

BREWSTER CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

SCHOOL BOARD OPERATING PROTOCOLS

In an effort to maintain a high degree of respect and trust among the Board, the administrative staff, the teaching staff, and the community, we hereby agree to the following protocols to govern the Board's conduct.

BOARD MEMBER ROLES/AUTHORITY

1. The Board is responsible for overseeing the finances of the District, hiring and evaluating the Superintendent, setting policy and proposing an annual budget to voters.
2. The Board annually sets goals for the District in collaboration with the Superintendent.
3. The Board delegates the administration of schools to the Superintendent and his/her staff.
4. Hiring decisions are made by the Superintendent. With respect to the hiring of building principals, directors and central office administrators, the Board is afforded the opportunity to meet the candidate recommended by the Superintendent in Executive Session for a discussion prior to the vote on their appointment. The Board is also afforded the opportunity to review job postings for assistant principal, principal, directors and central office administrators prior to posting.
5. Board Members have authority as members of the corporate board, only at a duly convened meeting. A Board Member does not have authority to take individual action.
6. Board decisions are binding on all Board Members. Board Members are entitled to disagree on an issue, but once an issue is decided, all Board Members will support the Board's decisions.
7. The Board strives to reach decisions through consensus rather than simply by majority vote, whenever possible.
8. The Board annually evaluates the performance of the Superintendent and performs an informal mid-year "check in" relating to the Superintendent's performance to date that is focused on District goals and the Superintendent's annual objectives tied to those goals with reference to, but not completion of, the contractually agreed upon evaluation tool.
9. The Board annually evaluates itself, reviews its protocols, and holds itself to standards of best practice.
10. Regular attendance by Board Members at Board meetings is important to a well-functioning Board. When a Board Member cannot attend a meeting, that Board Member is responsible for determining what happened at the meeting,

preferably by watching the video of the meeting that is posted to the District website and communicating with Board Members who were present.

11. Each year the Board will establish Board committees, with each member serving on at least one committee. Board Members will also serve as liaisons to other school-related organizations.
12. Board Members are encouraged to attend school events (sports, performing arts, curricular, music, etc.) and are expected to participate in professional development activities.

SUPERINTENDENT'S ROLE/AUTHORITY

1. The Superintendent is responsible for the administration of the District, and serves as the chief executive officer.
2. The Superintendent shall have the authority to organize, reorganize and arrange the administrative and supervisory staff, including, without limitation, instruction and business affairs, which, in his/her judgment, best serves the District, subject to the approval of the Board of Education.
3. The responsibility for hiring, selection, placement and transfer of personnel shall be vested in the Superintendent of Schools subject to the approval of the Board of Education.
4. The Superintendent shall suggest regulations, rules, policies and procedures deemed necessary for the well ordering of the District.
5. It is the Superintendent's responsibility to provide visionary and inspirational leadership that enables the District to continually improve the educational experiences of children.
6. The Superintendent is a visible presence in the schools to underscore that the most important interactions that occur are in the classrooms.
7. The Superintendent provides the Board with the information and analysis it needs to formulate policy and take other appropriate actions.
8. The Superintendent creates and sustains a climate of collegiality among members of the staff and parent body.
9. The Superintendent acts as the educational leader of the community.

BOARD PRESIDENT'S ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITY

1. The Board President has no greater authority than any other Board Member.
2. The Board President serves as liaison between the Board and the Superintendent.
3. The Board President is responsible for sharing information pertaining to Board business with all members on a timely basis.

4. The Board President meets regularly with the Superintendent and Vice President to set meeting agendas.
5. The Board President runs meetings in an orderly manner, utilizing parliamentary procedure. He/she encourages open discussion and deliberation, and guides the Board to reach decisions.
6. With the Superintendent, the Board President is the primary media contact and spokesperson for the Board.
7. The Board President makes committee and liaison assignments in consultation with Board Members.
8. The Board President responds to written communications to the Board of Education from community members and notifies the Board of the original correspondence as well as the response.
9. The Board President oversees and coordinates the orientation and mentoring of new Board Members.

