



## **Board of Education Handbook**

The Board of Education Handbook is intended to provide supplemental information to that which is contained in the Board Bylaws and Policies. Board members are encouraged to refer to the handbook for guidance in routine matters which may come before the Board. Revisions to the Revised School Code and other applicable law will be represented in Board Bylaws and Policies. The Handbook shall be reviewed as part of the Board of Education annual Organizational Meeting and may be revised at any time as changes to Board of Education practices which are not governed by the Revised School Code and other applicable law may occur. Revisions shall be made in accordance with the Open Meetings Act requiring a motion, public discussion and a vote by a majority vote of the Board. Board members are required to comply with all provisions in the Board Handbook.

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## **NEW BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION**

The Board and its staff will assist each new member-elect to understand the Board's functions, policies, and procedures before taking office or as soon as possible thereafter. The following methods will be employed:

- The electee will be given selected material on the job of being a member of the Board.
- The electee will be invited to attend Board meetings and to participate in its discussions.
- The electee will be invited to meet with the Superintendent and other Administrative personnel to discuss the structure and functioning of central administration and the district as a whole.
- The electee will be supplied the same materials to prepare for meetings as the Board of Education members receive with the exception of Closed Meeting and confidential information.
- A copy of the Bylaws, Board Handbook and Policies manual of the Board will be given to the electee.
- The Board encourages the participation of all its members at conferences, workshops, and conventions which provide a measure of in-service training and development.

## **BOARD MEMBER TERMS**

There are seven Board seats which are elected on rotating terms in even year November elections. The following schedule represents the rotation commencing with the November 2014 election.

Seats Elected:

November 2014 Seat C – Six Year Term

November 2014 Seat D – Six Year Term

November 2014 Seat F – Two Year Term (To fill vacancy due to resignation)

November 2016 Seat E – Six Year Term

November 2016 Seat F – Six Year Term

November 2018 Seat A – Six Year Term

November 2018 Seat B – Six Year Term

November 2018 Seat G – Six Year Term

November 2020 Seat C – Six Year Term

November 2020 Seat D – Six Year Term

November 2022 Seat E – Six Year Term

November 2022 Seat F – Six Year Term

November 2024 Seat A – Six Year Term

November 2024 Seat B – Six Year Term

November 2024 Seat G – Six Year Term

## **FILLING A BOARD VACANCY**

Board Bylaw 0137 references Board vacancies. The vacancy shall be filled by the Board using the following procedure:

- The Board shall seek qualified and interested candidates from the community through the news media, word of mouth, and contacts with appropriate organizations.
- All applicants are to submit a notice of their interest, in writing, to the President of the Board.
- The Board shall interview all interested candidates to ascertain their qualifications.
- To become a candidate an individual must possess the requirements as outlined by law.
- Appointment by the Board to fill a vacancy shall be by majority vote of the full Board at an open meeting.
- An appointed member of the Board shall serve until the next annual school election at which time the position shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term.

See Appendix A for sample application and Appendix B for sample questions for candidates.

## **BOARD/STAFF COMMUNICATION**

It is the desire of the Board of Education to maintain open communication between itself and school district staff. Board Members seeking clarification regarding the agenda may contact the Superintendent, Board President, and/or Assistant Superintendents.

When emailing questions or comments to the Assistant Superintendents, Board members will copy the Superintendent and the Board president in their emails.

Board Members are entitled to receive copies of existing documents in the possession of the school district except as prohibited by law. Requests for existing reports or documents will be made to the Superintendent and/or Board President.

In the event Board Members are requesting the creation of new reports or documents, the Board Member must inquire at a Board of Education meeting under Additional Business. Board Members will allow the Superintendent sufficient time to direct staff to generate the documents. In the event of a situation requiring immediate attention, requests must be made through the President of the Board or the Superintendent.

