and student success.

## **Board Goals**

### Student Achievement

Each and every student in the Berlin Public Schools will achieve established, rigorous performance standards in all areas of student learning by becoming independent strategic readers, problem solvers, and critical thinkers.

### Communication

The Berlin Board of Education will establish reciprocal communication that is accessible and understandable, and that unites all citizens around the belief that high-quality public education is a community's most valuable asset.

### Facilities and Educational Adequacy

The Berlin Board of Education will ensure all students have the opportunity to learn and achieve in safe and educationally adequate facilities by meeting the needs of the district with respect to adequate space and the quality of learning environments.

## Board Governance

The Berlin Board of Education will institutionalize a focus on continuous improvement leading to student achievement and student success through its development of policy, ongoing evaluation, and commitment to individual and Board professional growth.

### **Core Values**

The Board will:

1. Deliberate in many voices, but govern in one.
2. Cultivate a sense of group responsibility; understanding that it is the Board, not the staff or administration, which is responsible for excellence in governance.
3. Be an active part of the school district's leadership team, striving to lead the district through a clear mission statement, an articulated vision for the district, shared and commonly understood goals, broad and clearly written policies, and a continual monitoring of the school and student performance.
4. Be willing to hold itself to high standards of excellence in governance and professional responsibility, including a willingness to hold individual Board members and the Board itself accountable for its actions.
5. Continually monitor its own process, performance and progress.
6. Vigorously and intelligently advocate for the school district and its students on the local, state and national level.
7. Commit, both individually and collectively, to being well-informed and educated on local, state and national educational issues, initiatives and practices.
8. Regularly communicate with all stakeholders about school district performance, direction, initiatives, issues and ideas.
9. Formally and informally recognize and celebrate school, staff and student success.
10. Insist on the pursuit of excellence on the part of all with a role in the school district – staff, students and board members.
11. Always strive to act in the interest of what is best for all students, believing that all students can learn and succeed at a high level.
12. Serve as a model of positive professional and ethical conduct.



## **Key Work of School Boards**

In addition to its Mission Statement and Board Goals, as well as responsibilities defined by law, the Board subscribes to the *Key Work of School Boards*. This framework for planning and action, developed by the National School Board Association, is based on the system's concept that no action or progress is accomplished in isolation. The eight essential areas for Board focus and action are as follows:

Vision – establishing a clear vision of student achievement as a top priority of the Board, staff and community.

Standards – setting clear standards for student performance.

Assessment – establishing regular and valid assessments to measure district and student progress.

Accountability – establishing a process that holds the school system accountable for student success.

Alignment – aligning of all district resources to focus on student performance.

Climate – creating a positive climate throughout the school district to promote student success.

Collaborative Relationships – building collaborative relationships with the community to promote and develop a consensus and understanding of the priority of student achievement.

Continuous Improvement – committing all individuals within the school district to the idea of continuous improvement in the pursuit of student achievement and success.

## **Board Authority and Responsibility**

The Board of Education is ultimately responsible for ensuring that Berlin residents have access to a free, quality education through high school. Connecticut law imbues the Board with specific and often broad authority over the administration of Berlin schools. For example, the Board of Education exercises control over school buildings and property, employs and supervises the superintendent of schools, adopts a budget, and approves textbooks. A lengthier and more specific listing of the Board's authority can be found in Chapter 10 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

While the Board has broad authority over the Berlin schools, much of this authority is delegated to the superintendent of schools and other district employees. The Board of Education functions, not as management responsible for the administration of the school

district, but as a board of directors responsible for establishing a vision for Berlin's schools, and monitoring its progress in reaching that vision.

Reference: BOE Policy 9075

### **Authority of Individual Board Members**

Individual Board members have no authority except when they are meeting as a Board of Education. The Board of Education is a collective body and, by statute, can only act when a quorum is assembled in a legally constituted meeting. The statements or actions of individual Board members do not bind the Board of Education, except when that statement or action has been authorized by an official act of the Board. Board members should be careful not to act or speak in a manner that suggests they are speaking or acting on behalf of the board of education or the school district when they have not been so authorized by the Board.

Reference: BOE Policy 9075

### **Board Committees**

The Board understands that not all of its work can be accomplished at regularly scheduled meetings of the entire Board, and that in order to dedicate the necessary time, expertise and focus on individual issues it is necessary to utilize committees of the Board. The Board's committee structure was developed so that it is aligned with the Board's goals to better focus Board activity and action on its stated priorities.

