

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 719
Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools



School Board Handbook



Our mission is to inspire and empower each student to reach their full potential.

Board Approved: February 9, 2026

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The History of Prior Lake–Savage Area Schools

Edgewood School

Edgewood School opened in 2006, though Early Childhood Family Education programs have been housed in district buildings since 1990. Edgewood provides Early Childhood Family Education, Early Childhood Special Education, Early Childhood Screening, and Circle of Friends Preschool and Prekindergarten. Circle of Friends Preschool has earned a four-star Parent Aware rating, reflecting our commitment to high-quality early learning, strong family partnerships, and continuous improvement. Families enrolling in Circle of Friends also have the option to choose our nature-based preschool program.

Five Hawks Elementary

Five Hawks was founded in 1973 and students receive instruction focused on inquiry, applying hands-on science, technology, engineering and mathematical practices with projects related to the environment. Five Hawks has 22 unique outdoor learning spaces. Each fall, students participate in a school-wide E-STEM day with a full day of outdoor and environmental learning.

Glendale Elementary

Glendale was founded in 1997 and is located right across the street from the McColl Environmental Learning Center which features indoor and outdoor learning spaces, as well as walking paths, fishing docks and more! Every spring, Glendale hosts a school-wide E-STEM Festival. Students participate in a variety of environmental learning activities.

Hamilton Ridge Elementary

Hamilton Ridge was founded in 2020 as the 7th elementary school in the Prior Lake–Savage Area School district. Hamilton Ridge has unique learning stairs in the center of the building that is used as a flexible learning space for students.

Jeffers Pond Elementary

Jeffers Pond was founded in 2006 and is home to some of our Circle of Friends nature-based preschool classes. In 2022 Jeffers Pond partnered with the City of Prior Lake to create a Hammock Forest in their Outdoor Learning Center. Jeffers Pond has 31 unique outdoor learning spaces. Each spring, students participate in a school-wide E-STEM learning day with a full day of outdoor and environmental learning.

La ola del lago

La ola del lago was founded in 2014 and is a K-5 Spanish Immersion school. La ola del Lago means "The wave of the lake." The immersion classroom is similar to a traditional elementary classroom, except all instruction is in the Spanish language. Each year, Amity International interns from various Spanish-speaking countries work with staff and students in the classroom.

Redtail Ridge Elementary

Redtail Ridge was founded in 2009 and is recognized for strong academics, especially in science and math, and its focus on environmental education (E-STEM) and hands-on learning. Redtail Ridge has a school garden that all students help plant, maintain and harvest. Redtail Ridge's Lifeskills program reaches learners with unique challenges.

WestWood Elementary

WestWood was the first elementary school built in the district, opening in 1963. WestWood is proud to be an E-STEM school where students receive instruction focused on inquiry and real-world problem solving in the 21st Century, applying hands-on science, technology, engineering and mathematical practices with projects and field experiences related to the environment.

Hidden Oaks Middle School

Hidden Oaks was founded in 1989 and currently houses grades 6–8. Students participate in a variety of student spirit days throughout the year. All of our middle school students have the opportunity to participate in band or choir. All 8th grade students have the opportunity to go on a trip to Washington D.C. in the fall.

Twin Oaks Middle School

Twin Oaks Middle School was founded in 2006 and is part of a U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Sustainability District that supports Environmental Education. All 8th grade students have the opportunity to travel to Washington D.C. in the fall. Twin Oaks has been recognized by the Minnesota Department of Education as a PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Supports) Sustaining Exemplar School.

Prior Lake High School

Prior Lake High School (PLHS) was founded in 1951 and moved to a new building in Savage, MN in 2003. The high school is known for its strong E–STEM focus (Environmental Education, Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) with programs like the Fab Lab and MNCAPS, strong academics, high college readiness, and a large, diverse student body with a vibrant “Laker” community spirit.

Bridges Area Learning Center

Bridges was founded in 2009 and was housed at the Northgate Center. After outgrowing its original space, Bridges celebrated a major milestone with the opening of a new, purpose-built facility next to Twin Oaks Middle School in the fall of 2019. Teachers at Bridges tailor instruction that is adapted to the needs of the students. Students at Bridges experience small class sizes and flexible schedules in a dedicated building that The Prior Lake Rotary Club partners with Bridges for its STRIVE program, which provides a mentor to every student at risk of not graduating.

