



## **Troup County School System Governance Team Operating Protocols**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The Troup County School System's Governance Team is composed of the seven elected school board members and the appointed Superintendent of Schools. Together, this team bears responsibility for overseeing the operations of the public school system. The Board and the Superintendent have different functions and can only effectively promote the efficient operation of the school system when each performs its own role. This document tries to differentiate the roles and responsibilities of school board members from those of the Superintendent and to explain how the individuals involved are required to interact and function as part of an effective governance team.



## **I N D E X**

Troup County School Governance Team Protocol .....	Pages 3 – 6
Board Code of Ethics (TCSS Board Policy BH) .....	Pages 7 – 9



## **Troup County School Governance Team Protocol**

For the purpose of enhancing teamwork among members of the board and between the board and the administration, the members of the Troup County Board Governance Team (school board members and superintendent) commit collectively and individually to the following operating protocol:

### **Governance Team member's roles and responsibilities**

- Governance team members are accountability driven and committed to spending less time on operational issues and maximum time focused on policies to improve student achievement
- Governance team members will support current district policies, state and federal laws
- The governance team will continue to review policies annually
- The governance team will appropriately engage stakeholders in development and revision of policies
- The governance team will maintain and apply district policies consistently while being cognizant of and recognizing potential uniqueness of situations
- The governance team will be accountable for managing resources and aligning finances to meet goals defined in the school district's strategic plan
- The governance team will lead as a united team exemplifying strong collaboration and mutual trust
- The governance team will serve as ambassadors for the school district and utilize interactions with stakeholders as an opportunity to educate on the strategic plan initiatives and the process for providing input to the work of the district and its priorities

### **Communication**

- All board members will receive the same school system related information at approximately the same time
- When a board member requests information or has information to share, the request or the information will be provided to the Superintendent who will distribute it to pertinent parties, including other board members as appropriate
- The superintendent will determine how appropriate staff will undertake board member requests
- There will be no surprises during or outside of board meetings



### **School System Facilities Visits**

- The full board will be encouraged to attend scheduled school visits made on a rotating basis each year
- All visits to schools and to school district facilities should be conducted for a specific purpose
- Board members may visit facilities when invited by administration or district staff
- Board members must follow visitor procedures
- This protocol does not preclude Board members from attending school functions as a parent should his/her child attend that school or as a community member

### **Volunteering**

- Board members should refrain from involvement in any school system facilities' day-to-day operations
- Board members should refrain from discussing school board business during volunteer visits to schools
- Board members should refrain from engaging in conversations from a board member's perspective except when specifically authorized to do so by the Board
- Board members should refrain from functioning outside of the role of volunteer during such visits

### **Media**

- Board members will be kept informed of incidents and district position and/or position statements
- The board chairman is the official spokesperson for the Board of Education
- The official spokesperson for the school district is the superintendent or his/her designee



### **Citizens**

- An individual board member who is contacted by a citizen should encourage the person to seek resolution using the school district's chain of command
- The board member must explain the need for him/herself to remain impartial
- The board member should inform the superintendent of citizen concerns

### **School Board Meetings**

- Board members will prepare for meetings by reviewing the board packet in advance of the meeting
- Any exchange of information regarding the meeting will be shared with every member of the governance team (no surprises)
- Board members will, to the best of their ability, submit questions to the superintendent in a timely manner
- During meetings board members will address questions to the superintendent and or to the board chairman, as appropriate
- Board members will refrain from side bar conversations and/or irrelevant use of electronic devices during meetings
- All action initiated by a board member must be supported by a majority vote of the Board as demonstrated in a public vote at an appropriately called and posted meeting of the Board.
- The Board acts only as one body. Individual board members do not have authority to act unilaterally. Only the Board, acting as a whole, while in a public meeting has authority

### **Superintendent Evaluation**

- The evaluation of the Superintendent will be in accordance with state law and Board policy.
- The Board Chairman obtains input from all Board members for the Superintendent's evaluation.
- The Superintendent's evaluation is conducted in executive session.

### **School Board Evaluation**

- Evaluation of the Board is an assessment of completion of goals established by the Board and its working relationship with the Superintendent.
- The evaluation of the Superintendent is an indication of the Board's success in meeting established goals.



### **Compliance with Protocol**

- If, after appropriate informal methods have been used to address the concern, a majority of the board believes that another board member has repeatedly failed to comply with the Protocol, the concern shall be placed on the next board meeting agenda.
- The board members with the concern will state their concern and provide an opportunity for discussion, including a response from the board member(s) accused of non-compliance
- By vote of the board, options available to address the concern, if it is valid include, but are not limited to:
  - pass a motion expressing the concern and objection of the board to the continued violation of its procedures;
  - provide the board member the opportunity to participate in specific training related to the Board Protocol;
  - initiate the formal proceedings outlined in the Code of Ethics conflict of interest section, if determined to be appropriate.



