

## **Role of the Board of Education**

The Board of Education (BOE) does not run the Chesterfield Township School District. Our role is to ensure that the district is well run through the creation and updating of policies. These policies serve as a guide to the superintendent and provide direction, a basis for decision-making, and an imperative for action.

When hearing concerns on issues affecting the district as a whole, our board members function as policy makers. We place these concerns on a meeting agenda for discussion by the entire board or a board committee. The discussions can result in new or revised district policies.

## **Individual Board Members**

As individuals, board members cannot make decisions for the board, take actions for the board, or speak for the board, unless the board has authorized them to do so. As board members, we are sworn to abide by the NJ School Board Member Code of Ethics, which defines the parameters under which we function.

## **Functioning by Committee**

The BOE functions by committee to review staff and administrator recommendations on the operation of the district, development of the budget, facilities maintenance, curriculum development, etc. The Chesterfield Township School District BOE operates with numerous committees such as Curriculum & Instruction, Finance, Human Resources, CTEA/CAEA Negotiations, etc. These committees typically consist of two board members and a district administrator.

## **Contacting Board Members/Chain of Command**

Sometimes, community members contact individual board members about personal issues. When that happens, board members will rightfully refer the person to an appropriate school staff member. Thinking that contacting a BOE member means “going right to the top” actually complicates rather than alleviates any problem or issue. Going around or over the heads of school staff creates morale problems and puts board members outside their area of responsibility. When the chain of command is used properly by citizens and board members, it improves communication and leaves the Board of Education free to act as final arbiter on issues that have not been resolved, at other steps in the chain. To determine who best should handle a matter or question, ask yourself, “Who is closest to the problem?” Most often the answer is a staff member. Bringing your concern to a teacher or principal will quickly get a

response. If this is not the case, the next step is to seek out the superintendent. As a final step in this process, concerns can be brought before the board.

### **Responsibilities of the Board**

Board members are responsible for ensuring that the Chesterfield Township School District provides its children the best education possible. We have a responsibility not only to listen to all citizens but also to make sure those with a special point of view understand the needs of the school system as a whole. Above all, board members are responsible for and to the students in our schools

If you would like more information about the general functioning of Boards of Education, please see

1. 13 Things School Board Members Wish People Knew About Them- <https://www.njsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/13-things.pdf>
2. School Board Basics: Frequently Asked Questions- <https://www.njsba.org/news-information/parent-connections/school-board-basics-frequently-asked-questions/>
3. Who Does What In Public School Governance- [https://www.njsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/publications\\_whodoeswhat2014.pdf](https://www.njsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/publications_whodoeswhat2014.pdf)