Reynoldsburg City School District Board of Education Handbook: 2025-2026 School Year

Updated August, 2025

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1. Introduction

Welcome to the Reynoldsburg City Schools Board of Education! If you're reading this handbook, you have either been elected to the Board, or appointed to the Board to fill a vacancy… or perhaps you're a District parent or employee, or a District resident whose taxes support your local public schools, or even someone considering running for a seat on the Board.

This guide can be read in two ways. One is as a concise, bare-bones, "quick start" guide to what the Board does, to allow you to hit the ground at least power-walking if not running. The other is a more detailed, conversational presentation of current Board practices, including some of the "why" behind them. These parts contain explanations and advice gained from actual experience on this Board — the kind of information that one Board member might share with another with another as the occasion arises. Collecting them in one document ensures that every Board member has access to this information, and hopefully will result in fewer cases of a Board member saying, "Wow, I wish someone had clued me in on this months ago!"

If a section or sub-section contains both kinds of information, there is an inset box at the beginning labeled "The essentials." Information outside that box can be read as need arises or interest calls.

2. District leadership

2.1. Superintendent

The superintendent is one of only two District employees who report to the Board. It is the Board's responsibility to hire, supervise, and evaluate the superintendent. It is the superintendent's job to hire all other District staff, subject to Board approval.

2.2. Treasurer

The treasurer is the other District employee who reports to the Board. It is the Board's responsibility to hire, supervise, and evaluate the treasurer. It is the treasurer's job to manage the District's finances, and to keep the Board informed of its financial outlook. The treasurer also records the minutes of the meetings.

2.3. Cabinet members

The cabinet is made up of District-level administrators who report directly to the superintendent. In Reynoldsburg City School District, the members of the cabinet and their job descriptions can be found on the About RCS tab on the District webpage.

2.4. Student body representative

In 2023, the Board approved adding one non-voting representative from the high school student body selected by the board with recommendations from the superintendent. The student representative will be allowed to participate in Board discussions at the discretion of the presiding officer.

The student representative for 2023-24, and 2024-2025 was Pratima Neopany. The student representative for the 2025-26 school year is Riley Albright

2.5. Mission and vision

Empowering leaders who impact the NOW and innovate the FUTURE

2.6. Onboarding

In the weeks between your election and the first Board meeting (and maybe up to a few weeks after), you will be contacted by the Superintendent, Treasurer, Director of Communications, and Board President, who will provide you with information you will need as a new school board member. You will receive:

- **REYN email address:** You will have an email address account set-up for District use. Please remember that email correspondence is public information and therefore subject to duplication and disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act and Sunshine Laws.
- **District name tags:** You will have a name tag that can be worn any time you are representing the District as a Board member.
- **ID badge:** An ID badge and lanyard will be provided to you in the weeks following the organizational meeting (see **Section 5**) with your picture on it. This must also be worn any time you are in a District building to identify you as a board member. The ID badge will provide you with access to the Administrative Office building during regular M-F business hours.
- **Business cards:** You will be provided with a box of business cards that you are free to pass out as you wish.

The Superintendent, Treasurer, and Director of Communications will also work with you to take care of several items of business before (or in some cases, shortly after) you take office:

- **Employment paperwork:** The Treasurer will contact you about completing necessary paperwork (ethics forms, AUP, W-4, etc.).
- **Election certificate:** You will need to provide the Treasurer with a copy of your election certificate as soon as it is mailed to you by the board of elections. This can simply be scanned in and emailed.

- **Swearing-in:** The Treasurer will contact you regarding your swearing-in and the oath of office. (See also Organizational meeting.)

- **BoardDocs:** All meeting agendas and minutes going back to approximately 2010 are hosted on BoardDocs, an online service used by thousands of school boards and similar entities across the county. This is also where all Board policies are hosted. The Superintendent and Treasurer will review BoardDocs with you prior to your first board meeting and you will receive a login for BoardDocs.

- **Meeting with Board President:** The sitting Board President will meet with you prior to the first board meeting of the new calendar year (see below). The Board President will outline various board procedures and protocols.

- **Tour of the District:** The Director of Communications (or another member of the administration) will work with you and any other new Board members to arrange a tour of the District.

- **Meeting the cabinet:** The Superintendent or Director of Communications will arrange for you to meet members of the administration to get overviews and introductions to the various departments of the District.

- **Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA) updates:** Like most school districts in Ohio, the Reynoldsburg City School District is a member of the Ohio School Boards Association, which provides information, training, and other services to member school districts. The Superintendent's office will send your contact information to OSBA so you can start receiving notices and alerts.

- **OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show:** This event is most likely the first one that you will attend as a Board member or Board member-elect. OSBA holds their annual Capital Conference each November, shortly after Election Day. This is a good place to learn some boardsmanship, meet other school board members, and educate yourself about cultural, economic, legal, and other issues that affect our school district – and we're lucky enough to live within driving distance of this annual event. You will be contacted by the Treasurer regarding your registration for the conference (paid for by the District).

- **OSBA New Board Member Workshop:** This workshop is usually held in Columbus in January and is a great introduction for new Board members. The Treasurer will register you and contact you regarding its time and place.

2.7. District geography

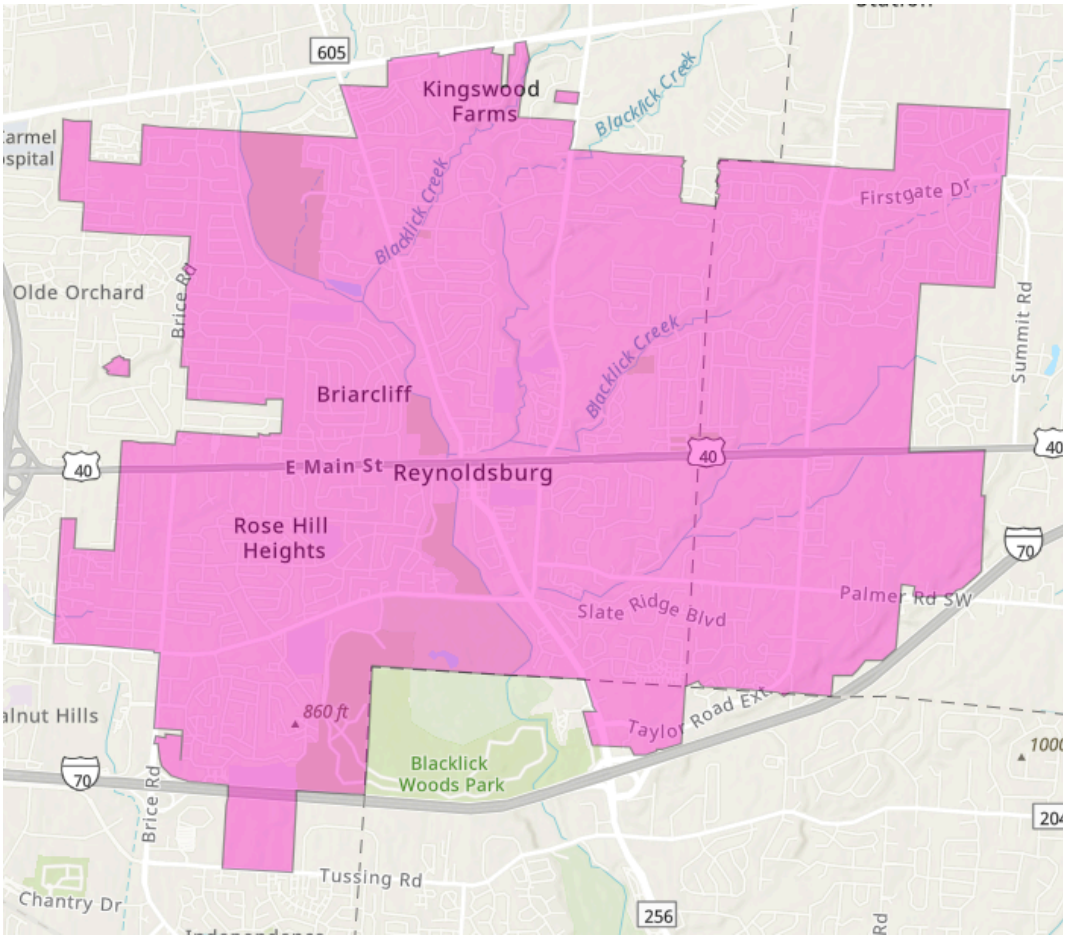
The Essentials

The Reynoldsburg City School District consists of seven elementary schools (French Run ES, Herbert Mills ES, Rose Hill ES, Slate Ridge ES, Summit Road ES, Taylor Road ES, Waggoner Road ES), two junior high schools (Baldwin Road JH, Waggoner Road JH), and one high school (Reynoldsburg HS). Unique to RCSD is the fact that it has a single high school that occupies two campuses. The original one is the Livingston Avenue campus; the newer one is the Summit Road campus.

Building leadership, contact information, and other information for each school can be found on the "Schools" tab on the District website.

