

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Liberty Elementary School District</b> <b>Governing Board-Superintendent Operating Standards (Formed July 2023)</b></p>
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For the purpose of enhancing teamwork among Members of the Board and between the Board and Administration, we, the Members of the Liberty Elementary School District Board, do hereby publicly commit ourselves collectively and individually to the following operating protocol:

- The Board will represent the needs and interests of all the children in the Liberty Elementary School District and Board Meetings will reflect the positive focus of students and student achievement.
- Communications between staff and the Board are encouraged. However, Board requests that will likely require considerable time or have political implications are to be directed to the Board President and/or Superintendent. All personnel complaints and criticisms received by the Board or its individual members will be directed to the Superintendent.
- The Board and the Superintendent will set goals annually for Liberty Elementary, the Superintendent, and themselves, that are clear using the strategic plan format as a framework.
- The last stop, not the first, will be the School Board. We agree to follow the chain of command and insist that others do so. While the board is eager to listen to its constituents and staff, each inquiry is to be referred to the person who can properly and expeditiously address the issue.
- A Board Member will encourage others to present their own issues, problems or proposals in a constructive manner.
- The Board will emphasize planning, policy-making and public relations rather than becoming involved in the management of the schools.
- The Board will address its behavior by yearly self-evaluation and by addressing itself to any individual problems, such as poor meeting attendance, leaks of confidential information and/or speaking poorly publicly of other board members.
- The Superintendent is the Chief Executive Officer and should recommend/propose/suggest on most matters before the board.
- Surprises to the board or the Superintendent will be the exception, not the rule. There should be no surprises at a board meeting. We agree to ask the Board President or the Superintendent to place an item on the agenda instead of bringing it up unexpectedly at the meeting.
- 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. The Board President will communicate the position(s) of the Board on controversial issues.

- Conduct at a Board Meeting is very important. We agree to avoid words and actions that create 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 civility, care and respect to avoid an escalation of negative impressions or incidents. Individual members may disagree with a board action, but will support the decision of the board as a whole.
- To be efficient and effective, long board meetings must be avoided. Points are to be made in as few words as possible; speeches at board meetings will be minimal. If a board member believes he/she doesn't have enough information or has questions, either the superintendent or the board president is to be called before the meeting.
- Board meetings are for decision-making, action and votes, not endless discussion. Board Members will be engaged, come prepared and agree to "move the question" when discussion is repetitive.
- The Superintendent will ensure that supporting information required for informed decision-making is provided to the Board at least three days prior to the meeting.
- Conflicts between Board Members may be addressed by the Board President.
- The Governing Board will not play to the audience. We agree to speak to the issues on the agenda and attend to our fellow Board Members. Facts and information needed from the Administration will be referred to the Superintendent.

Listening to complaints and concerns is part of serving on a school board. Board Members must remember that they have a duty to remain "fair and impartial" in all situations. A complaint or concern may start off as something passed in casual conversation, but ultimately may require investigation and board action. As this is the case, individual Board Members need to be very careful in terms of how they respond to complaints or concerns. We rarely know the path issues will take and thus a standard of care is always necessary when addressing issues which come before us. The board is oftentimes the last stop if a complaint or concern moves through the process. If an individual Board Member becomes involved prior to a board level hearing it is likely the public will see them as biased. To prevent a charge of bias, or having prejudged the facts of a situation, a method should be employed which will protect individual Board Members. One such option is the LAST method for handling complaints and concerns (Associated School Boards of South Dakota).

**Listen** to the person...**Acknowledge** their complaint or concern...**Send** them to the correct person (lowest level in the organization where the issue can be resolved)...**Thank** them for their interest in the district

Use of the LAST method protects both the individual Board Member and the school district when the board must corporately consider a complaint or concern. It ultimately ensures all involved are treated in a fair and impartial manner.

## Who Has Authority for What – The Board and Superintendent as a Team

A question often asked by Board Members and Superintendents is “What is the role of the Board and what is the role of the Superintendent in the operation of the school district?” The age-old statement that the board sets policy and the Superintendent administers that policy would seem to indicate a very distinct and clear dividing line between the respective roles of each. That division, however, is not always so clear nor is it one upon which everyone involved agrees. Many times Board Members are tempted to get in and “do” the job themselves. Conflict situations arise when the Board and the Superintendent have not defined their specific roles within the district. Keeping roles clear and communications open is the key to good Board/Superintendent relationships.

