

North Kitsap School Board and Superintendent Operating Principles

Introduction

Successful organizations are the result of effective and dynamic leadership. To assure a quality operation, leaders agree on basic ways of operating together. Operating principles define the beliefs, values, and methods of working together.

The manner in which the Board and Superintendent conduct their business becomes a model throughout the organization and serves for staff and community as an example of how problems are solved.

This procedure sets the principles and practices of cooperative behavior for North Kitsap School District leadership. The board and superintendent may document their commitment to strive to uphold these principles by passing a resolution annually.

These operating principles are not intended to limit a board Director's ability to uphold their oath of office to faithfully discharge the duties of their office in affirmation of support to the constitutions of the United States and the State of Washington. Additionally, these principles will not hinder individual board Directors' freedom of individual opinion or expression, nor will it limit their freedom to individually communicate with any members of their constituency. If a board Director believes any of the operating principles in this procedure are in conflict with their oath, constitutions of the United States and the State of Washington and their freedoms stated by those, they will strive to rectify the conflict by pursuing the revision of these operating principles in this procedure.

LEADERSHIP ROLES	
NKSD Board of Directors	NKSD Superintendent
Reviews and Suggests What	Decides How
Requests Information	Seeks and Provides Information
Considers Issues	Provides Recommendations
Creates, Reviews, and Adopts Policy	Recommends and Carries Out Policy
Approves and Reviews Plans	Implements Vision
Monitors Progress	Reports Progress
Contracts with Personnel	Supervises Hiring Process and Practices
Approves Evaluation Criteria and Procedures	Supervises and Evaluates Personnel
Approves and Reviews Budget	Formulates Budget
Represents Public Interest	Acts in Public Interest

COOPERATION AND SUPPORT

Open communication requires trust, respect, and a fundamental belief in goodwill among board members and the superintendent.

A sustained commitment to an organization survives and is nurtured in an open environment that recognizes the need and right of individuals to construct, express, examine, and synthesize divergent thought. Understanding opposing viewpoints helps us to better represent North Kitsap School District's community's interests.

We are challenged to pursue a common intent through a review of opinion and fact, to an end that is understood and defensible by all. Once a final decision is reached, each member will support the decision of the board as authority rests with the whole board and not individual board members. Individual members may maintain their own contrary opinion, but recognize that the expression of that opinion may or may not promote discord and undermine the board's authority.

We strive to minimize misunderstandings and reduce conflict by:

- Supporting each other constructively and courteously.
- Maintaining confidentiality.
- Focusing our discussions on agenda items and issues.
- Constructively dealing with disagreement.
- Upholding the integrity of every individual.
- Pursuing thorough understanding.
- Involving those parties who will be affected by the decision and solution.
- Expressing our opinions and positions on issues honestly and openly.

School board members strive to emulate the Individual School Director Standards of the Washington State School Directors' Association found on www.wssda.org.

COMMUNICATIONS

The board will give direction to the superintendent as quorum of members through adopted policies or action(s) taken at board meetings. The superintendent will communicate the direction to the staff and keep them informed of board goals, priorities, concerns and actions.

The board will give the superintendent feedback on the superintendent's performance on a regular basis. [Procedure 1630P Evaluation of the Superintendent]

The superintendent will let the board know as soon as possible of any major issue that may arise which could be problematic for the district.

The board president will be the official spokesperson for the board and will strive to best represent board decisions without personal opinion. The superintendent will be the official spokesperson for district operations.

When individual board members express their opinions to the community and public, they will explicitly state that their opinions are just their opinions and do not reflect the official position of the board. When the opinion is contrary to the official board position, the individual will indicate that their personal opinion is contrary to the board and is only an individual opinion.

To facilitate proper Open Public Meeting Act (OPMA) notifications, board members will attempt to communicate intended attendance at scheduled district activities beyond board

meetings to the superintendent or the superintendent's assistant. Attendance is encouraged at district activities even if intended attendance was not previously communicated. If there inadvertently is a board quorum present, no discussions of school business can be conducted. If discussions commence, enough members should leave to eliminate the quorum.

School and facility visits are encouraged and provide the board with perspectives relevant to their work. When board members visit schools and facilities, they should notify the Superintendent, coordinate with central office staff and use school visitor procedures (Procedure No. 4200P).