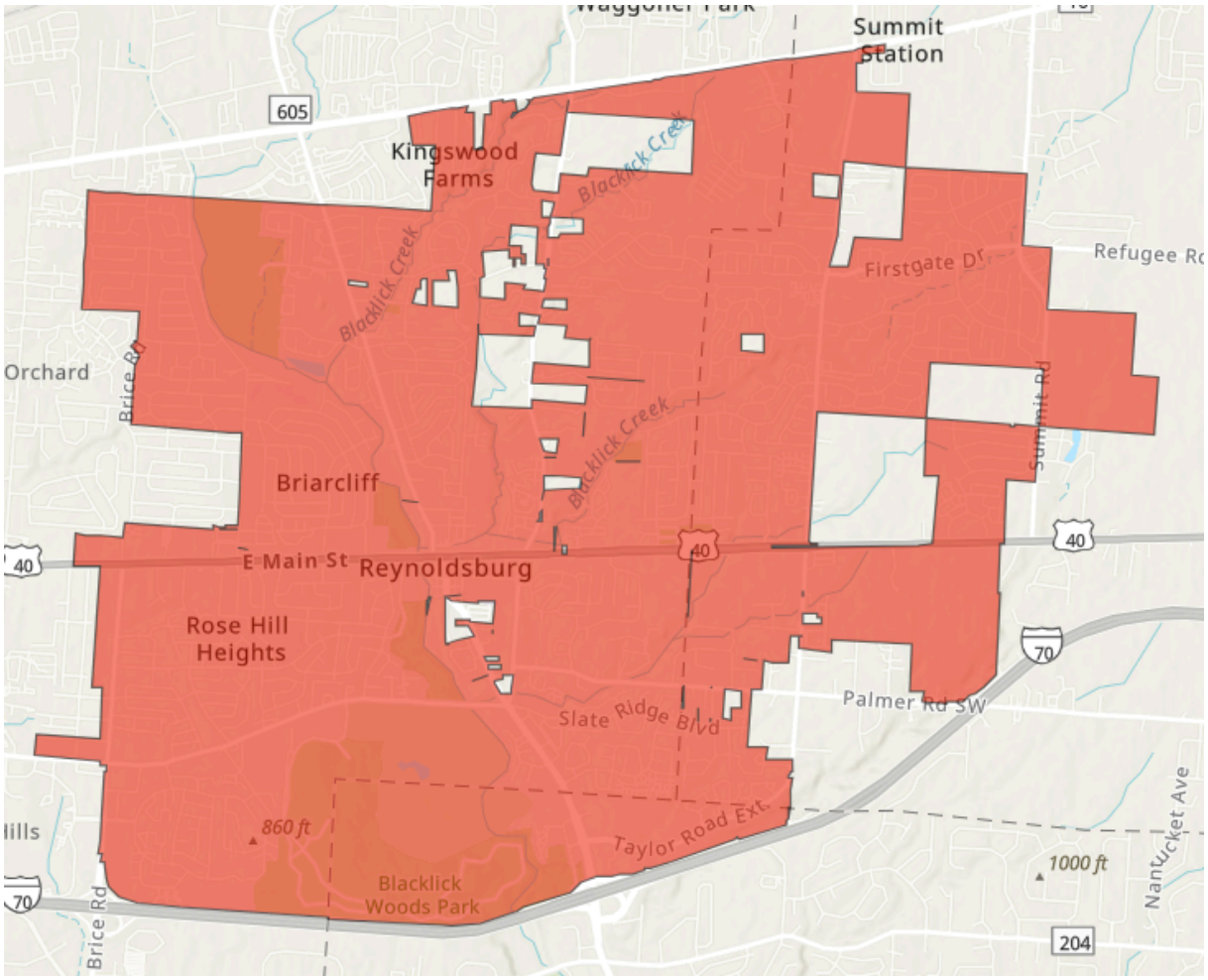
2.7.1. The territory

The map below shows the boundaries of the Reynoldsburg City School District:



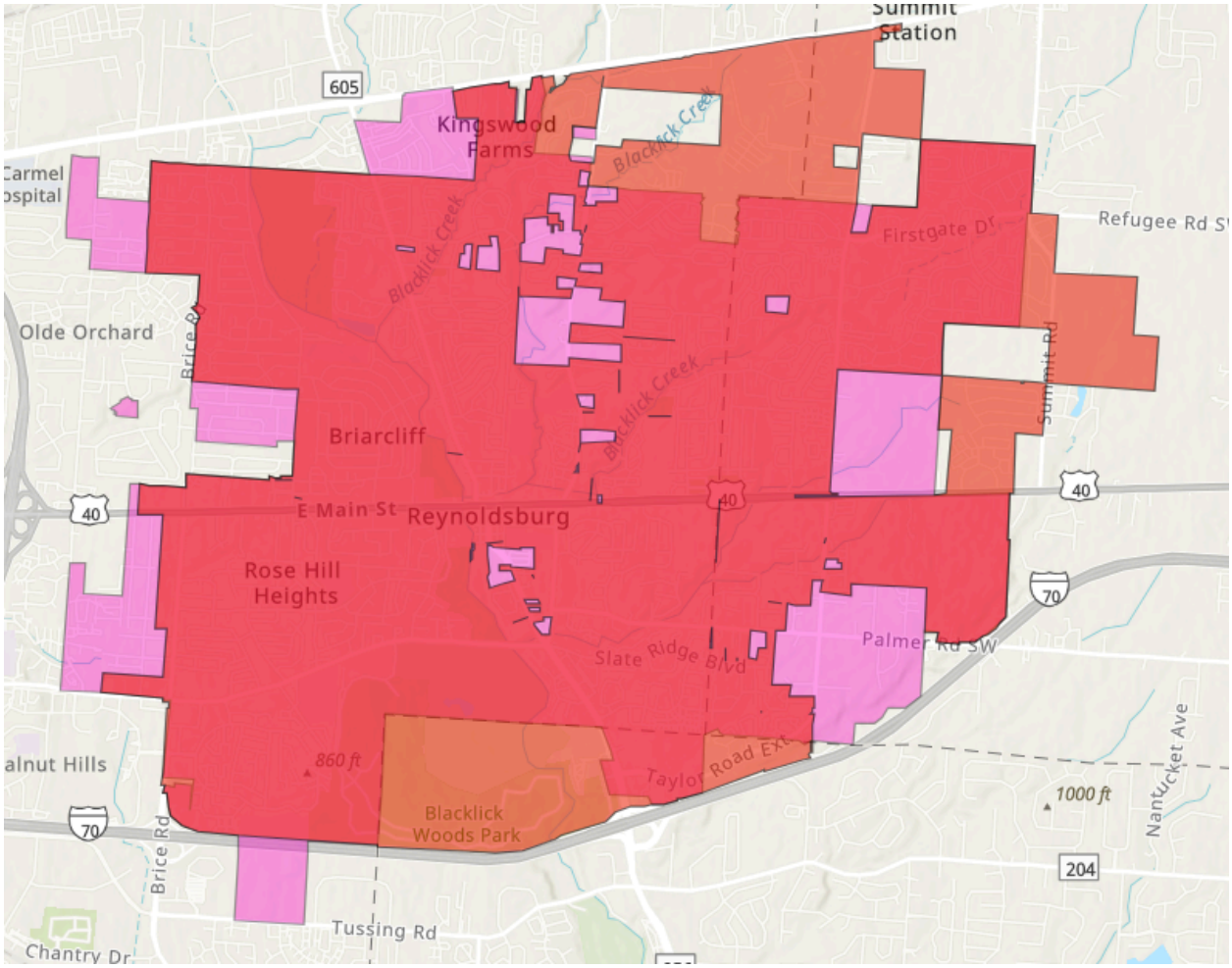
Boundaries of Reynoldsburg City School District, 2025

The District boundaries are not the same as those of the City of Reynoldsburg. The next map shows the boundaries of the City of Reynoldsburg as of the beginning of 2025:



Boundaries of the City of Reynoldsburg, 2025

If we look at the two boundaries on the same map, we can see areas of the District that lie outside City limits. Some of them are in the City of Columbus; others are in unincorporated areas of Truro Township, Etna Township, and Jefferson Township. On the other hand, there are some areas within the City of Reynoldsburg that are not part of Reynoldsburg City School District. Some are part of the Pickering Local School District; others are part of the Licking Heights Local School District; and a few are even in the Gahanna-Jefferson City School District.



Overlaid boundaries of Reynoldsburg City School District and City of Reynoldsburg, 2025

This confusing geography has caught more than one family by surprise over the years.

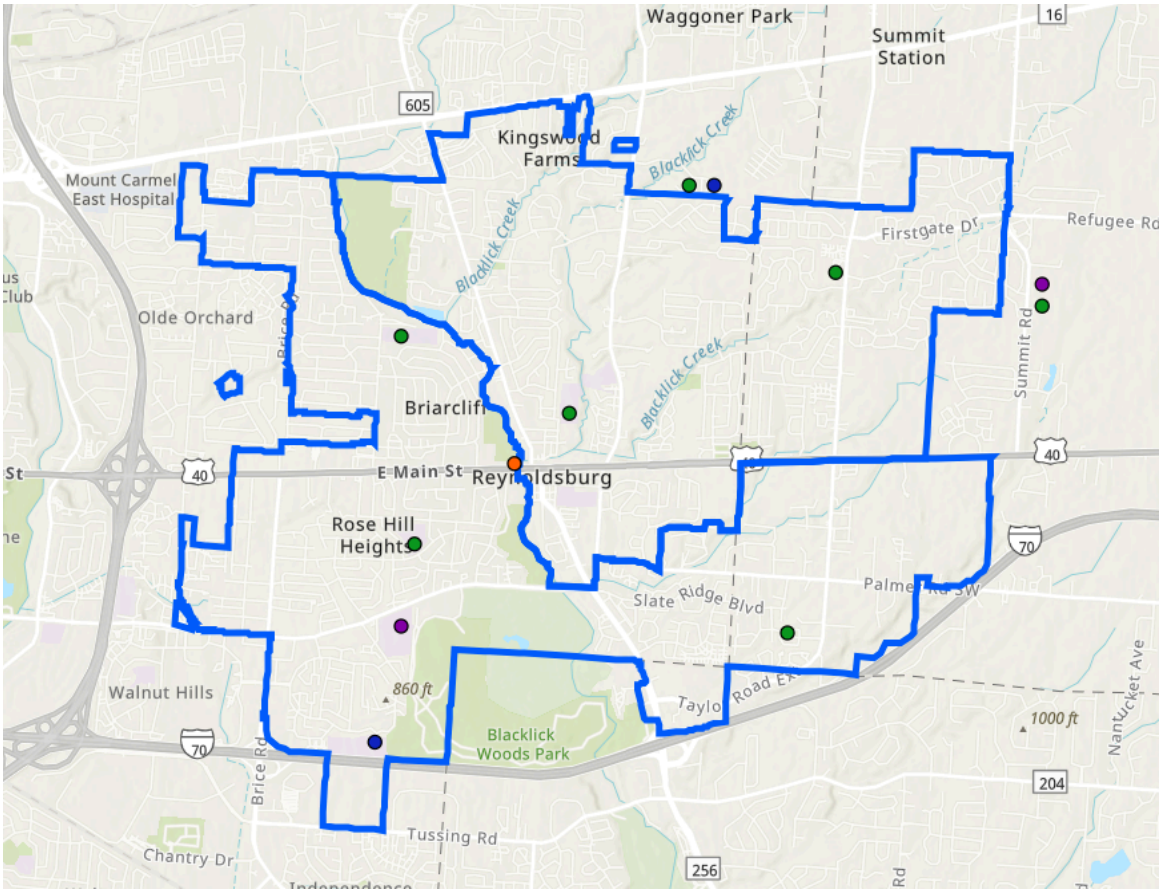
2.7.2. District buildings

The Reynoldsburg City School District consists of seven elementary schools (French Run ES, Herbert Mills ES, Rose Hill ES, Slate Ridge ES, Summit Road ES, Taylor Road ES, Waggoner Road ES), two junior high schools (Baldwin Road JH, Waggoner Road JH), and one high school (Reynoldsburg HS). Unique to RCSD is the fact that it has a single high school that occupies two campuses. The original one is the Livingston Avenue campus; the newer one is the Summit Road campus. Building leadership, contact information, and other information for each school can be found on the “Schools” tab on the District website.

