



Board Operating Procedures

Board Approved October 15, 2024

PREFACE

School district board of trustee operating procedures provide a structured guide for how the board governs and oversees the district's activities. These procedures outline the responsibilities, decision-making processes, and ethical standards that trustees must follow in fulfilling their duties. The goal is to ensure that the board operates transparently and effectively, supporting the district's mission while being accountable to the community, students, and staff. This framework promotes collaboration, governance efficiency, and alignment with educational goals.

Ethics for School Board Members

As a member of the Board, I shall promote the best interests of the District as a whole and, to that end, shall adhere to the following ethical standards:

Equity in attitude

- I will be fair, just, and impartial in all my decisions and actions.
- I will accord others the respect I wish for myself.
- I will encourage expressions of different opinions and listen with an open mind to others' ideas.
- I will not take things personally.

Trustworthiness in stewardship

- I will be accountable to the public by representing District policies, programs, priorities and progress accurately.
- I will be responsive to the community by seeking its involvement in District affairs and by communicating its priorities and concerns.
- I will work to ensure prudent and accountable use of District resources.
- I will make no personal promise or take private action that may compromise my performance of my responsibilities.
- I will keep all confidential information shared by the Superintendent private and not disclose it to a third party.
- I will communicate complaints/concerns to the Superintendent in a respectful manner.

Honor in conduct

- I will tell the truth.
- I will share my views while working for consensus.
- I will respect the majority decision as the decision of the Board.
- I will base my decisions on fact rather than supposition, opinion, or public favor.
- I will express my thoughts and decisions in a professional manner.
- I will listen to all Board members' thoughts/opinions.

Integrity of character

- I will refuse to surrender judgment to any individual or group at the expense of the District as a whole.
- I will consistently uphold all applicable laws, rules, policies, and governance procedures.
- I will keep confidential information that is privileged by law or that will needlessly harm the District if disclosed.
- I will uphold the District's reputation through my actions, words, and decisions.

Commitment to service

- I will focus my attention on fulfilling the Board's responsibilities of goal setting, policymaking, and evaluation.
- I will diligently prepare for and attend Board meetings.
- I will seek continuing education that will enhance my ability to fulfill my duties effectively.
- I will avoid personal involvement in activities the Board has delegated to the Superintendent.
- I will not use my position for professional/personal gain or profit.

Student-centered focus

- Most importantly, I will continuously guide by what is best for all students of the District.

How to Communicate With the Community

1. Board members are encouraged to participate in community activities as liaisons between the public and the school district. When doing so, board members are expected to:
 - a. Relay information about district goals.
 - b. Clarify a trustee's limitations, obligations, and responsibilities as a member of the board.
 - c. Support board decisions.
 - d. Interact in a positive manner.
 - e. Listen politely and respectfully to comments.
 - f. Make no commitment on behalf of the board or district.
 - g. Avoid criticizing district personnel.
 - h. Refer questions about specific district activities to the appropriate staff person who can best answer the questions.
2. The Board of Trustees encourages community input; however, it will not respond to or act on the basis of anonymous calls or letters.
3. Signed letters addressed to the board or a board member will be forwarded to the president or the superintendent for inclusion in the weekly board information packet.
4. The board will communicate to the community collectively through district communication vehicles authorized by the board in policy or the district communication plan.

How to Communicate With Team Members Between Meetings

1. The superintendent will communicate with each board member by weekly board information packets that may include information such as the following:
 - a. District events
 - b. Progress reports on board goals and directives
 - c. Follow-up reports in answer to board member questions
 - d. Updates on administrative matters or district operations
2. The superintendent will meet with the board president as needed, or communicate by telephone, fax, and/or e-mail to inform him or her of district issues that may need to come before the board for information or action.
3. The board president may direct the superintendent to distribute copies of documents to each member of the board for information. The weekly board information packet will be used to distribute information unless circumstances dictate a more immediate delivery.
4. The superintendent will communicate requested information to all board members in as timely a manner as possible without interfering with the regular conduct of district business.
5. Board members may communicate with other individual members for purposes of asking question, clarifying information, or socializing under circumstances that do not conflict with or circumvent the Texas Open Meetings Act.
6. Board members may not communicate with other individual members for purposes of soliciting votes in support of or opposition to items of business that may come before the board.
7. Board members who wish to share information relevant to district business or issues scheduled to come before the board will relay the information to the board president for placement on a future agenda or to the superintendent for distribution to all members in the weekly board information packet.

Related Policies: BE (Legal) and BJA (Local)

How to Visit Campuses as a Board Member

1. Board members are encouraged to attend as many school events as their time permits.
2. Board members may visit any campus after informing superintendent about the best time to visit.
3. Board members are required to check in with the principal's office and follow campus guidelines for visitors.
4. Board members may interact with any staff member or student during lunch or recess as long as they do not disrupt the learning process.
5. Following campus guidelines, board members may go into teachers' classrooms or individual buildings to observe. They may not evaluate the teacher's performance.
6. Board members are not to go into teacher's classrooms or individual building for the purposes of evaluation. Board members may not give any directive to any staff or students.
7. When visiting with teachers of their own children or grand-children, board members will make it clear that they are acting as parents rather than as board members.
8. Board members will not request or accept extraordinary consideration or favors from any district employee.

