

HUNTERDON CENTRAL REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL
BOARD OF EDUCATION HANDBOOK



Board Approved:

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Hunterdon Central Regional High School Board of Education Member Handbook, a comprehensive guide to your role and responsibilities as a vital part of our educational community. As a member of the Board of Education, you play a crucial role in shaping the future of our schools and ensuring the success of our students. This handbook is designed to provide you with a clear understanding of your duties and to offer guidance on effective communication, meeting procedures, committee participation, and more. Your commitment and dedication as a Board of Education member are greatly valued. By familiarizing yourself with the contents of this handbook, you will be better equipped to contribute effectively to the growth and success of our educational community. Your role is essential in shaping the future of our schools.

Our NJSBA field representative is a terrific resource and is available to ALL Board members for questions and information. If you have questions, please email Patricia Rees at prees@njsba.org or on her business cell at (609) 278-5297.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

“The Board of Education adopts policies under which the school district operates; oversees the budget; approves the curriculum; hires and evaluates the Superintendent; represents the public during contract negotiations; and serves as a communications link between the community and the school system. School Board members must remember that they have no authority except that which results from participation in decisions of the Board during an official meeting. Actions, promises or commitments made by individual Board members are without legal basis and have no binding commitment upon the district. Board members should be aware that they are elected to represent the entire district in all matters pertaining to education, and not any one segment...

The function of the school Board is not to run the schools, but to see that they are run effectively. The Board establishes school district policy and goals and communicates those goals to the Superintendent. The Superintendent is accountable to the Board, and all other staff members are accountable to the Superintendent. Teamwork between the Board and Superintendent is essential. Board members should look to the Superintendent for leadership and guidance on educational procedures.”¹

Board President and Vice President

Per Board Bylaw 0171, “the President of the Board of Education shall:

1. Preside at all meetings of the Board;
2. Require the Board Secretary to call special meetings of the Board, N.J.A.C. 6A:32-3.1;
3. Sign all school district warrants, N.J.S.A. 18A:19-1;
4. Certify to all payrolls, N.J.S.A. 18A:19-9;
5. Subscribe bonds, notes, contracts, and other legal instruments for which the signature of the President is required, N.J.S.A. 18A:24-32;

¹[FAQ WHAT CANDIDATES WANT TO KNOW ABOUT BEING A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER](#), New Jersey School Boards Association, Accessed 15 February 2025.

6. Issue subpoenas to compel attendance of witnesses and production of documents, N.J.S.A. 18A:6-20;
7. Appoint all committees of the Board;
8. Serve as committee member ex officio in accordance with Board Bylaw No. 0155

The Vice President shall assume the duties of the President during the absence or disability of the President, act as liaison, together with the President, to the administration, and shall perform such further duties as may devolve upon him or her by direction of the Board, the President, or by virtue of law or the aforesaid rules of the State Board of Education.”²

Board Norms and Expectations

1. The benefit of the students should be at the forefront of our discussions and actions.
2. Treat every member with respect.
3. Listen empathetically and with curiosity. Be open to learning what a person is communicating.
4. Stay focused on the content, not the person. No personal attacks.
5. Operate with honesty and transparency in discussions, collaboration, and decision-making.
6. No surprises at the table.
7. Be respectful of time.
8. Recognize our successes.

Adherence to the Board norms and expectations will allow the Board to operate efficiently and effectively for the benefit of the students, staff, parents, and taxpayers of the community. In the event that a Board member fails to uphold the norms, the Board President will remind that Board member of the Board’s expectations. If the Board member continues to violate the norms, the Board President will discuss the matter with the NJSBA representative and/or the Board Attorney for guidance on appropriate actions.

² Hunterdon Central Regional High School District, [Policy 0171 - DUTIES OF BOARD PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT](#)

COMMUNICATION

Board Member Email

All members of the Board of Education are assigned an official email address to facilitate communication of all matters related to the district. This includes sharing information through shared network drives and resources. Board members should not use their personal email to engage in any official business related to the district. All information related to the business of the Board, regardless of where it is stored, is subject to an open public records request.