2.7.3. High school and junior high buildings

The Reynoldsburg City School District has two junior high schools (Baldwin Road JH, Waggoner Road JH), and one high school (Reynoldsburg HS). Unique to RCSD is the fact that it has a single high school that occupies two campuses. The original one is the Livingston Avenue campus; the newer one is the Summit Road campus. Building leadership, contact information, and other information for each school can be found on the “Schools” tab on the District website.

The map below shows District high school and junior high school attendance boundaries:



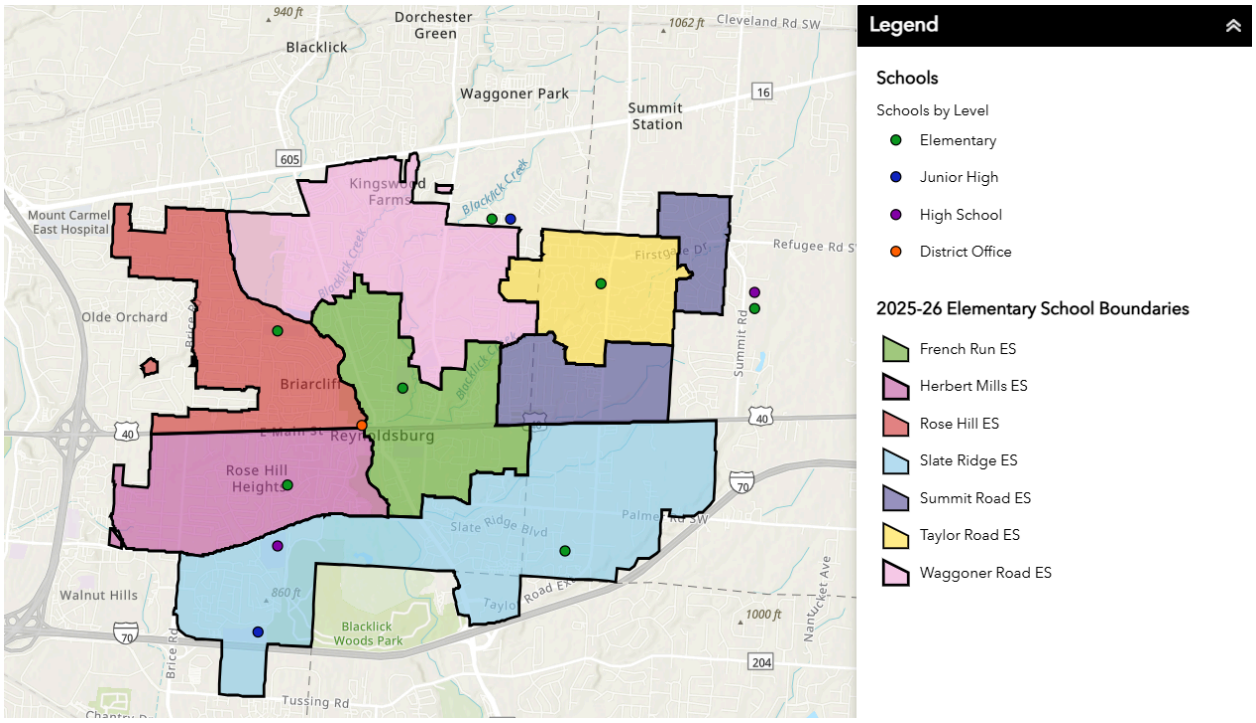
Junior high and high school attendance zones, 2025-2026 school year

- Students living in the northwestern shape attend Waggoner Road Junior High.
- Students living in the southwestern shape attend Baldwin Road Junior High.
- By default, students attending Waggoner Road JH will go on to attend the Summit campus of Reynoldsburg High School, and those attending Baldwin Road JH, the Livingston campus of Reynoldsburg High School.
- However, this can be impacted by their pathway placement site. If a student lives in the Livingston Campus area, but their pathway is at Summit, they will attend Summit, and vice versa
- An interactive version of this map is available in interactive form in the Transportation part of the District web page.

2.7.4. Elementary school buildings

The Reynoldsburg City School District has seven elementary schools: French Run ES, Herbert Mills ES, Rose Hill ES, Slate Ridge ES, Summit Road ES, Taylor Road ES, and Waggoner Road ES.

The map below shows the attendance zones for the District's seven elementary schools:



Elementary school attendance zones, 2025-2026 school year

- Students graduating from French Run, Waggoner Road, Summit Road, or Taylor Road will attend Waggoner Road JH, and then the Summit campus of RHS.
- Students graduating from Herbert Mills, Rose Hill, or Slate Ridge will attend Baldwin Road JH, and then the Livingston campus of RHS.
- An interactive version of this map is available in interactive form in the Transportation part of the District web page.

2.7.5. Other buildings

Preschool
Located at RHS-Livingston Campus

Central Office (CO)
7244 E. Main St

Business Office/Welcome Center
1555 Graham Rd

Field house
Located at RHS Livingston Campus

Transportation
7932 E. Main St

Hannah J. Ashton facility
1482 Jackson St

2.7.6. Unusual facts

- The buildings on the Waggoner Road campus (Waggoner Road JH and Waggoner Road ES) and the Summit Road campus (RHS-Summit and Summit Road ES Road) lie outside Reynoldsburg City School District territory, in Licking Heights Local School District, although they are parts of the City of Reynoldsburg. This was a matter of some litigation between the two districts in 1991.
- The business office and welcome center on Graham Rd used to be Graham Road Elementary School, which was closed in 2010 as a cost-cutting measure.
- The Hannah Ashton facility used to be the Hannah J. Ashton Middle School, which was closed in 2023 because of prohibitive costs of maintaining it as a safe, suitable space for teaching.

3. Basic responsibilities

According to OSBA, a school board has three responsibilities:

1. Hire and manage a superintendent.
2. Hire and manage a treasurer.
3. Set school district policy.

3.1. Hiring and managing a superintendent

The essentials

The Superintendent is one of only two District employees who are hired directly by, and report directly to, the Board. The Superintendent is in charge of the administration of the District. A common rule of thumb is, “The Board decides the ‘what’; the Superintendent determines the ‘how’.”

3.1.1. Communication with the Superintendent

Board members should be in regular communication with the Superintendent. If you’re not communicating in a routine and regular way, then most of your communication will be complaint- or crisis-driven, and any time you reach out to the Superintendent, the conversation will have some tension even before it begins, as the Superintendent wonders, “What’s the problem this time?”

The Superintendent provides regular updates, typically on a weekly basis in the form of a Superintendent’s Weekly Board Packet. Many of these updates are routine, and possibly rather

boring: departmental information and progress on ongoing projects. Some items, however, are more significant, and allow Board members to review how one issue or another has developed over time if it turns into something requiring Board action, or something that Board members (or the public) has questions about later.

The Superintendent also meets with Board members individually or in small groups (specifically, groups of two, to avoid creating a quorum and violating Open edgings laws), to give updates on items that aren't in the weekly updates or to discuss whatever issues the Board member(s) might want to discuss. Depending on the preferences of individual Board members and the Superintendent, other communication might take the form of texts, emails, or phone calls.

This is also a good place to underscore that because only the Superintendent and Treasurer report to the Board, questions that Board members have for members of the cabinet should go to the Superintendent. It's hard enough having five bosses, without those bosses bypassing you to talk to your subordinates, not to mention that it makes things awkward for those subordinates as well, when the boss's boss(es) start asking you to do things. If you need to interact directly with a District employee other than the Superintendent, it should be with the knowledge and approval of the Superintendent.

3.1.2. Evaluation of the Superintendent

Evaluating the Superintendent is another of the Board's primary responsibilities. Best practice is to agree on a small set of measurable goals (aligned with the District mission) for the Superintendent to work toward during the year. Employee evaluations are always potential sources of tension, and especially so with an employee reporting to multiple bosses—i.e. a five-member board. This can be stressful not only for the Superintendent, but for the Board itself, which needs to synthesize the opinions of multiple Board members—who typically join the Board right in the middle of a school year. For that reason, clear and ongoing communication is essential. You don't want to find yourself at the end of an evaluation cycle, suddenly struggling to write an honest and fair evaluation without a clear idea of what you were expecting the Superintendent to do. If you're a new Board member, you should have received a briefing on the Superintendent's active goals and whatever feedback the Board has provided them on progress toward the goals. (If you haven't, please remind the Board president!)

The OSBA has a recommended cycle for the evaluation process, starting with determining Superintendent goals at the beginning of a school year (July-August), doing a mid-year formative evaluation (November-December), and finishing with the summative evaluation near the end of a school year (April-May). Though this process sounds simple, it is all too easy to let one step or another fall by the wayside in the business of the school year, making further steps difficult or impossible to do. In particular, because our Board meetings are held in the evening, and evaluations are done in executive session, finding a good time to do evaluation-related tasks can be tricky: Do you do them at the end of the meeting, so that it doesn't hold up all the monthly business, or during the meeting when minds are clearer but meeting attendees are waiting for the meeting to resume? Or do you schedule a special Board meeting with the

primary purpose of having an executive session for evaluation-related tasks? Either way, it should be a conscious decision.

