



School Board Member Handbook



**Excellence, Equity, Empowerment.
Every Student, Every Day.**

**10 Civic Center Plaza, Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 387-1868
www.isd77.org**

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Navigating this Handbook	1
Handbook Maintenance and Review Procedure	1
District Information	2
Overview	2
Strategic Framework	3
Leadership Directory	4
District Facilities	5
Schedule a Facility Visit or Tour	6
School Year Board Member School Assignments	6
District Memberships/Partnerships	6
Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD)	6
Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA)	7
Educare Foundation	7
Becoming a Board Member	7
Running for School Board	7
Eligibility Requirements	7
Running for School Board	8
Term of Office	8
Filling Vacancies	8
Post-Election Procedures	8
Canvass and Declaration of Results	8
Certification of Results	8
Issuance of Certificate of Election	8
Campaign Financial Report Certification of Filing	8
Taking Office	8
Official Oath of Office	8
Ceremonial Oath of Office	9
Organizational Meeting	9
District Intake Paperwork	9
Board Membership	9
Board Organization	10
Board Offices	10
Role of the Chair	10
Role of the Vice-Chair	10
Role of the Clerk	10
Role of the Treasurer	11
Board Compensation	11
Expense Reimbursement	11
Learning the Job	11
Learning from Board Colleagues	11
Workshops and Retreats	12
Committee Participation	12
Informal Meetings	12
Mentorship	12
Ongoing Professional Development	12
Individual Board Membership	13
Duties as an Individual Board Member	13
Board Time Commitment	13
Conflict of Interest	13

Working as a Board Team	13
Duties of the Board	14
Board Governance Model	15
Standards for Board Leadership	16
Attributes of High-Performing Board Teams	16
Role of the Superintendent	16
Hiring a Superintendent	16
Duties of the Superintendent	17
Tenets of an Effective Board-Superintendent Relationship	17
Evaluating the Superintendent	17
Board Communication Guide	18
Communication Between Board Members	18
Building Collaborative Relationships	18
Addressing Team Dysfunction	18
Guidelines for Interacting Outside a Board Meeting	18
Communication with the Superintendent	19
Disagreements with the Superintendent	19
Communication with District Administrators and Staff	19
Discussing YOur Child with Staff	20
Communication with Constituents Including Staff, Students, Parents, and Community	20
Engaging with the Community	21
Communication with the Media	21
Communication on Social Media	22
Using a District Email	22
Communicating with Board Members Via Email	23
Board Meetings and Governance	23
Meetings of the Board	24
Types of Meetings	24
Open Meeting Law (OML)	25
Closed Meetings	25
Meetings Conducted by Interactive Technology	25
Meeting Operations	25
Attendance of Meetings	25
Presentations	25
Voting	26
Quorum of the Board	26
Parliamentary Procedure During Meetings	26
Presiding Officer	26
Superintendent’s Role in Board Meetings	26
Board Committees	26
Election of Board Officers	27
Guide to Board Meeting Roles and Responsibilities	27
Data Privacy	28
Public Comments to the Board	28
Agenda and Minutes	28
Agenda Procedures	28
Consent Agenda	29
Meeting Minutes	29
References for Further Information	29

Introduction

Navigating This Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to outline the board’s operating procedures and norms. It also includes important information on policies, meetings, committees, partnerships, and communication. Its ongoing guidance is meant to enable each board member to fulfill essential governance duties and to exercise their responsibilities as a board member, while also providing expectations and standards of behavior for the conduct of the board.

Handbook Maintenance and Review Procedure

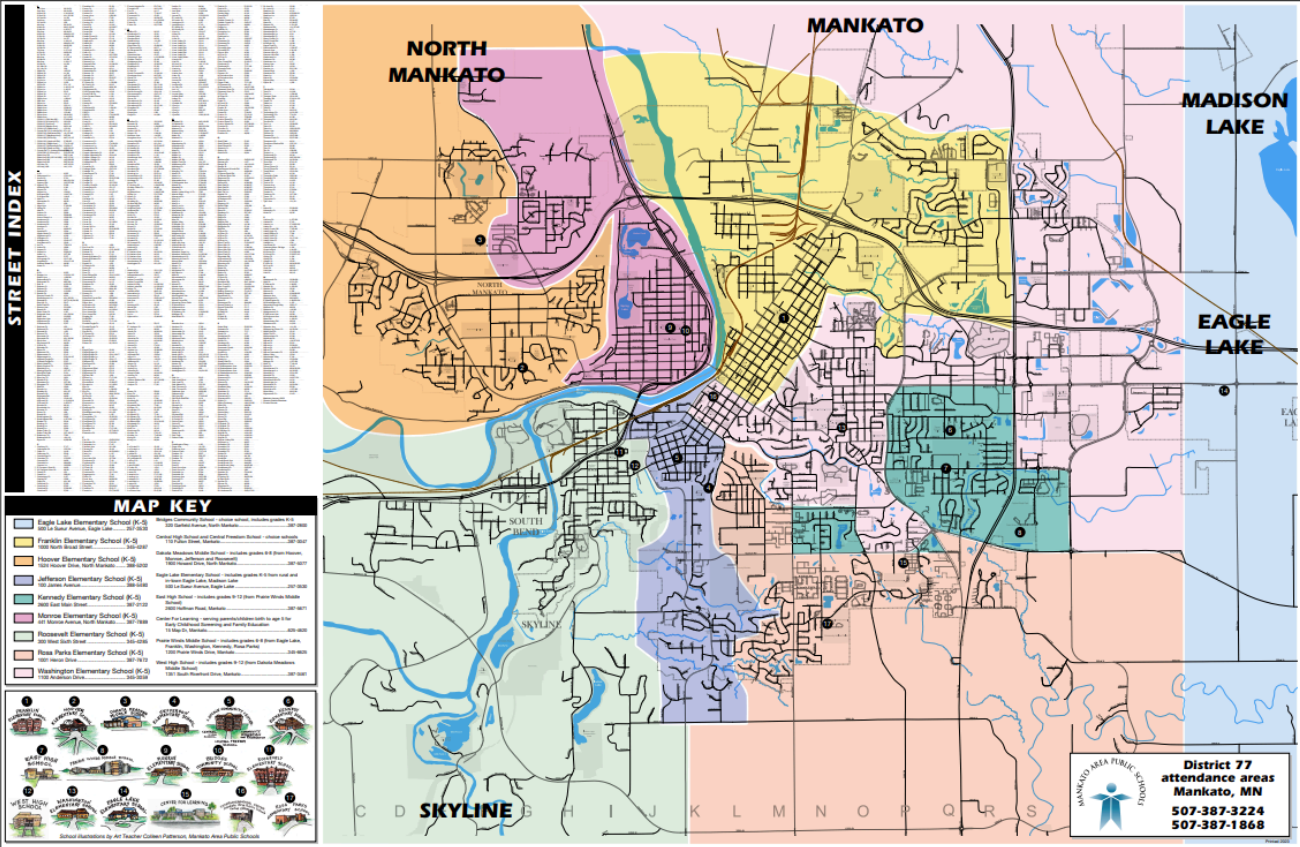
- Annually, the handbook will undergo a review and approval by the board.
- Board members may propose additions/revisions to the handbook at any time by sending an email to the chair and superintendent requesting to add “handbook discussion” as a topic for an upcoming work session.
- The handbook may be updated to reflect adopted policy changes without further board action;
- Hyperlinks within the handbook may be updated without further board action;
- The date this handbook was last approved is included on the cover page of this handbook.

District Information

Overview

Mankato Area Public Schools (MAPS) serves approximately 8,000 students in grades PreK-12 who come from over 140 square miles, encompassing three counties and five cities. Our students attend one of ten elementary schools (grades K-5), two middle schools (grades 6-8) and three high schools (grades 9-12). In addition, MAPS provides comprehensive early learning and adult education programs.