Board Member to Board Member

To guarantee compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA), in general, discussion of Board business should occur during public meetings or committees. Whether an email exchange among Board members would violate the OPMA depends on various details. Per the NJSBA Legal Department, “As a guiding principle, therefore, board members should be aware that once members begin to engage in two-way communication, or a string of communication involving additional board members, each step brings the board closer to the possibility that the board’s action could be challenged as a violation of the Sunshine Law.”³ The following is a summary of general Do’s and Don’ts:

DO	DON'T
<p>DO use email for discussion with less than a majority of the Board.</p> <p>DO use email for one way communication of information related to the business of the Board when corresponding with a majority of the Board. (BCC Board members and include disclaimer stating that the message is for informational purposes only and recipients should not reply all.)</p>	<p>DO NOT use email for discussion with a majority of the Board.</p> <p>DO NOT include any request for a response when corresponding with a majority of the Board</p> <p>DO NOT engage in “Rolling” email conversations. A “rolling” email occurs when one (1) member of the Board contacts other members via email individually or in smaller groups to successively discuss or gain opinions on an item related to Board business.</p>

Board Member to Administration Communication

As a Board of nine, it is important to understand that the Superintendent is the only Board employee. Furthermore, it must be noted that the Superintendent only takes direction from the majority/full Board. The rest of the administrators of the district report to the Superintendent. If a Board member reaches out to members of the administration or staff with questions, suggestions, or concerns it blurs the lines of authority and accountability and may redirect them from their daily responsibilities. Board members are not permitted to email staff or administrators except for the Superintendent from their Board email.

³ [Open Public Meetings Act and Technology](#), New Jersey School Boards Association, Accessed 15 February 2025

Exceptions to this practice are reserved for communication between the committee chairs and administrative liaison for the purpose of developing the committee agenda and clarifying upcoming Board agenda items.

In the event of a Board member's failure to adhere to these guidelines, the Board member's email account may be restricted from sending direct messages to staff and administrators.

Inquiries should be directed to:

- Board Secretary for matters pertaining to Board meeting attendance, mandated training, and matters related to their requirements as Board members.
- The appropriate committee chair for questions about the District, as well as any requests for subject-specific information. The committee chair will:
 - Attempt to answer the questions, if possible.
 - Forward inquiries and concerns for additional information to Board President and Superintendent as needed and respond back.
 - Discuss inquiries and concerns with the Board President and Superintendent and, if appropriate, add items to a future committee agenda for more discussion, as necessary.
- Board President for governance and all other matters.
 - In an effort to be respectful of the Superintendent's time, general inquiries should be directed to the Board President. If the matter requires the Superintendent's attention, the Board President will include her in the communication. If not, the Superintendent will be updated regularly regarding members' concerns. Urgent matters may be sent to the Superintendent directly, but the email must cc the Board President.
- Vice President in the absence of the Board President.

Communication with the Public

Because we are one Board comprised of nine individuals, messaging must represent the sentiment of the full Board. Per the New Jersey School Boards Association resource, *Who does what in Public School Governance: The Role of Board Members and Superintendents*,

“Board members have no legal authority except when sitting with other Board members in a legally constituted meeting. An individual Board member cannot make decisions for the Board, take action for the Board or speak for the Board unless the Board has authorized them to do so.

Likewise, concerns of individuals in the community which are brought to the attention of a Board member cannot be acted upon by that Board member, but are referred through established channels, such as Board President and/or the chief school administrator. When the chain-of-command is used properly by citizens and Board members, communications are improved, and

the Board of education can act as final arbiter on issues which have not been resolved at other steps in the chain.”⁴

Therefore, we must remain mindful of what we say and to whom when fielding questions, comments, or concerns from constituents on any matter related to Hunterdon Central.

HCRHS BOE email

Questions, comments, and concerns from the public should be addressed to the Board as a whole. Therefore, the Board will implement the use of an HCRHS BOE email. Messages sent to the BOE@hcrhs.org email address are automatically sent to ALL Board members, the Superintendent, and Board Secretary. Each message will receive the following auto-reply responsive email.

