



# **SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

# **OPERATING PROCEDURES**

Amended:  
Monday, February 17, 2025

## Welcome

The PSJA ISD is controlled locally through a Board of Education Trustees elected by voters. Seven Trustees serve as district representatives. All of the Trustees serve four-year terms voluntarily. The Board of Education conducts the school program in accordance with the state constitution and the standards set by the Texas Education Agency. A policy-making body, the Board delegates the day-to-day administration of the schools to the Superintendent and the professional staff.

Major responsibilities of the Board:

- to govern and oversee the management of the school District
- to levy and collect taxes
- to set the policies for the PSJA ISD
- to support and improve the educational system by keeping the Superintendent accountable
- to select the superintendent of schools
- to foster good community relations

Because of the special trust associated with governing the PSJA ISD, members of the Board of Education commit to working together to achieve success. This Operating Procedures Manual provides the workings of this Board and encourages you to join in this pursuit.



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## **Board of Trustees**

### **How are Board Members elected?** [Policies BBB(LEGAL) and BBB(LOCAL)]

The seven-member PSJA ISD Board of Trustees consists of local citizens who provide an important public service to the PSJA ISD community, serving without compensation. Board elections are held during the November uniform election date conducted biennially with trustees serving four-year terms. Places 1, 2, and 3 are held together and places 4,5,6, and 7 are held together on a rotating basis. To be elected, a candidate must receive more votes than any other candidate for the place.



### **Vision**

Every PSJA student is prepared to participate, compete, and excel in a global society to foster multi-generational prosperity.

### **Mission**

As educational leaders, the PSJA team is engaged and empowered to connect all students with innovative instruction, outstanding facilities, technology, skills, and social-emotional support while prioritizing health and safety for all – from early childhood through their chosen career. As one PSJA family, we build on our legacy of academic excellence, renowned college and career readiness, biliteracy and extracurricular programs, and our multicultural heritage to ensure every student has the experiences and resources necessary to achieve the highest levels of success.

## 2024-2025 Board of Trustees and Superintendent of Schools



Front row, Left to right (sitting): Diana Y. Serna, President (Place 2);  
Dr. Alejandro Elias, Superintendent of Schools; Ricardo "Rick" Rodriguez, Vice-President  
(Place 4)

Back row, left to right (standing): Carlos Villegas, Jr., Member (Place 1); Yolanda Castillo,  
Member (Place 3); Ramona Barron, Secretary (Place 5); Griselda Quintanilla, Assistant  
Secretary (Place 6); Cynthia A. Gutierrez, Member (Place 7)

1st Reading: February 7, 2022

Adopted: February 21, 2022

Amended: February 17, 2025

## **Board Member Ethics**

### **What are the ethical requirements of board members?**

All PSJAISD board members 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.

#### **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 or my responsibilities.

#### **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.

#### **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 not disclose information that is confidential by law or that will needlessly harm the District if disclosed.

#### **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 avoid personal involvement in activities the Board has delegated to the Superintendent.
- I will seek continuing education that will enhance my ability to fulfill my duties effectively.

#### **Student-Centered Focus**

- I will be continuously guided by what is best for all students of the District.

# **Board Meetings**

**When does the Board of Trustees meet, and how can the public participate?** [Policy BE(LOCAL)]

PSJA ISD Regular meetings of the Board shall normally be held on the second Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. When determined necessary and for the convenience of Board members, the Board President may change the date, time, or location of a regular meeting with proper notice. Additional meetings are scheduled on an as-needed basis, and Texas law allows the Board to call an emergency meeting in crisis situations.

Board meeting agendas will be posted on the PSJA ISD website on the Board of Trustees webpage and are posted at least 72 hours before the board meeting.

In accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, the Board may meet privately in closed session to discuss matters related to personnel, student discipline, security, land acquisition and/or to consult with legal counsel [Policy BEC(LEGAL)]. No action, however, may be taken during a closed session.

The Board of Trustees encourages and invites the public to attend meetings and address the Board.