BOARD VICE PRESIDENT'S ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITY

1. The Board Vice President has no greater authority than any other Board Member.
2. The Board Vice President stands in for the President when he/she is not available.
3. The Board Vice President works with the President in providing guidance and mentoring to incoming Board Members.
4. The Board Vice President serves as a sounding board for the President.
5. The Board Vice President meets regularly with the Superintendent and President to set meeting agendas.

THE BOARD'S RESPONSIBILITIES WITH RESPECT TO THE EX OFFICIO STUDENT BOARD MEMBER(S)

1. Board Members should communicate respectfully to ensure that everyone, including the Student Board Member ("Student"), is treated with dignity.
2. Board Members should ensure an inclusive environment, where the Student feels comfortable contributing their insights, and provide ample opportunity to actively engage in discussions.
3. All Board Members should act as mentors to the Student in a constructive manner, focused on the Student's growth and fostering confidence in their role.

4. A Board Member mentor will be assigned to the Student representative.
5. All Board Members shall remain open to the Student's perspective to allow for a dynamic exchange of ideas.
6. In the Board's yearly self-evaluation, it will evaluate the participation and engagement of the Student by tracking the representative's attendance, active involvement in meetings, and contributions to discussions and decision-making.
7. Communication between the Board and the Student shall be conducted using the District's email.

AGENDA SETTING

1. The Superintendent and Board leadership (the Board President and Vice President) share the responsibility for setting agendas for Board meetings.
2. Board Members can suggest items they would like to see on the agenda to the Board President through the Board group email.
3. An item may be added to the agenda by the President or Superintendent, or by a majority vote of the Board. The timing of the agenda item will be decided by the Board President and Superintendent depending on urgency and other agenda items.

CONFIDENTIALITY

1. Board Members shall not disclose confidential information acquired through the course of official duties.
2. E-mail and/or electronic media communications should **not** be used for confidential matters.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

1. Discussions in Executive Sessions are confidential. Board Members and the Superintendent and/or her designee(s) shall not disclose any information regarding matters discussed in executive session.
2. The only topics that may be discussed in Executive Sessions are those listed in Open Meetings Law, Section 105:
 - a. matters which will imperil the public safety if disclosed;
 - b. any matter which may disclose the identity of a law enforcement agent or informer;

- c. information relating to current or future investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense which would imperil effective law enforcement if disclosed;
 - d. discussions regarding proposed, pending or current litigation;
 - e. collective negotiations pursuant to article fourteen of the civil service law;
 - f. the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation;
 - g. the preparation, grading or administration of examinations; and
 - h. the proposed acquisition, sale or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition of securities, or sale or exchange of securities held by such public body, but only when publicity would substantially affect the value thereof.
- 3. To the degree possible, Executive Sessions should not take longer than one hour.
 - 4. When possible, Executive Sessions shall be scheduled prior to Public Meetings.

COMMUNITY INQUIRIES

- 1. If a Board Member is contacted directly by a parent or community member with a concern, the Board Member should listen to the parent or community member and encourage them to follow the hierarchy or “chain of command” to resolve the issue. The chain of command is as follows: teacher, principal, District office staff, Superintendent, Board.
- 2. It is not the Board Member’s role to try to resolve the issue with the parent or community member or through the Superintendent. The Board Member’s role is to assist the individual by directing them to the appropriate individual who is best positioned to address the issue.
- 3. If a substantive criticism, complaint or issue is brought to the attention of a Board Member, that Board Member should relay the information to the Board President who will convey the information to the Superintendent and the entire board when appropriate. This helps to ensure that confidential or sensitive information is not shared via email. The Superintendent and her staff engage in fact finding and problem solving. The Board does not.

MEDIA CONTACT

- 1. The Board President and/or the Superintendent and/or their designees, make all official statements on behalf of the Board and respond to media inquiries.