"Thank you for writing to share your thoughts and perspective. By sending a message to BOE@hcrhs.org, all members of the Board have received your email. Your message will be reviewed and considered, along with all public feedback, as part of any appropriate deliberation of the Board. Where necessary, we also will refer any concerns to the district administration for follow-up. A member of the Administration or the Board President will contact you if we require further information. Again, we greatly appreciate your input."

To avoid confusion or mixed messaging, Board members should refrain from responding to emails sent to the BOE@hcrhs.org e-mail address. If emails are sent to Board members individually, responses should remember that an individual Board member cannot make decisions, take action, or speak for the Board unless the Board has authorized them to do so.

Communication with Board Attorney

In accordance with Policy 0174, the Board “authorizes the Superintendent of Schools, the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary and the Board President as designated contact person(s) to request services or advice from contracted legal counsel.”⁵ With the exception of the Board President, individual Board members may not contact the Board Attorney without prior written approval from the Board President.

Open Public Records Act

Emails sent by Board members on their district-issued or personal/private email addresses are subject to the Open Public Records Act (OPRA) under the same conditions that regular mail or other written communications are covered by OPRA. The subject matter of the email, rather than where it originated or where it is stored, is what determines whether it is a "public record" under OPRA. If the email discusses official Board business and the subject matter is not protected by an exemption under the law, then it can be requested and must be released under OPRA. Public records are defined as:

⁴ New Jersey School Boards Association. [Who does what in Public School Governance: The Role of Board Members and Superintendents](#). December 2014, Accessed 15 February 2025.

⁵ Hunterdon Central Regional District, [Policy 0174-LEGAL SERVICES](#).

“A public record under the common law is one required by law to be kept, or necessary to be kept, in the discharge of a duty imposed by law, or directed by law to serve as a memorial and evidence of something written, said, or done, or a written memorial made by a public officer authorized to perform that function, or a writing filed in a public office. The elements essential to constitute a public record are that it be in writing, that it be made by a public officer, and that the officer be authorized by law to make it.”⁶

Public Expressions and Social Media

Per Board Bylaw 0146, “Board members are entitled to express themselves publicly on any matter, including issues involving the Board and the school district. Individual Board members cannot, however, express the position of the Board except as expressly authorized.” Further, “a Board member shall not represent his or her personal opinion as the position of the Board and shall include in all formal expressions in which his or her Board affiliation is likely to be recognized, such as letters to government officials or newspapers, speeches to organizations, or any electronic communication posts on social media or other websites, a statement that the opinions expressed do not necessarily represent those of the Board.”⁷ The standard SEC approved disclaimer statement:

“The following statements are made in my capacity as a private citizen, and not in my capacity as a board member. These statements are also not representative of the board or its individual members, and solely represent my own personal opinions.”

For further information visit the [NJSBA website](#). If you still have questions, Board members may always contact the NJSBA’s Legal Department at 609-278-5279 for additional information and resources.

⁶ [A Citizen's Guide to the Open Public Records Act](#), Fifth Edition, October 2024, Accessed 15 February 2025.

⁷ Hunterdon Central Regional High School District [Policy 0146 - BOARD MEMBER AUTHORITY](#).

BOARD MEETING AGENDA

Overall, an agenda for a Board of Education meeting is a tool to facilitate effective communication, decision-making, and collaboration between the administration, Board members, and stakeholders, ultimately contributing to the successful operation and improvement of the Hunterdon Central Regional High School District.

The purpose of the agenda for the Board of Education meeting is to outline and organize the topics, discussions, and decisions that will be addressed during the meeting. It serves as a roadmap for the meeting helping participants (Board members, administrators, educators, community members, etc.) understand the flow of the meeting and the sequence in which topics will be discussed. An agenda provides transparency to the public and stakeholders about what will be discussed during the meeting. This transparency fosters trust and engagement by allowing the public to prepare and potentially share comments related to specific agenda items at the designated time during the meeting or to express their opinions or concerns to their Board representatives. When the meeting is over, the agenda serves as the basis for the meeting minutes by documenting what was discussed and decided during the meeting.