3.1.3. Hiring a superintendent

When a superintendent resigns or retires, it is up to the Board to hire a new one. Different boards go about this in different ways, but the last few times the RCSD Board has hired a new superintendent, they have used the services of a search firm to do so. As a member of the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio (ESCCO), we can have them do a search for no additional cost, and in fact, it was our ESC that did the search for current Superintendent Dr. Tracy Reed. As a member of OSBA, our Board can contract with them to do a search (though for an additional cost). There are also private firms, often staffed by former superintendents or school board members from various school districts, that provide search services. One that the RCSD Board used was Finding Leaders, who helped the Board hire Dr. Melvin Brown in 2017. Whichever entity does the search, they will provide the Board with a timeline, agree upon expectations, and help the Board to conduct the process in accordance with Board policy and state law.

3.2. Hiring and managing a treasurer

The essentials

The Treasurer is the other District employee hired directly by, and reporting directly to, the Board. The Treasurer oversees District finances, managing revenues, expenditures, and investments. The Treasurer also provides twice-yearly budget updates in the form of "five-year forecasts." And the Treasurer also performs "other duties as needed." In many districts (including ours), this means recording meeting minutes.

3.2.1. Communication with the Treasurer

The Treasurer provides regular updates, usually in the form of a page in the Superintendent's Weekly Board Packet. However, because the Treasurer does not report to the Superintendent, and because they are not usually in charge of large projects that develop over a span of weeks or months, there may not be an update from the Treasurer in every single Board Packet. Board members should also consult the Treasurer with finance-related questions as needed.

The Treasurer also presents financial updates at regular meetings of the Finance Committee, which are then presented for approval by the Board as a whole at the next regular Board meeting. This is covered in more detail in Committee reports.

3.2.2. Evaluation of the Treasurer

Evaluating the Treasurer is another of the Board's primary responsibilities. Best practice is to agree on a small set of measurable goals (aligned with the District mission) for the Treasurer to work toward during the year. Employee evaluations are always potential sources of tension, and especially so with an employee reporting to multiple bosses—i.e. a five-member board. This can be stressful not only for the Treasurer, but for the Board itself, which needs to synthesize the opinions of multiple Board members—who typically join the Board right in the middle of a school year. For that reason, clear and ongoing communication is essential. You don't want to find yourself at the end of an evaluation cycle, suddenly struggling to write an honest and fair evaluation without a clear idea of what you were expecting the Treasurer to do. If you're a new Board member, you should have received a briefing on the Treasurer's active goals and whatever feedback the Board has provided them on progress toward the goals. (If you haven't, please remind the Board President!)

The OSBA has a recommended cycle for the evaluation process, starting with determining Treasurer goals at the beginning of a school year (July-August), doing a mid-year formative evaluation (November-December), and finishing with the summative evaluation near the end of a school year (April-May). Though this process sounds simple, it is all too easy to let one step or another fall by the wayside in the business of the school year, making further steps difficult or impossible to do. In addition to the same concerns as when evaluating the Superintendent, the Board may want to stagger the evaluation milestones for the Superintendent and Treasurer, so that they don't end up evaluating both the Superintendent and the Treasurer on the same night.

3.2.3. Hiring a treasurer

When a treasurer resigns or retires, it is up to the Board to hire a new one. Various boards have handled this process in various ways. In the past, this Board has used search firms (such as ESC of Central Ohio, Finding Leaders, and K12 Consulting) to assist with this search. Whichever entity is chosen, it will provide the Board with a timeline, agreement on expectations, and support the Board throughout the process in accordance with Board policy and state law.

3.3. Setting policy

The essentials

As federal and state laws change, it is a school district's body of policy that keeps it in compliance with the law. Keeping up with these changes is a year-round responsibility. New or revised policies are typically discussed first by the Policy Committee, with recommendations from the Superintendent. They are then put up for discussion at the next regular monthly meeting, and voted for approval the month after that.

As laws change, it is a school district's body of policy that keeps it in compliance with the law. Keeping up with these changes is a year-round responsibility, and most school districts in Ohio

contract with one of two organizations to do this. One of them is OSBA, and you can recognize OSBA-written policies by their use of alphabetic codes. RCSD used to use OSBA for its policies, until sometime in 2016 or so. Since that time, RCSD's policy updates have been provided by the other policy-writing organization, NEOLA (formerly the Northeast Ohio Learning Association). When a school board hires OSBA or NEOLA to handle its policy updates, it's paying not only for the crafting of those policies, but also for the legal protections these organizations provide. If a school board is sued while adhering to its Board-approved OSBA or NEOLA policies, those organizations will provide legal support for their member boards.

The normal process for policy updates begins with a quarterly packet from NEOLA, containing policy revisions and occasional new policies for the District's Board to review. The Superintendent and Treasurer meet with the District's NEOLA representative to go over the updates. Often, these draft policies will have options in them that are left for individual school boards to decide; other times, the law will leave no room for variation.

Either way, the next step is for the Policy Committee to discuss these draft policies. They agree on what versions of the policies they will recommend to the Board as a whole (and make sure they understand the ones where no choice is permitted), and the policies go on the agenda for the next Board meeting for discussion (see Committee reports and Policies). There, the rest of the Board can ask questions, and possibly move to make amendments to various policies. (Caution: Deviating from NEOLA-approved policy language risks "voiding the warranty," as they may not provide the legal support that they would for their own language. On the other hand, NEOLA policies are written by human beings, who can and do make mistakes. It sometimes comes down to whether the Board would rather make the correction and risk legal exposure, or go with the error, and let NEOLA be on the hook to defend or correct it if the need arises?)

The final step is at the next month's Board meeting, when policies up for discussion the month before now get voted on by the Board. It is still possible to propose amendments at this point, since stakeholders who attended or streamed the last meeting may have contacted Board members in the intervening time to raise various concerns that may not have come up in the discussion. The same concerns apply as in the previous stage.

3.4. Approving negotiated agreements

The essentials

Certified staff are represented by the Reynoldsburg Education Association (REA); classified staff by the Reynoldsburg School Support Association (RSSA). Their collective bargaining agreements typically run for three years.

Both the certified staff (think teachers) and classified staff (support staff, including food service staff, bus drivers, custodians, and paraprofessionals) are represented by unions: the Reynoldsburg Education Association (REA) and the Reynoldsburg Support Services Association (RSSA). Their individual contracts are written in accordance with the REA's or

RSSA's collective bargaining agreement (CBA). The CBAs typically run for three years. The current version of each CBA can be found on the Human Capital Management page in the Departments section of the District webpage.

Before the term of one CBA ends, the Board and REA/RSSA (the "bargaining unit") work to agree on an updated CBA. It is convenient to have it set up such that the Board doesn't need to update both the REA's and the RSSA's CBA in the same year. Instead, the REA's new CBA will be approved in Year 1; the RSSA's in Year 2; and the negotiating teams have a year off in Year 3, before it's time to start the whole process over again in the following year.

The Board has its negotiating team (including the District's legal counsel, Superintendent, Executive Director of Business and Operations, Treasurer, and two Board members—usually the President and Vice President), and the bargaining unit has its team, and the two teams arrange times when they can meet and discuss the next CBA. When the two teams have a tentative agreement (or TA: a draft CBA that the teams agree on), the Board's team tells the rest of the Board the details in an executive session (see Executive sessions), and the bargaining unit's team takes the TA to the bargaining unit at large for a vote. This is the first time anyone else should be hearing anything about the negotiations, other than that they're going on. (If you've heard details about proposals from the Board's negotiating team or a bargaining unit's negotiating team before there's a TA to be voted on, then someone on one side or the other — or both — has been speaking out of turn.) If the union membership votes to approve the TA, then it's time for the rest of the Board to approve it as well; once they do, the TA has now become the renewed CBA.

Ideally, all this happens well before the current CBA expires, for a seamless transition from the old CBA to the new one. However, it doesn't always work out that way. When that happens, the existing CBA remains in effect until the new one is approved, and when the new one is approved, it is standardly backdated to take effect retroactively to the end of the last CBA. It's like a game in overtime: It's not the typical situation, but it happens, and there are established rules for how to proceed. Even so, it's a stressful situation to be in. You may hear people talking about how members of the union have now gone this many weeks or months "without a contract." Although that's not strictly true, it's not a good situation for a teacher or support staff member to be in: They're working under their existing employment contract, and trusting that when the new CBA is approved, their new contract will be as good as or better than what they could have gotten elsewhere. In these circumstances, it's especially important for the Board to continue to play by the rules, bargaining in good faith: The teachers and support staff want to work, and we want them to work, and if everyone keeps that in mind, there's no reason we can't arrive at something everyone can agree to.

3.5. Board goals

In addition to establishing goals for the Superintendent and Treasurer, it's good for school boards to set goals for itself. According to the OSBA, school boards that set goals are much more effective than those that do not, and even if they're not, setting goals can be a good

team-building activity. They are typically discussed in June or July and voted upon in an open meeting in July or August. Board goals for the 2024-2025 school year were:

1. Develop, articulate and steward the district's vision of learning that will be shared and supported by its schools and community. Reconvene the community conversation forums to discuss the strategic plan. Five such forums will be held with each forum addressing one of the strategic initiatives and one forum will discuss the district's vision and mission. Include stakeholders and the community in the development and revisions of the district's vision. Use the vision to drive planning, decision-making and evaluation of district operations and progress. Communicate its rationale for decisions to the community to reinforce its commitment to the vision

2. Provide safety and security of all students and staff. Review the district's safety and security plan and monitor on annual basis. Additional actions that the board may consider: Create board policy to support regular evaluation of safety and security risks and updating of risk mitigation plans, ensuring coordination with local safety agencies. Ensure the budget adequately addresses concern for safety and security issues. Ensure that facilities meet the learning needs of students and comply with current health, safety, security and accessibility standards.

