



BOARD OF EDUCATION

Handbook

April 10, 2024

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Purpose of this Handbook	3
Worthington Schools Overview	3
About the District	3
Mission Statement	4
Vision Statements	4
Quick Facts	4
Board of Education Contacts	4
Key Administrative Contacts	5
Organizational Chart	5
School Facilities	6
Average Daily Membership and Demographics	7
Budget and Financial Information	7
District Calendar	7
Boards of Education	9
Board Member Authority and Duties–Policy	9
Board Member Code of Ethics	10
Board Officers	10
Role of the President	10
Role of the Vice President	11
Role of the Treasurer Pro Tempore	11
Operating Protocol	12
Board/Superintendent Relationship	12
Board/Treasurer Relationship	12
Evaluation of the Superintendent and Treasurer	12
Board Committees	13
Board’s Role in Employment of School Personnel	15
Board’s Role in Termination of School Personnel	15
Filling Board Member Vacancies	15
Removal From Office	16
Compensation of Board Members	16
Professional Development	17
Reimbursement of Expenses	17

Board Meetings	18
Attendance at Board Meetings	18
Types of Board Meetings	18
Organizational Meeting	18
Board Work Sessions/Retreats	19
Emergency Meetings	19
Executive Session	19
Meeting Agendas	19
Amendments to the Agenda	20
Meeting Protocol	20
Role of the Board President	20
Motions	20
Public Participation	20
Voting	21
Sunshine Law and Public Records	23
Ohio's Sunshine Law	23
What Board Members Need to Know	23
Executive Sessions	23
Penalties for Violation of the Sunshine Law	24
Public Records Law	24
Levies and Bond Issues	25
What is a Tax Levy?	25
Common Types of School Tax Levies	26
What is a Mill?	26
Board of Education Involvement in Levy Campaigns	27
Appendices	28
Glossary of Educational Acronyms	28
State and National Agencies and Organizations	38

Introduction

Board service is both a tremendous challenge and a rewarding commitment. Being elected by the community to act as one of its representatives to the Worthington School District Board of Education “the Board” is an opportunity that should not be taken lightly. The Board’s leadership is crucial to the overall function of the School District and its students’ achievement.

Purpose of this Handbook

This handbook serves as a ready reference for the members of the Board to reinforce the Board’s work and to provide a common understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each board member and the Board’s role collectively. It is imperative all members fully understand their role and work as a cohesive team to effectively govern the District. This handbook may also be used as a reference guide for the Worthington School District community as a whole.

It is important to note this handbook is not intended to replace the Board’s policy manual. All Board members should be well acquainted with the board-adopted comprehensive policy manual, which may be found [here](#).

Worthington Schools–Overview

About the District

The Worthington City School District (the District) is referred to herein as Worthington Schools to be more encompassing of our entire school district because the District’s students live in multiple cities, townships, and zip codes.

Worthington Schools is an independent political subdivision of the State of Ohio and operates subject to the provisions of the Ohio Constitution and the Ohio Revised Code. Under the law, there is no authority for the District to have a charter or to adopt local laws. The District is not a part of, nor under the control of, the City of Worthington.

The District encompasses approximately twenty (20) square miles. The District’s boundaries include the City of Worthington and the Village of Riverlea, and portions of

the City of Columbus, as well as unincorporated territory lying within Perry Township and Sharon Township. The District lies entirely within the boundaries of Franklin County.

District Mission and Vision

OUR MISSION

**EMPOWERING
A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS
WHO WILL CHANGE THE WORLD!**

- 1** Diverse opportunities for students academically, co-curricularly and socially
- 2** A safe environment both emotionally and physically
- 3** Consistent communication and opportunities for two-way communication
- 4** Responsible and transparent utilization of community provided finances

Quick Facts

Current Board Members (2024):

Nikki Hudson	nudson@wscloud.org
Jennifer Best	jb@wscloud.org
Kelli Davis	kdavis@wscloud.org
Amber Epling-Skinner	aepling@wscloud.org
Stephanie Harless	sharless@wscloud.org

Key Administrative Contacts

Dr. Trent Bowers	Superintendent	tbowers@wscloud.org
TJ Cusick	Treasurer	tjcusick@wscloud.org
Angie Adrean	Assistant Superintendent Academics	aadrean@wscloud.org
Randy Banks	Assistant Superintendent Operations	rbanks@wscloud.org
Rob Messenheimer	Elementary Education, Director	rmessenheimer@wscloud.org
Emilie Greenwald	Secondary Education, Director	egreenwald@wscloud.org
Kelly Wegley	Academic Achievement and Professional Learning, Director	kwegley@wscloud.org
Jeff Eble	Business Services, Director	jeble@wscloud.org
Jeff Maddox	Human Resources, Director	jmaddox@wscloud.org
Vicki Gnezda	Communications, Director	vgnezda@wscloud.org
Toya Spencer	Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Director	tspencer@wscloud.org
Suzanne Palmer	Gifted Services, Director	spalmer@wscloud.org
Tim Gehring	Facilities Management, Director	tgehring@wscloud.org
Kim Marani	Special Education, Director	kmarani@wscloud.org
Jeff Collett	Technology Services, Director	jcollett@wscloud.org

Organizational Chart

The District organizational chart can be accessed [here](#). Board members are responsible for the hiring, guidance, and evaluation of the Superintendent and Treasurer. All other

administrators and staff in the District are selected, managed, and evaluated by these two educational administrators.

The Board, Superintendent, and Treasurer are regularly referred to as the District's leadership team.