Expectations

Board agendas with attachments are available no later than the **Friday afternoon before Board meetings**. It is each Board member's responsibility to thoroughly read the agenda and relevant attachments prior to the Board meeting to ensure he/she can make an informed decision on action items. To allow sufficient time to research responses and answer questions and to keep Board meetings running efficiently, Board members should forward questions about agenda items to the committee chairs or Board President **BEFORE** Board meetings.

Agenda Development

The Superintendent of Schools, in collaboration with the Board President, is responsible for creating the agenda for each Board meeting. This agenda will include presentations, reports, and actionable items. If necessary, the Superintendent and Board President may add items to the agenda after its distribution but before the meeting begins, if they believe it would benefit the Board. Any additional items will be communicated as soon as possible.

To assist in the smooth and efficient operation of the meeting and out of respect for all attendees, Board members should forward questions about agenda items to the committee chairs or Board President **BEFORE** Board meetings.

Voting

During the Board meeting, the President presides over the meeting by managing the movement through each section and working with the committee chair to facilitate discussion. At the point when a motion is moved and the discussion is finished, the Board President will call for a vote. The Business Administrator/ Board Secretary takes the minutes and records the vote of the Board.

When voting at a Board meeting, the terms "Yes," "No," and "abstention" represent different ways in which Board members can express their positions on a proposed resolution or motion.

- Yes: Indicates approval with the proposed resolution or motion. In essence, they support the decision or action being discussed and are in favor of it moving forward. A "Yes" vote implies that the Board member believes the proposal aligns with the best interests of the district.
- No: Expresses disapproval with the proposed resolution or motion. They believe that the decision or action being discussed is not in the district's best interests, and they do not want it to proceed.
- Abstention: An abstention occurs when a Board member chooses not to cast a vote either in favor or against the proposed resolution or motion. Board members might abstain for various reasons, such as a conflict of interest, lack of sufficient information, or personal reservations about the proposal. Abstaining indicates that the Board member is choosing not to take a stance on the matter. *It's important to note that an abstention is not the same as a "No" vote; it does not count as opposition to the proposal.*

In the context of a Board meeting, each Board member's vote plays a crucial role in making decisions that impact the organization's direction and actions. The outcome of the voting process determines whether the proposed resolution or motion is accepted, rejected, or deferred for further consideration. The distinction between "Yes," "No," and abstention ensures that Board members can express their opinions clearly and transparently, allowing for informed and responsible decision-making.

COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

Because the role of the Board is not to administer the district, but instead, to ensure it is well run, we must rely upon the committee structure to engage in meaningful work that empowers Board members to meet their ethical obligations. Pursuant to Board policy 0155:

“The Board of Education authorizes the creation of committees of Board members charged to conduct studies, make recommendations to the Board, and act in an advisory capacity. Committees are not authorized to take action on behalf of the Board.”⁸

Committee meetings shall convene on a regularly scheduled basis or be called by the chair of the standing committee or the Board President as the need arises. The President, Superintendent, Board Secretary, and all other members of the Board shall be advised of all Committee meetings by maintaining the shared Committee and Board Events calendars online.

The President of the Board may refer other items deemed appropriate to the various Committees for consideration on the recommendation of the Superintendent or Board. The Superintendent or her designee will review with each Committee those items falling within its area of responsibility. After discussion by the Committee, the recommendation of the Superintendent and Committee will be reviewed by the entire Board.

Committees shall recommend yea, nay, recommend modification or no opinion to the Board, but may not make decisions for the Board.

GENERAL COMMITTEE EXPECTATIONS

- **All recommendations will be based on how the proposed action will lead to greater outcomes or opportunities for students.**
- Committee meetings will not be spent on personal issues of Board members.
- It is each Board member’s responsibility to read the agendas, review the notes, and direct questions to the committee chair(s).
- Meetings should last no longer than 90 minutes.
- Meetings will be scheduled as in-person meetings. On occasion, meetings may be scheduled as a virtual committee meeting only if the committee chair, administrative liaison, and Superintendent determine that a virtual meeting is necessary.

⁸ Hunterdon Central Regional High School District [Policy 0155 - BOARD COMMITTEES](#).

COMMITTEE PARTICIPATION, ROLES, & RESPONSIBILITIES

Board committee chair(s): To be appointed by the President.