3. Ensure management of the organization, operations, and resources for an efficient and effective learning environment. Review and discuss 5YF as it relates to FY budget. This includes prioritizing resources to support the strategic plan. Ensure an organizational structure is in place that supports the district as a learning organization. Establish a framework for the district's negotiated agreements to support a high level of student achievement. Support a process for internal and/or external evaluation of district operations

4. Collaborate with families and community, responding to diverse interests and needs, mobilizing community resources. § Discuss and identify new avenues for the board to communicate with public. Additional actions that the board may consider: Provide leadership on educational issues important to the community and advocate on behalf of students and the district. Exhibit cultural, racial and ethnic understanding and sensitivity. Establish partnerships to promote and expand educational opportunities for all students. Foster partnerships with community organizations in the use of facilities and sharing of services. Maintain legislative awareness and communicate with local, state and federal governments in its advocacy role. Establish and follow well-articulated process for referring citizens with questions, concerns.

As of this writing, Board goals for the 2025-2026 school year have not been discussed or approved.

4. Regular meetings

The essentials

All official Board business must take place during a meeting open to the public, and announced at least 24 hours in advance (ORC 121.22). Some of these are the regular monthly Board meetings. Others include the yearly organizational meeting, and various special meetings.

Board meetings are covered in Policy 0165 in a very general way. In this handbook, we go over what to expect in various kinds of meetings. Section 4 is about regular meetings; other kinds of meetings are taken up in Section 5.

4.1. Routine monthly business

4.1.1. Agenda review and go-live

The week before the regular monthly Board meeting, Board leadership meets with the Superintendent and Treasurer (and members of the cabinet if appropriate) for “agenda review”: previewing and approving the agenda for the meeting. Many of the agenda items are the same every month; others happen on a regular semiannual or annual basis. Some of these items are described in the sections below; a full listing of these predictable agenda items can be found in the “Agenda template spreadsheet,” which can be found in the Reference Library folder in the Google Drive. This template will form the basis of the current month’s agenda, with other agenda items added as needed. At this point, the meeting agenda is only in draft form, and not available to the public. However, all Board members can view it by logging into BoardDocs, and selecting “Draft” agendas instead of “Active” agendas.

Two business days before the meeting, the agenda is published, and now appears in the “Active” agendas. For us, this happens on Friday, since we hold our meetings on Tuesdays. Between now and the meeting is when the rest of the Board should ask the superintendent and/or treasurer whatever questions they need to ask about agenda items in order to have an informed discussion and/or vote. This is also when members of the public might start reaching out to you to ask about certain items, offer suggestions, make requests, etc.

If you are on a committee that met during the preceding month, ideally you will submit the minutes before the agenda goes live, but speaking from experience, that’s not always possible. In that case, it’s best if you can send them to the treasurer to attach to the agenda on Monday, so that at least in theory, other Board members have a chance to read them before the meeting.

4.1.2. Approval of minutes, approval of agenda

After the roll call, Pledge of Allegiance, and Vow of Democracy, these are the first items that require a vote. If you have noticed inaccuracies or incomplete areas in the minutes, hopefully you have already notified the Treasurer or Superintendent of them, but if not, or if they haven't been fixed yet, now is the time to speak up.

As for the agenda, many of the routine items are voted on in a "consent agenda"; for example, voting to accept all the Superintendent's recommended hires, resignations, and other personnel items in a single vote yea or nay. However, if you know or suspect you will not be voting the same way on all of the items, this is when you should ask to have a separate vote for certain items. (If you forget, you can always ask when the meeting arrives at that item, but if you can do it here, things run smoother.) You don't have to explain why; just asking will be enough. A typical reason for wanting a separate vote on a particular item is a potential conflict of interest: Having a separate vote allows you to abstain on that one item while voting on the others.

This is also where the Board president or any other Board member can move to rearrange the agenda. For example, if you've got a full house because a lot of community members have asked to address the Board, you might move to put "Visitors" earlier in the agenda, so the visitors don't have to wait through a lot of other items before they can have their turn to speak. For this, someone needs to second the motion and then the Board needs to vote to approve it.

4.1.3. Communications

Communications are items that don't require a vote, but are just informational updates about various District-related items. Building spotlights live in this area, as do periodic updates about items such as District security, the state report card, or reports on student discipline or health. These items are often accompanied by slide decks, which you may or may not to decide to preview, depending on your opinion of spoilers.

4.1.4. Items from the Board

This is where Board members may (if they wish) talk about whatever is on their mind (though out of respect for other Board members and the public, it should be relevant to the District). Typical items include congratulations to students for various academic or athletic achievements; thanks to the City for the use of their meeting space; mentions of recent or upcoming events in the District, in individual buildings, or in the City, that Board members have attended or will attend; various issues that a Board member might have been asked about or seen discussed on social media. Every now and then, items from the Board could result in action: If there's something you think the Board should do, you can make a motion for it during your time here, and if you do, then it's treated like any other motion on the floor. Even so, as a courtesy to other Board members and the Superintendent and Treasurer, it's good to aim for "no surprises": If you know in advance that you plan to propose something, it's good form to let the Superintendent and Board president know.

4.1.5. Committee reports

The essentials

Committees that have met since the last Board meeting report their minutes here. Having them done in advance reduces the need for discussion time. If the items in a committee report also appear elsewhere in the agenda, the main discussion will take place at that place in the agenda rather than here.

Remember where we said you should submit any committee meeting minutes the week before the monthly Board meeting? Here's why: If you haven't done it in advance, then you end up delivering the committee report live, which takes longer, and doesn't allow other Board members time to think about what you're saying. If other Board members have had a chance to read your minutes, then this part of the meeting can simply consist of the Board president asking if any Board members have questions or comments on the committee meeting minutes. If the items in a committee report also appear elsewhere in the agenda (such as Finances, Curriculum, or Policy), the reporting committee member may mention that the main discussion will take place at that place in the agenda. Now sometimes there may be parts of a committee report that you **want** to spend time discussing; this system allows you more time to focus on those items, and now other Board members are in a better position to take in what you're saying.

4.1.6. Items from superintendent

This is similar to Items from the Board, except that it's from the Superintendent. And the Superintendent cannot make motions.

4.1.7. Recognition of visitors

The essentials

This is an opportunity for members of the public to share their views with the Board directly; it is not the place for a discussion with Board members. Visitors who want to address the Board should make their request no later than one business day before the meeting. They should address the Board as a whole, rather than any individual member, and limit their comments to 3 minutes. The Board President will acknowledge the message and (if appropriate) direct the Superintendent or Treasurer to follow up.

This is an opportunity for members of the public to share their views with the Board directly; however, it is not the appropriate venue for a discussion with Board members. The policy (specifically, Policy 0169.1) is that they need to make their request "no later than one (1) business day before the meeting." The rationale is that if it's an issue that needs fixing, it should

go through the right channels first: the teacher, then principal, the superintendent. That takes at least a few days, so if an issue has just come up, it shouldn't be coming to the Board yet. But to allow for situations that for whatever reason don't fit into this pattern, visitors can still make their request at any time prior the beginning of the meeting, and then the Board will need to vote on whether to recognize the visitor.

Although visitors typically end their address by expressing willingness to answer questions, the practice that this Board has adopted (in consultation with OSBA) is for the Board president to respond in one or both of two ways: thanking the visitor for sharing their thoughts; and asking the Superintendent to follow up with the visitor later. Although Board policy does not forbid asking a genuine, informational question, it is almost never a good idea to do so: It is all too easy for a question to elicit a response that turns into a question of the Board, and before you know it, we're having a debate that could derail the rest of the agenda. Furthermore, it sets an expectation that a Board meeting is a place for this kind of interactive discussion, and when the Board refuses to discuss other items in the same way, it opens us up to charges of favoritism and free-speech violations. If you want to have follow-up discussions with the visitor, reach out to them afterward using the contact information they have provided.

4.1.8. Financial

You can think of this as "Items from the Treasurer." Typical items are monthly bank statements, fund balances, transfers of money between funds. Twice a year there are updates to the five-year forecast. There is also a yearly cycle of various tax-related items, which you can read more about on our website**.** Some items in this part of the agenda will have first been discussed by the **Finance Committee**, as mentioned in Communication with the Treasurer.

4.1.9. Curriculum and programs

When new curricular materials are being adopted, they will show up in this part of the agenda, typically after having been discussed first by the **Outcomes Committee.**

4.1.10. Policies

New policies and policy updates recommended for adoption by the **Policy Committee** live in this part of the agenda (as outlined in Setting policy). Typically, they are up for discussion one month, and then are voted on in the next meeting. Again, if the committee meeting minutes have been submitted well in advance of the meeting, the discussion can consist of the Board president asking if any Board members have questions about any of the policy updates. Sometimes they will; if not, then the Board president reminds the Board that the policies will be up for adoption next month, and if anyone has any questions after reading the committee meeting minutes, they should reach out to committee members.

4.1.11. Student services

Here, the Board approves contracts to provide services for students with special needs that the District is not equipped to handle. They are typically not cheap, but as a public school district

committed to providing every student with a free and appropriate public education (or “FAPE,” as it’s called), it is our job to provide these services ourselves, or ensure that they are provided by someone else. It’s one of the things that separates us from private schools, which are free to deny admission to students who “aren’t a good fit,” or who “have needs that we cannot meet.” One of the Superintendent’s ongoing endeavors is to develop our own talent pool among our staff to be able to bring more of these services in-house.

4.1.12. Business and operations

Here, the Board votes on various items of business, including:

- contracts that exceed $50,000
- obsolete or otherwise unusable items to be sold as surplus

4.2. Once- or twice-a-year business

4.2.1. Five-year forecast and other financial matters

Various tax- and budget-related items take place at approximately the same time every year. The most prominent of them are the five-year forecasts, which generally happen in October and May. In the October forecast, the numbers for the current school year are estimates, since we have half the year to go. In the May forecast, the numbers for the current school year are much more certain, as only a few weeks remain in the year. However, even then, things might not always be as simple as they seem, because of peculiarities in the law regarding how things are labeled, and the unique circumstances of any given year. The Treasurer goes over all of this in a presentation, which the Finance Committee will have discussed in an earlier meeting, and which Board members not on the Finance Committee will have previewed in individual meetings with the Treasurer during the previous week.