School Facilities

Worthington Schools operates 19 educational facilities, in addition to a central administrative office, a transportation center, a maintenance building, and a grounds building. Names of the educational facilities are as follows:

- **Early Childhood Program**
Sutter Park Preschool
- **Elementary Schools**
Bluffsvue, Brookside, Colonial Hills, Evening Street, Granby, Liberty, Slate Hill, Wilson Hill, Worthington Estates, Worthington Hills, and Worthington Park
- **Middle Schools**
Kilbourne, McCord, Perry, Worthingway, and Phoenix Mastery-Based Middle School
- **High Schools**
Worthington Kilbourne and Thomas Worthington High Schools, the Linworth Experiential Program, and Worthington Academy.

Worthington Schools also partners with the **Delaware Area Career Center**, which serves students interested in career certification and technical programs.

Master Facilities Plan

In 2016, Worthington Schools began the process of reinvestment in a Master Facilities Plan. The first phase of this Plan was completed in 2021 and focused primarily on middle schools. Details regarding the first phase can be found [here](#).

In November 2022, residents of the District voted to support the second phase of the Master Facilities Plan. Voters approved issues that will help shape the future of the district.

The tax levy, bond, and permanent improvement issues that were passed will provide operational revenue and allow for the renovation and rebuilding of Thomas Worthington and Worthington Kilbourne High Schools.

The bond issue will allow the District to renovate and replace most sections of Thomas Worthington High School and replace the natatorium. The changes to Thomas Worthington will include creating a larger cafeteria, modernizing science labs, and adding other flexible learning spaces.

At Worthington Kilbourne High School, the upgrades will include allowing more natural light into student areas, installing a new roof, and modernizing the heating and cooling systems. Additional details and updates regarding the second phase can be found [here](#).

Average Daily Membership and Demographics

Worthington Schools has an Average Daily Membership (ADM) of approximately 10,700. ADM is an Ohio Department of Education method for measuring student enrollment based on time and attendance. It is calculated by dividing the total aggregate membership of the first full week of school in October by the number of days in the week that the school is open for instruction. Aggregate membership is the sum of aggregate attendance plus authorized absences.

Student Achievement

The Board's leadership is crucial to student achievement. The Board is committed to supporting the District's work in many areas, including:

- [Academic Achievement](#)
- [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)
- [Special Education](#)

District Goals

The District goals are set annually in a public meeting and can be accessed [here](#).

Budget and Financial Information

The Board Members must have a general understanding of the District's budget and be

able to communicate to community members and others about the District's financial position, needs, and outlook.

Monthly financial reports, the District's annual budget, and Five-Year Forecast can be accessed [here](#). The Board relies on the monthly financial reports, the annual budget, the Five-Year Forecast, weekly communication from the Treasurer, updates provided at board meetings, participation in the Treasurer's advisory committee, and participation in the finance committee to make decisions and to predict how best to govern the district.

The District policies related to finance are located in Chapter 6 of the policy manual.

Relevant Board Policy:

[Forecast and Appropriations and Budget Plan, PO 6231](#)

District Calendar

The Administration determines annually the total number of hours that the schools will be in session for instructional purposes with students in attendance, including scheduled classes, supervised activities, and approved education options. The Board approves the District calendar for each school year after it is voted on by all staff, administrators, and community members. More information about the District and school calendar is detailed in the district's policy manual.

Reference Board Policy:

[School Calendar, PO 8210](#)

Board of Education

Board Member Authority and Duties

The role and function of boards of education often are misinterpreted by the public and, in some instances, by board members themselves. It is important to understand that the Ohio legislature has delegated the organization, administration, and control of public schools to boards of education. While boards of education have very broad powers, their authority is not unlimited. The courts have held that boards have only such authority as is expressly granted by statute or necessarily implied. The courts have generally supported the sound judgment of boards when they act in good faith, are not arbitrary or unreasonable, and are not in clear violation of the law.

Two of the board's greatest responsibilities are the selection and employment of a competent Superintendent and Treasurer. The only positions reporting to the board are the Superintendent and Treasurer.

Another primary responsibility of the board is policymaking. Board members fulfill this responsibility by formulating and interpreting policies. A board should have clear and concise policies to do the job it was elected to do and to effect the orderly administration of the district's schools. Once policies are adopted and administrative guidelines are established, the board should depend on its Superintendent and Treasurer for implementation.

Worthington Schools' policy manual may be found [here](#).

Board members are not administrators. The function of hiring and evaluating staff is not within the direct authority of the board or its individual members. The board must ensure that a sound administrative process is in place for the evaluation of all staff and to hold the Superintendent and Treasurer accountable for the administration of adopted procedures.

The board is responsible for adopting an evaluation procedure and administering the evaluations of the Superintendent ([RC 3319.01](#)) and the Treasurer ([RC 3313.22](#)) in accordance with the adopted procedure. Each of these school administrators should be evaluated by the board annually.

Two important functions of the board are to be accountable to the community and to advise the Superintendent on the climate of the community. Board members should be very careful to distinguish between *listening* to community stakeholders and *interceding* as individuals in matters pertaining to the entire board or the administrative team. Individual Board Members have legal authority *only as a whole and only* when the board is convened in public session.

Helping new board members become familiar with their authority and duties is another important role for veteran board members.

Board Member Code of Ethics

Ohio laws set minimum ethical standards for public officials, including school board members, school district employees, and members of school district financial planning and supervision commissions. The ethics law is found in [RC Chapter 102](#). Additionally, there are two ethics restrictions found in the criminal code ([RC 2921.42](#) and [RC 2921.43](#)) and two statutes ([RC 3319.21](#) and [RC 3313.33](#)), that apply specifically to school board members. It is important to read and understand these statutes.