- Coordinate the engagement of the committee
 - Lead committee meetings by keeping the conversation focused, allowing all voices to be heard, and polling the members for consensus on action items.
 - Bring questions and concerns from non-committee members into committee meetings for discussion, regardless of a difference of opinion.
 - When action items are recommended by a committee, the chair should make sure the items have majority Board support and report items that do not have support to the Board President.
- Present the committee report at public meetings.
- Respond to all member inquiries, if a response is required, within 3 business days.

Board Committee members:

Your committee chair is faced with a demanding job and has the responsibility of presiding at your meetings and guiding them in such a way so that a definite decision is reached and/or positive action is taken that is beneficial to the Board and the District.

As a member of a committee, your job is important. You can assist in making the meeting as successful as possible by observing the following suggestions:

- Review Committee agendas and refer questions to committee chair **PRIOR** to the Committee meeting.
- Refer requests for topics to be discussed to the committee chair via email prior to the committee meeting for consideration. Topics may not be discussed at the next committee meeting but will be added to the list of topics to be discussed on the committee agenda.
- Provide input and inquiries related to the responsibilities defined by the committee.
- During the meeting, stick to the agenda. Offering subjects for discussion not appearing on the agenda impedes the meeting.
- Do not hesitate to comment, question, or disagree constructively.
- Board members should summarize their convictions in a direct statement. This permits a more thorough examination of an idea that could be highly constructive when completely understood.
- Reviews Committee notes and refers questions/feedback to committee chair **PRIOR** to the Board meeting.

Administrative liaison:

- Confer with the chair regarding the agenda, presentations, and follow-up items relative to the roles and responsibilities of the committee.
- Take minutes and provides draft Committee meeting minutes to Board committee chair for review prior to dissemination.

Non-Committee Board members:

- Refer requests for topics to be discussed or questions about agenda items to committee chairs via email **PRIOR** to the committee meeting for consideration. Topics may not be discussed at the next committee meeting but will be added to the list of topics to be discussed on the committee agenda.
- Review Committee agendas and minutes **PRIOR** to the next public Board meeting.
- Refer questions to committee chairs via email **PRIOR** to the public Board meeting.

COMMITTEE AGENDAS AND MEETING PARAMETERS

The committee agenda should be a cooperative effort between the chair and the administrative liaison and/or the Superintendent. The creation of an agenda should be used to help advance the mission and goals of the district. Agenda items generally come from 1) administrative priorities, 2) direction from the Board majority, 3) emerging issues, and 4) items advanced from the committee. In an effort to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Committee meetings, the administrative liaison will prepare all Committee meeting agendas as follows:

- Committee agendas must be developed to support fact-finding, deliberation, and advisement so as to inform the governance functions of the full Board.
- Agendas will be drafted by the administrative liaison in conjunction with the committee chair.
- Each Committee meeting shall have a start and end time with a limit of 1.5 hours in duration.
- The minutes of every Committee meeting will be posted in a shared Board drive and available to members of the full Board prior to the regular meeting of the Board.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- Preliminary Committee agendas will be available on BoardDocs no later than 24 hours prior to the committee meeting.
- Meeting minutes will be reviewed by the committee chair and shared on the Board drives within four days following each Committee meeting.
- Any Board member with a question should reach out to the committee chair.
- All Committees must provide an oral report to the full Board at the next regular public meeting. Committee chairs should **NOT** include details of deliberative items in their reports.

STANDING COMMITTEES

STUDENT LIFE & PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Scope and Purpose:

The purpose of the Student Life and Program Committee is to review initiatives and status, and recommend policy and action related to curriculum, extra- and co-curricular activities, professional growth and development, special and counseling services, community partnerships, and all other matters as they relate to the educational mission and goals of the district.

OPERATIONS AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Scope and Purpose:

The purpose of the Operations and Transportations Committee is to review initiatives and status, and recommend policy and action related to finance, transportation (in accordance with the requirements of all joint and other transportation agreements), the operational support for efforts to achieve the educational mission and buildings and grounds, construction, and all other matters as they relate to goals of the district.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Scope and Purpose:

The purpose of the Personnel Committee is to review initiatives and status, and recommend policy and action related to hiring of employees, employee evaluation, employee rights and responsibilities, and all other matters as they relate to human resources district support for efforts to achieve the educational mission and goals of the district.

