



WSD INSPIRES!

Gunn Marie Hansen, Ph.D., Superintendent

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

David M. Johnson, President
Frances Nguyen, Vice President
Jeremy Khalaf, Clerk
Tina Gustin-Gurney, Member
Khanh Nguyen, Member

Westminster School District Best Practices in Effective Governance Board-Superintendent Protocols

I. Communications

Exceptional Boards make governance intentional and invest in the structures and practices that address changing circumstances, thus allowing for Board Members and the Superintendent to effectively function as a team.

1. Board members inform the Superintendent of the most effective one-on-one method of verbal communication, e.g., cell, home telephone, office phone during business hours, private line voice message, etc.
2. The Superintendent will provide timely and relevant information to Board members. The Governing Board will make concerted efforts to read and understand the information provided by the Superintendent and his/her team so that they are fully informed.
3. In order to ensure that all Board members are well informed, Board members will each receive the same information and responses to issues and questions as appropriate.
4. Board members and the Leadership team will always strive to practice the “no surprises” rule with one another in order to avoid surprises to anyone.
5. Individual Governing Board members will be careful to avoid making statements that can be misinterpreted as the consensus opinion of the entire Board or the District when speaking.
6. The Superintendent will establish communication protocols should an emergency situation arise within the school

district. During crisis situations, the Superintendent or his/her designee will send an email or text alert to Board members and then attempt to reach Board members beginning with the Board President.

II. Individual Board Member Requests

All Board members are equal and authority rests with the Board as a whole. Direction is given to the Superintendent only at Board meetings through actions taken by the Board. Board members should have the opportunity to bring up new ideas or subjects of interest for future Board meeting agendas.

1. Individuals may bring up an item at a Board meeting for future consideration, explaining their interest in a particular course of action or topic. The Board may direct the superintendent to prepare materials for a deeper Board discussion and/or take action on it at a future Board meeting.
2. The Board President and the Superintendent will determine items appropriate for open or closed session; whether the item should be an action item subject to Board vote, an information item, or a consent item that is routine in nature; and determine the appropriate time to place the item on the agenda at the agenda setting meeting.
3. All new ideas or agenda item topics will be weighed against their effect on staff's ability to accomplish the District vision and goals. The Board will be respectful of the District staff's time based on the impact of the new agenda item or topic on agreed upon District priorities, the shift of staff time and energy, and any reallocation of District resources.

III. Handling Concerns/Suggestions

It is essential for Board members to be responsive to the community and be good listeners, while not attempting to personally resolve a

problem. It is also important to recognize there are staff members whose responsibility it is to remedy or deal with these situations.

1. The Board and Superintendent are committed to having parent and/or staff concerns handled at the appropriate level in the organization.
2. When someone shares a concern with a Board member, he/she will listen carefully and direct that person to the appropriate staff member or refer the parent or staff member to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will follow up in a timely manner and provide information to Board member(s) on the status of the concern.
3. If the complaint involves a personnel issue, a Board member will not explore in depth the details of the complaint in order to maintain neutrality.
4. Suggestions or ideas related to operational matters given to Board members by staff or constituents will be referred to either the Superintendent or appropriate cabinet member.

IV. Maintaining Confidentiality

Maintaining confidentiality is essential to protecting the interests of the District as well as individuals. The Governance team values, respects and honors those matters shared with the Governing Board and Leadership team and will maintain and hold that sacred trust.

1. The Board, Superintendent, and Cabinet members agree to maintain the confidentiality of all closed session and privileged communication as required by Education Code.
2. The Board will provide clear parameters to the District's negotiation team members and will not address specific issues of negotiation issues with employee bargaining unit members.

V. Board Member Role in Public

As elected officials, Board members play an essential role in the community and serve as liaisons to the public they serve.

1. Site and community invitations for Board members to attend official events will generally be coordinated through the Superintendent's office. The Superintendent's office will provide details for Board members regarding cost and expenditures for attendance, as appropriate.
2. Board members will make the administrator in charge of an event aware of their attendance when they arrive. Board members will be introduced at all school and District events, unless they are attending as a parent. When in doubt, the administrator in charge will ask the Board member whether he/she wishes to be introduced.
3. On high profile issues, the Superintendent or his/her designee will be the spokesperson for the District in order to communicate a unified message.

VI. Board Members Visiting Schools

School visits remind Board members that the students and learning are the primary focus of the District. School visits allow Board members to observe programs that are moving the team toward the achievement of District goals and show appreciation for the good work being done.

1. Board members are encouraged to visit school sites and observe instructional activities, events and school programs. As a courtesy to the school, Board members should contact the principal's office and the Superintendent prior to an official school visit.
2. The purpose of a Board member's visit is generally to observe and educate, not to investigate or give direction to personnel.

3. The Superintendent will ensure principals and teachers know that a teacher does not need to interrupt his or her lesson when a Board member visits a classroom.
4. When visiting with teachers of their own children, it is understood that the Board member is there as a parent, unless otherwise stated.

VII. Prior to Board Meetings

Much preparation goes into an effective Board meeting by the Superintendent, staff and Governing Board. To maximize the effectiveness of Board meeting, we agree on the following:

1. The Superintendent and staff will be available prior to the Board meeting to answer any questions and/or discuss agenda items in need of clarification.
2. Board members will thoroughly read materials before the Board meeting and will make every attempt to contact the Superintendent at least 24 hours prior to the meeting should they have a question or concern about a particular agenda item.
3. Board member questions will be answered in advance of the Board meeting, with a response provided back to all Board members, as appropriate.
4. Board members will make an effort to notify the Superintendent in advance of their intent to remove an item for discussion from the Consent Calendar.
5. When a high-profile item is being considered by the Board, any disagreements or concerns should be discussed with the Superintendent before the meeting.

VIII. At Board Meetings

Board meetings are the Board's meeting held in public. Effective Board meetings require the Board, staff and community to have a clear understanding of the structures and processes needed and required

under the law and the Brown Act so as to effectively operate the business requirements of the school district.

1. Each Board member will respect the right of other Board members to hold an opposing point of view. Following a vote, all Board members will respect the decision made by the Board.
2. All team members will be respectful and attentive during public comments. The Board President may acknowledge a public speaker's comment and indicate that the Superintendent will follow up on a concern or issue, if appropriate.
3. If an individual Board member cannot support the decision of the Board, the member is expected, at a minimum, to refrain from undermining the decision.
4. Whenever possible, Board action items of a significant nature will be presented as a discussion item prior to action.
5. Board items that are routine in nature may be placed on the Consent Calendar.
6. Use of personal electronic devices should not be used during a Board meeting, with the exception of family safety concerns or emergencies.

IX. Use of Study Sessions

Study sessions serve as a unique opportunity for the Governing Board and staff to engage in important conversations on District programs, future trends, and innovations, or to simply inform the Governing Board and Leadership team members on current or future issues that the District may face.

1. Study sessions will be developed throughout the year to ensure coverage of the timely and urgent issues which require extensive discussion before a possible Board action.
2. Study sessions will be organized with a brief staff presentation followed by Board discussion and questions. Materials should be provided to Board members in advance of the study session.