Excellence, Equity, Empowerment. Every Student, Every Day is the mission of our school district, and MAPS staff is proud to deliver future-focused education experiences for all students. Over 2,400 employees work together with our communities and families to provide a personalized education experience that meets the unique needs of each individual child. The Mankato Area Public School Board is composed of seven elected officials who represent, lead, and serve residents in Blue Earth, Nicollet and LeSueur counties, and the communities of Mankato, North Mankato, Eagle Lake, Madison Lake, and Skyline.



Strategic Framework



MANKATO AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS STRATEGIC ROADMAP

Mission Statement

our core purpose

Excellence, Equity, Empowerment. Every Student, Every Day.

Core Values



drivers of our words and actions

- **Courage:** We do and say what is needed to develop strength, resilience and character.
- **Student Centered:** Student success drives our decisions and actions, and we strive to provide each learner with what they need, when they need it.
- **Integrity:** We are honest, authentic and respectful in every interaction.
- **Accountable:** We know our desired outcomes, understand our individual responsibility for them, and collectively take accountability for results and continuous improvement.
- **Inclusive Practices:** We ensure ALL learners are welcomed and valued, have a sense of belonging and see themselves in their learning.

Vision



what we intend to create

MAPS inspires students to thrive through future focused learning experiences by:

- Pursuing their individual pathway
- Ensuring safe and secure schools
- Fostering inclusivity by understanding and appreciating diversity
- Engaging with families and caregivers
- Partnering with and contributing to our community

with high quality, dedicated and exceptionally trained staff.

Strategic Directions



focus of our improvement efforts

- A. Improving our professional practices so that each learner achieves at high levels in an inclusive educational model that is relevant and flexible
- B. Enhancing our student support structures to meet academic, social, behavioral, and mental health needs
- C. Recruiting, developing, and retaining staff to ensure positive learning experiences for students
- D. Strengthening our parent/caregiver partnerships and connections
- E. Ensuring safe, efficient and effective operations

Excellence, Equity, Empowerment. Every Student, Every Day.

#MAPSready

Leadership Directory

School Board Members

Shannon Sinning, Chair

Kari Pratt, Vice Chair

Erin Roberts, Clerk

Patrick Baker, Treasurer

Elizabeth Hanke

Christopher Kind

Liz Ratcliff

Superintendent's Office

Dr. Paul Peterson, Superintendent

Becky Bailey, Administrative Assistant

Travis Olson, Director of Teaching & Learning

John Lustig, Director of Administrative Services

Samantha Steinman, Director of Student Support Services

Amanda Heilman, Director of Business Services

Audra Nissen Boyer, Director of Community Education

District Facilities

District Office

10 Civic Center Plaza, Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 387-1868

Birth to age 5

Center for Learning
15 Map Drive, Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 387-4817

Elementary Schools

Eagle Lake Elementary School (K-5)
500 LeSueur Avenue, Eagle Lake MN 56024
(507) 207-3530

Franklin Elementary School (K-5)
1000 N. Broad Street, Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 345-4287

Hoover Elementary School (K-5)
1524 Hoover Drive, North Mankato, MN 56003
(507) 388-5202

Kennedy Elementary School (K-5)
2600 E. Main Street, Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 387-2122

Monroe Elementary School (K-5)
441 Monroe Avenue, North Mankato, MN 56003
(507) 387-7889

Roosevelt Elementary School (K-5)
300 W. Sixth Street, Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 345-4285

Washington Elementary School (K-5)
1100 Anderson Drive, Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 345-3059

Elementary Focus Schools

Bridges Community School (Global Studies) (K-5)
320 Garfield Avenue, North Mankato, MN 56003
(507) 387-2800

Jefferson Elementary School (Nature-Based) (K-5)
100 James Avenue, Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 388-5480

Rosa Parks Elementary School (STEAM) (K-5)
1001 Heron Drive, Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 387-7672

Community Education

Lincoln Community Center
110 Fulton Street, Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 387-5501

Middle Schools

Prairie Winds Middle School (6-8)
1200 Prairie Winds Drive, Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 345-6625

Dakota Meadows Middle School (6-8)
1900 Howard Dr., W, North Mankato, MN 56003
(507) 387-5077

High Schools

Mankato East High School (9-12)
2600 Hoffman Road, Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 387-5671

Mankato West High School (9-12)
1351 S. Riverfront Drive, Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 387-3461

Central High School (ALC) (9-12)
110 Fulton Street, Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 387-3047

Central Freedom School (9-12)
110 Fulton Street, Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 387-3047

Special Education Sites & Programs

Futures (K-12)
1610 Commerce Dr., North Mankato, MN 56003
(507) 387-1455

Future SUN Program (K-12)
2077 Lookout Dr., North Mankato, MN 56003
(507) 387-1455

INSITE (18-21)
50 Navaho Avenue, Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 387-1818

Schedule a Facility Visit or Tour

Board members have the same right as a parent or community member to visit the schools in the district, as long as you adhere to the procedures the district has for visitors. You may also visit the schools in an official capacity or to fulfill a specific duty required of you as a board member. In any event, be sure to communicate with the superintendent and building administrator to schedule your visit.

You should use school visits to build good working relations with building principals and staff, to celebrate the positive accomplishments of the schools, and to show your pride as a member of the board. Look for opportunities to visit when a school is hosting a special event or recognition program for students and staff. To ease in prioritization, at the start of each school year Board Members are assigned to a set of schools in which they serve as the Board’s liaison.

2025-2026 School Year Board Member School Assignments

Board Member	Schools
Shannon Sinning	East High School, Washington Elementary
Elizabeth Hanke	Eagle Lake Elementary, Jefferson Elementary, Prairie Winds Middle School
Erin Roberts	Central Freedom School, Central High School, Franklin Elementary, Futures, PEEK
Chris Kind	Bridges Community School, INSITE, Kennedy Elementary
Kari Pratt	Monroe Elementary, Dakota Meadows Middle School, MAPS Center for Learning
Liz Ratcliff	Roosevelt Elementary, SUN, West High School
Patrick Baker	Hoover Elementary, Rosa Parks Elementary, Adult Basic Education (ABE)

District Memberships / Partnerships

Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD)

Mankato Area Public Schools, along with 40 other K-12 school districts, is a member of the AMSD organization. The mission of AMSD is to advocate for metropolitan school districts and advance legislation that supports student achievement. AMSD is a strong voice for public education both at the Legislature and in the media, with a proactive agenda and a commitment to action. AMSD’s primary task is to lobby at the state level for the needs of metropolitan school districts. However, AMSD’s Board believes that its lobbying efforts are most effective when the organization plays a role in shaping the broader public debate on K-12 issues and advocates for policies that benefit the State as a whole.

Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA)

The Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) is a private, nonprofit organization that exists to support the work of the public school boards and public education. The MSBA is a leading advocate for public education, supports, promotes, and strengthens the work of public school boards through professional development opportunities, policy development and maintenance, legislative guidance and information, and legal advice. As mentioned in the school board training section of this handbook, the MSBA offers annually, a Leadership Conference in January and a Summer Seminar in August. However, the MSBA School Board Workshop Series (Phase I, II, III, and IV) is the most important set of workshops for school board members because it sets the foundation for their work. These sessions cover all aspects of school board service.

Educare Foundation

Educare is a non-profit, public entity which provides financial support to Mankato Area Public Schools, beyond the normal operating budgets, for programs and activities that enhance educational opportunities for all students. Through this funding, we enable teachers to explore new ways to expand a world of learning for their students. The Educare Foundation provides support through two types of grants:

Ed Waltman Mini Grants Program distributes up to \$24,000 annually, with a maximum of \$1,000 awarded per mini grant. Grant requests are accepted and reviewed every quarter by the Educare Grants Committee.

