

## **BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT OPERATING AGREEMENTS**

### **A. Purpose of Agreement**

The Springfield Board of Directors is the policy making body for Springfield Public Schools. To effectively meet the system's challenges, the Board of Directors must function with the Superintendent as a cohesive leadership team. To ensure unity in purpose and clarity in process; effective group agreements should be in place. The following are the group agreements for the Springfield Board of Directors and the Superintendent.

### **B. Board Member Job Description (see Policy BBAA and BBF)**

1. Work as a team to set the long-term direction of Springfield Public Schools with a clear vision, mission statement, measurable goals, and priorities.
2. Focus on policymaking, policy-review, planning, and evaluation.
3. Manage Board processes including Board-Superintendent Operating agreements and participating in an annual Board self-evaluation.
4. Set priorities annually for Board professional development, pursuing continuous improvement through regular board work sessions and professional development activities from outside organizations (e.g., OSBA).
5. Supervise the hiring, performance evaluation, and other personnel management processes related to the Superintendent.
6. Work with the Superintendent as a team, recognizing that the Superintendent is the Board's employee and advisor.
7. Respect the Superintendent's responsibility to manage the day-to-day operations of the District and to direct employees in District and school matters.
8. Be accountable for the financial stewardship of the District, including but not limited to the following responsibilities: serving on the Budget Committee, aligning resources with goals and priorities, setting expectations, monitoring progress, adopting the Budget, and accepting the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.
9. Deliberate and make decisions in accordance with public meeting law. Foster a positive Board environment; encouraging debate, different points of view, and listening, doing so with care and respect.
10. Understand that as an individual, a Board member has no authority or inherent powers. The only authority to direct action rests with the full majority of the Board sitting and acting at the Board table.
11. Board members will adhere to standards of ethical conduct and professionalism. They will also maintain confidentiality according to the Oregon Revised Statute standards, particularly in executive session and administrative function sessions, including when interacting with staff, elected officials, and the community.
12. School board members have a right to express their own personal views on school district issues. However, school board members who wish to express their personal opinions about issues before the voters must:
  - a. Clearly distinguish their personal views from those of the board they represent.

- b. Not use district funds, facilities, or channels of communication to encourage voters to vote in support or against any proposition.

**C. Role of Board Leadership: Board Chair/Vice Chair (see Policy BCB, BH/BHA)**

1. Manage the Board's process; convene meetings; develop the Board agenda with the Superintendent, seeking Board member input; and execute documents, as appropriate.
2. Serve as the authorized spokesperson for the Board with regard to Board policy, process, and decisions. The Chair may delegate this responsibility to other Board members and/or the Superintendent.
3. Communicate with individual Board Members concerns shared with the Chair by other Board members regarding issues agreed to in the Operating Agreement.
4. Facilitate the orientation of new Board Members.
5. Assist the Superintendent in communicating important information to the full Board. Keep Board members apprised of information exchanged with the Superintendent.
6. The Vice Chair will perform these duties when the Chair is not available.

**D. Role of the Superintendent (see Policy BCD and AE)**

1. Manage the day-to-day operations of the District.
2. Work as a team with Board Members.
3. Work with the Board to establish a clear vision for the District.
4. Collaborate with the Board to develop district goals that support the physical and cognitive growth and development of students, reviewed and revised as needed.
5. Collaborate with the Chair and Vice Chair to effectively bring information and issues to the Board to facilitate proactive, data-informed decisions on policy and budget/revenue issues.
6. Facilitate and direct communication between the central office staff and the Board that will require more than 20 minutes of staff time or when confidential by nature.
7. Provide regular communications to the Board. This may include: scheduling information for activities and events, as well as notice, follow-up or resolution of issues.

**E. Meeting Operations and Decision Making (see Policy BD/BDA, BDB, BDC, BDD, BDDA, BDDD, BDDF, BDDG, BDDH)**

1. Attend and be fully engaged with a minimal distraction from cell phones, etc. at regularly scheduled Board meetings unless prevented by sickness or an unavoidable cause.
2. Respect the scheduled starting and ending times for meetings. Executive sessions and work sessions will end no later than 10 minutes before Board meetings. The Vice Chair will assist the Board Chair with keeping on schedule.
3. Cooperate in scheduling special meetings and/or work sessions for planning and training purposes.
4. Board meeting discussions should be thorough yet concise and pertinent to the issues on the agenda.
5. Cast a vote on all matters except when a conflict of interest arises.
6. Uphold decisions that have been made by the Board.