# **Addressing the Board**

**How can the public address the Board?** [Policies BED(LEGAL) and BED(LOCAL)]

Addressing the Board at a Regular Board Meeting

The PSJA Board of Trustees welcome members of the community to speak on agenda items that will be voted on during that meeting. To comment on a specific agenda item, please submit the following online form by 5:00 pm on the day of the meeting. (Click [here](#) to access form)

Members who sign up before the 5:00 pm deadline will be asked to speak in the order the form was received. If individuals signed up, but are not present when name is called, the submission will be voided.

The PSJA School Board permits each person to speak with in an established 3-minute window. Please remember only items on the agenda may be addressed by the individuals speaking before the board. Individuals intending to speak on items not on the agenda will be directed to the Superintendent or designee.

As part of this process, specific factual information or recitation of existing policy may be used in response to inquiries presented, but keep in mind the Board will not deliberate or enter into dialogue with members of the public during this portion of the meeting.

If you have any questions about this process, please reach School Board Secretary Estella Garza at 956.354.2000 ext. 1023 or email her at [estella.garza1@psjaisd.us](mailto:estella.garza1@psjaisd.us). Thank you!

\*Note: If a member of the public causes disruption by his or her words or actions during the meeting and continues to do so after at least one warning, the presiding officer may request assistance from law

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enforcement officials for the individual to be removed from the meeting.

### **Addressing the Board at special meetings, emergency meetings, or public hearings.**

The same guidelines provided above for addressing the Board at a Regular Meeting are to be followed.

### **During All Meetings of the Board, the Board President will ensure that the following guidelines are followed:**

- Requests to address the Board will be accepted on a first come, first served basis.
- Speakers are not allowed to identify students (other than parents who identify their own children) by name.
- Speakers should practice normal rules of decorum. Vulgar language, profanity nor disruptions of the meeting will not be tolerated.
- The Board will not respond to inquiries made during a board meeting on any topic not posted on the agenda; however, the Board may reply with a statement of specific factual information given in response to the inquiry, recitation of existing policy in response to the inquiry, or direct the person to visit with staff about the issue.
- Individuals addressing the Board will be limited to three minutes; however, when necessary to accommodate large numbers of individuals wishing to address the Board, the presiding officer may adjust public comment procedures.
  - Adjustments may include establishing an overall time limit for public comment, adjusting the time allotted to each speaker, or deferring public comment on items that are not on the agenda.
  - Generally, time allowed each individual speaker would be decreased when the number of individuals speaking at three minutes per speaker exceeds one hour (60 minutes). In this case, the time of each speaker would be adjusted to allow more speakers to participate in public comment.
  - When adjustments are made, no individual shall be given less than one minute to speak.

## **Agenda Creation and Agenda Items**

### **How are the agendas created? [Policy BE(LOCAL)]**

In consultation with the Board President, the Superintendent shall prepare the agenda for all Board meetings. The deadline for submitting items for inclusion on the agenda is the fifth calendar day before regular meetings and the third calendar day before special meetings. Members of the Board shall be given notice of regular and special meetings at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled time of the meeting and at least one hour prior to the time of an emergency meeting.

Any Board member 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 topics that have been timely submitted by a Board member. Before the official agenda is finalized for any meeting, the



Superintendent shall consult the Board President to ensure that the agenda and the topics included meet with the Board President's approval. In reviewing the preliminary agenda, the Board President shall ensure that any topics the Board or individual Board members have requested to be addressed are either on that agenda or scheduled for deliberation at an appropriate time in the near future. The Board President shall not have authority to remove from the agenda a subject requested by a Board member without that Board member's specific authorization.

## **Board-Adopted Strategic Framework**

**What guides decisions made by the Board of Trustees?** [Policy AE(LOCAL)]

The Board of Trustees has adopted a strong strategic framework to guide all decision-making. Board members will honor the Mission, Vision, and Strategic Covenants while meeting District goals through scalable systems that operate with effective change management and system development with a commitment to continuous improvement.