Initiative Grants are funded on an annual basis, with a due date typically late March, early February. The annual initiative Grants generally total around \$75,000 with 4-5 grants being awarded per year.

Becoming a Board Member

Mankato Area Public Schools is governed by seven school board members, elected at-large, representing all citizens within the MAPS boundaries. Board members are elected officials. Elections are held in November of even-numbered years. To avoid having all seven seats up for election simultaneously, the seats are balloted on alternating basis, with four spots being available one year, and the remaining three being available two years later.

Running for School Board

Eligibility Requirements

To run for a board seat, you must be (1) at least 21 years old, (2) an eligible voter, (3) a district resident for at least 30 days prior to election/appointment, and (4) not convicted of a felony. [Minn. Stat. 123B.09](#); [Minn. Stat. 204B.06, Subd. 1.](#)

Running for School Board

The Minnesota School Board Association maintains great resources for prospective school board candidates at: <https://mnmsba.org/membership/becoming-a-school-board-member/>

Term of Office

Board members are elected to four-year terms and take office on the first Monday in January. The term of a member who has been appointed to fill a vacancy will be for the remainder of the predecessor's term until the date of the district's next general election. There is no limit on the number of consecutive terms a board member can serve. [Minn. Stat. 123B.09.](#)

Filling Vacancies

A vacancy on the board can occur for a number of reasons including when a member dies, resigns, or ceases to be a resident of the district. All vacancies will be filled according to [Minn. Stat. 123B.09.](#)

Post-Election Procedures

Canvass and Declaration of Results

Between the third and tenth days after a district election, the board must canvass the returns and declare the results of the election. [Minn. Stat. 205A.10, Subd. 3.](#)

Certification of Results

The district clerk shall certify the results of the district election to the county auditor. [Minn. Stat. 205A.10, Subd. 3.](#)

Issuance of Certificate of Election

After canvassing the election and the time for contesting an election has passed (seven days after the canvassing board has declared the result of the election), the board shall issue a certificate of election to the candidate for each office who received the largest number of votes cast for the office. If there is a contest, the certificate of election to that office must not be issued until the outcome of the contest has been determined by the proper court. [Minn. Stat. 205A.10, Subd. 3;](#) [Minn. Stat. 204C.40, Subd. 2.](#)

Campaign Financial Report Certification of Filing

The Certification of Filing is due no later than seven days after the general election. [Minn. Stat. 211A.05.](#)

Taking Office

Board members take office the first Monday in January. [Minn. Stat. 123B.14, Subd. 1.](#)

Official Oath of Office

The official oath of office is administered once elections have been canvassed, the candidates have turned in their certificate of campaign filing report, and the seven-day contest period has ended. When the contest period ends, the school election officer should give each winning candidate the certificate of election. Each winning candidate then has thirty days to sign the official oath and acceptance of office

form in front of a notary. By signing this document, the individual officially becomes a board member on the first Monday in January. [Minn. Stat. 358.05](#).

Ceremonial Oath of Office

The ceremonial oath of office is usually administered at the organizational meeting on the first Monday in January (or as soon thereafter as practicable). While the official oath of office is required, the ceremonial oath of office is optional.

Organizational Meeting

On the first Monday in January (or as soon as practicable thereafter) each year, newly elected board members' terms of office begin, and boards must meet to organize for the year. [Minn. Stat. 123B.14, Subd. 1](#). During this meeting, ceremonial oaths of office may be administered, officers are elected, committee assignments are established, and meeting schedules are adopted. This process lays the groundwork for the board's operations, emphasizing collaboration and effective governance to serve the district and its stakeholders.

For more regarding organizational meetings see, [MSBA's First Monday in January Handbook](#).

District Intake

Upon certification of the election, Becky Bailey, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent and School Board, will contact newly elected Board members to facilitate completion of the District's intake process to make the transition as smooth as possible. This will include providing a copy of this board handbook, access to district electronic resources including email, obtaining your contact information, providing necessary paperwork, and arranging a meeting with the Superintendent. Further, new Board members participate in an orientation on the governance role of school boards. This is done in advance of training sessions facilitated by the Minnesota School Boards Association.

Board Membership

The effectiveness of your decisions as a board member hinges on your knowledge of the district's schools, staff, students, and the communities they inhabit. Recognizing the specific needs and aspirations of the Mankato Area Public Schools will empower you to advocate for policies and initiatives that truly enhance our educational outcomes. By engaging with this information, you will not only enhance your ability to make informed decisions but also build trust and credibility with fellow board members, the community, staff, and students alike. Let this knowledge serve as the foundation of your tenure, guiding your decisions and initiatives to foster an environment where every student can succeed.

When considering your governance role, embracing the procedural steps that underpin the integrity of the democratic process is paramount. From post-election procedures to the establishment of board offices, each action reflects your commitment to transparency and accountability. By being diligent in these duties, you acknowledge the trust placed in you by constituents. Prioritizing effective governance ensures you serve the community and prioritize the needs of students.

Board Organization

Board Offices

Officers of the board include chair, vice-chair, clerk, and treasurer. These positions are determined annually at the organizational meeting. All board members, regardless of office, maintain equal rights and equal voices. See the Election of Board Officers section on page 27 for information regarding nominating and voting procedures.

Role of the Chair

- The chair, when present, shall preside at all meetings of the board, countersign all orders upon the treasurer for claims allowed by the board, represent the district in all actions, and perform all duties a chair usually performs.
- In case of absence, inability, or refusal of the clerk to draw orders for the payment of money authorized by a vote of the majority of the board to be paid, the chair may draw the orders, or the office of the clerk may be declared vacant by the chair and treasurer and filled by appointment.
- Serve as a member of the executive committee.

Role of the Vice-Chair

- The vice-chair shall perform the duties of the chair in the event of the chair's temporary absence.
- Serve as a member of the executive committee.

Role of the Clerk

- The clerk shall keep a record of all meetings in the books provided.
- Within three days after an election, the clerk shall notify all persons elected of their election.
- On or before September 15 of each year, the clerk shall:
 - file with the board a report of the revenues, expenditures, and balances in each fund for the preceding fiscal year.
 - make and transmit to the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education (Commissioner) certified reports, showing:
 - revenues and expenditures in detail, and such other financial information required by law, rule, or as may be called for by the Commissioner;
 - length of school term and enrollment and attendance by grades; and
 - other items of information as called for by the Commissioner.
- The clerk shall enter into the clerk's record book copies of all reports, the teachers' term reports, the proceedings of any meeting, and keep an itemized account of all expenses of the district.
- The clerk shall furnish to the county auditor, on or before September 30 of each year, an attested copy of the clerk's record, showing the amount of proposed property tax levy voted by the district or the board for school purposes.

- The clerk shall draw and sign all orders upon the treasurer for the payment of money for bills allowed by the board for salaries of officers and for teachers' wages and all claims, to be countersigned by the chair.
- The clerk shall perform such duties as required by the Minnesota Election Law or other applicable laws relating to the conduct of elections.
- The clerk shall perform the duties of the chair in the event of the chair's and the vice-chair's temporary absences.
- By resolution, the board may combine the duties of clerk and treasurer in a single person in the Office of Business Affairs. Typically, that single person almost always delegates at least some duties to others.

Role of the Treasurer

- The treasurer shall deposit the funds of the district in the official depository.
- The treasurer shall make all reports which may be called for by the board and perform all duties a treasurer usually performs.
- In the event there are insufficient funds on hand to pay valid orders presented to the treasurer, the treasurer shall receive, endorse, and process the orders in accordance with [Minn. Stat. 123B.12](#).
- By resolution, the board may combine the duties of clerk and treasurer in a single person in the Office of Business Services. Typically, that single person almost always delegates at least some duties to others.