The Worthington City School Board's Code of Ethics link can be found [here](#).

Board Officers

In accordance with Ohio statute [RC 3313.14](#), the Board elects a President and Vice President at an organizational meeting held prior to January 15 to serve a term of one year. Any member may be voted into either position by a simple majority vote of the members present. Unlike a majority of other motions, only a motion is needed to nominate a member for either of these positions (i.e., a second by another member is not necessary).

Role of President

The President attends all agenda preparation meetings, presides over all board meetings, and carries out other important leadership responsibilities, such as:

- Responding on behalf of the Board to all community communications

- Communicating with district legal counsel
- Maintaining the orderly conduct of all board meetings
- Signing all approved meeting proceedings after the signature of the Treasurer
- Acting as the Board’s representative when signing contracts, memoranda of understanding, 5705.412 certificates, and other official board documents
- Ensuring that each Board Member has a voice at meetings;
- Calling special meetings of the Board as necessary;
- Facilitating good communication among the Board Members and the administration. In order to facilitate this, the President should be copied on all communications between Board Members and the Superintendent, Treasurer, and staff members.

Role of Vice President

The Vice President attends agenda preparation meetings and is authorized to fulfill all responsibilities and duties held by the President in the event of the President’s absence.

Role of the Treasurer Pro Tempore

If the Treasurer is absent for any meeting(s), the Board is required to elect a Treasurer Pro Tempore from its membership. The Treasurer Pro Tempore is responsible for keeping record of the meeting’s procedures, including meeting start and end times, taking roll call, keeping record of motions and votes, and certifying the contents of the official minutes of the meeting.

Links to Relevant Board Policy:

[Officers, PO 0152](#)

[Presiding Officer, PO 0163](#)

Operating Protocol

Board/Superintendent Relationship

The success of the District depends to a great extent on the working relationship between the Board and its Superintendent. The most important element of this relationship is trust. Each Member of the Board needs to understand the role of the Board and the role of the Superintendent and to respect those roles.

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) defines the role of the Superintendent as the district's chief educational leader with direct responsibility for the administration and operation of the school district. The Superintendent is charged with implementing board-approved policies and presenting recommendations for Board consideration and approval. Communication is crucial to allow the Board to function in its role of governance oversight and accountability.

Link to Relevant Board Policy:

[Board-Superintendent Relationship, PO 1210](#)

Board/Treasurer Relationship

The Treasurer reports directly to the Board and is responsible for the accounting of all money received and spent by the District. The Treasurer maintains the official financial records and must keep the Board well informed of all financial forecasts. Worthington's current Five-Year Forecast is available on the District webpage via this [link](#).

In addition to financial duties, the Treasurer acts as the Board's Secretary. The Secretary is responsible for maintaining the official minutes of all board meetings, including the date, time, location, Board Member roll, and record of all actions taken and approved by the Board.

Link to Relevant Board Policy:

[Duties of the Treasurer, PO 1320](#)

Board Committees

The Board may authorize the establishment of committees from among its membership as it deems necessary for operation of the District. It is the responsibility of the Board President to assign Board Members to board committees, which is a collaborative process. Typically, this is done in consultation with each Member to best align with the Member's area of expertise and interest.

Currently, Worthington Schools has only one Board Committee: a Policy Committee. Two Board Members serve as the Board's representatives to that committee. Board Committee meetings are noticed and open to the public.

All other committees are administrative, led, and managed by the Superintendent, Treasurer, or other administrator. One or two Board Members are appointed to serve and attend that committee's regularly scheduled meetings. Current administrative committees in the District include:

- AAPL (Academic Achievement and Professional Learning) — meetings occur twice quarterly
- Communication — meetings occur at least twice a month
- Facilities — meetings occur two to three times a year
- Shared Solutions* — meetings occur as needed
- SPAC (Supplemental Programs and Activities Committee) — meetings occur two to three times a year
- Finance** — meetings occur two to three times a year
- Insurance*** — meetings occur quarterly
- TAC (Treasurer's Advisory Committee)** — meetings occur two to three times a year

*The President and Vice President typically serve on this committee.

**Different Board Members are typically assigned to these committees, and the President does not serve on either committee.

***Committee members should only participate as observers.

Link to Relevant Board Bylaws:

[Committees, Bylaws 155](#)

Board Members as Liaisons

Board Members serve one-year terms as liaisons to several neighborhood, civic, and district related groups (one liaison to each group). Liaisons may attend meetings of these groups, etc. They are:

- City of Columbus - Build and maintain relationships with the city to allow for collaboration on matters of mutual interest for the benefit of the community.
- City of Worthington - Build and maintain relationships with the city to allow for collaboration on matters of mutual interest for the benefit of the community.
- Perry Township - Build and maintain relationships with the township to allow for collaboration on matters of mutual interest for the benefit of the community.
- Sharon Township - Build and maintain relationships with the township to allow for collaboration on matters of mutual interest for the benefit of the community.
- Village of Riverlea - Build and maintain relationships with the village to allow for collaboration on matters of mutual interest for the benefit of the community.
- Worthington Education Foundation - Attend WEF monthly meetings build and maintain a relationship with the WEF, and update Board Members on ways in which the Board of Education may support the Foundation.
- Worthington Public Library Board - Build and maintain relationships with the Libraries to provide insight into matters requiring school board approval.
- Swiminc - Attend monthly meetings and build and maintain a relationship with Swiminc and update Board Members on ways in which the Board of Education may support the non-profit.
- OSBA Legislative Liaison - Share updates related to state and federal education-related legislation at board meetings. Share with Board Members via email copies of OSBA legislation publications (e.g., The Link and Facts in a Flash). Encourage colleagues and the community to contact their legislators on important legislative issues. Establish and maintain relationships with legislators.
- OSBA Student Achievement Liaison -
- Worthington PTA Council (Board Members rotate attending monthly meetings)

In addition to serving in liaison positions and participating on committees and at regular and special Board meetings, Board Members traditionally discharge a variety of other duties, including attending student feedback meetings, providing remarks at high school graduation ceremonies, and representing the District at school and community conferences, banquets, and other ceremonies for the District's academic and athletic programs.