POLICY COMMITTEE

Scope and Purpose:

The purpose of the Policy Committee is to continually review bylaws and policies in accordance with district philosophy and educational goals as well as state law and regulation, and to make recommendations to the full Board to update, create or repeal policies as needed.

BOARD MEMBER LIAISONS AND DELEGATES

Scope and Purpose: Board of Education members may be assigned as liaisons to School Board and community-based organizations. The Board values these relationships as a critical component of our communication with parents and the community.

As liaisons, Board members are expected to attend meetings of the assigned organization to provide a brief report of the meeting to the Board at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. If a liaison is unable to attend a meeting, he/she will make every effort to arrange for the alternate Board member to attend. Current liaison assignments include: Hunterdon Central Parent Engagement Committee, New Jersey School Boards Association Assembly, Hunterdon County School Boards Association, Hunterdon County Vocational School District.

Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Attend all meetings of the organization to which they are assigned. If a liaison is unable to attend a meeting, he/she shall inform the alternate. If the alternate is unable to attend, he/she shall inform the Board President, who will assign another Board member to attend. A liaison who is unable to attend a meeting of the organization should give notice to the alternate not less than one week prior to the scheduled meeting.
2. Work with the point of contact to receive a list of meeting dates, times, and locations.
3. Listen and learn about the activities, interests, and mission of the organization.
4. Be prepared to provide a very brief report on current Board of Education topics, if requested.
5. Respond to general inquiries for basic information.
6. Defer more specific inquiries to the Superintendent or direct the individual to the chain of command, as appropriate.
7. Provide a brief report of the important highlights of the meeting to the Board at the next public meeting.

APPENDIX A - CALENDAR OF BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

The list below provides an outline of the major activities that require action, review, and approval by the Board as recommended by the NJSBA. In addition to the items listed, the Superintendent should regularly provide updates on progress toward the achievement of district goals and objectives and the Board should review progress toward the achievement of Board goals.

January

- ✓ Board reorganization
- ✓ Appoint Board Leadership
- ✓ Select Board Committees
- ✓ District In-house orientation for new board members
- ✓ Board Code of Ethics Discussion
- ✓ Board Discussion Retreat
- ✓ Receive Superintendent Student Safety Data Systems Report for Period 1
- ✓ Review the requirements of Superintendent contract renewal (For contracts expiring July 1st see 18A:17-15)
- ✓ Review preliminary budget numbers
- ✓ Review Board Member mandatory training requirements
- ✓ Financial Disclosure online submission to Ethics Commission (newly elected board members, November elections)

February

- ✓ Review preliminary budget numbers
- ✓ Update on capital projects
- ✓ Financial Disclosure online submission to Ethics Commission
- ✓ Board committees confirm meeting schedule for upcoming year

March

- ✓ Hold budget hearing / adopt budget

April

- ✓ Hold budget vote

May

- ✓ CSA evaluation – begin process (all non-conflicted board members) once CSA has completed his/her portion
- ✓ Begin Board self-evaluation process
- ✓ Approve written curriculum that clearly and specifically aligns with the most recent State Board adopted version
- ✓ End of Year personnel recommendations (All staff: Non-tenured, Tenured, & Administration)
- ✓ Appoint outside professional positions not appointed at reorganization (register keepers, consultants, etc.)
- ✓ Recognize Teacher/Staff Awards (special meeting)

June

- ✓ Schedule Closed Session meeting (all non-conflicted board members) to organize Superintendent evaluation narrative (Rice Superintendent)
- ✓ Finalize the Superintendent's Evaluation and conduct closed session summary conference (Rice Superintendent; all non-conflicted board members) before July 1 as per statute
- ✓ Board requests Contract Analysis, from NJSBA Labor Relations Dept., for employee contracts ending in June of the upcoming year
- ✓ Review results of compiled Board Self-Evaluation
- ✓ Board Annual Retreat