### **Strategic Covenants**

**The Board also guides the Superintendent with the following strategic covenants:**

#### ***Dual Language***

**The District is committed to ensuring all students develop mastery of the English and Spanish languages using proven dual language methods. For those students who enter our system not fluent in English, the District shall ensure bilingual teachers are available to provide one-way or two-way dual language instruction so students can improve in other subject areas while still learning English. The Board believes that students who develop fluency in multiple languages are better prepared for success, and the District offers one-way and two-way dual language instruction throughout the District to promote student fluency in multiple languages.**

#### ***Curriculum***

**The District shall offer equitable access to an effective, sequential dual language curriculum, preschool through grade 12, that is aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, and that meets the socio-emotional needs of students. The Superintendent shall refer to evidence-based research to strengthen the 50/50 One-Way and 50/50 Two-Way models that close the achievement gap for English Learners.**

### *Seal of Biliteracy*

The Board of Trustees also recognizes the value of alignment to the District and state seal of biliteracy, encourages excellence as a goal for all students, and wishes to publicly recognize students for exemplary achievements. The District shall present the seals of biliteracy to each graduating high school student who has attained the required high school dual language credits.

### *Parental Engagement*

Parents/guardians are essential partners in the District. The Superintendent shall involve them in establishing an advisory structure, along with District and school personnel, to provide input on program implementation.

### *Certification*

The Superintendent shall ensure that teachers and paraprofessionals implementing a dual language program hold the required credentials and certifications as required by the state.

### *Professional Development*

The Superintendent shall provide professional development and collaboration time as necessary to ensure that administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals have the knowledge and skills they need to implement an effective dual language program.

Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD

## **Mission**

Every PSJA student is prepared to participate, compete, and excel in a global society to foster multi-generational prosperity.

## **Vision**

As educational leaders, the PSJA team is engaged and empowered to connect all students with innovative instruction, outstanding facilities, technology, skills, and social-emotional support while prioritizing health and safety for all—from early childhood through their chosen career.

As one PSJA family, we build on our legacy of academic excellence, renowned college- and career-readiness, biliteracy and extracurricular programs, and our multicultural heritage to ensure every student has the experiences and resources necessary to achieve the highest levels of success.

## **Board Meetings and Board Member Conduct**

**How are board meetings conducted and what is expected of Board members as they conduct business?** [Policy BE(LOCAL)]

The Board shall observe the parliamentary procedures as found in *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, except as otherwise provided in Board procedural rules or by law. Procedural rules may be suspended at any Board meeting by majority vote of the members present.

Board members are expected to conduct themselves professionally and ethically during all meetings and public forums. While differences of opinion, if respectfully presented, are encouraged and will not be construed as unprofessional or unethical behavior, unprofessional and uncivil behavior will not be considered germane to any motion and will not be tolerated.

When the agenda is prepared, the Board President shall determine which items, if any, qualify to be placed on the consent agenda. The final consent agenda shall be sent to the Board for review on the Wednesday before the scheduled meeting date. For each item listed as part of a consent agenda, the Board shall be furnished with the necessary background material.

All items on the consent agenda shall be acted upon by one vote, without separate discussion. However, if a Board member wishes to withdraw an item for individual consideration, that member must have contacted the Superintendent with any questions related to the item at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting date. If this requirement is met, the item shall be withdrawn from the consent agenda and discussed separately. The remaining items shall be adopted under a single motion and vote.

**Deliberating Motions:** The Board President shall ensure that all deliberation is germane to the motion under consideration. Each Trustee will be recognized only once per item, and may speak for up to two minutes. Time will be stopped when the administration or presenter is responding to a question, but will resume when the Trustee begins speaking again. Once every Trustee who wishes to speak has had one opportunity to do so, no further discussion will be allowed on that item. If time is not used by a Trustee on an item it is forfeited. Additionally, a Trustee may not allow for another Trustee to use their respective time. The Board President or his/her designee shall enforce this rule to maintain orderly and efficient deliberations.

Voting shall be by voice vote, a show of hands, or by electronic tally, as directed by the Board President. Any member may abstain from voting, and a member's vote or failure to vote shall be recorded upon that member's request.

**Executive Session:** The board may only deliberate matters in closed session as permitted by the Open Meetings Act. A vote on a matter deliberated in closed session must be made in open session. Information and opinions shared during closed session must remain confidential. All personnel matters

must be conducted in closed session unless specifically required by the Open Meetings Act, and any information that is subject to the attorney-client privilege must be kept confidential.