Board's Role in Employment and Termination of School Personnel

The Superintendent and Treasurer make a recommendation of the hiring of all personnel, and the Board approves. Other than the Superintendent and Treasurer, the Board acts on the hiring of all other school employees (RC 3318.18) but does not recommend which employees to hire or serve on hiring committees.

No teacher may be initially hired by the District unless such person is first nominated by the Superintendent (RC 3319.07). The Board may designate someone other than the Superintendent to nominate a teacher for employment if the Superintendent's nomination would create a conflict of interest in a public contract (RC 3319.07).

The Superintendent and Treasurer make a recommendation of the termination of any personnel, and the Board approves. As with hiring, no employee may be terminated or non-renewed without official Board action.

Filling Board Member Vacancies

The Superintendent and Treasurer have no authorization to remove a board member.

A vacancy on any board can occur for various reasons, including, but not limited to:

- Death of the sitting member
- Moving to a residence outside the district
- Resignation
- Removal from office
- Failure of a person elected to office to qualify within 10 days after the organizational meeting of appointment or election
- Accepting a public office that is incompatible with the office of Board Member

All elected officials in Ohio are subject to removal from office for misconduct through a court proceeding pursuant to [RC 3.07](#) and [RC 3.08](#). Grounds for removing a board member include:

- Willfully and flagrantly exercising authority or power not authorized by the State of Ohio
- Refusing or neglecting to perform any official duty
- Gross neglect of duty
- Gross immorality
- Drunkenness
- Misfeasance, malfeasance, or nonfeasance

To initiate proceedings for removal, a recall petition must be signed by at least 15% of the total vote cast for governor at the most recent election for office of governor. The petition must state the charges alleged against the said board member. The law directs that a hearing on the removal be conducted within 30 days. At the hearing, the judge or, if requested, a jury may order the removal of a board member.

Relevant Board Policy:

[Filling a Board Vacancy, PO 145](#)

Compensation of Board Members

Board Members may be compensated for regular board meetings, special meetings, work sessions, and policy committee meetings no more than five thousand dollars per year. (see Ohio Revised Code Section (RC) [3313.12](#), [3311.19](#)). The Ohio Constitution prohibits increases or decreases in compensation for public officials during a term of office ([Oh. Const. Art. II, Sec. 20](#)).

A Board may pass a resolution or change board policy to change board compensation amounts at any time, but those changes will apply only to Board Members beginning new terms or for those appointed to a vacancy after the change is made.

Professional Development

Board Members are expected to seek opportunities for continued professional growth while serving in office, this includes participating in local conferences such as the OSBA Capital Conference and Board Leadership Institute. In addition, the Board supports allowing one member per year to attend a national conference. Participation in national conferences should rotate annually.

Relevant Board Bylaws

[School Board Conferences, Conventions and Workshops, Bylaws 175.1](#)

Reimbursement Expenses

[RC 3315.15](#) permits districts to create a “service fund” which can be used to pay those expenses actually incurred by Board Members in the performance of their official duties. This fund may not exceed the equivalent of \$2 per student enrolled in the district, or \$20,000, whichever is greater. It also may be used to pay the expenses actually incurred by Board Members-to-be for training and orientation occurring between the date of election or appointment and the date of administration of the oath of office.

Board Meetings

Board meetings are crucial to the work of the School Board. As public officials, the law requires the Board to conduct its business in public. No vote is valid unless it is recorded in a public session. The way in which the Board conducts its business in public reflects on the quality of the work of the entire district.

Board of Education Calendar

Regular Board meetings are determined and approved for the year at the Organizational Meeting held before January 15. Board meetings are generally held on the second and fourth Monday of each month at 6:30 PM. A full list of board meetings, including additional or special meetings added during the course of the year, is available on the District website page dedicated to Board of Education information, accessible [here](#).

Attendance at Board Meetings

A quorum of members is required for a board meeting to be considered official. For Worthington Schools, this is three of our five sitting Board Members. Each Member's attendance at board meetings is crucial to the board's ability to conduct its business. This includes all regular and special meetings, committee meetings, emergency meetings, workshops, training, etc.

Types of Board Meetings

A "meeting" is defined as any prearranged discussion of the public business of a Board of Education, committee, or subcommittee by a majority of its members.

There are two basic types of board meetings: regular and special. A regular meeting is one that is scheduled and approved by the Board at its organization meeting as part of the year's board meeting schedule. A special meeting is one that is scheduled after the approved board meeting schedule. Under these two overarching headings, there are several variations of meeting formats.

