

# Development of Board Norms

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# Board Norms

An effective tool for Board governance is to set standards for how members will interact and work together.

Norms are descriptions of how board members treat each other and others.

Norms address the question:

Is our board behavior a model for our students?





# Norms Discussion

- What group behaviors will help the group to be successful?
  - All the Time
  - Before a Board Meeting
  - During Committee Meetings
  - During a Board Meeting
  - After a Board Meeting





## Examples - All the Time

- Serve as an advocates and champions of our students/staff and public education.
- Lead through sound policy, ensuring transparent, legal, and ethical operations.
- Focus on equitable high-quality learning opportunities for all students.
- Govern in an impartial professional manner, treating everyone with civility and respect.
- In partnership with the Superintendent, we will respect our individual skills, experiences, and perspectives and govern together as a team with a unified voice.
- Welcome input and consider all viewpoints with the expectation that students are at the center.
- Act as stewards of tax dollars and effectively manage district resources.



## Examples - Before a Board Meeting



Be prepared for Board by reading the agenda and background materials prior to the meetings.



Arrive and begin on time. Notify president of absence or late arrival as soon as possible.



Ask questions ahead of time to allow for research the requested information while being mindful to inform the public of our work.

# During Committee Meetings

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| Come   | Come prepared, having reviewed agenda and notified chair of any questions or concerns.                                  |
| Notify | If unable to attend, notify chair asap and call one of the alternates to attend if available.                           |
| Listen | Listen to and consider thoughtfully all administrative recommendations, while understanding our role as a board member. |
| Work   | Work toward consensus with your colleagues keeping all students as the focus for your recommendations.                  |



# Examples - During the Board Meeting



**LISTEN WITH AN OPEN MIND TO THE UNINTERRUPTED OPINIONS OF OTHERS WHO HAVE THE FLOOR.**



**DELIBERATE THE ISSUES AND ADDRESS PROCESS – NOT PERSONALITIES.**



**MAKE DECISIONS AND INTRODUCE/HOLD DISCUSSIONS BASED UPON EVIDENCE AND DATA.**



**ENSURE EVERYONE'S VOICE IS HEARD.**



**NO SURPRISES TO ONE ANOTHER OR THE ADMINISTRATION.**



**FOLLOW PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE GUIDELINES.**



**ARTICULATE CONTENT FOR PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING.**



**CELEBRATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF STUDENTS AND STAFF.**



## Examples - After a Board Meeting

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| Support | Support the outcomes determined by the Board majority in recognition that we deliberate in nine voices but govern in one and students are always at the center of our decisions.                         |
| Respect | Respect the time of our Board team and administration by setting clear expectations of Board member time commitments and not making individual requests for information or visits to the administration. |
| Take    | Take responsibility for the work of the team and follow through as agreed upon with a strategic focus to plan toward the future.   |
| Be      | Be dedicated to supporting and attending school functions.   |
| Strive  | Always strive to develop professionally as individual board members and as a Board.  |



# Board Norms

High-performing boards not only adopt norms but also keep them fresh and monitor them in practice. They become part of the culture, part of the “way we do things here.”

CULTURE  
“The way we do  
things around here!”

**How will we  
ensure these  
norms guide our  
work and do  
not sit on a shelf?**

# Upholding Your Norms...

- Are any of the norms you have developed ones that you can't live with, and abide by?
- How will we address norm violations?
- Do our norms reflect an understanding of our role as board members?
- Periodically revisiting your norms- annually at reorganization? At a retreat?