### Standards of Behavior

**What are the expectations of board members' standards of behavior?** [Policy BBFA(LOCAL)]

- Board members will commit to upholding the Board of Trustees' Code of Ethics. [Policy BBF(LOCAL)]
- Each Board member shall provide to the District in a timely manner information necessary for the District's annual financial management report.
- A Board member shall not use coercive means or promise special treatment in order to influence Board or District decisions, nor use his or her position to seek personal advantage.

### Failure to Follow Board Expectations or Causing

Any Trustee who fails to meet the Board's standards of conduct, approved procedures, or otherwise engages in behavior that disrupts or detracts from the orderly operation of the Board may be subject to the following steps:

1. **Warnings:** The Board President shall issue up to two warnings, clearly identifying the disruptive or noncompliant behavior.
2. **Removal:** If, after the second warning, the Trustee continues the disruptive conduct, the Board President may request the removal of the Trustee from the Board room to maintain order.

### Censure and Trespass Notices

If a Trustee's actions repeatedly violate Board expectations or significantly interfere with the Board's ability to govern effectively, the Board may take the following actions:

1. **Censure:** By majority vote, the Board may formally censure a Trustee whose behavior fails to meet these standards.
2. **Campus Trespass Notice:** The Board may issue a trespass notice restricting the Trustee from visiting district campuses if the conduct is egregious or persists despite prior warnings or corrective efforts.
3. **Meeting Attendance Restriction:** Where a Trustee's behavior poses a serious threat to the orderly conduct of Board meetings, the Board may issue a trespass notice prohibiting the Trustee from attending meetings in person. In such cases, the Trustee shall be permitted to participate virtually, in accordance with applicable laws and policies.

## **Communications**

### **What is the protocol for how the Board should communicate? [Policy BBE(LOCAL)]**

- The superintendent will update the board members on board-related matters.
- When a proposal is presented to the Board, the Board shall hold a discussion and reach a decision. Although there may be dissenting votes, which are a matter of public record, each Board decision shall be an action by the whole Board binding upon each member.
- Board members as individuals shall not exercise authority over the District, its property, or its employees. Except for appropriate duties and functions of the Board President, an individual member may act on behalf of the Board only with the express authorization of the Board. Without such authorization, no individual member may commit the Board on any issue.
- Certain information disclosed to board members is confidential by law and may not be disclosed to third parties. Board members must not disclose information that is subject to the attorney-client privilege. Board members also should not disclose any information to which they have access by virtue of their position as board members that has not been made public, if, to do so, would compromise the board or the administration in the conduct of their affairs.
- In the event a board member communicates with the public either electronically or in writing regarding a matter of district business, the member is encouraged to remember that the Public Information Act may require disclosure of such communication. Board members are encouraged not to respond to anonymous communications.
- Board members who host Internet sites that include, sponsor or permit postings regarding matters relevant to the district or district business, will include a disclaimer in a form approved by the board's attorney, providing that such postings are not made on behalf of the district.

## **Conflict Resolution**

### **How are conflicts resolved?**

Board members are encouraged to express concerns about another member's performance directly with that member.

If a member is unsuccessful in resolving a concern with a fellow board member, they should address the matter with the board president. The board president shall discuss the concern with the board members in question and may moderate a discussion between them.

If, in the board president's judgment, resolution of the concern requires discussion amongst a quorum or more of board members, a meeting must be posted and conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

The president shall remind the board member whose behavior is in question about the adopted Code of Ethics and Board Operating Procedures and discuss how the board member's behavior does not comply if applicable. The discussion also will identify more appropriate alternatives to the behavior, or refer the

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board member to policies or procedures that outline approved ways to deal with any issue that prompted the behavior.

If the concern involves the board president, a board member may discuss his or her concerns with the board vice president. Board members will not take concerns about fellow board members to the superintendent. Board members will not speak about performance concerns regarding individual board members with anyone other than the board and the board's attorney.

## **Board Member Requests for Information and Communications with Staff**

### **What is the protocol for Board members to request information? [Policy BBE(LOCAL)]**

An individual Board member shall seek access to records or request copies of records from the Superintendent or other designated custodian of records, who shall respond within the time frames required by law. No individual Board member shall direct or require District employees to prepare reports derived from an analysis of information in existing District records or to create a new record compiled from information in existing District records. Directives to the Superintendent or other custodian of records regarding the preparation of reports shall be by Board action.

Information gathered will be disseminated to the entire Board.

