

Steilacoom Historical School District No. 1
Board of Directors' Operating Protocol
Adopted January 15, 2025

The most effective way to operate and supervise a dynamic, growing school district is through close cooperation between the school board, the superintendent, and the administrative leadership team. Each group plays a different role, and each role is essential to the success of the entire system (staff and students). In order to allow each group to compliment and ensure the success of the others, there must be agreement on some philosophical ideas and practical ways of working together to achieve the common goal – quality education programs for each student. To achieve, within the legal and financial limits of the District, quality education programs for each student, the Board pledges to strive toward excellence in performance and expects the same from each individual who works in Steilacoom Historical School District.

Board directors and administrators have an obligation to provide educational leadership. The public expects the best in planning, decision-making, communication, and educational expertise. However, all decisions and policies of the Board-Administration Team must be gauged and tested against two fundamental beliefs: schools are for kids; and schools belong to the people.

For the purpose of enhancing teamwork among members of the Board and between the Board and the Administrative Team, we, the members of the Steilacoom School District Board of Directors, do hereby publicly commit ourselves collectively and individually to the following operating protocol:

PRINCIPLES FOR BOARD-ADMINISTRATION RELATIONS

The following philosophical ideas, operating principles, and behaviors, when adhered to by all, will create an open, productive environment for a team approach to school leadership:

1. Positive Approach

Each member of the team is charged with the responsibility of working with the team to find the best way to meet the needs of the students and staff. An open, positive, and problem solving atmosphere toward designing, implementing, and assessing plans to achieve the goals of the organization is critical.

2. Judgment and Trust

To develop an effective team process, each group must support and cooperate with team members, collectively and individually.

3. Loyalty and Disagreement

Cooperation, support, and loyalty do not mean there will be agreement on every issue. Dialogue, divergent thinking, and debate will encourage the best decisions. To clarify this principle, a few ground rules must be covered:

- Each team member has the responsibility for being loyal to the District, to each member of the team, and to the primary goal -- a quality education for every child.
- Board Directors should not be contacting employees of the District on operational issues. Questions about operations, direction, etc., should be directed to the Superintendent.
- Board Directors are encouraged to offer praise for employees, but criticism must be channeled through the Superintendent's office.
- Debate the issues, not one another. Avoid personal slurs and snide comments.
- Information about employees, negotiations, and other confidential areas discussed in executive session will remain completely confidential. Information given in confidence, particularly when planning and exploring alternatives must also remain confidential. Team members should state in advance whatever they consider to be confidential information.
- When Board Directors or the superintendent find themselves in disagreement with another team member, a one-to-one meeting with that person should be arranged to resolve the disagreement. Once resolved, the disagreement will remain a private matter.
- Discussion at meetings and debate over issues should be open and honest. Once a final team decision is reached, each member has the responsibility to support the decision.
- Agendas must be open and on the table for meaningful dialogue to occur. Information upon which decisions are to be made, with accompanying alternatives, will be given to the Board in a timely manner so that appropriate input and analysis can take place prior to the time of the decision. Surprises at meetings are counterproductive.

4. Accountability to Community

The School Board, Superintendent, and administrative team are accountable to the public for the decisions made and for the quality of their work. Responsibility to the community is demonstrated by listening to them and by using effective systems of gathering information as assessment.

5. Communication

Effective interpersonal communication requires a healthy communication climate with high levels of trust and respect for individuals and for the mission of providing a quality education for all students. To achieve this, messages must be open, straightforward, and honest.

- The Superintendent and the Board will make deliberate attempts to share information and data with all team members. Team members shall utilize the chain of command as outlined by District policy/procedures.
- When an individual Board Director is contacted by a staff or community member, each member has agreed to the following procedures:
 - a. Hear out the individual's concern.
 - b. Ask if the issue has been discussed with the person immediately responsible.
 - c. Express concern about the issue and a desire to assist in resolution, while reinforcing the need to resolve the issue at the immediate local level. If unsuccessful, proceed to the next level(s) of responsibility.
- Only the Superintendent, her designee, or a Board-designated representative may contact the District's negotiator, should one be used, on current negotiations. If a Board Director feels a need to talk to District counsel or the negotiator, he or she is to contact the Superintendent who will arrange for all meetings. The Board chair may contact the District's legal counsel in reference to the Superintendent's contract.
- It is important to keep the Superintendent and other Board members informed of unusual happenings as quickly as they occur.
- The Superintendent is responsible for communicating official district operational positions to the media. There will also be occasions when the Board chair communicates the official District position. Board members may certainly state personal positions; as long as they make it known they are not speaking for the Board or the District.
- The Board will emphasize planning, policy making, and public relations rather than becoming involved in the daily operations of the schools.
- After reviewing the agenda, Board members agree to ask questions when clarification is needed so that the Board meetings can proceed smoothly and efficiently. Board members can also contact the Superintendent to discuss issues prior to the meetings. Members may also request addition of items to the agenda prior to its adoption.

- Each Board member will become conversant with matters on which the Board acts, reviewing all materials prior to meetings. They will attend essential Board training and inform themselves about important issues through individual readings.
- All personnel complaints and criticisms received by the Board or its individual members will be directed to the Superintendent.
- Members agree to operate as a team and employ appropriate group problem solving techniques. They agree to focus on issues rather than personalities, to propose viable alternatives to problems, to disagree constructively and communicate with each other in a respectful manner.

Signed this 15th day of January 2025;



Sam Scott, Board Chair



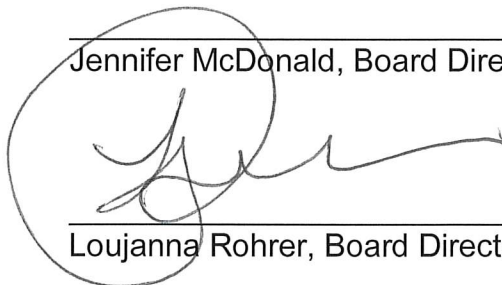
Melanie Tinsley, Board Vice Chair

Kathi Weight, Superintendent



Patrick Lewis, Board Director

Jennifer McDonald, Board Director



Loujanna Rohrer, Board Director