Associated Policy – [Policy 202 School Board Officers](#)

Board Compensation

Board members receive compensation as approved by the board in policy [218 School Board Member Compensation](#).

Expense Reimbursement

Per district policy 212, "The school board will reimburse the necessary expenses of all school board members who attend meetings and conventions pertaining to school activities and the objectives of the school board, within the approved policy and budget allocations of the school district relating to the reimbursement of expenses involving the attendance at workshops and conventions." Board members can contact Becky Bailey with questions or to request the necessary reimbursement forms. The associated policies below further articulate policies and procedures related to expense reimbursement.

Associated Policy – [212 School Board Member Development](#), [213 Out-of-State Travel by School Board Members](#), and [412 Expense Reimbursement](#).

Learning the Job

Learning from Board Colleagues

One of the most valuable resources at your disposal, outside of this handbook, is the wealth of experience and knowledge possessed by your fellow board members and district staff. Engaging with

them can significantly enhance your understanding of board operations, policies, and educational best practices. Your colleagues on the board bring diverse backgrounds and perspectives that can provide invaluable insights. Here are a few ways to leverage their experience:

Workshops and Retreats – Participate actively in board workshops and retreats. These sessions are designed not only to address key issues but also to foster team building and collective learning.

Committee Participation – Join board committees that align with your interests and expertise. Working closely with other members on specific topics will deepen your understanding and contribute to your professional growth.

Informal Meetings – Work with the superintendent to schedule informal meetings with key staff members to discuss specific areas of interest. These one-on-one interactions can offer a more personalized learning experience and help you build strong working relationships.

Mentorship

The district recognizes the importance of supporting new board members as they transition into their roles. To facilitate this, the district has implemented a mentorship program designed to provide guidance, support, and valuable insights. Each new board member will be paired with an experienced mentor who will help them navigate their responsibilities and become effective contributors to the board. This mentor will be a seasoned board member with a deep understanding of the district's operations, policies, and culture. The assignment will be made by the board chair in consultation with the superintendent to ensure a good match based on experience and areas of expertise.

To support you in this transition, you and your mentor will use the [MSBA New Board Member Orientation Year At-a-Glance](#) to guide you through your first year. This program aims to provide you with the knowledge, tools, and support necessary to become an effective and confident board member. Mentor and mentee should schedule a time before each school board meeting to check-in regarding the upcoming agenda, policies, and procedures.

Throughout the year, you will engage in various learning sessions, attend MSBA training events, and participate in board meetings and district activities. These experiences are designed to deepen your understanding of board operations, district policies, and educational goals. By the end of your first year, you will have a solid foundation to effectively contribute to the board's mission of providing quality education for all students. Mentors are encouraged to attend the workshops and trainings with the mentees to make the information more relevant and specific to the district.

Ongoing Professional Development

Continuous learning is crucial for effective governance. Board members are encouraged to participate in school board and related workshops and activities sponsored by local, state, and national school boards associations, as well as in the activities of other educational groups. Each board member shall receive training in school finance and management developed in consultation with the Minnesota School Boards Association. [Minn. Stat 123B.09, Subd. 2](#). Members are encouraged to attend the full series of MSBA's Learning to Lead Phase Workshops and other opportunities for professional development. Members can reach out to Becky Bailey to register them for events of interest.

Associated Policy - [Policy 212 School Board Member Development](#)

Individual Board Membership

Duties as an Individual Board Member

The position of board member carries with it a profound responsibility to uphold the highest ethical standards. A commitment to integrity, transparency, and accountability will not only enhance the effectiveness of educational policies but also strengthen the community's confidence in the board's decision-making. Remember that your actions and decisions will help shape the future of our students, schools, and community. The Code of Ethics in District Policy 209 will help guide you in navigating the complexities of governance with unwavering moral clarity and purposeful dedication.

Associated Policy – [209 Code of Ethics](#)

Board Time Commitment

The time required to complete your board responsibilities will most vary by time of year. It will depend on how many meetings are scheduled, which committees you serve on, what issues are going on in the district at the time, and how much time you need to prepare for upcoming meetings. For example, if the district is going through a building project, hiring a superintendent, or developing the district budget, the time needed for board meetings may be more extensive. On average, however, you can anticipate spending about nine to twelve hours a month on board service.

Conflict of Interest

As a board member, you are expected to uphold the highest standards of integrity by actively avoiding any conflicts of interest in your official capacity. This means refraining from any personal financial involvement in district transactions such as sales, leases, or contracts you oversee or participate in. If a potential conflict arises, you must fully disclose your interests and abstain from decision-making processes related to those interests. You will operate under stringent guidelines to ensure that any exceptions to this rule are handled transparently, with unanimous consent and clear documentation. This approach maintains the community's trust and ensures all decisions are made solely in the best interest of the district and its stakeholders.

Associated Policy – [210 Conflict of Interest - School Board Members](#)

Working as a Board Team

At the heart of educational excellence lies the steadfast commitment of the board, entrusted with duties that shape the very fabric of our district's future. Defined by statute, yet driven by a passion for progress, the board's responsibilities encompass a profound dedication to nurturing thriving learning environments and supporting the endeavors of our administration. Crucial to fulfilling these responsibilities is the collaborative spirit of board teamwork, where collective wisdom and shared vision pave the path toward transformative change. By fostering an environment of mutual respect and collaboration, the board can harness its collective strength to address challenges, capitalize on opportunities, and ultimately, advance the educational journey of every student in our district.

Duties of the Board

- The board has powers and duties specified by statute. The board's authority includes implied powers in addition to specific powers granted by the legislature.
- The board exercises administrative functions. It also has certain powers of a legislative character and other powers of a quasi-judicial character.
- The board shall supervise and manage the schools of the district; adopt rules for their organization, government, and instruction; prescribe textbooks and courses of study; and make and authorize contracts.
- The board shall have the general charge of the business of the district, its facilities and property, and of the interest of the schools.
- The board, among other duties, shall perform the following in accordance with applicable law:
 - provide by levy of tax, necessary funds for the conduct of schools, the payment of indebtedness, and all proper expenses of the district;
 - conduct the business of the schools and pay indebtedness and proper expenses;
 - employ and contract with necessary qualified teachers and discharge the same for cause;
 - provide services to promote the health of its pupils;
 - provide school buildings and erect needed buildings;
 - purchase, sell, and exchange district property and equipment as deemed necessary by the board for school purposes;
 - provide for payment of claims against the district, and prosecute and defend actions by or against the district, in all proper cases;
 - employ and discharge necessary employees and contract for other services;
 - provide for transportation of pupils to and from school, as governed by statute; and
 - procure insurance against liability of the district, its officers, and employees.
- The board, at its discretion, may perform the following:
 - provide library facilities, public evening schools, adult and continuing education programs, summer school programs, and intersession classes of flexible school year programs;
 - furnish school lunches for pupils and teachers on such terms as the board determines;
 - enter into agreements with one or more other independent districts to provide for agreed upon educational services;
 - lease rooms or buildings for school purposes;
 - authorize the use of school facilities for community purposes that will not interfere with their use for school purposes;
 - authorize co-curricular and extracurricular activities;
 - receive, for the benefit of the district, bequests, donations, or gifts for any proper purpose; and

- perform other acts as the board shall deem to be reasonably necessary or required for the governance of the schools.