The Board of Education has three standing committees. These committees are: Leadership, Accountability and Measurement; Communications and Alignment; and Resources and Capacity Building. Each committee is composed of three Board members appointed by the Board president, with each member serving on one committee.

In addition to the three standing committees, when a particular issue calls for the expertise of more than one committee – such as the review of proposed Board bylaws – the Board will utilize a Leadership Committee consisting of the chairs of the three standing committees and the Board president, if he/she is not a chair of one of the three standing committees. The Board will also rely on ad hoc committees, appointed by the Board president, for those tasks that require a committee of the Board and do not fall within the parameters of the standing committees (i.e. disciplinary and residency hearings).

Reference: BOE Policy 9001

## **Student Information**

Except for statutorily mandated exceptions, such as expulsion and residency hearings, Board members do not get involved with individual student matters. Individual student information is confidential and Board members only have access to this information when that information is necessary for Board members to perform a function in their official capacity.

## **Indemnification of Board Members**

Connecticut law provides that the school district must indemnify and hold school employees, volunteers and board members harmless from any claim, demand or judgment from negligence in the performance of their duties and responsibilities. This protection includes legal fees, expenses and other costs.

Reference: CGS 10-235

## **Board Meetings**

### Meeting Schedule

The Board of Education establishes its annual meeting schedule at its annual meeting in November. The Board meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month, except in the months of July, August, November and December, when it meets once.

Reference: BOE Policy 9046

### Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Board of Education are those meetings listed on its annual schedule of meetings voted on at the annual meeting. Board meetings start at 7:00 p.m. and are generally held at the Board of Education Meeting Room. At regular meetings, the Board can add items to the meeting agenda.

### Special Meetings

Meetings of the entire Board that are not on the annual schedule of meetings are special meetings. At a special meeting, the Board cannot add items to the meeting agenda for discussion or action.



### Meeting Agendas

The superintendent of schools, in conjunction with the Board president, develops an agenda for each Board meeting. Meeting agendas, along with necessary documents and materials, are distributed to Board members prior to the meeting. Board agendas are designed to minimize votes and discussion on matters that are unnecessary, trivial, or are best addressed at the non-board level. Ideally, Board agendas are designed so that meeting time is dedicated to a focused, informed discussion on student achievement and educational priorities.

Reference: BOE Policy 9010

### Robert's Rules of Order

The Board conducts its meetings utilizing the *Robert's Rules of Order*, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition, for the conduct of its meetings, except when these rules are in conflict with Board policy or Connecticut law. The Board president serves as the Board parliamentarian, unless another board member is chosen as parliamentarian by a majority of the Board.

Reference: BOE Policy 9035

### Board Quorum

Five members of the Board shall constitute a quorum. Unless otherwise specified by Board policy, a majority of board members voting on a particular item is sufficient for approval.

Reference: BOE Policy 9065

### Consent Agenda

Agenda items that require a vote by the Board, but may not require discussion are to be placed on the consent agenda. The consent agenda is an item on the meeting agenda in which all voting items that do not require Board discussion or debate are listed. A vote to approve the consent agenda by the Board shall approve all items listed on the consent agenda. If a Board member wishes to discuss an item, he/she shall request that the item be taken off the consent agenda, and it will be discussed and voted on separately following a vote on the consent agenda.



## Board Votes

The Board of Education is a collective body and, as such, can only act via a vote by its members. Board votes must be in public at a properly noticed meeting of the Board and recorded in writing. Pursuant to Robert's Rules, all motions must be made by one board member and seconded by another. Members may vote in favor, against or abstain from voting. Members may explain their vote, but are not required to explain it.

Reference: BOE Policy 9065

## Board Member Attendance

Board members are expected to attend meetings of the Board, including meetings of their assigned committee. While it is almost inevitable that, on occasion, an individual member will have a personal or professional conflict that prevents him/her from attending a meeting, ideally this is a rare and unavoidable circumstance. Service on the Board of Education is a public trust on behalf of the community and children of Berlin, and it is expected that Board members will make this service a priority. The Board of Education functions best when all nine members devote the time, energy, preparation and seriousness of purpose necessary to accomplish exceptional work and that is called for by public service.