Organizational Meeting

City school boards are required to hold a regular "Organizational Meeting" no later than January 15 each year. At this meeting, the Board must elect a president and vice president, each to serve a one-year term. Other items typically included in the organizational meeting agenda are:

- Oath of office for re-elected and new members
- Establishing dates, times, and locations for the year’s regular meetings
- Board committee appointments

Board Work Sessions/Retreats

These meetings usually refer to meetings at which the Board will discuss matters but take no action. For example, the Board meets annually with the administration to set annual goals. If scheduled at the organizational meeting, work sessions are considered regular meetings. If the work session or retreat was not set by the Board in January at the organizational meeting, it is a special meeting. Although no votes are typically taken at these meetings, the work session will meet the definition of a “meeting,” and the Open Meetings Act will apply, including the requirement to properly notice the meeting, make it open to the public, and take minutes.

Emergency Meetings

The Board may hold an emergency meeting to discuss matters of exceptional urgency that require immediate board action. In the event of an emergency, the standard rule of 24-hour notice to the media and 48-hour notice to Board Members is replaced with a requirement to provide notice as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Specific legal boundaries for executive sessions are covered in the Sunshine Law and Public Records section.

Meeting Agendas

Each meeting agenda is prepared by the Board President, Vice-President, and the Administration. If a Board Member wants something added to the agenda, the Board Member should contact the Board President. It is the practice of the Worthington Board of Education to distribute the draft agenda and related meeting materials to each Board Member prior to its publication for review. Pursuant to Board policy, the agenda and related materials are published three business days prior to the meeting.

As a Board Member, you are expected to understand the agenda and become familiar with the packet contents before arriving at the meeting. Questions about the agenda and meeting materials should be directed to the Board President or Superintendent prior to the meeting.

Amendments to the Agenda

Amendments may be made to the agenda prior to its adoption during the meeting. A majority vote adopts an agenda. After it is adopted, only a 2/3 vote or unanimous consent may change the agenda.

Meeting Protocol

Meetings follow the guidelines set forth in “Robert’s Rules of Order.” The Treasurer acts as the official record keeper and is responsible for keeping the minutes of the meeting’s proceedings. Should the Treasurer be absent or unable to perform the duties, the Board must elect a Treasurer Pro Tempore *from its membership* to serve in the Treasurer’s capacity as the meeting record keeper.

Role of the Board President

The Board President has a significant role as the meeting’s parliamentarian. The President is responsible for maintaining proper meeting decorum. It is important that the President be comfortable with meeting procedures. The President must be willing to take control of the meeting if the proceedings become disorderly and ensure that all have a fair and equal voice.

Motions

Board and Superintendent recommendations and other agenda items before the Board must be put in the form of a motion by a Board Member and seconded by another Board Member before they may be discussed and brought to a vote. The point of a motion is to ensure only one idea at a time is before the Board for discussion. This maintains an orderly progression for the meeting. Once a vote is taken, that motion may not be reconsidered in the same session.

Public Participation

The School Board and Administration encourage and appreciate community interest in meetings of the Board. This section of Board meetings is designed to hear the views of community members about their schools and items on the agenda. Each speaker will be

asked to address the Board at the visitor's podium so that the speaker's remarks may be clearly heard. The speaker should give their name and street address and limit comments to a maximum of five minutes. If more than six speakers are present, speakers will be limited to three minutes. Consistent with the Board's policy on Public Complaints, the Board asks that complaints about particular employees be referred to the Superintendent and not addressed during public session. The Board reminds all speakers that our District values and respects all people as they are and that our District is committed to creating and maintaining safe spaces for all of our students and community members.

The Board reminds the community that it values public input and always appreciates when community members remember the District's values, refraining from using harmful or offensive language, and for sharing your comments in a civil and respectful manner. It is not the Board's usual practice to respond to remarks during the visitor comment section of the meeting.

Relevant Board Policy

Public Participation at Board Meetings, PO 0169.1

Public Complaints, PO 9130

Voting

It is important for every Board Member to be familiar with the legal rules relating to voting. In most cases, a simple majority is sufficient to carry a motion provided a legal quorum is in attendance, but in some instances, that is not sufficient. Additional details and examples can be found [here](#).

It is the professional responsibility of each Member to vote. However, in some instances, abstention, or the removal of oneself from the voting, may be required by law. For instance, a Board Member may not vote or participate in the making of a contract of a public school teacher or instructor where the Board Member is related to the individual under consideration as father, brother, mother, or sister ([RC 3319.21](#)). Members are also forbidden under [RC 2921.42](#) to secure approval of an individual contract with his or her spouse. [RC 3313.33](#) prohibits a Board Member from having any pecuniary interest either directly or indirectly in any contract of the Board.

There are exceptions to these general rules. In cases where there are questions about voting, the Treasurer should be contacted.

Relevant Board Policy

[Voting, PO 0167](#)

Sunshine Law and Public Records

Ohio's Sunshine Law

Ohio's Sunshine Law (RC 121.22) requires all acts and most deliberations of boards of education and other public bodies, as well as their committees and subcommittees, be conducted in public. The Board must provide notice of when those meetings will occur and keep minutes of the proceedings.

As a Board Member, it is important to remember that if a majority of the Board (3 or more of a 5-member board) meets formally or informally to discuss District business, that could be construed as a Board meeting and is subject to the Sunshine Law. The law allows for a majority of Board Members to be present at any given meeting if they are observers and not engaging in any Board-related discussion.

[OSBA's fact sheet on Ohio Sunshine Law](#) is a helpful resource.