## **ANNUAL ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING**

The Board of Education Annual Organizational meeting is held in January, per Bylaw 0142. At the Organizational Meeting the Board will:

1. Establish regular public Board of Education meetings;
2. Establish depository accounts and check signatories;
3. Authorize persons to invest on behalf of the Rochester Community Schools;
4. Authorize persons to enter into agreements with financial institutions for commercial card agreements, custodial agreements, and other transactions;
5. Establish authorized persons to sign in the name of Rochester Community Schools;
6. Authorize persons to enter District's Safety Deposit Box;
7. Designate official newspaper for official publications;
8. Designate District legal counsel representation;
9. Authorize tax collection for each municipality;
10. Designate a person responsible for implementing public notice requirements of the Open Meetings Act;
11. Designate an insurance carrier;
12. Designate persons to serve as Director and alternate Director to the MAISL Management Trust;
13. Elect officers.
14. Review Board Handbook
15. Sign Code of Cooperation

## **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The Election of Board officers is held in accordance with Bylaw 0143. The procedure for electing officers will be as follows:

The ranking officer of the preceding Board will preside until the election of a president.

In order for a Member of the Board to stand for election, he or she must be nominated by a Member of the Board. For a vote to take place, a motion must be made and approved to close nominations.

Election of officers will be by a majority of the full Board using a Roll Call vote. Where no such majority exists on the first ballot, a second ballot will be cast for the two candidates who received the greatest number of votes. If no such majority exists on the second ballot, repeat ballots will be voted on until there is a majority.

Officers will serve for approximately one year and until their respective successors are elected and shall qualify.

An officer may resign his/her officer position while remaining on the Board. If the President resigns, the office of President will be filled by the Vice President for the remainder of the term. A new Vice President will then be elected by the Board of Education within 30 days. If any other officer resigns, the Board will elect a new officer within 30 days.

## **APPROVAL OF EXPENSES AND REIMBURSEMENT**

Board expense reimbursement process is identified in Bylaw 1001

Superintendent approval and reimbursement of expenses:

The superintendent will be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the discharge of their official duty, as well as for attending activities and functions that benefit the district. Actual and necessary expenses are those that relate to functions that have been directed by the Board or are necessary to the discharge of those duties. The Superintendent is expected to exercise good judgment and ensure that expenditures incurred are reasonable, necessary, and in the best interest of the School District.

The Board will approve all expenses. The superintendent will not be reimbursed for discretionary activities, entertainment expenses, purchasing alcoholic beverages, or expenses of a spouse, other family members or guests accompanying the superintendent in discharging their official duties or performing authorized functions. The Board may approve reimbursement for other activities upon request. The Superintendent will be required to provide the same documentation as all other employees when attending events or submitting a request for reimbursement.

## HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

The Board recognizes the value to school governance of public comment on education issues and the importance of allowing members of the public to express themselves on school matters. Accordingly, members of the public will be allowed at designated times to express themselves on matters relating to the school district.

Members of the public may address the Board during the following agenda items:

- Citizens requesting placement
- All Board action, discussion, and information items
- Additional Business, Citizens present

Permission to speak at any other time during the meeting will be solely at the discretion of the presiding officer of the Board.

Each speaker must be recognized by the presiding officer in Accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised. Each speaker is to stand, step to the microphone, identify himself/herself by name, and direct his/her remarks to the Presiding officer within a three (3) minute time frame.

The Board President and/or Superintendent/designee may respond to public comments as appropriate. If comments or questions need further investigation or study, the Board may direct the Superintendent/designee to respond to the community member at a later time.

The presiding officer may terminate a speaker's privilege of address if, after being warned, the speaker persists in improper conduct or remarks including using vulgarity, lewdness, obscenity, and/or references to personal or private matters which are unrelated to the performance of or fitness for public office or employment.

In order to provide for the orderly transaction of business during the meetings of the Board, when any individual citizen or group of citizens wishes to appear before the Board, the following procedures will prevail:

### A. FORMAL PLACEMENT ON THE AGENDA

1. Citizens may request formal placement on the agenda by notifying the Superintendent's Office in writing no later than noon on Wednesday preceding the regular meeting of the Board of Education. The written request must include the name, address, telephone number of the person or persons making the request; the name of the group or organization represented; the topic of concern; and discussion of topic, including any supporting documentation.
2. Questions, suggestions, or proposals which have been presented verbally should be submitted also in writing and signed by the individual or the spokesman of the group appearing before the Board to the Superintendent on the Wednesday prior

to the regular meeting of the Board of Education. The Superintendent and/or Board President will place the item on the agenda as appropriate in accordance with Board Bylaws. The Superintendent and/or his/her designee will contact the citizen regarding his/her placement on the agenda by Friday noon preceding the regular meeting of the Board of Education.