July

- ✓ Superintendent reviews and revises Action Plans to achieve District Goals

August - September

- ✓ Receive Superintendent Student Safety Data Systems Report for Period 2
- ✓ Report: Graduation Pathways Report
- ✓ Review progress of all students at key grade levels in mastering the NJ Student Learning Standards and on the performance of student subgroups on state tests
- ✓ Annual review of Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and law enforcement operations for alcohol, other drugs, weapons and safety
- ✓ Board of Education approves District & BOE Goals and Action Plans
- ✓ Approve the Safety and Security Plan
- ✓ Board plans for negotiations for employee contracts ending in June of upcoming year and reviews bargaining unit contracts to determine start date for negotiations
- ✓ Public presentation of standardized testing results

October

- ✓ Public hearing of the Violence and Vandalism Report
- ✓ Develop budget parameters focusing on student achievement based on strategic planning goals and/or district annual goals and set budget calendar
- ✓ Public presentation of standardized testing results
- ✓ NJSBA Workshop

November - December

- ✓ District Performance Review (DPR) submission by Nov. 15 if applicable
- ✓ Review budget priorities, ensure planned purchase of materials and curriculum development to support student achievement
- ✓ Review audit report / approve and oversee the corrective action plan if needed

APPENDIX B - Resources

- New Jersey School Boards Association
 - Field Representative: Patricia Rees at prees@njsba.org or (609) 278-5297
 - Every business day, an NJSBA staff attorney is available to provide legal information to board members. Call 1-888-886-5722, Ext. 5254, to reach the Attorney of the Day.
- Hunterdon Central Regional High School Board of Education [Website](#)
- Hunterdon Central Regional High School [Policy Manual](#)
- Basic Parliamentary Procedure: [An Introduction to Robert's Rules of Order](#) (requires NJSBA login)
- Board [Voting Requirements](#)
- Open Public Meetings Act / Sunshine Law:
 - Guidance from NJSBA Legal Department Regarding [OPMA & Technology](#) (Email)
 - Quick Reference for the [OPMA](#)
- Resources for [Board Presidents](#)
- What [Candidates Want To Know](#) About Being A School Board Member
- [Who Does What](#) in Public School Governance: The Role of Board Members and Superintendents
- Topical [School Law](#) Resources

APPENDIX C - Code of Ethics for School Board Members

N.J.S.A 18A:12-24.1

- a. I will uphold and enforce all laws, rules and regulations of the State Board of Education, and court orders pertaining to schools. Desired changes shall be brought about only through legal and ethical procedures.
- b. I will make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of children and will seek to develop and maintain public schools that meet the individual needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex, or social standing.
- c. I will confine my board action to policy making, planning, and appraisal, and I will help to frame policies and plans only after the board has consulted those who will be affected by them.
- d. I will carry out my responsibility, not to administer the schools, but, together with my fellow board members, to see that they are well run.
- e. I will recognize that authority rests with the board of education and will make no personal promises nor take any private action that may compromise the board.
- f. I will refuse to surrender my independent judgment to special interest or partisan political groups or to use the schools for personal gain or for the gain of friends.
- g. I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to the schools which, if disclosed, would needlessly injure individuals or the schools. In all other matters, I will provide accurate information and, in concert with my fellow board members, interpret to the staff the aspirations of the community for its school.
- h. I will vote to appoint the best qualified personnel available after consideration of the recommendation of the chief administrative officer.
- i. I will support and protect school personnel in proper performance of their duties.
- j. I will refer all complaints to the chief administrative officer and will act on the complaints at public meetings only after failure of an administrative solution.