Executive Sessions

Executive session is only to be used for specific reasons, which are specified in the Sunshine Law. It is vitally important for all Board Members and anyone else in attendance to observe 100% confidentiality of any items or issues that are discussed in executive session. Any discussion of executive session content outside of the session is a serious breach of trust and a sign of poor boardmanship and must be avoided under all circumstances

The rules of executive session are stated in the Sunshine Law. For the Worthington Schools Board to enter executive session, there must be a motion, second, and roll call vote. The purpose or purposes of the session must be stated in the motion, and while in session, those are to be the only topics of discussion. No official action or vote may be taken in executive session. Each Board Member must observe strict confidentiality regarding executive session discussion. Sharing executive session content outside of session is a sign of poor boardmanship and in some cases may cause legal liability.

As set forth in [RC 121.22](#), there are seven acceptable topics for executive session that apply to boards of education. They are:

- The appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of an employee or official, or the investigation of charges or complaints against an employee, official, licensee, or student, unless the employee, official, licensee, or student requests a public hearing.
- The purchase of property for public purposes, or the sale of property at competitive bidding, or the disposition of unneeded, obsolete, or unfit-for-use school property.
- Conferences with the board's attorney to discuss matters which are the subject of pending or imminent court action.
- Preparing for, conducting, or reviewing negotiations or bargaining sessions with employees.
- Matters required to be kept confidential by federal law or rules or state statutes.
- Specialized details of security arrangements and emergency response protocols for a public body or a public office.
- To consider confidential information related to marketing plans, specific business strategy, production techniques, or personal financial statements of an applicant for economic development assistance or related to negotiations with other political subdivisions respecting requests for economic development assistance.

Penalties for Violation of the Sunshine Law

The Sunshine Law provides that any Board action is invalid if the Board violated any of the notice provisions of the law. A court may issue an injunction compelling Members of the Board, committee, or subcommittee to comply with the Sunshine Law.

Public Records Law

Like the Open Meeting Law, the Public Records Law requires public offices to keep and make available for inspection and copying records pertaining to school business. In most districts, the Treasurer is responsible for keeping all records and complying with public record requests. Our practice is Public Records Requests are sent to the Director of Communications. Any member of the public may make a request but must follow the Board's public records request policy.

It is important to remember that under [RC 1306.01](#), any document, device, or item, regardless of physical form or characteristic, including an electronic record which serves to document the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the office are deemed public records. This includes emails, text messages, and all social media messaging.

Relevant Board Policy

[Public Records, PO 8310](#)

Levies and Bond Issues

What is a tax levy?

Boards of education may propose additional local revenues in the form of a specific tax by a board resolution. School districts can place a levy on the ballot up to three times a year on specific election dates. If a majority of voters who vote on the issue approve the tax, county officials charge and collect the tax under the terms specified in the tax levy proposal. The funds collected are then disbursed to the district. When a levy is placed on the ballot, it must identify as its objective a legally defined school district purpose. Permissible uses for a tax levy depend on the type of levy but may include:

- Operating expenses
- General ongoing improvements
- Specific permanent improvements
- Purchase of educational technology
- Debt service for bonds issued for school construction

Common Types of School Tax Levies

There are several types of levies, including General operating levies, permanent improvement levies, and bond levies. Operating levies fund day-to-day operations, including salary and benefits for staff. Permanent improvement levies provide a dedicated annual source of revenue for capital improvements, such as buses, technology, furniture, equipment, and deferred maintenance. Bond levies pay for principal and interest on long term debt issuances, usually for big ticket capital projects such as building renovations or new construction.

Operating levies can be for a fixed amount of mills or can grow over time, called an incremental levy. An incremental levy has a fixed amount of mills in the first year and then adds a certain number of mills in the following years. There can be a maximum of five total increments, including the original tax.

OSBA offers detailed information on Understanding Tax Levies here:

<https://www.ohioschoolboards.org/sites/default/files/OSBAUnderstandingLeviesFactSheet.pdf>

What is a Mill?

The unit of value for expressing the rate of property taxes in Ohio is the mill. A mill is defined as one-tenth of a percent or one-tenth of a cent (0.1 cents) in cash terms. Millage is the factor applied to the assessed value of property to produce tax revenue.

A property tax bill = rate x value

Rate is the number of mills. 1 mill = \$0.001

Value is the county auditor's fair market value of the property times 35%, called the assessed value.

Very simply then, 1 mill = \$35 per \$100,000 of fair market value.

Board of Education Involvement in Levy Campaigns

Ohio Revised Code [RC 3315.07](#) prohibits boards of education from spending public money to support or oppose the passage of a levy or bond issue. [RC 9.03](#) allows boards to use public funds to publish and distribute communications, as the purpose behind the communication is to provide information about the school district and not to sway the recipient of the communication.

Use of District Facilities

Under [RC 3313.77](#), a Board of Education may allow community groups to use its facilities for auxiliary, educational, recreational, cultural, civic, social, religious, or other board-approved purposes that promote the welfare of the community.

Under the Equal Protection Clause and the First Amendment, a school district may not grant the use of its facilities to people whose views it finds acceptable but deny use to those wishing to express less favored or more controversial views.

Appendices

Glossary of Educational Acronyms

Following are some of the many abbreviations commonly used among educators but perhaps unfamiliar to Board Members.

504 (504 Plan) A plan developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or educational institute receives accommodations that will ensure their academic success and access to the learning environment

AAA (American Arbitration Association) Aids in resolving disputes outside the court system.

AASA (American Association of School Administrators) Provides a number of services for school administrators, including conducting studies and surveys on educational issues.

AASPA (American Association of School Personnel Administrators) Works to establish acceptable school personnel standards, techniques and practices.

ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) Protects individual rights set forth in the U.S. Constitution.