**B. OTHER PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

1. Citizens wishing to speak on an agenda item or to comment on an item not on the agenda are required to complete a "Hearing of the Public" information card available at the meeting with his/her name, address, telephone number, date, and topic. After speaking before the Board, the card should be submitted to the recording secretary.
2. If more than one person wishes to speak on the same topic, the new speaker is encouraged to provide only new information. If the person is representing an organization or group, the person should indicate whether the comments or presentation represents the official view of the organization or group.
3. No participant may speak more than once on the same topic unless all others who wish to speak on that topic have been heard.
4. All written statements should be given to the Secretary of the Board so that copies may be made available to members of the Board. All written statements and documents presented by an individual or group to the Board of Education during the meeting are considered public documents.

- C. The minutes of the board will reflect who spoke during each public comment section but will not attempt to summarize comments made.

## **PROCESS FOR COMPLAINTS AGAINST A BOARD MEMBER OR SUPERINTENDENT**

To promote objectivity and mitigate concerns of bias, when a complaint is made that the Board President believes could reasonably result in disciplinary action against a Board member or the Superintendent, the Board should select legal counsel to investigate and make written findings and recommendations to the Board. Legal counsel may be selected through the Board President, who has the authority under Bylaw 0143 (Board President) "to consult with the Superintendent and/or school district legal counsel prior to presentation of an issue to the full Board."

Once the investigation has been completed and a report has been submitted to the Board, the Board will need to decide whether the allegations were substantiated and what, if any, disciplinary action is appropriate. To comply with the Open Meetings Act, the Board would need to make that decision at an open meeting; however, at the request of the individual named in the complaint, the Board could go into closed session to hear the complaint and

consider potential discipline. The Board may render its decision based on the report or may have legal counsel participate in closed session to discuss the investigation, findings, and recommendations. Alternatively, if the Board has additional questions after receiving the report or after hearing the complaint, the Board could direct the Board President to obtain a follow up opinion from counsel to supplement the initial investigation and report.

### **Process in Steps**

1. A complaint is received.
2. If the complaint is received by anyone other than the Board President, the complaints should be directed to the Board President.
3. The President notifies the Board that a complaint has been received.
4. The President selects legal counsel to review, investigate and make written findings and recommendations to the Board.
  - a. The Board will receive the investigation report prior to the hearing.
  - b. The investigation report may include general recommendations about proactive or remedial measures that the Board could take to resolve the complaint and/or prevent future policy violations.
  - c. To the extent permitted by law, the investigation report may be shared with the Complainant and Respondent; however, this would be a separate report that may be redacted/revised for confidentiality purposes and would not contain legal advice. The report shared with the Complainant and Respondent will also be part of the public record.
5. The Board schedules a meeting to hear the complaint which may be in closed session at the request of the individual named in the complaint.
  - a. Each Complainant and Respondent will be given three minutes for each complaint. For example: if there are five complainants they will have 3 minutes to respond to each complaint, or 15 minutes total. The Complainant will speak first, and then the Respondent will have the opportunity to respond. In the event of multiple Complainants, the Respondent will have the opportunity to respond after each Complainant or reserve comment until all of the Complainants have spoken.
  - b. Any Board Member not under investigation in a complaint may ask clarifying questions of the parties, if needed, after all parties have spoken. However, the parties are not permitted to question each other.
  - c. The meeting to hear/consider the complaint is not an evidentiary hearing, as each side will have had the opportunity to participate in the investigation. A party may have a representative at the meeting (e.g., a lawyer or union representative), but having a representative at the meeting will not broaden the



party's rights or change the nature of the meeting. For instance, a representative could make the 3-minute statement described in 5 a) on behalf of a party, but the representative would not have the right to call witnesses, conduct cross-examination, or otherwise turn the meeting into an evidentiary hearing.

6. After hearing the complaint, the Board may make its decision based on the report or may have legal counsel participate in closed session to discuss the investigation, findings, and recommendations.
  7. The Board will vote to either substantiate or dismiss the claims in the complaint, or if there are additional questions, the board can direct the investigator to supplement the investigation and report. If more information is needed, the decision would be postponed until the information is available and a new meeting has been scheduled. If any claims are substantiated, the Board will determine any disciplinary actions.
- \* In the event the Board President is named in the complaint, then the Board Vice President would fill the role of President in the above process.
- \* In the event the person named in the complaint is a Board member, the Board expects that the Board member will recuse themselves from acting in their role as Board member related to the complaint, including but not limited to:
- reviewing legal opinions,
  - meeting with counsel in a closed session, and
  - deliberating or voting on issues related to the complaint.