Other tax-related items are easier to miss among the routine monthly items, but are comparably important, so here are all the regularly occurring budget-related items in a typical year:

- **August:** Approve final appropriations for **current fiscal year (CFY).**
  Temporary appropriations were approved in June; now, with the school year underway and more accurate enrollment data available, we finalize those appropriations as we approach the end of the first quarter. (Until 2024, the deadline was in September; it is now a month earlier.)

- **October (specifically, by October 15):** 5-year forecast for **CFY.**
  This is a mid-year report on how we’re doing in terms of our budget. (Until 2024, the deadline was in November; it is now a month earlier.)

- **February:** Resolution accepting the amended (i.e. actual) tax amounts and rates as determined by the Franklin County Budget Commission for **CFY**.
  This item may not be necessary if the estimates from the previous March proved to be accurate.

- **March:** Resolution accepting the estimated tax amounts and rates as determined by the Franklin County Budget Commission for **next fiscal year**.
  The Budget Commission looks at our collection of various levies that remain in effect, and tells us now much money it will likely bring in for the new fiscal year beginning in July.

- **May:** 5-year forecast update for **CFY.**
  As we close in on the end of the fiscal year, the 5-year forecast is updated with more accurate numbers.

- **June:** Approve temporary appropriations for **next fiscal year**.
  With the estimated tax rates for the next fiscal year approved in March, the Board can tentatively decide where to allocate its funds in the next fiscal year.

4.2.2. Security presentation (executive session)

Once a year, usually in the fall, the Board receives a briefing on the District's security protocols. This is one of the several items of business that can and should be done in executive session. However, during the Communications portion of the agenda, the director of safety and security will also give a presentation on those parts of the security protocols that can be shared with the public.

4.2.3. Superintendent and treasurer evaluations

Read more about these in Evaluation of the Superintendent and Evaluation of the Treasurer.

4.2.4. Athletic recognitions

Usually, there will be one meeting in the fall and one meeting in the spring when fall or spring athletes are recognized for their achievements. Expect larger crowds on those nights, which will mostly disappear after the presentations of certificates and the photo ops.

4.3. Executive sessions

The essentials

Although Board meetings are open to the public, there are few types of business that can be discussed in a private setting, or executive session. Some such items are litigation; the buying of real estate; disciplinary business that has been appealed to the Board; and hiring and evaluating an employee. No votes can be taken in an executive session: The Board must reconvene in open session before any vote can take place. Discussion must be limited to the specified purpose(s) for that particular executive session. Discussions during executive sessions should not be shared outside executive session.

Although Board meetings are open to the public, there are few types of business that can be discussed in a private setting, or executive session. Some such items are litigation; the buying of real estate; disciplinary business that has been appealed to the Board; and hiring and evaluating an employee. That last item includes setting Superintendent or Treasurer goals (see also Evaluation of the Superintendent, Evaluation of the Treasurer, and receiving information about a tentative agreement regarding a collective bargaining agreement (see also Approving negotiated agreements).

No votes can be taken in an executive session: The Board must reconvene in open session before any vote can take place. At times, it may seem to you that you can predict other Board members' votes based on the questions they ask or opinions they express in executive session, and maybe you can. That's fine, but you're still not allowed to vote in executive session, and that includes non-binding "straw votes."

Discussion must be limited to the specified purpose(s) for that particular executive session. For example, if you're in executive session to talk about some litigation, you're not allowed to talk about the Superintendent's evaluation after you've finished discussing the litigation, even though both types of business are legitimate items for executive session.

Discussions during executive sessions should not be shared outside executive session. The full Board policy on executive sessions can be found in Policy 0167.2.

5. Other meetings

Board meetings are covered in Policy 0165 in a very general way. In this handbook, we go over what to expect in various kinds of meetings. Section 4 was about regular meetings; in this section, we turn to other kinds of meetings.

In addition to the regular monthly Board meetings, there are meetings that happen at other times. These are commonly lumped together under the term "special meetings," though there is some ambiguity over this term, which we'll get into in Section 5.3.

5.1. Organizational meeting

The essentials

Prior to the first regular Board meeting of the year, an organizational Board meeting is held. Following the requirements in ORC 3313.14, this meeting usually ends up taking place on the first Tuesday in January. The organizational meeting is where a lot of routine items are taken care of to allow the rest of the meetings during the year to proceed smoothly–and legally.

Every January, prior to the first regular Board meeting of the year, an organizational Board meeting is held. Following the requirements in ORC 3313.14 and Policy 0151, this meeting usually ends up taking place on the first Tuesday in January. Usually it is held in the Central Office Board Room. (You will be notified if that is not the case.) The organizational meeting is where a lot of routine items are taken care of to allow the rest of the meetings during the year to proceed smoothly — and legally. Some highlights of the agenda:

- Swearing-in of new Board members
  Oath of Office
  I, _____ solemnly affirm that I will support the Constitution of the State of Ohio; and that I will faithfully and impartially discharge my duties as a member of the Board of Education of the Reynoldsburg City School District, to the best of my ability, and in accordance with the laws now in effect and hereafter to be enacted, during my continuance in office, and until my successor is elected and qualified.
- Election of a Board President and Vice President
- Establishing a schedule for regular Board meetings
  For the last several years, meetings have been scheduled for the third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 PM, but this can be changed depending on the needs of the existing Board.
- Committee assignments
  A standard resolution is to task the Board President with assigning Board members to committees. The organizational meeting is a good time to discuss the role of these committees. The President will typically request Board members to email their committee preferences in order for them to make the assignments prior to the next meeting.
- Resolutions allowing the Superintendent to perform their routine duties
  These allow the Superintendent to do things such as hiring staff without having to wait until the next Board meeting to do so. (All hires are eventually voted upon by the Board.)
- Resolutions allowing the Treasurer to perform their regular duties
- Adopting Robert's Rules of Order for conducting meetings
  If you've attended Board meetings for a while, you'll know that not every Board member (even the one writing these words!) knows Robert's Rules by heart! The important thing is that we accept them as a norm and try to follow them, in order to ensure that every Board member is able to speak while still being able to carry out the Board's business efficiently.
- Approving a handful of legal firms for District affairs
  Education law is so complicated that not just any law firm can do it well. The District works primarily with one legal firm, but has others in its approved list for certain areas of specialty (such as property law), or for occasions when someone in litigation with the District is already represented by our primary legal firm.

The organizational meeting is also when pictures of each Board member and the Board as a whole are taken, to be posted on the District web site and shared on social media. You will be notified of the photo schedule prior to the meetings.

5.2. Special meetings

The essentials

Occasionally, the Board will meet in order to have a more intensive and less time-bound discussion of a topic than is feasible at the regular monthly meeting. Depending on the topics to be addressed, these meetings may be called work sessions or retreats. They are scheduled based on the times when all Board members are available to attend; like other Board meetings, they are open to the public.

Occasionally, the Board will meet in order to have a more intensive and less time-bound discussion of a topic than is feasible at the regular monthly meeting. These meetings are known as “special meetings,” and like regular Board meetings, they are open to the public. Here’s what the Ohio Revised Code says about these meetings (ORC 3313.16):

> A special meeting of a board of education may be called by the president or treasurer thereof or by any two members, by serving a written notice of the time and place of such meeting upon each member of the board at least two days prior to the date of such meeting. Such notice must be signed by the official or members calling the meeting.

A couple of notes. First, a special meeting can be called by any two members of the Board. So if there’s an issue that seems urgent to you, but maybe not to the Board President, if you can convince at least one other Board member of its urgency, you can call a meeting.

Second, the ORC refers to “the treasurer thereof”, i.e. the treasurer of the board of education. This language seems to harken to a time when a school district’s treasurer was a member of its school board, rather than someone hired by it. (For example, the Reynoldsburg School District treasurer was a member of its board until as late as the early 1960s.) So in practice in RCSD, special meetings are called by the Board President or two Board members, not the District Treasurer.

The ORC language above doesn’t talk about agendas for special meetings, but Board Policy does. Per Policy 0165: Meetings, the agenda for these meetings can be published as late as 24 hours before the meeting, rather than two (business) days. But counterbalancing this flexibility is a stricter adherence to the agenda at the meeting itself: “At the special meeting, the Board may only discuss those issues set forth on the agenda, whether in open session or executive session.”

5.2.1. Work sessions and retreats

Sometimes special meetings go by other names. For example, if the Board is considering whether to ask for a tax levy, we might schedule a “work session” to do so. These are scheduled based on the times when all Board members are available to attend. OSBA also recommends

that at least once a year, Board members do a self-assessment. Special meetings held for this purpose are usually facilitated by someone from OSBA.

Sometimes, such meetings have a wider focus, taking a big-picture look at the District and the direction it is headed. For that reason, these meetings include cabinet members in addition to the Board, Superintendent, and Treasurer. These "retreats" help Board members to come to a common understanding of where the District is going, and allow the administration to take into account the will of the Board as it implements plans. Board retreats are typically for a half-day or longer, and therefore might be held on a weekend, and possibly at a location other than the Board central office (such as at the OSBA facility in Delaware, or the Educational Service Center near the airport). But even if they're held at a different location and/or on a weekend, Board retreats follow the same policy as all special meetings.

5.2.2. Emergency meetings

Sometimes, an urgent issue will come up that requires Board action before the next scheduled meeting. When that happens, the Board might have an "emergency" meeting. Like other special meetings and Board meetings in general, emergency meetings are open to the public; however, notification requirements are less strict. Per Policy 0165: Board Meetings and Policy 0164: Notice of Meetings, Board members and news media that have requested notification must be notified immediately of the time, place, and purpose of the emergency meeting. As with other special meetings, the agenda for an emergency meeting can be published as late as 24 hours before the meeting, but nothing can be added to it at the meeting.