The real need in each district is for the Board and Superintendent to decide what each is to do and establish proper procedures that will lead to the performance of those duties.

Board Members, as they make decisions and find themselves involved in the business of the district, should ask themselves: Are we providing leadership to the Superintendent and staff and establishing policy for the district or have we stepped into the role of the administration? Superintendents should ask themselves: Am I providing leadership to the board in pointing out areas where policy is needed, or am I usurping the board's responsibility by establishing policy? Worse yet, am I forcing the board to make administrative decisions because I don't want to take the responsibility.

The following division of roles and responsibilities between the Board and Superintendent are provided as examples (Adapted from the Nebraska School Boards Association).

	<b><u>School Board</u></b>	<b><u>Superintendent</u></b>
1. Policy	Adopts	Implements and suggests
2. Meetings	In charge of	Serves as a resource person
3. Budgets/Finance/ Audits	Adopts and monitors	Prepares, administers, monitors details
4. Instruction	Establish criteria, approves and monitors	Recommends, oversees staff's efforts
5. Personnel	Establishes criteria, approves or rejects	Interviews, recommends, hires, evaluates, promotes staff development
6. Facilities/Transportation/ Food Services	Develops policy on use of facilities, transportation, food services	Implements policy, writes rules and regulations, makes recommendations
7. Community Relations	Creates a positive image for district	Creates a positive image for district, directs communications
8. The Board and Superintendent	Hires the Superintendent, establishes expectations, evaluates	Works at the pleasure of the Board, is Chief Executive Officer of the District

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Regular:

- The Superintendent will communicate with Governing Board Members as quickly as possible, within a 24 hour period. Governing Board Members will communicate in a timely manner any concerns, complaints or issues they hear from community members or staff and will ensure that all parent, community or staff issues are brought to the board by the individual raising the concern.
- The Superintendent answers all Governing Board Member questions by responding to all members of the Governing Board. The Superintendent identifies and strives to use each Governing Board Member's preferred method of communication and strives to communicate with all Governing Board Members on an equal basis.
- The Superintendent will communicate with the Governing Board members weekly through the Board Update at the end of the week. During Fall/Winter/Spring/Summer Breaks this may not occur as frequently.
- Members of the Board will be cognizant and careful regarding communicating by emails. They should not use "reply all", and avoid any discussion with each other concerning District matters that may come before the Board for the decision making process.
- The District maintains a Communications Team led by the Director of Communications, which handles social media posting and responses. Communication with the media will be handled by the appropriate Superintendent Designee.
- Members of the Governing Board/Superintendent Team are mindful that all communications are subject to the Open Meeting Law and Governing Board Members are mindful that communicating with a quorum of Governing Board Members regarding official Board business, if not properly posted, may constitute an Open Meeting Law violation.
- The Governing Board President and the Superintendent meet prior to each Governing Board meeting to establish the meeting agenda and weekly to discuss school district issues to be addressed .
- Communications and body language at the board dais are handled by all on the Governing Board/Superintendent Team in a professional manner.

Emergency/Crisis Communication Protocol Superintendent-Board:

- The Governing Board/Superintendent Team discusses emergency scenarios and establishes standards related to prioritizing when the Superintendent will communicate emergency situations to the Governing Board (High = Immediate, Medium = within 3 Hours, Low = Next Day).
- District emergency communication standards (24/7/365) are established for disseminating information to parents, staff, community and the media by the Superintendent.
- The superintendent establishes emergency communication standards and strategies that can be implemented from a variety of physical locations to ensure a unified messaging district-wide.
- Communication with the media will be handled by the appropriate Superintendent Designee
- The District communicates at the beginning of each school year how information regarding emergencies will be communicated to various stakeholder groups.
- The District's Emergency Response Plan includes a Crisis Communication section, which is in alignment with these standards.

  
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Board President

  
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Board Member

  
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Board Member

  
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Date

  
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