Refusal to adhere to these expectations, which the Board believes would create a conflict of interest, may result in censure or other Board action.

## **ATHLETIC AND COMPETITIVE CLUB RECOGNITION GUIDELINES**

The goal of these guidelines is to clearly identify who the board will recognize, the information those involved need to provide and timing for the recognitions.

1. Coaches and Sponsors will submit a form for recognition.
2. The following information would be on the district website: The RCS Board of Education is proud of the accomplishments of our students and would like to recognize and celebrate school sponsored academic, athletic, and artistic teams and clubs, or the individuals on those teams or clubs that have won state or national championship awards or titles (i.e. came in first place and are equivalent to a Michigan High School Athletic Association championship). Coaches or sponsors must complete the following form to request recognition. The board will recognize students 2-3 times per year - likely in December, May, and June, if

needed, of each year. The individual completing the form will receive an automated confirmation of receipt. Additional information, including the date and time of the recognition, will be provided by the board Vice President after submitting the form.

3. A form on the RCS website will include the following information:
  - a. Team/club name
  - b. School(s)
  - c. Coach/sponsor name
  - d. Coach/sponsor email
  - e. Coach/sponsor phone number
  - f. Name of competitive event
  - g. Date of event
  - h. Award/title earned
  - i. Number of students involved
  - j. Name and grade of student for individual awards (provide multiple slots for adding students)
  - k. Provide any relevant details related to this award/title/competition
4. The link will be posted on the district website, where those inquiring about potential recognition will be directed.
5. During the board recognition, teams/clubs will have up to three minutes to provide information about the team/event/award/title. They will then have the opportunity to introduce each person on the team or the individual who received the award.

## COMMITTEES

The Board President shall be appointed to the Superintendent's Steering Committee.

The Board Vice President shall be appointed to the Superintendent's Steering Committee and the Superintendent Policy and Curriculum Committee.

The Board Treasurer shall be appointed to the Superintendent's Steering Committee and the Superintendent's Business, Operations and Support Committee.

Two additional Board members will be appointed to each of the Superintendent's committees following the Annual Organizational Meeting.

Board members will be assigned as representatives to PTA Council, Rochester Area Youth Assistance (RAYA), Oakland County School Board Association (OCSBA), Oakland Schools Legislative Committee, MASB Liaison, RCS Foundation, the District Critical Incidence Team (DCIT), the Health Advisory Board, the Career and Technical Advisory Committee and to each school as determined by the President.

## **BOARD MEMBER INVOLVEMENT IN STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

Board members' decisions in matters pertaining to student discipline should be based solely upon information provided by the Administration and the affected students/parents, and that the Board members should discuss or deliberate the substance of the case only at the appropriate time; i.e., a Board hearing. Any communication coming from community members regarding student discipline should be redirected to the administration.

## Appendix A – Sample Application

Application for Appointment to the Rochester Community Schools Board of Education  
**Term: {Month, Day, Year to Month, Day, Year}**

For consideration as a candidate for appointment, this application, along with a resume, must be received by {time} on {date}. Methods of return include the following:

1. Mail to: President, Board of Education  
Rochester Community Schools  
501 West University Drive  
Rochester, MI 48307  
(Please note: Application must be returned by {time} {date}. Postmark date will not be considered.)
2. Fax to: Rochester Community Schools  
Attn: President, Board of Education  
at 248-726-3105
3. Email to: President (email address)
4. Drop Off: The Administration Center  
501 West University Drive  
Rochester, MI 48307  
Attn: President, Board of Education

Duties and responsibilities of a Board member:

1. Monday evenings: Board of Education meetings and closed sessions
2. Committee assignments: approximately two meetings per month
3. School assignments: three school assignments, approximately six meetings per year
4. Liaison assignments: on average, one per month
5. Ceremonial duties: commencements, honors events
6. Preparation for Board meetings

Additional district information is available at [www.rochester.k12.mi.us](http://www.rochester.k12.mi.us)

Timeline: Candidates for appointment will be announced on the district website on {date}. There will be an Open House for the community to meet candidates on {date} beginning at {time}. Candidates will be briefly interviewed at a special open meeting on {date} beginning at {time}. Final interviews and the appointment of the Board member will take place at a special open meeting on {date} beginning at {time}. The appointee will be sworn in on {date} at the regularly scheduled Board meeting and will take his/her seat.