Related Policies: GKA (Legal), BBF (local) and BBFA (Legal)

How to Respond to Community or Employee Complaints

1. Listen briefly and respectfully. Remind the complainant of the board's responsibility to remain impartial and noncommittal because complaints may ultimately be brought to the board on appeal.
2. Determine if the complainant wishes to express dissatisfaction or desires some action be taken to resolve an issue.
3. Complainants who desire some action be taken should be directed or referred to the appropriate policy outlining grievance procedures and informed that the steps listed in policy are necessary to protect everyone's rights while following an orderly process.
4. Ask if the complainant has followed the "Chain of Command" outlined in district policy.
5. If the complainant does not know the district's "Chain of Command," provide the following information.
 - a. The complainant should first discuss the problem with the person in authority closest to the problem.
 - b. If not satisfied with the resolution of the problem, the complainant should go to the administrative supervisor of the person noted in "a."
 - c. The administrative supervisor will help the complainant initiate any correspondence or forms required by policy and attempt to resolve the complaint.
 - d. If still not satisfied, the complainant may appeal to the superintendent or a designee for resolution.
 - e. If the superintendent is unable to resolve the issue or the complainant is still not satisfied, the formal complaint is brought to the board following local policy.
6. Board members will inform the superintendent of all complaints from staff and community but will not direct the superintendent to take specific actions.
7. The superintendent shall inform the board of the resolution of complaints referred by board members if the complaint requires superintendent intervention.

Related Policies: DGBA, FNG and GF (Legal and Local for each policy)

How to Communicate With the Media

1. The superintendent or, in his or her absence, a specified designee shall be the official district spokesperson to the media on district issues
2. The board president shall be the official spokesperson for the Board to the media
 - a. All Board members who receive calls from the media should direct them to the Board's spokesperson and notify the Board President and Superintendent of the call

Related Policies: BBF (Local), BDAB (Local), BJA (Local) and GBB (Local)

Individual Board Member Request for Information or Reports

- A. Board members shall request information and/or reports through the Board President to the Superintendent.
- B. The Superintendent will gather the information and/or report and disseminate it in a timely manner to the entire Board.
- C. Board members are encouraged to advise the Superintendent of questions or concerns on agenda items before the Board meeting.

How to Prepare the Board Meeting Agenda

A. Placing items on agenda

1. In consultation with the Board President the Superintendent shall prepare the agenda for all Board meetings.
2. Any Trustee may request that a subject be included on the agenda for a meeting, and the Superintendent shall include on the preliminary agenda of the meeting all Trustee-requested topics that have been timely submitted.
3. The deadline for submitting items for inclusion on the agenda is noon on the Tuesday before regular meetings.
4. Before the official agenda is finalized for any meeting, the Superintendent shall consult with the Board President to ensure that the agenda and the topics included meet with the President's approval.
5. The superintendent will ensure that agenda packets are distributed to board members at least 4 calendar days before scheduled board meetings.
6. In accordance with Texas Open Meeting Law, no member can place an item on the agenda less than 72 hours in advance of a meeting, except in an emergency as per Texas Code.

B. Executive Session

1. All personnel items where an individual employee's status with the District is discussed will take place in executive session unless specifically required by Texas Open Meeting Law to be in open session. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to go into executive session in accordance with Section 551.071 through 551.084 of the Texas Government Code to discuss any item(s) it is authorized to discuss in executive session in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. Any necessary Board action related to such item(s) will be taken in open session following executive session.
2. Anything that violates the right to privacy, i.e. Texas Open Meeting Act, Texas Open Record Act, cannot be placed on the agenda.

C. Consent agenda items

1. When the agenda is prepared, the Board President shall determine items, if any, that qualify to be placed on the consent agenda.
2. A consent agenda shall include items of a routine and/or recurring nature grouped together under one action item.
3. For each item listed as part of a consent agenda, the Board shall be furnished with background material.
4. All such items shall be acted upon by one vote without separate discussion, unless a Board member requests that an item be withdrawn for individual consideration. The remaining items shall be adopted under a single motion and vote.
5. Examples could include:
 - Annual renewal of Region XX and TEA items
 - Budget amendments
 - Financial information
 - Minutes of regular and special Board meetings
 - Updates of Board policy
 - Bid recommendations

How to Participate as a Trustee in Board Meeting

During Meeting

1. Ensure you are fully prepared, on time and ready to participate
2. Endeavor to start and end meetings on time
3. Avoid hidden agendas and springing any surprises on other members
4. Once recognized by the Board President, ensure that each board member is allowed to speak without interruption.
5. Focus on agenda item until it is resolved or until a specified time has been reached to resume the resolution process.
6. Say in once, say it well.
7. Model the behaviors the board expects of students, staff and community members.
8. Before committing to a position on an agenda items or issue make sure all relevant information has been presented, including the Superintendent's recommendation.