## **Concerns and Complaints**

### **How should Board members handle concerns or complaints? [Policy BBE(LOCAL)]**

If employees, parents, students, or other members of the public bring concerns or complaints to an individual Board member, he or she shall refer them to the Superintendent or another appropriate administrator.

When the concern or complaint directly pertains to the Board's own actions or policy, for which there is no administrative remedy, the Board member may request that the issue be placed on the agenda.

## **Media Inquiries**

### **How should the Board handle the media? [Policy GBBA(LOCAL)]**

The Board President shall be designated as the spokesperson for the Board. New media requests for District information, interviews, comments, or statements shall be directed to the Communications Department. News releases concerning the overall operations of the District, schools, events, initiatives, or activities shall be prepared by the Communications Department. In any situation affecting the District or an individual campus, the Superintendent or designee shall be the official District spokesperson and shall be responsible for all communication with the news media.

## **Campus Visits**

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### **Can Board members visit campuses? [Policy BBE(LOCAL)]**

A Board member shall adhere to any posted requirements for visitors to first report to the main office of a District facility, including a school campus. Visits during the school or business day shall not be permitted if their duration or frequency interferes with the delivery of instruction or District operations.

### **Board Members must notify the Superintendent, building principal, and building supervisor of board visits.**

## **Travel**

### **Are Board members required to travel and who pays when they do? [Policy BBG(LOCAL)]**

A travel budget for the Board shall be established as part of the annual budget planning process and shall be budgeted in the general fund. Trustees shall be allocated a budget for travel, professional development training, and reasonable expenses associated with attending functions of District-related organizations. Total expenses incurred shall not exceed the budgeted amount for such expenses as adopted by the Board for the fiscal year.

## **Board Development**

What training will Board members receive? [Policies BBD(LEGAL) and BBD(LOCAL)].

Board members will fulfill the training requirements specified in Board Policies BBD(LEGAL) and BBD(LOCAL). The Board President shall announce the status of each Board member's continuing education credit. The announcement shall be made annually at the last regular Board meeting before the District's uniform election date, whether or not an election is held. The announcement shall be reflected in the meeting minutes and, when necessary, posted on the District's website in accordance with law.

Board members should be familiar with district policies, especially their duties as defined in policy BAA(LEGAL) and will annually review its Board Operating Procedures and Board Ethics Policy BBF(LOCAL).

## **Advocacy**

### **Is advocacy part of our job? [BBD]**

The Board promotes the vision and engages the community in developing and fulfilling the vision. The Board advocates on behalf of Texas public schoolchildren.

The board:

- Demonstrates its commitment to, and advocates on behalf of, the shared vision and goals by clearly communicating them to the superintendent, staff, and community.
- Regularly reports district progress to families and the community

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- Ensures multiple forms of two-way communication will be used to engage, empower, and connect students, families, staff, media, and community with the District.
- Builds collaborative relationships and partnerships with families and community, business, nonprofit, higher-education, education support organizations, and governmental leaders to influence and expand educational opportunities and meet the needs of students.
- Recognizes the respective roles of and provides input and feedback to the legislature, State Board of Education, and the Texas Education Agency to ensure maximum effectiveness and benefit to Texas schoolchildren.
- Promotes school board service by educating the community about the role of a school board and encouraging leadership opportunities within the community.

## **Superintendent's Evaluation and Contract**

**How does the Board evaluate the Superintendent?** [Policies BJCD(LOCAL)] and BJC(LEGAL)]

### Superintendent's Evaluation

- The Board shall prepare a written evaluation of the Superintendent at annual or more frequent intervals. The Board shall furnish the Superintendent with a copy of the completed evaluation and shall discuss its conclusions with the Superintendent in a closed meeting, unless the Superintendent requests that the discussion be open. The Board may at any time conduct and communicate oral evaluations to augment its written evaluations.

### Superintendent's Contract

- A board may employ by contract a superintendent for a term not to exceed five years.

### **Conflict Clause**

In the event of any conflict between these Operating Procedures and the Board's policy regarding agenda preparation or the conduct of Board meetings, these Operating Procedures shall take precedence. The intent is to ensure clarity and consistency in how meetings are organized and conducted, while preserving the Board's ability to govern effectively.