## Meeting Minutes

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), minutes must be taken at all meetings of the Board of Education. These minutes must be available within seven days of the meeting, but all votes of the Board must be reduced to writing and available within forty-eight hours. The FOIA requires that minutes must contain the recording of votes and the names of those members in attendance. These requirements apply to meetings of Board committees as well.

In order to appropriately apprise the public of the Board's work, Board minutes should contain the time of the meeting; members in attendance; a brief description of any business transacted by the Board, along with any Board action; the recording of Board member votes; and a description of any executive session held, along with the names of all individuals present for the executive session.

Reference: BOE Policy 9040

## Executive Session

Although, as a public agency, the Board must meet and conduct its business in public, under certain narrowly-defined exceptions, the Board may exclude the public from a

portion of its meeting by calling an executive session. The Freedom of Information Act provides that a board of education may hold an executive session by a two-thirds vote of those members in attendance and voting. Although the law allows for discussion in executive session, any action by the Board must be taken in open session.

The permissible reasons for holding an executive session are limited and, when in doubt, the Board should consult with its counsel. Some reasons are to discuss documents with respect to collective bargaining, personnel matters (with the permission of the individual who is the subject of the discussion), pending claims and litigation, confidential documents and student matters.

Reference: BOE Policy 9060

### Notice of Meetings

The regular schedule of Board meetings, established at the Board's annual meeting, is forwarded to the town clerk. All Board meetings must be posted at least twenty-four hours prior to a meeting, except in emergency circumstances. Board members are to receive meeting agendas and relevant documents and materials prior to meetings.

### Open Meeting Requirements

As a public agency, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requires that all meetings of the Board be posted at least twenty-four hours in advance and that members of the public are allowed to be present. Additionally, the FOIA requires that all Board documents be made available to the public promptly upon request, with limited provisions for the redaction of confidential information.

Reference: BOE Policy 9060

### Public Comment at Meetings

The Board may designate a meeting agenda item to allow for public comment, permitting any individual or group to address the Board concerning any subject that lies within its jurisdiction. Three minutes may be allotted to each speaker and a maximum of nine (9) minutes per topic, although the Board president may extend this time, as appropriate. The Board may modify these limitations at the beginning of a meeting if the number of persons wishing to speak makes it advisable to do so. No inappropriate or disrespectful conduct shall be permitted at any Board of Education meeting. Persistence in such conduct shall be grounds for summary termination, by the president, of that individual's privilege of address and, if disruptive behavior continues, removal from the meeting. All speakers must identify themselves by name and address.

The public comment, or Audience of Citizens, portion of a meeting is an opportunity for Board members to hear from the public. It is not an opportunity for Board members to engage in discussion or debate with members of the public. Accordingly, Board members will not comment on or respond to public comments during Audience of Citizens.

Reference: BOE Policy 9035

### Meeting Norms

It is the expectation that the Board of Education is a professional organization whose meetings model appropriate behavior for the school district. Members will be prepared for meetings and arrive on time, with those individuals who cannot timely attend giving prior notice to the Board president. Board members will be dressed professionally for all public meetings. Board meetings will be conducted via understood and established procedures as set forth in Board policy and bylaws.

In order to ensure that meetings of the Board are as effective and useful as possible, members will avoid surprises by articulating specific concerns in advance. The Board believes that informed, respectful discussion and debate is the best means of arriving at good decisions for the school district. Accordingly, during discussion Board members will listen attentively, consider all points of view, support their positions with facts when possible, be prepared to answer questions from other Board members, focus on the issue at hand, avoid negative and personal comments, and be prepared to compromise, understanding that the goal of debate among Board members is not to prevail but to arrive at the best possible decision for the school district.

Board meetings, following the Pledge of Allegiance and a brief moment of silence, begin with the introductions of Board members and school administrators present at the meeting, followed by a restatement of the Board's mission statement. Copies of materials and handouts will be made available to the public so that they can better follow the proceedings.

### Annual Meeting

The November Board meeting following the election is the Board's Annual Meeting. At this meeting, the newly-elected Board members will sit with the Board for the first time and the Board will elect officers and select legal counsel. The Board will also recognize teachers of the year, student award winners, staff members and school volunteers.

Reference: BOE Policy 9046