6. Committees

The essentials

Each Board member is assigned to be on a few Board committees. Like full Board meetings, committee meetings are open to the public, and minutes must be kept. Schedules typically depend on committee members' personal schedules. Committees get the first look at some items that will eventually be discussed and possibly voted on by the Board. Committee reports are a regular item on the monthly Board meeting agendas. Board members may also be appointed to fill roles that connect to the larger community. All committee and other role assignments for the current school year are listed in the "School Board" section on the District webpage.

6.1. Board committees

Board committees are those created and (re-)approved by the Board, which happens annually at the Organizational meeting. For that reason, terms coincide with calendar years, rather than the school year. Committee assignments for the current school year are listed in the School

Board section on the District webpage. Official Board policy on committees in general can be found in Policy 0155.

6.1.1. Finance/Audit

This committee generally meets at least once every couple of months. They are the first to see the updated five-year forecasts before the Treasurer shares them with the rest of the Board.

Members of the Finance/Audit Committee for the 2025 calendar year are **Angela Abram** and **Mandy Young**.

6.1.2. Policy

The Policy Committee's duties are explained in Setting policy.

Members of the Policy Committee for the 2025 calendar year are **Angela Abram** and **Neal Whitman**.

6.1.3. Buildings and Grounds

The Buildings & Grounds Committee meeting is where members of the Board receive updates from the Executive Director of Business and Operations on items of maintenance, repair, or replacement that carry a large enough price tag that they will require Board action in a regular meeting. The minutes of these meetings should give other Board members a heads-up about these items prior to that meeting. Many of these items may also come up in weekly Board packets.

Members of the Buildings and Grounds Committee for the 2025 calendar year are **Angela Abram** and **Neal Whitman**.

6.1.4. Calendar

The Calendar Committee sets the calendar for the school year, including first and last days of school, holidays, and in-service or professional development days. Meetings involve the Superintendent as well as representatives from the Reynoldsburg Education Association. The committee tries to set calendar dates at least two years out. Their calendar recommendations are voted on by the Board at the regular monthly meeting.

Members of the Calendar Committee for the 2025 calendar year are **Kendra McKay** and **Mandy Young**.

6.1.5. Outcomes Coordination (aka "Outcomes")

When there are significant changes to District-level curriculum, grade alignment, or other things that directly affect student instruction, the Outcomes Coordination Committee hears about it first. The presentation heard in the committee meeting is shared with the Board as a whole at the next monthly meeting, possibly with revisions based on input from the committee.

Members of the Outcomes Coordination Committee for the 2025 calendar year are **Kendra McKay** and **Neal Whitman**.

6.1.6. Interscholastic Athletic Board of Control (aka “Athletics”)

This committee does a lot of little things, such as looking at coach-to-student ratios, considering grade and eligibility requirements, or making dealing with budget cuts as they affect athletics. It’s a bit different every month. Sometimes, a new policy or policy update is more appropriately considered by the Athletics Committee first rather than the Policy Committee; when that happens, the Athletics Committee’s recommendations will make their way onto the agenda for discussion and approval by the entire Board, just as if they had come from the Policy Committee. The committee meets about once a quarter, and more often as needed.

Members of the Athletics Committee for the 2025 calendar year are **Jeni Quesenberry** and **Kendra McKay**.

6.1.7. Safety

The Safety Committee reviews the District’s safety policies and procedures. The committee meets about once a quarter, and more often as needed.

Members of the Safety Committee for the 2025 calendar year are **Jeni Quesenberry** and **Mandy Young**.

6.2. Other roles

Board members may also be appointed to fill roles that connect to the larger community. All committee and other role assignments for the current school year are listed in the “School Board” section on the District webpage.

6.2.1. Board designee for expulsion appeals

One Board member is designated to hear students’ disciplinary appeals that come to the Board, and make a decision on behalf of the Board. Until a few years ago, such appeals were heard by the entire Board in executive session, but we moved to this system to allow for more timely hearing of the appeals. When the entire Board was involved, a student’s family might have to wait almost a month for the next Board meeting, by which time any suspension would probably already have been served, and the only remedy on the table would be to expunge the event from the student’s record.

The Board designee for expulsion appeals for the 2025 calendar year is **Jeni Quesenberry**.

6.2.2. Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Rec representative coordinates activities in which the District cooperates with the City’s Parks and Recreation Department. They sometimes provide input when the City is considering installing or replacing playground equipment at City parks. They pass information to

the Board about City events such as Christmas on the Towne or the community Halloween party.

The Board-designated Parks and Recreation liaison for the 2025 calendar year is **Kendra McKay**.

6.2.3. Legislative liaison

The legislative liaison makes a point of keeping up with bills working their way at the Statehouse, and developing (or trying to develop) relationships with legislators who represent the District. Most of the keeping up part can be done by reading the weekly OSBA legislative updates and trying to act on their occasional calls for action. The part about developing relationships could mean regularly calling legislators about public education-related legislation or concerns, or inviting them to visit the District for various events. **These are things that any Board member can do**, but having someone designated with that role lessens the likelihood that with distributed responsibility, it ends up not getting done at all. One event of particular interest for the legislative liaison is attending OSBA's annual legislative symposium, held at Capitol Square in March. There are legislative updates, and a lunch to which state legislators are invited (and which some of them attend), and a panel discussion with state legislators in the House or Senate Education Committees. When possible, the monthly report from the legislative liaison includes notes on actions taken; at the very least, it can include items copied and pasted from the most recent OSBA legislative update.

Some possibly useful resources for legislative liaisons and other Board members:

- ohiohouse.gov
- ohiosenate.gov
- The Complete Guide to Testifying in House or Senate Committee (courtesy of the Ohio State Bar Association–the OSBA that should not be confused with the Ohio School Boards Association!)
- Advice for writing letters to the editor ("LTEs"), including links to several newspaper websites (courtesy of Honest for Ohio Education)

Legislative liaisons for the 2025 calendar year are **Angela Abram** and **Neal Whitman**.

6.2.4. City liaison

The City liaison makes a point of attending Reynoldsburg City Council meetings and meeting regularly with the Mayor to promote a collaborative relationship and partnership.

City liaison for the 2025 calendar year is **Jeni Quesenberry**.

6.2.5. Eastland-Fairfield Career & Technical Schools Board of Education

Along with 15 other school districts, RCSD is a member of Eastland-Fairfield Career Center & Technical Schools. As a member district, our Board appoints one member of the EFCTS Board of Education.

The Board's designee for the Eastland-Fairfield board member for the three-year term ending December 31, 2025, is **Mandy Young**. Because EFCT terms are three years, and Board terms are four years, and the least common multiple 3 and 4 is 12, we can expect that an EFCT term will end at the same time as that person's Board term only once every 12 years–longer than most school board members serve. And that's assuming that their EFCT term began at the same time as one of their Board terms. The point is that it is the norm for an EFCT representative's Board term to end before their EFCT term is up. If a Board member wants to finish out their EFCT term after leaving the Board, it's not a problem, just as long as the Board as a whole votes to approve it.

6.2.6. Reynoldsburg Education Foundation liaison

The Reynoldsburg Education Foundation is a charitable organization co-founded by former Board member and Board President Debbie Dunlap (2016-2023) and former RCSD employee, parent, and tireless booster Margaret Mary Luzny. The REF raises funds to provide small grants to RCSD teachers, and provide scholarships for students in financial need to attend the annual 8th grade trip to Washington DC.

The Board-designated REF liaison for the 2025 calendar year is **Kendra McKay**.

7. Ethics and expectations

7.1. During meetings: Voting

The essentials

When the Board has an action item on the agenda, the procedure is for a member to move to approve the item; for another member to second the motion; for the Board to discuss the item; and for the Board to vote. The discussion is your chance to tell the public why you're voting as you are. You might recap the important points from your discussions with the Superintendent or Treasurer, or re-ask a few some key questions during the discussion.

When the discussion is over, vote! Don't abstain from a tough decision; abstentions are for conflicts of interest. Once the vote is taken, the Board (including you) has spoken, and it is now time to support the decision of the Board as a whole.

When the Board has an action item on the agenda, the procedure (per Roberts' Rules) is for a member to move to approve the item; for another member to second the motion; for the Board to discuss the item; and for the Board to vote.

If things are running well, most or all of the votes will result in approval. Why? During discussions with individual Board members prior to the meeting, it may become clear to the

Superintendent that a consensus does not exist, and they may decide not to recommend a certain item, or to do further research or preparation to try to carry out the Board's will. As a result, if an item makes it to the agenda at all, it likely already is favored by most of the Board members. However, members of the public who are less familiar with how the Board operates may (and sometimes do) take the prevalence of often-unanimous approvals to mean that the Board is simply a rubber stamp for whatever the Superintendent wants to do.

That is why the discussion phase is particularly important. For many run-of-the-mill items (e.g., approval of the agenda, monthly financial statements, the dozens of personnel items), the only discussion needed is probably the Superintendent's or Treasurer's comments on the items, which will be much the same in every month, for newer observers. However, for non-routine or controversial items, the discussion is your chance to say what you want to say about it. If you plan to vote for it, tell your reason(s) for doing so. If you plan to vote no, tell your reason(s) for doing so. It is important for the public to know why you're voting as you are. If you have discussed the item with the Superintendent or Treasurer (and hopefully you have), feel free to recap the important points from your discussion that have shaped your decision. Alternatively, you may re-ask the Superintendent or Treasurer some key questions during the discussion, so that they can tell the public what they told you. You can even straight-up announce how you intend to vote, if you wish. Don't worry about influencing others' votes: The discussion is the place where you can and should try to do that. It may be that you've asked a question that hasn't occurred to other Board members, and they may need to hear about it before they make their final decision.

Sometimes, an item that you intend to vote against is bundled with several other items in a "consent agenda" (a collection of several related items that are mass-approved or rejected in one voting action). When that happens, by all means request to vote on that item separately; there's no need for a motion or a second. But if you've raised the profile of this one item in this way, other Board members can reasonably conclude that you intend to vote no — or at the very least, that you have some unaddressed concerns about it. In that case, they (and probably meeting attendees) will be especially curious to hear those concerns, so definitely raise those concerns before the vote is taken.

