

New York Mills Union Free School District



Board of Education Governance Guide

**Board of Education and Superintendent
Principles and Operational Guidelines**

2024

New York Mills Union Free School District Board of Education

Mission

Through combined efforts of students, staff, parents, and community members, our mission is to foster the confidence, knowledge, cognition, and character necessary to instill a strong work ethic, to create an environment of tolerance and respect, and to ignite an attitude of inquiry and enthusiasm for learning that will enable students to become productive, responsible citizens.

Vision

Our vision is to create an incomparable K-12 school district that is as highly regarded for its academic excellence, as it is for its pride and commitment to actively serve and improve its surrounding community.

Core Beliefs

We believe that all students ...

- Should be provided the opportunity to reach their full academic, physical, and social-emotional potential in order to become productive citizens.
- Should demonstrate respect, honesty, and integrity as part of maintaining good citizenship.
- Should be responsible and accountable contributors to society through leadership and service to others.
- Should be treated fairly and equitably based on individual needs.
- Should have learning experiences that expand beyond the classroom.
- Should develop technological awareness, problem-solving, and analytical skills.
- Should be empowered to learn and grow through successes and failures.
- Have value and worth and are part of a greater whole.
- Must feel welcome and safe.
- Are valued members of the school community.

Contact Information

Name of District: New York Mills Union Free School District

Address: 1 Marauder Boulevard
New York Mills, NY 13417

District Phone Number: (315)768-8127

District Fax Number: (315)768-3521

District Website Address: <https://www.newyorkmills.org>

Superintendent:
Superintendent e-mail: Michele D. LaGase
mlagase@newyorkmills.org

Supt. Secretary/Board Clerk:
Supt. Sec/Board Clerk e-mail: Mandy Mroz
mmroz@newyorkmills.org

Board of Education

Kristin Hubley	Board President	Term Expires: 2028
Robert Mahardy, Jr.	Board Vice-President	Term Expires: 2027
Sara DeFazio	Board Member	Term Expires: 2029
Jackie Edwards	Board Member	Term Expires: 2026
Jeremy Fennell	Board Member	Term Expires: 2028
Steve King	Board Member	Term Expires: 2025
Abbie Taylor	Board Member	Term Expires: 2029

Board of Education President Responsibilities (Policy 2100)

Duties of the President of the Board:

- ▶ Preside at all meetings of the Board;
- ▶ Call special meetings when necessary or on request;
- ▶ Appoint members to all committees of the Board;
- ▶ Serve ex-officio as a member of all committees;
- ▶ Execute documents on behalf of the Board;
- ▶ Perform the usual and ordinary duties of the office.

Board of Education Vice President Responsibilities (Policy 2100)

Duties of the Vice-President of the Board:

- ▶ To exercise the duties of the President in case of the absence or disability of the President.
- ▶ In vacancy of the office of the President, shall act as President until a President is elected.

Superintendent's Responsibilities (Policy 3002)

The Superintendent shall be the Chief School Officer of the Board of Education in the administration of the schools. He/she shall be appropriately certified as a School District Administrator through the New York State Education Department.

The Superintendent shall conduct his/her duties under the direct supervision of the Board of Education, and shall carry out his/her administrative functions in accordance with New York statutory law, requirements presented by the New York State Department of Education and the adopted policies of the Board of Education.

Board of Education Member Responsibilities (Policy 2100)

The powers and duties of the Board of Education are fully described in Section 1709 of the Education Law. In general, the Board shall have in all respects the Superintendence, management and control of the educational affairs of the District and shall have all the powers necessary to exercise these powers expressly granted to it by the laws of New York State and the Commissioner of Education.

No member of the Board as an individual has the right to exercise the authority of the Board. A Board member has authority only when meeting with the full Board, unless he/she has been specifically delegated authority to act on behalf of the Board.

Board of Education Meetings

- ▶ BOE Meetings are business meetings held in public and not public meetings.
- ▶ Procedures are established for Meeting Protocol and Public Comments.
- ▶ The BOE annually approves the schedule of meetings for the school year.
- ▶ The BOE President works closely with the Superintendent to develop each meeting's agenda.
- ▶ The agenda is sent to the BOE members in advance of the meeting.
- ▶ BOE members receive necessary background information from the Superintendent in advance of the meeting.
- ▶ All BOE information is uploaded to a secure drive for BOE member use only. BOE members can use computers to access the information at meetings.
- ▶ Special meetings are called as needed. Appropriate public notice is provided in compliance with Education Law.

Robert's Rules of Order (Parliamentary Procedures)

See Appendix A

Communication

- ▶ The BOE agrees to follow and promote the "chain of command."
- ▶ It is important to communicate (verbal, written, or electronically) in a responsible manner as an elected official.
- ▶ It is important that communication be focused on agenda items.
- ▶ Important policy and personnel concerns and complaints are to be brought directly to the attention of the BOE President and the Superintendent.
- ▶ Encourage community members to communicate following a "chain of command."
- ▶ Personal opinions do not reflect the opinions of the entire BOE.
- ▶ BOE policy governs Public Comment and recommended responses.
- ▶ The BOE President is the spokesperson for the Board of Education.
- ▶ The Superintendent is the spokesperson for the District.
- ▶ E-mail and text messages should be professional and responsible. E-mail and text messages can be "FOILed."