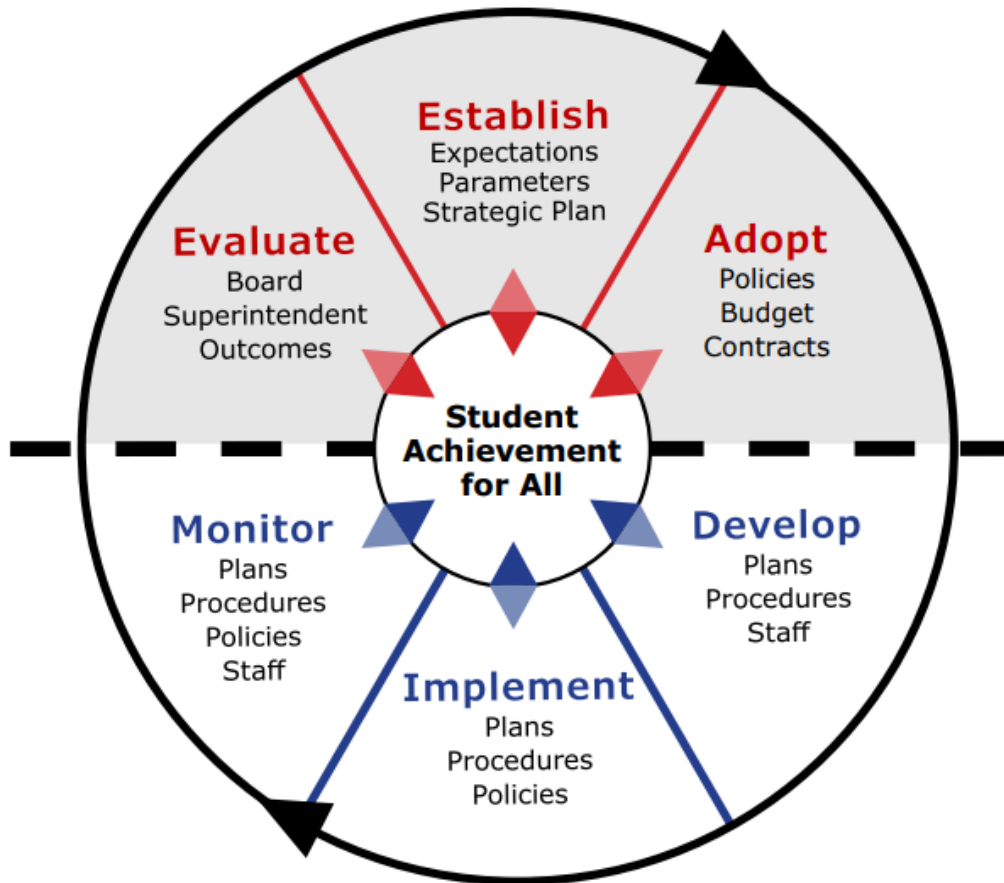
Associated Policy – [201 Legal Status of the School Board](#)

Board Governance Model

The [MSBA Board Governance Model](#) (included below) delineates the distinct roles and responsibilities of the board and the superintendent, ensuring both governance and management functions are clearly articulated and understood. It outlines the board's role in setting expectations and parameters through policy adoption, budgeting, contracting, and focusing on student achievement for all. It also highlights the superintendent's responsibilities in providing leadership and supervision, thus ensuring policies and strategies set by the board are effectively implemented.

Board Governance Model

The School Board Governs
Setting expectations and parameters



The Superintendent Manages
Providing leadership and supervision

Standards for Board Leadership

The board is responsible to the community to govern efficiently and lead effectively to provide students an equitable education that results in high achievement. To assist in this journey, see the [Standards for School Board Leadership](#) (Attachment A) developed by the MSBA - which is also attached as an addendum to this handbook. This document outlines best practices for board members and provides the standards we should strive to meet as part of a high-performing board team.

Attributes of High-Performing Board Teams

1. Everyone clearly understands the mission, goals, and role of the board; everyone knows who is, and who should be, doing what.
2. Board members are skilled in group leadership and/or membership functions.
3. Board members have a high degree of trust in one another.
4. Interaction occurs in a supportive atmosphere. Suggestions, comments, ideas, information, and criticism are all offered in a manner that is helpful. Respect is shown for varying team viewpoints.
5. Expectations for the group and its members are high. Goals are stretched.
6. The board is not dominated by an individual or sub-group; everyone participates and has the opportunity to influence the discussion.
7. The board has established procedures for operation including decision-making, conflict resolution, and meeting management.
8. The board is future focused. Decisions are made with long-term consequences and benefits in mind.
9. The board evaluates its performance periodically.

Role of the Superintendent

The board employs a superintendent to lead and manage the district. The superintendent is an ex-officio, non-voting member of the board and the chief executive officer of the school system. The superintendent's duties and responsibilities are derived largely from three sources: statute, the employment contract, and the job description. Superintendents are responsible for the management of the schools, the administration of all board policies, and are directly accountable to the board. The superintendent must annually evaluate each principal assigned responsibility for supervising a school building in the district. Also, the superintendent may delegate responsibilities to other district personnel but shall continue to be accountable for actions taken under such delegation. [Minn. Stat. 123B.143.](#)

Hiring a Superintendent

One of the most critical responsibilities of the board is the hiring of a superintendent. The selection of the superintendent is a decision that shapes the future of the district, influencing the quality of education, the effectiveness of school management, and the overall success of students. The importance of this decision cannot be overstated. The superintendent's vision and leadership directly impact educational outcomes and the district's ability to achieve its strategic goals. Therefore, it is imperative

that the board conducts a thorough and meticulous search process, considering candidates' experience, leadership style, and alignment with the district's values and objectives. This decision requires careful deliberation and a commitment to finding a leader who will foster a positive educational environment, promote innovation, and address the diverse needs of the school community. In essence, the hiring of a superintendent is not just a routine administrative task but a defining moment that sets the course for the district's future.

Duties of the Superintendent

As defined in the contract with Superintendent Peterson, “The superintendent shall perform those duties as set forth in M.S. 123.143, Subd. 1. The Superintendent shall have charge of the administration of the school under the direction of the School Board. The Superintendent shall be the chief executive officer of the School Board; shall direct and assign teachers and other employees of the schools under the Superintendent’s supervision; shall organize, reorganize and arrange the administrative and supervisory staff, including instruction and business affairs, as best serves the school district subject to the approval of the School Board; shall from time to time suggest policies, regulations, rules and procedures deemed necessary for the School District, and in general perform all duties incident to the office of the Superintendent and such other duties as may be prescribed by the School Board from time to time. The Superintendent shall abide by the policies, regulations, rules and procedures established by the School Board and the State of Minnesota.

The Superintendent shall have the right to attend all School Board meetings and all School Board and citizen committee meetings, serve as an ex-officio member of the School Board and all School Board committees and provide administrative recommendations on each item of business considered by each of these groups.”

Tenets of an Effective Board-Superintendent Relationship

Understanding and fostering a productive relationship between the board and the superintendent is critical for the success of our educational institution. The [17 Tenets of an Effective Board-Superintendent Relationship](#) (Attachment B), which is included in this handbook as an addendum, provides a comprehensive guide outlining key principles and best practices for maintaining a collaborative and effective partnership. This document highlights essential responsibilities and expectations for both the board members and the superintendent, promoting a clear understanding of each party's role in governance and administration. By adhering to these tenets, our board can ensure decisions are made efficiently, communication remains open and transparent, and the strategic goals of our district are met.

Evaluating the Superintendent

Evaluation of a superintendent’s performance is one of the board’s most important responsibilities. The evaluation of the superintendent is an inherent managerial right of the board. Done correctly, an evaluation is a useful governance tool that helps drive school improvement. In fact, a high-quality evaluation process enhances positive school-superintendent relationships, improves communication, clarifies leadership roles, creates common understandings, and provides a mechanism for accountability and communication.

Evaluation of the MAPS superintendent occurs annually, typically commencing following the conclusion of the school year. The evaluation process is determined by the Board Chair in consultation with the

board and superintendent, but typically will focus on progress toward goals established by the board and proficiency in a series of standards of performance. The evaluation will include a superintendent self evaluation as well as input from members of the superintendent's leadership team including cabinet members, school principals, and key district staff in addition to each of the seven board members.