APPENDIX D - Frequently Asked Questions

- A member of the public shared/emailed a concern, complaint, or question to the Board about a school or the district. Who should I reach out to?
 - Follow the district organization and chain of command. Decision-making shall be kept as near the task as possible. In general, the Superintendent is accountable for all activities and personnel in the district. Under the supervision of the Superintendent, each Principal is accountable for all activities and personnel within his/her building.
- As a Board Member, I have a concern, complaint, or question about a school or the district. Can I reach out to the administration?
 - As a Board of nine, it is important to understand that the Superintendent is the only Board employee. If each Board member reaches out to members of the administration with questions, suggestions, or concerns it will redirect them from their daily responsibilities and blur the lines of authority and accountability. Board members should refrain from contacting district personnel directly. Instead, when Board members have questions, they should follow the guidance in the [Board Member to Administration Communication](#) section of this handbook.
- As a parent, I have a concern, complaint, or question about something related to my child or child's school. Can I reach out to the administration?
 - Board members do not relinquish their rights to advocate for their child. Therefore, follow the chain of command when reaching out to the school and use your personal email when communicating with school/district personnel.
- I have a suggestion, idea, or request about a particular program. How do I get it on an agenda?
 - Requests for topics to be addressed by the Board should be referred to the relevant committee for review and discussion.
- How do I get things on the agenda?
 - The Superintendent of Schools, in collaboration with the Board President, is responsible for creating the agenda for each Board meeting. This agenda will include presentations, reports, and actionable items based upon committee recommendations and administrative needs to administer the district and comply with requirements.
- When do we have time to talk about issues that are important to each board member?
 - Issues that are important to each board member can be discussed by the relevant committee. And any requests for discussion under New Business should be submitted to the Superintendent, Business Administrator, and Board President before releasing the Board Agenda to the public and only after they have been discussed by the appropriate committee.

- What does the committee system mean to our deliberation and decision-making?
 - Because the role of the Board is not to administer the district, but instead, to ensure it is well run, we rely upon the committee structure to engage in meaningful work that empowers Board Members to meet their ethical obligations. Committees are not authorized to act on behalf of the Board.
- How do I find out exactly what goes on in a committee meeting?
 - There are three ways to find out what goes on in a committee meeting:
 - Meeting minutes and committee reports will be shared on the Board drives within one week following each Committee meeting and will include pertinent background information with the report.
 - Any Board member with a question can reach out to the committee chair.
 - All Committees provide an oral report to the full Board no later than at the next public meeting
- How do I give direction to the superintendent or other administrators so that they will do what I want them to do?
 - As a Board of nine, it is important to understand that the Superintendent is the only Board employee. The superintendent is responsible for administering the district and only takes specific direction from the Board majority.
 - Board members **SHALL NOT** contact district personnel directly. If each Board member reaches out to members of the administration with questions, suggestions, or concerns it will redirect them from their daily responsibilities and blur the lines of authority and accountability.
- How often can I visit the schools to check up on programs and staff?
 - You cannot visit the schools to check up on programs and staff. The function of the school Board is not to run the schools, but to see that they are run effectively.
- What do I do with all the reports I receive – do I really have to read it all? Should I save it all?
 - It is each Board member's responsibility to thoroughly read the agenda and relevant attachments prior to the Board meeting to ensure he/she can make an informed decision on action items.
 - All information shared with the Board is available in BoardDocs or in shared drives.
- What is the difference between regular session discussion and closed or executive session discussion?

According to the NJSBA, A Guide to Board of Education Meeting in NJ⁹:

- Regular session is a public meeting for the purpose of discussing or engaging in the business of the Board when a majority of the Board members are present. School boards are required to set aside a portion of every meeting for public comment
- Executive session is reserved for topics such as:
 - PERSONNEL: Reserved for the discussion of a particular employee or employees. In addition, the affected employee(s) must be given advance notice of the board's intention to discuss them and the right to request the meeting stay open to the public.
 - PENDING/ANTICIPATED LITIGATION: Issues involving attorney-client privilege are to be used only when there is potential litigation.
 - UNWARRANTED INVASION OF PRIVACY: Generally, when school board discussions would necessarily identify particular students, the school board is permitted to close the meeting to the public.
 - NEGOTIATION STRATEGIES: Specifics dealing with negotiation strategies with labor unions.
 - LAND PURCHASES: Only price and terms can be discussed in closed session.
 - SECURITY ISSUES: Specifics that could undermine safety of students and staff, if made public.

Official votes cannot occur in executive sessions.

⁹ [A Guide to Board of Education Meetings in New Jersey](#), New Jersey School Boards Association, Accessed 15 February 2025.