Rochester Community Schools

Board of Education

**Board Member Vacancy Application**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Are you a:

U.S. Citizen                    YES  NO

Registered voter in the Rochester Community Schools district      YES  NO

2. Provide biographical information and relevant qualities and skills you would bring to the position. (200 words or less)

3. Explain why you are interested in serving as a trustee on the Rochester Community Schools Board of Education. (200 words or less)

4. Describe at least two major issues facing our school district and what you would do to address those issues as School Board Trustee. (200 words or less)

Applicant may choose to provide responses in a separate word document

## Appendix B– Sample Questions for Board Candidate

Provided are some sample questions to start with, but it's always recommended to customize your questions to meet the specific and unique qualities and issues of your Board, school and community. Once the questions are selected, you may want to have a rating scale for each question so you can fairly evaluate responses.

1. Why are you interested in serving on the school Board?
2. What do you see as the role of a school Board member?
3. What contributions can you make to this school district?
4. How do you feel the school district can improve the academic achievement of students and the professional development of the staff?
5. What are the challenges facing our school district?
6. What are the biggest challenges facing public education today?
7. What approach would you take to helping pass millage renewals, millage increases or Headlee override elections? (If applicable now or in the future)
8. What qualities, skills and experience would you bring to the Board?
9. If you were faced with a tough issue as a Board member (raising taxes, cutting staff, programs), what kind of data would you need to help you make your decision?
10. What do you see as the roles and responsibilities of school Board members?
11. At times you may be caught between legitimately opposing points of view. There may be a difference between your personal point of view and the policy or law that you're required to uphold as a trustee. How will you handle this?
12. What do you think are the most important skills for students to have when they graduate?
13. Describe how you'll advocate openness and democratic processes in all Board activities with emphasis on team decision-making and consensus.

14. Are you willing to pursue the skills, the knowledge and the training necessary to become a fully functioning and effective Board member? Provide examples of how you might accomplish this.
15. When voting on issues, are you always willing to put learning first and give primacy to what's best for children?
16. In the challenging times that we're facing this year, why have you decided to be a part of the decision-making process?
17. What would you like to see changed in the district and how do you envision your role in that change?
18. An average month for a school Board member includes about five scheduled meetings and perhaps another five school or community related activities. In addition, there's daily email correspondence, required reading and district updates. How will you fit this into your schedule?
19. As a Board member you'll be asked to make decisions where you must put aside what's best for you, your family, your friends and your school to do what's best for the students and district. What does this mean to you?
20. After review and discussion on significant issues, the Board operates by a majority vote. When the majority vote is different from your position how would you manage the situation?
21. What are your beliefs about the use of technology in education?
22. Working effectively with other school Board members and the superintendent requires skills in communication and decision-making. How do you see yourself working with other members of the leadership team? What is your vision for education in this community?
23. How can a Board know if its goals are being accomplished and its policies carried out?
24. How do you view the relationship between the Board of Education and the administration/staff?
25. If appointed to the Board, would you seek re-election when the appointment expires?
26. Describe your response if a parent cornered you in the grocery store and asked for your support on a particularly hot issue?
27. What will you do to become more effective as a Board member?

28. Identify a recent Board decision that you felt strongly about and describe how you would balance community concerns, student needs, state and federal law, staff considerations and your personal value and beliefs to determine how to vote on the issue.

### **Appendix C – MASB New Member Orientation**

In 2013 the Rochester Community Schools Board of Education was recognized as an MASB Honor Board, which means that all seven Board members have completed the 100 level series MASB Board Certification courses. Professional development for Board members is supported and encouraged by the Rochester Community Schools Board of Education and administration. The MASB New Member Orientation publication contains valuable information regarding Board member responsibilities and expectations. All Board members are encouraged to become familiar with this publication and to take advantage of professional development opportunities for Board members.