Board Communication Guide

Communication Between Board Members

Adhering to guidelines for effective and lawful communication with your fellow board members is crucial. While open and collaborative communication is vital for the board's success, remember that discussions outside of official board meetings must be handled carefully to avoid violating the Minnesota Open Meeting Law (OML). This law requires any gathering of a quorum of board members, where official business is discussed, must be conducted in public and notice must be provided to ensure transparency. (See exceptions in the Closed Meeting Chart on pages 25.) Therefore, while informal discussions can be valuable for building relationships and exchanging ideas, avoid veering into areas of official board business unless they are part of a scheduled public meeting.

Building Collaborative Relationships – School governance is founded on the belief that a group of very different people representing various constituencies in their district can make better decisions than any one person alone. That diversity is the board's strength. It's best to be open-minded about the opinions of your fellow board members. Your goal should not be to change them to your point of view, but rather to determine the best solution to an issue by working together to try and accommodate all views. You want the students to be the "winners" — not one board member or another.

Addressing Team Dysfunction – Open communication is critical to the proper functioning of the board. If you feel the board is not functioning well, it may be appropriate to suggest a workshop where the board reviews its ground rules, board policies on board operations, and board/administrative relations that establish how the leadership team will function. If these ground rules and policies are not effective, then consider modifications to them. The board may want to hire a facilitator to assist with discussions to improve the board's working relations.

Guidelines for interacting outside a board meeting

- **Be Cautious with Written Communication.** Exercise caution with emails, texts, and social media interactions among board members. Avoid group messages or email chains discussing board business that could be construed as a meeting.
- **Be Transparent with Your Intentions.** Always make the purpose of any gathering clear, ensuring it is social or educational in nature and not meant for making decisions or deliberations that should be reserved for official meetings.
- **Consider Public Perception.** When planning to meet outside of formal board meetings, consider how such gatherings might be perceived by the public. It's crucial to remember any appearance

of conducting board business or decision-making outside of the designated public meetings could undermine community trust and confidence.

Associated Policy – [205 Open Meetings and Closed Meetings](#)

Situation	District Protocol
I have general questions about board governance and/or operation.	Board members are always welcome to contact the Board chair, another Board member, or the Superintendent with questions on board governance and operations. Members are also welcome to access the resources of MSBA.
I have a concern or questions regarding board governance.	Board members are always welcome to contact the Board chair or Superintendent with concerns. Board members can also request a concern be brought to a work session if their issue is not resolved.
I have a concern or questions regarding district operations.	Board members should bring any concerns regarding district operations to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will contact the appropriate staff to seek input on any given question and follow-up with the Board member.

Communication with the Superintendent

You need to establish a productive working relationship with the superintendent. To do this, you need to communicate with that individual. The Superintendent always welcomes informal touch-base meetings with Board members. If you have questions, it is better to call the superintendent and discuss them before the board meeting rather than surprise the superintendent at a public meeting. If the questions are concerns or relate to negative feelings from the community, superintendents appreciate knowing about them in advance of the board meeting so they can come prepared to address them. It is appropriate to call the superintendent, set up a meeting to discuss questions, or send an email for simple questions or requests. When contacting the superintendent, it is important for you to keep the scope of such contacts within reason, to permit adequate time to receive a response, and to generally remain cognizant of the superintendent’s other responsibilities and demands on their time.

Disagreements with the Superintendent – Always treat your fellow board members, the superintendent, and other administrators with respect. However, don’t be afraid to disagree on an issue. In fact, a discussion about an issue that reflects two or more views usually results in a better decision than if everyone agrees with the first solution offered. Be certain to debate the issue, not the person, and maintain decorum in debate.

Communication with District Administrators and Staff

You will likely come in contact with district employees, including administrators, teachers, and other staff members. While there’s nothing wrong with talking to district staff, keep in mind that complaints should follow the chain of communication. Additionally, understand individual board members do not have authority to direct the work of district staff members. Directing requests through the superintendent can assist with appropriate prioritization, identifying information that may be readily available, and

determining when it may be appropriate to have the full board weigh in regarding certain requests and project ideas.

Discussing Your Child with Staff – This can be a tricky area. No matter what you say about “speaking as a parent, not a board member,” it may be difficult for some teachers to separate your role on the board from your role as a parent. Make sure you’re not using your position as a board member to secure special treatment for your child. If there are issues you wish to discuss with a teacher, you should follow

the normal procedures for contacting your child’s teacher to discuss them. Keep in mind that you do not relinquish your parental rights now that you’re a board member.

Communication with Constituents Including Staff, Students, Parents, and Community

Identify the person contacting you and ensure you have their contact information. Seek to understand the situation or interest but, generally, do not agree or commit to resolve it personally as that is not the role of individual board members. Here are some general expectations:

- Do not agree to confidentiality or commit to limit your options of notification.
- Do not get involved in staff employment or contractual issues.
- Exercise caution if interacting with a parent who is working on behalf of an organized group rather than on behalf of their own student.
- When applicable, redirect the person to the appropriate staff person or administrator to address the concern.
- Be alert to patterns of like concerns and notify the superintendent’s office of the possibility.
- If the concern raises governance or public relations questions, contact the board chair in addition to the superintendent.
- Avoid forming and communicating opinions about a board decision before the board has discussed it in a board meeting.

Situation	District Protocol
If I get a phone call, email, or stopped in public from a constituent with concerns regarding the district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get name and contact information. ● Seek to understand the situation or concern - but do not agree/disagree or commit to personally resolving the situation. ● Refer the person to the right district staff - i.e. student to principal, parent to teacher/principal/administrator. ● Alert the Superintendent to the contact. ● Be available for future contact if referral doesn’t address the issue.
If I get a phone call, email, or stopped in public from a constituent regarding the board’s decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get name and contact information. ● Seek to understand their concern. ● Represent the views of the Board (instead of your personal views) on items that have already been decided. ● Thank them for their perspective.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Alert the Board Chair and Superintendent.
If I get an email that is addressed to the entire board with concerns from a constituent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Thank the individual for reaching out and sharing their perspective. ● Coordinate any action that may be required with the Board Chair and Superintendent. ● Do not reply all.
There is a situation that requires the district’s legal counsel to be contacted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coordinate through the Superintendent ● If the Superintendent is the subject of the contact with legal counsel, then coordinate through the Board Chair.

Engaging with the Community

Be proactive. The board can engage key stakeholders by inviting and appointing them to participate in standing and ad hoc committees, advisory panels, focus groups, forums, and surveys to describe a vision for the district, set its goals, plan strategically, align resources with goals, and other actions offering them an opportunity to learn about public education and to influence governance decisions. Encourage all members of the community to visit their schools. Invite them to extracurricular activities, schedule a grandparents’ day, and offer tours. In public education, familiarity often breeds support.

Use a variety of means to engage community members, inform them about the district, and learn about their interests, priorities, and concerns. Print and electronic media, social media (be mindful of emerging trends for younger parents), the district’s website, and face-to-face conversations all play important roles in a year-round district campaign to inform and to be informed. Each month, the Board Communications Committee prepares a Board Bulletin newsletter updating the public on the work of the School Board. All board members have the opportunity to review the Board Bulletin before it is published.

While accentuating the positive — student successes and district progress — don’t neglect the negative. Be the first to let the community know about clouds looming on the horizon, and what the board is doing to dispel them. The board should be ambassadors for the district by scheduling dialogues with a cross section of the community — preferably in their neighborhoods as well as in online forums. And be prepared to address negative comments and feedback in a positive, proactive manner.

In addition, consider the varying expectations of the district’s constituents. The parents of seniors may have far different expectations than the parents of kindergartners, and elderly community members with no students in the district may want completely different types of communication.