### **Board Meeting Agenda Preparation**

1. A draft agenda will be developed by the Superintendent, Board Chair, and Vice Chair. The draft agenda will be provided to all Board members three business days prior to the leadership team meeting to finalize the agenda.
2. In the event that circumstances require that an item be added to an agenda after it has been made public, the superintendent, in consultation with the Board Chair, will distribute an updated agenda or addendum and any appropriate supporting materials as soon as practicable.
3. Board Members will follow the procedure outlined below for requesting items on the Board Agenda:
  - a. Contact the Board Chair and Superintendent via email no later than Monday the week prior to a scheduled Board meeting. The subject line of this email should read *Proposed Agenda Item(s)*.
  - b. If further clarity on the item is needed, the Board Chair will contact the Board member who proposed the item for further clarification.
  - c. Proposed items will be discussed in the Board leadership meeting prior to the meeting.
  - d. The Board Chair or Superintendent will follow up with the Board member after the leadership meeting to inform them of the next steps on the proposed item.
4. If a board member would like to add an item after the agenda has been distributed, a motion may be made at the Board meeting. The motion requires a second, is debatable on changing the agenda only, and needs a simple majority vote to be added to the agenda.
5. If a decision is not needed immediately, it may be better to have the topic added to the agenda for a subsequent meeting, giving all board members and staff sufficient time to prepare for a discussion.

### **Board Meeting Preparation**

1. District administrative staff will supply appropriate supporting information required for informed decision-making to each board member in the board meeting packet. This packet will be available to Board members electronically. A paper copy may be requested for pick up the Friday prior to the Board Meeting.
2. All Board Members are expected to be prepared to address relevant agenda items.
  - a. Board members need to read and be familiar with agenda packet materials before each board meeting.
  - b. Board members who have questions regarding agenda items should ask these questions of the Superintendent before the scheduled board meetings. Any questions about agenda items or requests for additional information about them will be directed to the Superintendent or designated administrator and copied to all the members of the Board.
  - c. Board Members will, as far as possible, let the Superintendent know ahead of time when a request for information will be made in a public meeting so that staff can be prepared to provide a thorough answer.
  - d. "No Surprises Rule": If a Board member feels a question may be controversial, or require staff preparation, please let the Superintendent and/or Board Chair know

ahead of time. They can help determine if there is a better way to address the issue. If your question is to clarify an issue or if it is prompted by the discussion, then it is appropriate to ask it at the board meeting, as long as the question does not broach topics properly discussed in executive session. Be clear in communication with the Superintendent and Board Chair to avoid surprises at board meetings. Make it a goal to make no new proposals on the night that the Board is scheduled to make a decision or action.

### **Consent Agenda**

1. A consent agenda is an item listed on the regular agenda that groups routine items under one agenda heading. Routine items (such as approving minutes of the last meeting) can thus be approved by a single unified motion and vote of the board. The purpose of the consent agenda is to expedite business and streamline the meeting. There is no discussion of items on a consent agenda. If clarification of an item is necessary then a board member can request that the item be removed from the consent agenda and considered by the board as a separate motion.
2. There are three specific times that call for an item to be pulled:
  - a. When a board member plans to vote “no”
  - b. When a board member needs further information or discussion before deciding how to vote.
  - c. When a board member has a conflict of interest and needs to abstain from voting on that item.
3. If a board member intends to pull an item from a consent agenda, please notify the Board Chair and/or Superintendent prior to the meeting.

### **Community and Public Input at Board Meetings (see Policy BDDH)**

1. Board members listen to public comment and take it into account during discussion and deliberation. However, Board members have no direct interaction with the public during a regular Board meeting. The Board Chair acknowledges and thanks members of the public for their input as appropriate.
2. When possible and appropriate, responses to public questions should be included in Superintendent-Board updates.

## **F. Communication**

1. Communicate openly and honestly.
2. Respect differences and listen well and for positive intent.
3. Operate as representatives and make decisions in the best interest of the whole District. Consider research, best practices, evaluative data and public input in making purposeful decisions. Be mindful of the needs of ALL the children in our District and the interests of our collective community.
4. Focus on the situation, issue, or behavior- not the person.
5. When a concern or problem arises with an individual Board Member, communicate first with the Board Member. If the issue is not resolved, communicate with the Board Chair and finally with the Superintendent, if necessary.