After Meeting

1. Support the decision of the Board and will work to undermine Board decisions or encourage others to do so.
2. Abide by the confidentiality laws of executive session and ensure all documents, records, reports, etc. are treated in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, policies, etc.
3. Faithfully serve in trust for the entire community.

During Board meetings, Trustees will commit to staying in the Strategic role by focusing on good questioning techniques. The following questions are a sampling of the types of questions that the Carrizo Springs Trustees are committed to utilizing.

How to Participate as a Trustee in “Public Comment”

1. The board will follow the provisions adopted in policy BED (Local) in conducting a public comments time during board meetings.
2. The board will make copies of policy BED (Local) available to members of the public at board meetings at which a public comment time is scheduled.
3. Board members will listen to comments of speakers but will avoid asking questions of them or responding to them.
4. The board designates the president as its spokesperson if a response to the speaker is required. The president will limit responses to those allowed by law:
 - a. Statements of fact.
 - b. References to board policy.
 - c. Placing the item on a future board agenda for discussion.
5. Following a speaker’s comments, a board member may ask the president to place the subject on a future board meeting agenda.
6. With the approval of the board, the president may direct the superintendent to investigate matters brought forward during public comment and report findings to the board at a later meeting.
7. If a subject raised by a speaker is listed on the agenda posted in advance for the meeting, board members may discuss the subject at the time designated for that topic on the agenda.
8. If a speaker brings a complaint about an individual district staff person or board member, the president will remind the speaker of the formal grievance process available to them as outlined in policy.
9. The board respects the First Amendment rights of the public to address the board during the time it has set aside for public comments and will not decline to hear any speaker who has followed the appropriate procedures for speaking without seeking legal advice.

Related policies: BED (Legal and Local), FNG (Local)

How to Express Concern about Another Member's Performance

1. Individual board members are encouraged to express their concerns about another member's performance directly to that member.
2. If addressing the issue directly with the member does not resolve the concern, then discussion with the board president is appropriate.
 - a. The board president shall discuss the concern with the individual in question on behalf of the reporting board member or shall moderate a discussion between the members. If a quorum of the board is involved, the meeting must be posted and conducted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.
 - b. The president shall remind the board member whose behavior is in question about the adopted code of ethics and discuss how the questionable behavior does not comply with the code. The discussion also will identify more appropriate alternatives to the questionable behavior or refer the board member to policies or procedures that outline approved ways to deal with the issue that prompted the questionable behavior.
 - c. If the board member in question does not believe his or her behavior is in conflict with the board's code of ethics, an agenda item specifying "evaluation of individual board member performance" may be listed on the agenda for an upcoming board meeting.
 - d. The matter will be discussed by the full board in closed session in an attempt to clearly identify behavior that may be inappropriate and discuss possible solutions or alternative approaches that may have a more positive impact on team cohesion and effectiveness.
3. If the concern involves the board president, a member may discuss his or her concerns with the board vice-president.
4. Generally speaking, when concerned about a board member's behavior, board members agree the best practice is to:
 - e. Not take concerns about fellow board members to the superintendent.
 - f. Not speak about concerns regarding individual members with individuals outside of the board.
 - g. Not speak negatively about another board members, superintendent, or staff in the community.

Related Policies: BBFA (legal), BBF (Local)

Evaluation of the Superintendent

- A. Summative Evaluation in January
 - 1. The president will distribute blank evaluation instruments to each member at least two weeks in advance of the summative evaluation meeting along with instructions for completing the instrument.
 - 2. The superintendent will prepare a report and present it to the president for distribution to board members with the blank evaluation instruments. The report will include:
 - a. Summary results on superintendent performance goals established following the previous year's summative evaluation
 - b. Summary of progress on current year's district goals
 - c. Report on student performance as required by the state
 - d. Any additional district or professional highlights the superintendent believes will demonstrate effective performance for the past year
 - 3. The president will compile all results of the summative evaluation in a written document
- B. Board workshop to develop superintendent performance goals using district goals, data from TAPR report, and results of most recent summative evaluation; determine progress reports needed and dates to present to board. (September)
- C. Board workshop to review instrument and process; revise if needed and adopt instrument for the coming year; budget discussion tied to board goals. (March)
- D. Superintendent incorporates priorities from district goals and superintendent performance goals into district improvement plans and budget being drafted for next year. (April)
- E. Board elections. (November)
- F. Review evaluation process with new board members. (February)
- G. Formative evaluation; superintendent gives progress report on this year's performance goals.
- H. Board reviews superintendent evaluation policy and confirms dates and process for January summative evaluation. (October)
- I. Board workshop to review and update district goals using data from most recent TAPR report.
- J. Superintendent's "state of the district" report to the board; blank evaluation forms, copy of superintendent contract, and comparison information regarding superintendents' salaries and benefits distributed to board members. Report on district goals. (Early December)



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Carrizo Springs Consolidated Independent School District
452 Hwy 85 East
Carrizo Springs Texas 78834
www.cscisd.net
830-876-3503