Communication with the Media

It's important to handle media interactions with care to maintain the veracity and unified voice of the board. Maintaining a unified voice is crucial as it ensures all board communications are consistent, clear, and reflect the collective decisions and strategic direction of the board. This unified approach helps to build trust and credibility with the community, stakeholders, and the media.

Situation	District Protocol
If I am approached by the media regarding a concern or board decision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get the reporter’s name and contact information and seek to understand their question. ● Ask that you be given the opportunity to coordinate with the Superintendent and Communications Coordinator on the best method of response. ● Notify the Superintendent and Communications Coordinator.

Communication on Social Media

Social media plays a significant role in board members’ responsibilities. To use social media effectively while avoiding potential pitfalls, remember your posts should reflect well on your role and set a good example for students and the community. Be careful not to share personal, confidential, or legally protected information about students, employees, or board members. Opt for face-to-face or telephone conversations for private matters instead of using social media. Control your emotions and avoid posting in anger or frustration, as negative statements can have lasting consequences and may lead to legal issues. Always use polite language and refrain from abusive, profane, or offensive comments. Additionally, avoid posting on behalf of the district or sharing commercial messages linked to the district. Use social media primarily for listening, making announcements, and gathering feedback rather than conducting board business. Finally, ensure you comply with all relevant laws and district policies, including those related to acceptable use, harassment, discrimination, and privacy. Your online actions should always reflect the values and responsibilities of your position within the district.

Situation	District Protocol
I know about an upcoming district event that should be featured on social media.	Board members are always welcome to share posts from official district sources. If in doubt, coordinate with the Board Communications Committee.
I saw a post containing false or misleading information regarding the board or district.	If you are certain of the factual information, Board members are free to respond in a respectful manner. If there is any doubt, coordinate with the Superintendent and communications coordinator.

Using a District Email

You should use a district email account for your board communications. While this creates another account to monitor, the extra effort is well worth it. As an elected official, your communications related to your office are presumed to be public data unless a provision of law makes part or all of the email private. Your emails may contain private personnel data ([Minn. Stat. 13.43](#)), private educational data ([Minn. Stat. 13.32](#)), correspondence with a private individual ([Minn. Stat. 13.601](#)), or protected medical information.

Members of the public may request access to public government data for any reason. Government entities must respond to these requests, and any work required to separate private data from public data, known as redaction, cannot be charged to the requester. The government entity must keep public data readily accessible, and redacting private data is its responsibility. Often, decisions about redaction need to be made by legal counsel, which adds to the expense.

If you use a personal or work email account, access to the public data may require you to turn over the personal or work device on which the emails are stored. If you use a district email address, the district's computer system can be searched to respond to public data requests. As a result, you do not have to worry about your personal or work devices being unavailable or about your personal or work information being shared with others.

Using a separate email account also separates your board work from personal or business correspondence. This reduces the number of emails that need to be searched in preparation for responding to a public data request, saving the district time and money.

Another reason this separation is helpful is in how you think about your emails related to board work. Remembering the presumed public status of what you write in emails to other board members, the superintendent, and other district personnel about board work can save you from explanations and embarrassment. Public data may end up on the local news or social media, so it is wise to keep this in mind as you compose emails related to board work.

A final consideration is the potential to violate the OML. If a two-way communication about board business occurs among a quorum of the board (or a quorum of a board committee), it results in an OML violation, and the emails create a record of the violation.

Communicating with Board Members Via Email – To ensure OML compliance, you are strongly discouraged from using email to communicate with other board members about issues within the board's realm of authority, except for procedural elements like establishing meeting dates and locations. Generally, you should use email only for one-way communications to and from the board chair or superintendent to distribute information.

Board Meetings and Governance

Board meetings are pivotal gatherings that dictate the course of educational policies and decisions within a district. Governed by a structured framework, these meetings encompass various types, from regular sessions to emergency convenings, each serving distinct purposes and following legal mandates outlined in Minnesota statutes. Moreover, the operational norms, roles of board officers, and adherence to parliamentary procedures shape the conduct of these meetings, ensuring efficiency, transparency, and accountability. The following sections delve into the intricacies of board meetings, covering everything from meeting types and legal obligations to procedural guidelines and public participation protocols.

Meetings of the Board

Types of Meetings

Regular Board Meeting – Regular meetings of the board are held according to an established schedule. The schedule must be kept on file at the district office. No additional notice required unless the date, time, or place of the regular meeting is changed. [Minn. Stat. 13D.04, Subd. 1.](#)

Special Meeting – The board may hold a special meeting to conduct business as needed. A special meeting can provide extra time for presentations, such as review of building-level outcomes, or to deal with an issue that arises but is not likely to be ongoing. A special meeting requires three days' notice (posted on the district's main bulletin board and either published in the official newspaper or mailed/delivered to those persons requesting notice) of the date, time, place, and purpose of the meeting. Board discussion and action must fall within the posted purpose(s) of the meeting. [Minn. Stat. 13D.04, Subd. 2.](#)

Emergency Meeting – The board may hold an emergency meeting called to deal with a situation that requires immediate board consideration and possible action, such as a response to a school fire, a school safety issue, etc. The board determines when an emergency meeting is needed. Good faith effort must be made to notify the news media that have requested notice in the same manner as notice is given to board members. If the situation allows for a three-day notice, hold a special meeting. [Minn. Stat. 13D.04, Subd. 3.](#)

Business Meeting - At business meetings, the board takes action on policies, contracts, bid awards, personnel appointments, etc. This meeting may be a regular, special or an emergency meeting.

Work Session – A work session is a meeting of the board with selected staff or presenters to study and discuss in depth matters which potentially will come before the board. No votes are taken during these meetings. Work sessions will typically be held immediately after the second regular business meeting of the month and at other times as necessary.

Retreat - On occasion, the board will hold an extended meeting with the superintendent and other staff as necessary for the purposes of planning, development and evaluation etc.

Committee - Board members are assigned to committees at the organizational meeting and they meet on occasion throughout the year.

Organizational Meeting – The first meeting in January will be devoted to business required for the proper organization of the board. The agenda may include:

- Seating new members including administering the ceremonial oath of office
- Electing officers for chair, vice-chair (optional), clerk, and treasurer
- Setting the dates, time, and location(s) for regular board meetings
- Establishing standing committees and committee members
- Passing a [Resolution for Combined Polling Places](#)
- Designating district depositories
- Designating district legal representatives
- Selecting the official newspaper

Open Meeting Law (OML)

The Open Meeting Law ([Minn. Stat. Ch. 13D.](#)) is intended to preserve the rights of the public to observe actions and decisions of its representatives. To satisfy this, all meetings of the board will be open to the public for attendance, and a schedule of the board's regular meetings and working sessions will include times and locations and shall be kept on file at the district office. (See the Closed Meeting Law Chart link below for exceptions). Additionally, the board will ensure a schedule of meetings is posted on the district's website. The OML applies to all meetings of the public body. For the law to apply, a quorum (a majority of the members of the board) must be present. Although the responsibility to ensure meetings are properly noticed lies with the board, this operational activity is typically carried out by the staff member who functions as the clerk to the board.

Closed Meetings

Minnesota's OML requires all board meetings to be open to the public with few exceptions. A public body must begin in an open meeting and state on the record the specific grounds permitting the meeting to be closed and describe the subject to be discussed. A majority vote is needed to close the meeting, with the time and place announced at the public meeting before going into closed session. Please review [Minn. Stat. 13D.05](#) before proceeding to close a meeting. For specific questions, consult with legal counsel.

For more information regarding closed meetings, see [MSBA's Closed Meeting Law Chart](#).