When the discussion is over and the vote is taken, vote! If you find that the issue is more complicated than you realized (even with your preparation), don't abstain! Abstentions are for when there is a conflict of interest (or possible or perceived conflict of interest). You're here to make the hard choices. Instead, you might move to postpone the item until the next meeting, or until your question or concern is resolved.

Once the vote is taken, the Board (including you) has spoken. If the vote doesn't go your way, and people want to ask you about it later, just say that the Board voted to approve (or disapprove) the item. If they want to push the issue and ask more about your objections, you can refer them to the minutes (once they're published) or to the livestream to hear or read your comments prior to the vote.

7.2. Outside of meetings, including texts

The essentials

All Board decisions are to be made in meetings open to the public. A meeting is "any prearranged discussion of the public business of the public body by a majority of its members". This includes sequential meetings that collectively meet those criteria. It can even include communications by text messaging. If you use social media, keep a separate profile for yourself as a Board member; do not participate in comment threads other than on your own profile, where they are easier to keep track of.

All Board decisions are to be made in meetings open to the public. Furthermore, just because you don't call something a meeting doesn't mean it's not a meeting. So as noted above, "retreats" and "work sessions" are Board meetings, and must be open to the public. In fact, the definition of "meeting" is even broader: "any prearranged discussion of the public business of the public body by a majority of its members" (ORC 121.22, Policy 0169.2 Open Meeting / Sunshine Law). In the case of the Reynoldsburg City School Board of Education, a majority is also a quorum (3 out of 5). This definition also includes sequential meetings that collectively meet those criteria, and even communications by text messaging.

So let's consider a few "what-ifs":

- What if I see two other Board members at a Friday football game (home or away), and we talk?
  Answer: You've got a quorum, but probably the meeting wasn't planned: You and they (probably?) didn't know who all would be at the game. Even so, it's best to stay away from Board business, especially anything that might eventually require a vote.

- What if Board member A talks to Board member B on the phone about something they're going to vote on?
  Answer: They're talking about Board business, but it's not a quorum, and they may or may not have planned the phone call. But now that A has talked to B about this issue, neither of them should discuss it with other Board members, because that makes a quorum. Now if you're thinking, "That's only a problem if they **pre-arrange** conversations with other Board members," this is dangerous territory. If A serendipitously "happens" to see Board member C at Civic Park, and just "happens" to see Board member D at STEM night at Rose Hill Elementary, and talks about this issue to all of them, it starts to look suspicious.

- What if all Board members are on a text thread talking about ideas for the float in the Homecoming Parade?
  Answer: Well, although creating a float is not serious District business, and therefore not something you would want to take up valuable meeting time with, be aware that you're treading on thin ice. Be very careful not to stray into District business that **is** in the

Board's purview? If the Board takes a controversial vote, and a member of the public is convinced there were Open Meetings violations, you don't want to have to spend your time (and possibly billable-by-the-quarter-hour District counsel time) to show that the text thread about the Homecoming Parade did not turn into collusion involving the vote.

7.3. Relations with District staff

The essentials

Questions that Board members have for members of the cabinet or other District staff should go to the Superintendent. If you need to interact directly with a District employee other than the Superintendent, it should be with the knowledge and approval of the Superintendent. If a District employee reaches out to a Board member with a concern, the first question should be whether they raised the concern with their building principal. If it really is the case that no administrator is willing or able to take care of the problem, it needs to make its way to the Superintendent (and possibly the Board) as soon as possible. If they give up now, their courage will have been wasted, and nothing will change.

"Board-Staff Communications" is the title of Policy 0148.1, which states, "The Board of Education desires to maintain open channels of communication between itself and the staff. The basic line of communication, will, however, be through the Superintendent."

To quote from Communication with the Superintendent:

> [B]ecause only the Superintendent and Treasurer report to the Board, questions that Board members have for [District staff] should go to the Superintendent. …. If you need to interact directly with a District employee other than the Superintendent, it should be with the knowledge and approval of the Superintendent.

This cannot be stressed enough. It's not that Board members never talk to other staff about their concerns, but be aware that when there's a need to do so (or when people **believe** there's a need to do so), it's a sign that something is not working the way it should. It indicates a lack of trust, and probably communication problems somewhere in the system. Of course, staff who happen to live and vote in the District are your constituents just like all your other constituents, and they have as much right to talk to you as any constituent does. But ideally, if they're also a District employee, they should be able to get quicker and better resolutions to their problems by taking them through the recognized channels than by taking them to a Board member. And if talking to a Board member **does** get quicker results, that short-term benefit will likely be outweighed by the reinforcement of the staff member's distrust in the system, and damage to the trust between the Superintendent and the Board. As Policy 0148.1 puts it:

> [S]taff members should be encouraged to utilize the procedures, established in Board Policy or the collective bargaining agreement to have their concerns, complaints, or grievances addressed.

How that looks in practice: If a District employee reaches out to a Board member with a concern, the first question should be whether they raised the concern with their building principal, and what happened when they did. If they haven't done that yet, encourage them to do so. If they've taken their issue a couple of steps up the chain and it still hasn't been resolved, encourage them not to give up, because if it really is the case that no administrator is willing or able to take care of the problem, it needs to make its way to the Superintendent (and possibly the Board) as soon as possible. If they throw up their hands now, their courage will have been wasted, and nothing will change.

7.4. Communication with stakeholders, including social media

The essentials

If a community member comes to you with a concern, whether in person or by another medium, your first question should be whether the person has raised the concern with the District staff member closest to the problem with the power to solve it. Emails sent to the entire Board are fielded by the Board President, with CCs going to other Board members to ensure they know the question was addressed. If you choose to engage with social media, have a separate account for Board-related posts, and limit your posts and comments to this account to allow for easier compliance with public records laws.

If a community member comes to you with a concern, your first question should be whether the person has raised the concern with the District staff member closest to the problem with the power to solve it. If the person is a parent of a student, that would be the child's teacher, and if that did not resolve the issue, then the building principal. If the issue is a more general concern (for example, someone wants to report unsafe driving by a bus driver, or wants to know about the District's math curriculum), then the appropriate staff member might be the Transportation director, or the Assistant Superintendent of Leadership and Learning. If you don't know which person to refer them to, you can offer to find out and get back to them by email, or refer them to the District website, which has been newly redesigned.

The same guidelines apply if a community member reaches out via email, with one exception: If an email comes to the entire Board, it is the President's place to respond to it. (This is covered in Policy 0148 Public Expressions of Members: "The Board President functions as the official spokesperson for the Board.") When they do, they will CC the rest of the Board to ensure that all members know that the email has been responded to, and what the response was. However, if you have questions about the response, you should address them only to the Board President.

If the Board President's response is to forward the email to the Superintendent or Treasurer, then the Superintendent or Treasurer should let other Board members know that they have responded appropriately. This is a fine line to walk here, because as Board members, we do not want to get into day-to-day administration of the District, but on the other hand, we want to know that when a stakeholder reaches out, their concern is going to the right person and being addressed. When someone complains that they raised a concern with District administration and "nothing was done!", we want to be confident that something **was** done, even if we don't need to know the details. We don't want to have an uneasy feeling that the person could be right, because we know of another case here or there when something really did slip through the cracks.

What about social media? Well, first of all, you're under no obligation to even read things posted on social media, let alone respond to it. Some public officials live this way, and sometimes express that it's quite liberating. However, social media is a powerful communication tool, and many elected public servants find that its pros outweigh its cons. If you do use social media in your Board-related communications, there are too many legal nuances to get into here; you should take advantage of various educational and training resources available through OSBA to build your familiarity with the legal implications. One thing to keep in mind, however, is that unlike a position such as Mayor, or State Senator or State Representative, a school board member is part of a group that acts officially **only** as a group, so make it clear that any opinion you express on Board business that might be a votable issue is your opinion alone.

Even though this handbook doesn't address a lot of legal issues regarding social media, here are some tips from various Board members past and present on handling social media.

- Limit your comments on other people's threads to facts only, and maybe not even that, because comments get buried and hard to find, making it hard to comply with open records laws.
- If you do engage in a conversation, do it on your own social media site, where your written commentary will not get lost or buried.
- Don't get into a snarky back-and-forth with people online. You're not going to outsnark them; you're just going to look stupid, and make the rest of the Board look bad. And if by some chance you **are** able to burn a commenter into submission, you're going to look mean and petty, and make the rest of the Board look bad.
- If someone's comments or questions are reasonable on the surface but you're not sure if the're arguing in good faith, you should decide whether the facts you can provide will be beneficial enough to other readers of the conversation to make the engagement worthwhile.

7.5. District events

There is always something happening in the District and the community: art shows, musical and theatrical performances, athletic events, dances, read-aloud nights, and many others. You are welcome to attend as many or as few of the events as you wish. There are simply too many for any Board member to attend them all, but the master calendar on the District website makes it

easier for Board members to see what there is, and perhaps “spread out” to allow the Board to show support at a wider variety of events.

There are a few events, however, that you should make it a priority to attend. Although attendance is not required, it’s a bad look if you don’t show up. People may wonder, “If you don’t want to visibly support the District at this event, why did you even want to be a Board member?”

- **Reynoldsburg High School graduation:** You will be on stage, possibly participating in the graduation ceremony. You will be wearing a graduation gown and hood that signifies the college/university from which you graduated as well as your area of study. The Superintendent’s administrative assistant will help you with this prior to graduation day.
- **Parades and events:** The Board marches in the Homecoming Parade in the fall of each year, and often in the Fourth of July parade.

8. Miscellaneous

More information about the Reynoldsburg City School District, its Board, and its history are available in the “Reference library” folder in our Google Drive, including its ever-growing acronym glossary, a listing of previous Board members and terms, a history of bonds and levies passed and rejected from the mid-20th century through 2022; and other items. It depends on how deep you want to go.

Thank you for volunteering to serve the children in our District, and for doing “what you can, with what you have, where you are” to make our world a better place!