Committees

- ▶ The BOE makes use of committees to attend to district business outside of BOE meetings.
- ▶ Committee reports are provided to all members at scheduled BOE meetings.
- ▶ The President determines committee membership and, if possible, takes the interest and expertise of board members into consideration prior to assigning committee membership. Each committee has two or three BOE members. One member serves as Committee Chairperson. The BOE President serves as an ad hoc member on all committees.
- ▶ BOE members trust committee representatives to make recommendations to the entire BOE.
- ▶ The following committees are in existence:
 - o Communications Committee
 - o Finance Committee
 - o Facilities Committee
 - o Health and Safety Committee
 - o Policy Committee
 - o Transportation Committee

Board of Education Agreements/Ground Rules

1. Interactions:

- a. BOE Members will treat each other with the utmost respect at all times.
- b. Disagreements are part of intellectual discussions; therefore, we can agree to disagree.

2. Interfacing with School Administration, Faculty, and Staff:

- a. Board President should be approached first for any questions or concerns.
- b. Board members, when acting in the role of a board member, will discuss all matters with the Board President and Superintendent if there is an issue with school personnel.
- c. Board members, when acting in the role of parent, will work through the normal chain of command to ensure that it is understood that they are acting as a parent and not as a Board member.
- d. When faced with issues from constituents (including staff), Board members will thank the person for voicing their concern and encourage them to use the chain of command. If that is not possible, express that the concern will be shared-and then share the concern with the Superintendent and the rest of the Board.

3. Expectations and Responsibilities:

- a. Be prepared for meetings.
- b. Concerns regarding agenda or meeting protocols need to be voiced to the Board President and/or the Superintendent prior to the meeting.
- c. Speak up without reservation whether you agree with an opinion or have a difference of opinion.
- d. Ask for what you need.
- e. Keep commitments.
- f. Demonstrate "active participation" in a caring and respectful manner.

4. Listening Effectively:

- a. Check for understanding.
- b. Summarize what you heard so that you understand what you heard.
- c. "Seek first to understand, then seek to be understood."
- d. Listen generously

5. Level of Participation:

- a. Each Board is expected to participate fully and be respectful in dialogue.
- b. Disagreements mean that while we disagree with the item or issue, we will not be disrespectful.
- c. If the item up for discussion cannot be resolved during the meeting, the Board President will move to have the discussion tabled for another meeting.

6. Confidentiality:

- a. Confidential information will be kept confidential.

7. Participation in School Events/Groups

- a. Board members are encouraged to attend school events such as concerts, musicals, open house, community sponsored events, etc.
- b. Board members are asked not to attend meetings or take leadership roles in groups or events, both associated with, and separate to, the district such as PTSO, Athletic Boosters, the musical. If asked, board members can volunteer to assist with events such as the craft fair or golf tournament.

8. Decision Making:

- a. State laws are first order of consideration.
- b. Parliamentary procedure is the second order of consideration. (see Appendix A)
- c. The Board will work towards consensus on major decisions (ex. budget, capital projects, hiring of the Superintendent, policy, etc.). This means that each board member can support the decision (both publicly and privately) because the decision was arrived at in a fair and open manner. This will be demonstrated by each Board member stating, "Yes, I can support this."
- d. Other types of decision-making will be used when consensus is not sought. This includes majority decisions.
- e. Committees make recommendations to the Board unless the Board specifically delegates the decision authority on a specific issue.

9. Agenda Items:

If a Board member seeks to have an item on the agenda, the Board member will:

- a. Call the Board President.
- b. Call the Superintendent.
- c. Ask, if during a Board meeting, for it to be placed on a future agenda.

Appendix A

Abbreviated Robert's Rules of Order

What is Parliamentary Procedure?

It is a set of rules for conduct at meetings that allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion. It's a time tested method of conducting business at meetings and public gatherings. It can be adapted to fit the needs of any organization.

Sample Order of Business:

1. Call to order and roll call of members.
2. Present the Agenda.
3. Consider minutes of last meeting--vote to accept amended minutes.
4. Special orders--important business previously designated for consideration at this meeting.
5. Business—motions.
6. Announcements.
7. Adjournment

Presenting Motions:

1. Obtain the floor.
2. Make a motion--avoid personalities and stay on subject.
3. Wait for someone to second the motion.
4. Another member will second the motion or the Chairman will call for a second--if there is no second to motion it is lost.
5. The Chairman restates the motion.
6. Debate--concise and focused on content of motion.
7. Keep established time limits.
8. Put the question to the membership--if there is no more discussion, a vote is taken.

Note: Motion to Table – This motion is often used in the attempt to "kill" a motion. The option is always present, however, to "take from the table", for reconsideration by the membership.

Voting on a Motion:

1. By General Consent -- When a motion is not likely to be opposed, the Chairman says, "if there is no objection ...". The membership shows agreement by their silence, however if one member says, "I object," the item must be put to a vote.
2. By Voice -- The Chairman asks those in favor to say, "aye", those opposed to say "no". Although "voice" is preferred, any member may move for an exact count.
3. By Ballot -- Members record their votes; this method is used when secrecy is desired.

In summary, parliamentary procedure is an effective means to get things done at your meetings. But, it will only work if you use it properly.

1. Allow motions that are in order.
2. Have members obtain the floor properly.
3. Obey the rules of debate -- stay focused.

Most importantly. *BE COURTEOUS.*

Adapted from: <http://www.robertsrules.org/rulesintroprint.htm>