6. To increase transparency in district operations and Board oversight, the Superintendent should be included in meetings between a Board Member and key stakeholders (*key stakeholders are defined as people who have a stake in the outcomes of students and the climate, culture, and learning conditions of students, educators, classified staff, and the larger community*) when acting as an elected official and representative of the board when discussion topics could lead to a board decision. This does not apply to board appointments to committees.

**Communications Outside of Board Meetings with Community and Board (see Policy BD/BDA)**

1. Via Email: When the entire Board receives communication from a community member, the Board Chair will respond. A “footnote” statement will be added to the bottom of the response so that patrons understand that it is the practice of the Board that the Board Chair will respond on behalf of the Board. The footnote will read as follows:

“To assure that Board conversations and deliberations do not occur through email, the Board Chair will respond on behalf of the Board. School Board Members only deliberate when gathered as a quorum as outlined in the Public Meeting Law. All Board members will receive the response given by the Board Chair.”

2. When a single Board member receives a communication from a member of the public he/she may respond to that patron as an individual Board member. The Board member may elect to forward the email and his/her response to the Board Chair or full Board if he/she wishes.

**Communications Outside of Board Meetings with Board Members and the Superintendent (see Policy BD/BDA)**

1. The Superintendent will communicate regularly with board members between meetings.
2. The Superintendent will meet or communicate with the board chair as needed to inform him/her of district issues that may need to come before the board for information or action.
3. The Board Chair may direct the Superintendent to distribute relevant documents to each board member for information.
4. The preferred method for board members who wish to share information relevant to district business or issues scheduled to come before the board is to relay the information to all Board members and the Superintendent. Board members may send relevant information directly to each other, but should also copy the Superintendent and the full board with this information. Board members should refrain from encouraging electronic or other discussion about such information in a manner that would violate Public Meetings Law.

**Communications Outside of Board Meetings with Board Members (see Policy BD/BDA)**

1. The state’s Public Meeting Law generally permits an individual board member to converse with other board members outside of board meetings. As with the

- Superintendent, board members should establish productive relationships with each of the other board members.
2. Do not discuss any school board matters if you have a quorum – a simple majority (more than half) of the total number of members on your board. This would constitute a meeting in violation of the Public Meeting Law. Be careful to ensure that such informal chats do not substitute for full deliberation in a public meeting.
  3. Electronic communications among Board members shall be limited to messages not involving deliberation, debate, decision-making or gathering of information on which to deliberate. The same holds true with social media.
  4. Avoid sequential email communications or social media conversations
  5. Board members will use their Board email addresses for all school board related issues. All email can be requested by the public or media under a public records request. Communications made from a board member’s personal email account, if used for school board related issues, may also be subject to a public records request.

### **School Visits by Board Members (see Policy BG)**

1. School visits will be conducted according to Board policy and will be coordinated through the Office of the Superintendent.
2. Board members will be informed of unofficial visit opportunities (i.e., sporting events, plays, concerts). Board members may choose to attend these events as their schedules allow. Attendance at these events does not need to be coordinated through the Office of the Superintendent.

### **G. Complaints (see Policy KL)**

1. The best way to respond to complaints is to be a good listener. This allows a Board member to ask questions to understand the situation better. Board members should be careful that the questions they ask or comments they make do not indicate a future board action.
2. When a Board member receives an informal complaint, the Board member will then provide guidance on the proper channels for addressing the concern. The Board member will direct the individual to solve the problem at the lowest level.
3. The Board advises that the process for resolving a complaint is as follows:
  - a. Teacher/Employee;
  - b. Principal/Supervisor;
  - c. Level/Department Director
  - d. Superintendent;
  - e. Board.
4. Individuals who desire to file a formal complaint must use the process outlined in Policy KL.

### **H. Board or Superintendent Committees**

**Board Committees:** The committee chair is responsible for implementing the charge of the Board. The committee chair will provide regular updates of committee progress to the Board. External communication of committee progress is the responsibility of the

committee chair – the committee chair will provide advanced copies to the Board and the Superintendent of any external communication 36 hours before release.

***Superintendent Committees:*** Board members may be asked to serve on a Superintendent or District committee. The Board member is a representative of the Board to staff, student, parent and community members. Board members serving on a committee should temper their participation, mindful of their position as an elected official. Board members serving on a committee are to respect the role of the committee chair and refrain from initiating a new direction for the committee or initiating formal community input except when requested by the committee chair. The Board representative on a Superintendent or District committee will assist the Superintendent in reporting committee progress to the Board. Voting rights will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

**SPRINGFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT 19**  
**SECTION A/B: BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS**  
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