MEETING DYNAMICS

1. In both public meetings and executive sessions, each Board Member has a right to be heard once on an issue prior to others having a second chance to speak.
2. Board Members agree to listen to one another and not interrupt.
3. The Board President leads and is authorized to focus discussion toward closure.
4. It is the Board's goal to resolve public meetings within two-hours whenever possible.
5. Board Members should avoid repetitious discussion.
6. Board Members should address their comments to the Board, not the public.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS

1. There is an opportunity for public participation at business meetings and special meetings. Civility and respect is expected during this discourse.
2. Public participation at Board meetings is governed by Policy 1510.
3. Speakers must speak from the podium, state their name, and comments are limited to 3 minutes.
4. Public remarks are to be directed to the entire Board.
5. The Board President is responsible for the orderly conduct of the meeting and shall rule on such matters pertaining to public comment, including the length of time allowed for public comment and the appropriateness of the subject being presented.
6. The Board President should identify the rules governing public comment at Board meetings prior to each public comment period and emphasize the need for civility and mutual respect.
7. The Board will not engage in discussion or answer questions posed by speakers during public comment. Comments and questions presented during public comment are taken under advisement. The Board may request that the Superintendent or designee follow-up with the speaker to address comments or questions posed during public comment.
8. The Board should not utilize Board Remarks and Committee Updates as an opportunity to address or respond to public comments.

RELATIONSHIP TO STAFF

1. Contact with members of the staff occurs through the Superintendent when Board Members are wearing their "Board hat."
2. When Board Members contact staff as a parent, a personal email account must be used (not the District email account) and it is reassuring to say, "I am

calling/writing as a parent.”

3. Individual Board members have no authority to directly contact any District personnel.

INFORMATION SHARING

1. The Board and Superintendent agree to maintain a practice of “no surprises.”
2. The Board and Superintendent agree to share information and questions relating to agenda items carefully and consistently.
3. Board Members should check their Board email at least twice a week.
4. Board Members should review the Superintendent's weekly update closely and carefully protect the confidential information contained therein.
5. Board Members should keep all email communications brief and to the point.
6. Board Members, when possible, should let the Superintendent and Board know in advance about questions or concerns that they intend to raise at the board meeting, and the Superintendent will do the same.
7. If a Board Member has questions regarding agenda items, they should be conveyed to the Superintendent and the Board by, at the latest, the Monday prior to the Tuesday board meeting. This allows the Superintendent enough time to ensure that the questions can be appropriately addressed.
8. Board Members should expect that confidential news will come through the weekly update, executive session, or in an emergency through telephone contact.
9. Requests for information on agenda items or presentations are to be made by the Board collectively, not by individual Board Members. The Board must maintain a reasonable balance of volume, content, and tone. If the Superintendent deems it appropriate, requests for information may be addressed in the weekly Board update from the Superintendent or placed on a future Board agenda for discussion
10. Board Members may communicate with each other by telephone, e-mail, or in person, but such communication must be consistent with guidelines for public and executive session decision-making.

TIMELINE/GENERAL BOARD CALENDAR

(Dates are approximate)

July:

- Reorganization meeting (1st Tuesday of July by state law unless the Board approves a different date in July no later than July 15)

August:

- Board retreat with Superintendent; at least once annually.
- Goal alignment Work Session
- Vote on tax warrant

September:

- Superintendent evaluation criteria must be adopted and filed with District Clerk by September 10th

September/October:

- Presentation of Board, District and Building/Department goals
- Decide and vote on BOE NYSSBA Annual Convention attendance and Annual Business Meeting attendance

October:

- Work session to review NYSSBA proposed legislative priorities and bylaws

January/February:

- Mid-year check-in with Superintendent
- Mid-year check-in for BOE
- Begin annual review of tenure candidates

April:

- Adopt school budget for voter consideration
- Vote on BOCES annual budget and trustees

May:

- Informational Budget hearing and budget newsletters mailed
- Annual Budget Vote and Trustee Election (generally falls during the third week of May).
- Vote on tenure, Tenure recipient recognition
- Vote on WPSBA annual budget

May/June:

- Board's discussion for Superintendent's year end review
- Year end review with Superintendent
- BOE self evaluation
- Discussion of proposed district goals for following year

June:

- Recognition of retirees, outgoing trustees & PTAs

Dated TBD:

- Building tours