## **Board Code of Ethics**

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The **Troup County Board of Education** desires to operate in the most ethical and conscientious manner possible and to that end the board adopts this Code of Ethics and each member of the board agrees that he or she will:

### **Domain I: Governance Structure**

1. Recognize that the authority of the board rests only with the board as a whole and not with individual board members and act accordingly.
2. Support the delegation of authority for the day-to-day administration of the school system to the local superintendent and act accordingly.
3. Honor the chain of command and refer problems or complaints consistent with the chain of command.
4. Recognize that the local superintendent should serve as secretary, ex-officio to the board and should be present at all meetings of the board except when his or her contract, salary or performance is under consideration.
5. Not undermine the authority of the local superintendent or intrude into responsibilities that properly belong to the local superintendent or school administration, including such functions as hiring, transferring or dismissing employees.
6. Use reasonable efforts to keep the local superintendent informed of concerns or specific recommendations that any member of the board may bring to the board.

### **Domain II: Strategic Planning**

1. Reflect through actions that his or her first and foremost concern is for the educational welfare of children attending schools within the school system.
2. Participate in all planning activities to develop the vision and goals of the board and the school system.
3. Work with the board and the local superintendent to ensure prudent and accountable uses of the resources of the school system.
4. Render all decisions based on available facts and his or her independent judgment and refuse to surrender his or her judgment to individuals or special interest groups.
5. Uphold and enforce all applicable laws, all rules and regulations of the State Board of Education and the board and all court orders pertaining to the school system.



### **Domain III: Board and Community Relations**

1. Seek regular and systemic communications among the board and students, staff and the community.
2. Communicate to the board and the local superintendent expressions of public reaction to board policies and school programs.

### **Domain IV: Policy Development**

1. Work with other board members to establish effective policies for the school system.
2. Make decisions on policy matters only after full discussion at publicly held board meetings.
3. Periodically review and evaluate the effectiveness of policies on school system programs and performance.

### **Domain V: Board Meetings**

1. Attend and participate in regularly scheduled and called board meetings.
2. Be informed and prepared to discuss issues to be considered on the board agenda.
3. Work with other board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during the discussion and resolution of issues at board meetings.
4. Vote for a closed executive session of the board only when applicable law or board policy requires consideration of a matter in executive session.
5. Maintain the confidentiality of all discussions and other matters pertaining to the board and the school system during executive session of the board.
6. Make decisions in accordance with the interests of the school system as a whole and not any particular segment thereof.
7. Express opinions before votes are cast, but after the board vote, abide by and support all majority decisions of the board.

### **Domain VI: Personnel**

1. Consider the employment of personnel only after receiving and considering the recommendation of the local superintendent.
2. Support the employment of persons best qualified to serve as employees of the school system and insist on regular and impartial evaluations of school system staff.
3. Comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and all board policies regarding employment of family members.



### **Domain VII: Financial Governance**

1. Refrain from using the position of board member for personal or partisan gain or to benefit any person or entity over the interest of the school system.

### **Domain VIII: Conduct as Board Member**

1. Devote sufficient time, thought and study to the performance of the duties and responsibilities of a member of the board.
2. Become informed about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed education and training.
3. Communicate in a respectful professional manner with and about fellow board members.
4. Take no private action that will compromise the board or school system administration.
5. Participate in all required training programs developed for board members by the board or the State Board of Education.
6. File annually with the local superintendent and with the State Board of Education a written statement certifying that he or she is in compliance with this Code of Ethics.

### **Domain IX: Conflicts of Interest**

1. Announce potential conflicts of interest before board action is taken.
2. Comply with the conflicts of interest policy of the board, all applicable laws and Appendix B of the Standards document.

Upon a motion supported by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, the board may choose to conduct a hearing concerning a possible violation of this Code of Ethics by a member of the board. The board member accused of violating this Code of Ethics will have thirty (30) days notice prior to a hearing on the matter. The accused board member may bring witnesses on his or her behalf to the hearing, and the board may elect to call witnesses to inquire into the matter. If found by a vote of two-thirds of all the members of the board that the accused board member has violated this Code of Ethics, the board shall determine an appropriate sanction. A board member subject to sanction may, within thirty (30) days of such sanction vote, appeal such decision to the State Board of Education in accordance with the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education. A record of the decision of the board to sanction a board member for a violation of this Code of Ethics shall be placed in the permanent minutes of the board.