Only the superintendent or their designee is to contact the district's attorneys, consultants, or negotiators. The board may request the superintendent to arrange a meeting, if they feel there is a need.

The board president, with direction from the board, may contact the district's legal counsel and share that information with the remainder of the board.

JUDGMENT AND TRUST

The complexities of operating a school district cannot be fully addressed in policies, procedures or operating principles. Working with people and handling difficult and controversial issues on a daily basis requires good judgment, common sense and a strong trust relationship between board and superintendent. Every complaint cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved; every issue or concern will not be foreseen. We will approach these situations with the belief the other person is working in good faith with good expectations.

When an individual board member is contacted by a staff or community member regarding a complaint or concern, the best approach is to:

1. Listen to the concern or complaint and assist by providing them information about the appropriate channels and processes for communicating the complaint or concern.
2. Inform the superintendent of the complaint/concern. The superintendent will follow-up on the matter and update board member, and the entire board where appropriate.

DECISION MAKING

The identification and evaluation of alternatives, and awareness of short- and long-term consequences, and an appreciation for the needs of community, as well as individuals are essential to the decision-making process.

In order to formulate and execute sound decisions, we strive to:

- Resolve problems and make decisions at the lowest level possible.
- Provide for input from all concerned, when possible.
- Use a decision-making style appropriate to the situation.
- Engage in respectful deliberation as decisions are made.
- Reevaluate the effectiveness of the decision, when appropriate.
- Communicate decisions that are made with clarity.

- Be as transparent to the public as the law requires

Using this process, we recognize that a decision may sometimes be superseded by a higher level of authority. When this occurs, the rationale will be communicated to those involved before releasing the information.

BOARD MEETINGS

Board meetings are the way the board conducts business and are open to the community. The meetings will be conducted effectively and will use Robert's Rules of Order as a guideline. Board meetings will be conducted consistent with board Policies 1400 through 1440.

1. Board members will make every effort to communicate changes and corrections to the posted minutes to the superintendent's assistant or the superintendent as soon as they are provided. An updated copy of the minutes will be posted two days prior to the meeting.
2. Board agendas will be developed as a partnership between the board and the superintendent. The agenda will be first established at the previous board meeting. The board president and the superintendent will review the agenda in detail and may make revisions by the Friday before the Thursday board meeting.
3. Board meeting agendas are intended to include timely topical presentations from staff, providing the Board with needed information that supports recommendations related to initiatives and programs to be implemented or current programs. All items addressed to the board for action or discussion by staff will be given in an objective fashion explaining both the positive and negative aspects of the action.
4. Except in cases of real urgency, board actions on issues will be limited to those issues and items that are on the agenda.
5. Board meeting agenda and background material on agenda items will be provided electronically to all board members by the Friday before the Thursday board meeting.
6. Board members will review all material provided and seek clarification or additional information as needed prior to the board meeting. Board members will discuss agenda items they have concerns about with the superintendent and/or board president prior to the board meeting. Discussing concerns with agenda items prior to the board meeting is a courtesy and promotes trust and develops effective working relationships and does not limit an individual board member from making any comments, asking any questions and providing any feedback in the board meeting.
7. Board members requesting information from staff at board meetings will do so through the superintendent.
8. Open and honest discussion of issues, ideas and positions on agenda item is encouraged.

9. If board members feel “rushed” or feel they do not have enough information, the board member will request a “table” or postponement until such time as adequate information is presented.

10. Once a final decision has been made, board members and superintendent should individually and collectively, publicly support successful implementation. This support does not limit an individual board member’s opinion or expression of that opinion. However, the board member must state that as a member of the board they are obligated to support the implementation of the board’s decision as the board’s authority resides with the majority of the board and not the individual member.

11. All discussions that occur during executive sessions are privileged and shall not be shared with anyone unless it is the express decision of the board to do so.

LISTENING/COMMUNICATION

Listening expresses our concern for others by showing an interest in not only the information but also the other person. Active listening benefits each party, and is a key to effective communication. We should take sufficient time to summarize and paraphrase what we have heard. Messages should be open and honest. We work to minimize misunderstandings and reduce conflict. We strive for mutual understanding and support.

As a board/superintendent leadership team, we strive to:

- Keep the discussions professional.
- Demonstrate that we have recognized the other’s point of view.
- Share information with all people affected in a timely manner.

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