ACT (American College Testing Program) Standardized test taken by high school students seeking admission to college.

ACTE (Association for Career and Technical Education) Promotes and improves vocational education in high school, postsecondary and adult education.

ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Federal law protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

ADM (Average Daily Membership) The enrollment of students receiving services under the Superintendent's supervision.

AERA (American Education Research Association) The major professional organization of educators involved in educational research.

AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor/Congress of Industrial Organizations) The largest federation of unions in the United States.

AFSA (American Federation of School Administrators) Union for school administrators.

AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) The largest public employee and health care workers' union in the country.

AFT (American Federation of Teachers) An integral part of the American labor movement and a member affiliate of the AFL-CIO.

AGO (Attorney General's Opinion) Interpretation of a legal question by the Ohio attorney general (OAG), usually at the request of a local or state government official.

AP (Advanced Placement) Test taken by high school students to earn college credit.

ASCA (American School Counselors Association) Promotes the rights and welfare of children and improves professional standards in school counseling.

ASBO (Association of School Business Officials International) Promotes improvement and advancement of school business officials, school Board Members and others interested in school business management.

ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) Supports educators as they develop, evaluate and improve curricula.

BASA (Buckeye Association of School Administrators) A professional association for Ohio's public school administrators.

BCI (Bureau of Criminal Investigation) Investigative arm of the Ohio attorney general's office.

BRF (Bond Retirement Fund) School district fund dedicated to the payment of debt service charges.

BWC (Bureau of Workers' Compensation) State agency that administers worker injury claims.

CBE (Competency-Based Education) State testing program to assess student achievement in grades one through eight.

CCP (College Credit Plus) An opportunity for students to expand their educational options and take a college course(s) while in high school.

CCSSO (Council of Chief State School Officers) A nationwide organization of the 58 public school officials who head departments of public education in the U.S. states, territories, D.C., Department of Defense Education Activity, and Bureau of Indian Education.

CGCS (Council of the Great City Schools) Conducts studies of problems shared by urban schools.

CIP (Continuous Improvement Plan)

CLC (Curriculum Liaison Council)

COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986) Federal law that allows employees to continue to receive health insurance after they leave a school district.

COTC (Central Ohio Technical College) A public technical college in Newark, Ohio. Worthington Schools partners with this technical college to offer a number of college credit plus courses.

DOE (U.S. Department of Education) Federal government agency.

ECS (Education Commission of the States) Collects information on laws and standards in education and about administrators, principals and teachers. Also researches state policy issues.

EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) Federal agency formed in 1964 to enforce federal laws, making it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or employee on the basis of on race, color, sex (including gender identity, pregnancy and sexual orientation), religion, national origin, age, disability or genetic information.

EL (English learner)

ELA (Education Law Association) Works to improve education by promoting interest in and understanding of the legal framework of education and the rights of students, parents, school boards and school employees.

ERI (early retirement incentives) Programs that provide monetary incentives to school district employees who retire early.

ESC (Educational Service Center) Name given to Ohio county offices of education in 1995.

ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) The original federal education act enacted in 1965.

ESEA was updated in 2002 as the No Child Left Behind Act and reauthorized in 2015 as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) The most recent reauthorization of ESEA.

ETS (Educational Testing Service) Provides evaluative instruments, research, and services related to educational testing programs such as the PSAT, SAT, GRE and GMAT. Also conducts the National Assessment of Educational Programs (NAEP).

EV (exempted village school district) Name given to Ohio school districts centered in villages.

FAPE (free appropriate public education) Special education and related services that are provided at public expense without charge.

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) Federal law that addresses inspection and disclosure of student records.

FLSA (Fair Labor Standards Act) Federal law concerning wages and benefits for school district and other employees.

FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993) Federal law that authorizes unpaid leave for employees who are ill, become parents or who must care for sick relatives.

GED (General Education Development test) Test that allows students who did not graduate from high school to obtain an equivalent diploma.

GF (General Fund) School district fund receiving all moneys dedicated to the payment of current operating expenses.

GMAT (Graduate Management Admissions Test) Test taken by college students seeking admission to graduate school in business.

GRE (Graduate Record Examination) Test taken by college students interested in studying for advanced degrees in academic fields.

GRF (General Revenue Fund) Major fund of state government from which services are funded.

IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) Federal law passed in 1975 to provide for the education of children with disabilities.

IEL (Institute for Educational Leadership) Coordinates programs at national, state and local levels that are designed to support and enhance the capabilities of educators and policymakers.

IEP (Individualized Education Program) Plan devised by a school district for the education of a child with disabilities.

JVSD (Joint Vocational School District) Name given to school districts providing career and technical training to public school students and adults.

LAF (OSBA Legal Assistance Fund) Provides supportive assistance to boards of education in cases or controversies of statewide significance, primarily at the appellate level.

LEP (Limited English Proficient) Students and families for whom English is not the primary language.

LPDC (Local Professional Development Committee) Local committee comprised of teachers and administrators which approves professional development plans of educators needed to obtain or retain licensure.

MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) MTSS is a framework that helps educators provide academic and behavioral strategies for students with various needs

NABSE (National Alliance of Black School Educators) Promotes awareness, professional expertise and commitment among black educators.

NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) Authorized by Congress, NAEP determines the nation's progress in education.

NAESP (National Association of Elementary School Principals) Sponsors programs designed to teach principals about new curricula and technology, to clarify educational issues and trends, and to inform them of new educational research developments.

AIS (National Association of Independent Schools) Assists independent elementary and secondary schools to strengthen their programs and more effectively serve their students and families.