Meetings Conducted by Interactive Technology

In the ever-evolving landscape of governance, technology has become an indispensable tool for facilitating communication and collaboration. Section 13D.02 of the Minnesota Statutes acknowledges this reality by outlining the conditions under which meetings governed by section 13D.01 can be conducted using interactive technology.

For more information regarding remote meetings, see [Minn. Stat. 13D.02 Meetings Conducted by Interactive Technology](#).

Meeting Operations

Attendance of Meetings

All board members are expected to attend all meetings. However, it is recognized that scheduling conflicts will occur. If a board member cannot attend a meeting, they are expected to notify the board chair, Superintendent, and Superintendent's administrative assistant.

Presentations

The first business meeting of the month will typically include an informational presentation from a department, school, or another district entity. Board members are encouraged to ask questions of the presenters to seek greater clarity. A board member can request that a particular presentation be made to the board by contacting the Board Chair and Superintendent.

Voting

Each elected member of the board will have one vote. A roll call vote will be taken when required by law or when requested by any board member.

Quorum of the Board

In order for a board meeting to be official and before any action can be taken by the board, at least a quorum of board members (four) must be present. In the absence of a quorum, the only official action that the board may take is to adjourn the meeting. The gathering of a quorum constitutes a meeting if “members discuss, decide, or receive information as a group on issues relating to the official business of the district.”

Parliamentary Procedure During Meetings

MAPS generally follows Roberts Rules of Order. Specific policies related to parliamentary procedure are below.

Associated Policies – [203 - Operation of the School Board - Governing Rules](#); [203.1 - School Board Procedures; Rules of Order](#)

Presiding Officer

The chair will preside over all board meetings. If the chair is unable to preside, the vice-chair will perform the duties of the chair. Should both the chair and vice-chair be unable to preside, the clerk will perform the duties of the chair. In the unlikely event that the chair, vice-chair, and clerk are unable to preside, the treasurer will perform the duties of the chair.

Superintendent’s Role in Board Meetings

The superintendent is a key person at all board meetings. The superintendent and chair commonly plan the meeting agenda together. The superintendent makes certain the meeting room is set up as required and all tools needed are available, such as audio or visual recording equipment, internet access, microphones, etc. Each item on the agenda is introduced by the chair; however, for discussion or action items, the superintendent or a designee is often asked to explain the issue. The superintendent’s recommendation should be solicited before a vote is taken.

Board Committees

Committees may be established to address recurring needs of the board. Committees are in place to make the board’s work more efficient and effective. They serve in advisory capacities and bring recommendations to the full board for decision making. Board committees meet as often as necessary to accomplish their work and should meet only when there is substantive work to be done.

The board has established a number of permanent standing committees of the board that are foundational to the governance and management of the school district. In addition, the board also designates ad hoc committees as needed and may also designate members to participate on committees not controlled by the board.

Committee membership is determined by the Board Chair through consultation with members and formalized by board vote at the January organizational meeting of the board.

Permanent Standing Committees of the Board

1. Communications Committee
2. Executive Committee
3. Facilities Committee
4. Finance Committee
5. Policy Committee

Ad Hoc Committees

1. Negotiations Committees for various employee groups
2. Legislative Committee
3. Student Advisory Council
4. Sustainability Committee
5. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

Board Designees to non-Board Committees

6. Energy Committee
7. Transportation Committee
8. Community Education Advisory Council
9. Greater Mankato Growth Advisory Council
10. Wellness
11. MSHSL Representative
12. Meet and Confer
13. Sick Leave Bank
14. Special Education Parent Advisory Council
15. Student Community Safety Advisory Council

Associated Policy – [214 School Board Committees](#)

Election of Board Officers

Minnesota law is silent on the method of electing officers, except that the election must be by open vote and not by any form of secret ballot. [Minn. Stat. 13D.01, Subd. 4](#). Subsequently, the board may establish its own procedures, including procedures for nominating officers and voting procedures. The board will establish procedures in advance of the meeting so that everyone will know what to expect from the outset. The board must follow the procedures, but the procedures can be changed if the majority of the board members agree.

Guide to Board Meeting Roles and Responsibilities

Effective management and clear understanding of roles are essential for the smooth operation of board meetings. The [Guide to Board Meeting Roles and Responsibilities](#) (Attachment C), and included in this handbook as an addendum, provides a detailed outline of the duties and expectations for board members, the chair, the superintendent, and administrative staff before, during, and after meetings. This comprehensive guide helps ensure all participants are well-prepared, meetings are conducted efficiently, and follow-up actions are clearly defined. It covers everything from agenda preparation and legal advice to maintaining a positive meeting atmosphere and accurate record-keeping.

Data Privacy

It's essential to understand how data privacy relates to board meetings. When discussing district matters in board meetings, we encourage open dialogue. However, we need reasonable restrictions to ensure orderly proceedings and protect individuals' privacy and due process rights. These rights extend to both employees and students of the district. For employees, this includes the privacy of their personnel data. Similarly, students have privacy rights concerning their educational data. To uphold these privacy rights, we have procedures in place for handling agenda items and complaints.

Associated Policy – [406 Public and Private Personnel Data](#), [515 Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records](#)

Public Comments to the Board

The board recognizes the value of participation by the public in deliberations and decisions on district matters. However, the board retains the right to determine whether and how public comment may occur. The School Board has established [public comment guidelines](#) that each commenter must adhere to. Those who wish to address the board must complete a [form](#) by 3pm of the day of the Board Meeting.

Associated Policy – [206 Public Participation in School Board Meetings / Complaints About Persons at School Board Meetings and Data Privacy Considerations](#).

Agendas and Minutes

Agenda Procedures

The board will conduct business during meetings through an adopted agenda that advances board work and district goals. The agenda serves as a roadmap for the meeting, outlining topics such as reports, presentations, discussions, and decisions. It is expected all board members will read the agenda and any supporting documents prior to the meeting. Each board member has the right to request additions, amendments, or revisions to the agenda prior to its adoption, and the board will determine if those changes are to be made.

One week prior to the board meeting, the executive committee will meet with the Superintendent to craft the draft agenda. On the Wednesday prior to regular board meetings, Becky Bailey will distribute the proposed agenda to the Board. Board members with questions or comments on the agenda are encouraged to contact the Board Chair and Superintendent for clarification. A motion to adopt the agenda will be brought before the Board at the start of the meeting, at which point any Board member can motion to request an amendment to the agenda. Board members are expected whenever possible to contact the Board Chair and Superintendent in advance should they plan to make a motion to amend the agenda.

Associated Policy – [203.3 School Board Meeting Agenda](#)

Consent Agenda

The superintendent, in consultation with the board chair, may place items on the consent agenda. A consent agenda is a part of the agenda that includes items typically approved together in one motion. These items may include meeting minutes, routine reports, personnel appointments, and other administrative matters. By grouping these items together, the board can streamline the meeting process and focus on more substantive discussions. If any board member wishes to discuss or vote separately on an item listed in the consent agenda, they can request to have it removed for individual consideration.

Associated Policy – [203.4 Consent Agendas](#)

Meeting Minutes

Minutes will be carefully recorded to include all actions of the board and all votes taken at a board meeting by the board's clerk or designee. Minutes do not include discussion or editorial comments. All adopted minutes are available on the School District's [School Board Webpage](#).

Associated Policy – [204 School Board Meeting Minutes](#)

References for Further Information

- [District Policy Manual](#)
- [MAPS Strategic Roadmap](#)
- [District Budget and Financial Reports](#)
- [Employee Collective Bargaining Agreements](#)
- [School Board Meeting Calendar](#)
- [MSBA Legal Requirements for School Board Members](#)
- [MSBA Common Acronyms Used in Education](#)
- [MSBA Glossary of Educational Terms](#)
- [MDE – School Finance Reports](#)
- [MN House Research – Minnesota School Finance: A Guide for Legislators](#)