NAPE (National Association of Partners in Education) Promotes the value of school volunteer and partnership services.

NASBE (National Association of State Boards of Education) Improves the policymaking skills and leadership abilities of state boards of education.

NASSP (National Association of Secondary School Principals) Conducts activities and events to enhance the effectiveness of middle and high school principals.

NBPTS (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards) Seeks to strengthen the profession of elementary and secondary teaching and thereby raise the quality of education in the U.S.

NCES (National Center for Education Statistics) An agency of the U.S. Department of Education. Collects and disseminates statistics and other data related to education in the U.S.

NCLB (No Child Left Behind Act) 2002 reauthorization of ESEA.

NCSL (National Conference of State Legislators) Works to improve the quality and effectiveness of state legislators.

NEA (National Education Association) A national teacher's union.

NGA (National Governors' Association) Serves as a vehicle through which governors influence the development and implementation of national policy and apply creative leadership to state problems.

NSBA (National School Boards Association) An organization for state school board associations and local school boards. It seeks to improve the leadership and policymaking abilities of Board Members.

NSPRA (National School Public Relations Association) An association that promotes better public understanding of the objectives, accomplishments and needs of education.

OAC (Ohio Administrative Code) Publication containing rules and regulations of Ohio's executive agencies.

OACBDD (Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities) Ensures the availability of programs, services, and supports that assist eligible individuals with developmental disabilities.

OAESA (Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators) Promotes quality education and advances elementary school administration.

OAG (Ohio attorney general) Elected official charged with enforcing and administering Ohio's laws.

OAPE (Ohio Association of Professional Educators) Group dedicated to classroom teaching in a nonunion environment.

OAPSE (Ohio Association of Public School Employees) Represents nonteaching public school employees affiliated with AFL-CIO and AFSCME.

OASBO (Ohio Association of School Business Officials) Promotes professional growth and welfare of business officials in schools.

OASCD (Ohio Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) A statewide professional organization dedicated to improving instructional supervision and curriculum development.

OASSA (Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators) State association for administrators actively engaged in administration or supervision of secondary or middle school students.

OESCA (Ohio Educational Service Center Association) Group including Ohio's educational service centers, formerly known as county boards of education.

OCRC (Ohio Civil Rights Commission) State agency charged with enforcing anti-discrimination laws in employment and other venues.

OCSBA (Ohio Council of School Board Attorneys) An organization for attorneys who represent or have represented Ohio boards of education.

ODE (Ohio Department of Education) Ohio's state department of education.

OEA (Ohio Education Association) A state teacher's union that promotes the interests of teachers and the improvement of education in Ohio.

OFT (Ohio Federation of Teachers) Works to raise the standards of teaching by securing the conditions essential to the best professional service.

Ohio ACTE (Ohio Association for Career and Technical Education) Promotes and protects vocational education and vocational educators.

OHSAA (Ohio High School Athletic Association) Administers interscholastic sports programs.

OHSPRA (Ohio School Public Relations Association) The state chapter of the national association, OHSPRA members work to improve school public relations.

ORC (Ohio Revised Code) Also referred to as RC.

OSBA (Ohio School Boards Association) Serves Ohio public school Board Members and the diverse districts they represent through superior service, unwavering advocacy and creative solutions.

- Training Opportunities
- OSBA Annual Conference (November – week immediately following Election Day)

- Board Member 101, etc.

OFCC (Ohio Facilities Construction Commission) Provides funding, management oversight and technical assistance in construction and renovation of school facilities.

OFCC [Glossary of Terms](#):

OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Act) Name given to both state and federal laws that promote workplace safety.

OWE (Occupational/Work Experience Programs) School district programs that prepare vocational education students for entry into the workplace.

PDK (Phi Delta Kappa) A professional honorary society for men and women in education.

PERS (Public Employees Retirement System) Provides retirement, disability and survivor benefits to public employees.

PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test) Test taken by high school students to prepare for taking the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

PTA (Parent Teacher Association) Works to promote the health, education and welfare of children and youth and is a member of a national PTA organization.

PTAC (Parent Teacher Advisory Council) Comprised of representatives from parent groups in each school.

PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) Works to promote the health, education and welfare of children and youth. Works independently of any kind of national organization.

PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association) Works to promote the health, education and welfare of children and youth and intentionally includes students in the process.

PTSO (Parent Teacher Student Organization) Works to promote the health, education and welfare of children and youth and intentionally includes students in the process. Works independently of any kind of national organization.

RC (Revised Code) Also known as the Ohio Revised Code.

SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) Test taken by high school students seeking admission to colleges or universities.

SERB (State Employment Relations Board) Administers and enforces Ohio's public employee collective bargaining law.

SERS School Employees Retirement System.

SDIT (School District Income Tax) Tax imposed on income of residents by school districts after voter approval.

STRS (State Teachers Retirement System)

ULP (Unfair Labor Practice) Conduct by employers or employees defined as unfair under Ohio's collective bargaining law.

USC (United States Code) Multi-volume compilation of federal laws.

State and National Agencies and Organizations

NSBA - National School Board Association

COSSBA - Consortium of State School Boards Associations

USGBC - U.S. Green Building Council

OEA - Ohio Education Association

NEA - National Education Association

Worthington Specific

Worthington Unions WEA/ WESP - Worthington Education Association/ Worthington Education Support Professionals

WEF - Worthington Education Foundation

Worthington PTAC - Parent Teacher Advisory Council

CLC - Curriculum Liaison Council

Worthington Libraries