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 all 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.

- All active links are underlined
- Five general terms used throughout this handbook should be explained. From this point forward, the words, "board", "board member", "district", "chair", and "meeting" will have the same meaning as the formal terms, "school board", "school board member", "school district", "school board chair", and "school board meeting".

Handbook Maintenance and Review Procedure

- Annually, the handbook will undergo a review by the board. As part of this review, the board will:
 - Review mutual expectations of board norms
 - Seek input and feedback regarding best practices, as needed
 - Check the MSBA website for suggested handbook updates
 - Adopt the updated handbook by a majority vote of the board.
- Board members may propose additions/revisions to the handbook by sending an email to the chair and requesting to add "handbook discussion" as a topic for an upcoming study session.
- The handbook may be updated to reflect adopted policy changes as required without further board action
- Hyperlinks within the handbook may be updated without further board action
- The date this handbook was last reviewed, updated, and/or revised, is included on the cover page of this handbook.

DISTRICT INFORMATION

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 Prior Lake-Savage Area 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.

District Identity

Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools provides a high-quality education to students in grades E-12 and programs and services to residents from birth through adulthood who live in the cities of Prior Lake, Savage and Credit River, as well as the townships of Cedar Lake, Sand Creek and Spring Lake.

The community is located in the seven county metropolitan area of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Approximately 8,511 students are enrolled in the district. The uniqueness of the community lies in the mixture of suburban and rural living.

Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools prides itself in the many environmental learning opportunities that have become part of the district's unique culture. PLSAS is the only district in the state to have an environmental education program that grows with students from Early Childhood to high school. Our E-12 schools are the first district-wide E-STEM schools in the state of Minnesota. E-STEM stands for Environmental Education, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

The approved 2024 Strategic Plan reflects the district's goals.

Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools is home to seven Kindergarten through fifth grade elementary schools, including a Spanish Immersion School; one early childhood center; two middle schools for grades 6-8; an Area Learning Center for students in grades 9-12; and a high school serving students in grades 9-12.

Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools takes pride in expanding opportunities for all students. Examples include being one of Minnesota's Unified School Districts and offering the MNCAPS program at Prior Lake High School, which provides a wide range of postsecondary educational options beyond traditional pathways.

Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools 2026 Board Members and Terms

BOARD OFFICERS



Amy Bullyan
Board Chair
Elected 2022
Term Expires 2026
abullyan@plsas.org



Jessica Olstad
Board Vice-Chair/Clerk
Elected 2022
Term Expires 2026
jolstad@plsas.org



Jessica Mason
Board Treasurer
Elected 2024
Term Expires 2028
jmason@plsas.org

BOARD DIRECTORS



Lisa Atkinson
Board Director
Elected 2022
Term Expires 2026
latkinson@plsas.org



Mary Frantz
Board Director
Elected 2024
Term Expires 2028
mfrantz@plsas.org



Charles Johnson
Board Director
Elected 2024
Term Expires 2028
charlesjohnson@plsas.org



Dustin Smith
Board Director
Elected 2025
Term Expires 2026
dsmith@plsas.org

LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY

Superintendent's Office

Name	Position	Phone Number	Email Address
Dr. Michael Thomas	Superintendent	952.226.0010	mthomas@plsas.org
Martha Walz	Executive Assistant	952.226.0010	mwalz@plsas.org

Senior Leadership Team

Name	Position	Phone Number	Email Address
Dr. Tim Anderson	Executive Director of Academic Services	952.226.0031	tanderson@plsas.org
Rob Cothorn	Executive Director of Administrative Services	952.226.0021	rcothorn@plsas.org
Lisa Rider	Executive Director of Business Services	952.226.0041	lrider@plsas.org
Michelle Cuka	Director of Student Support Services	952.226.0033	mcuka@plsas.org
Joel Dahl	Director of Community Education Services	952.226.0312	joeldahl@plsas.org
Emily Malone	Director of Child Nutrition Services	952-226-0008	emalone@plsas.org
Marcus Milazzo	Director of Technology	952.226.0061	mmilazzo@plsas.org
Kristi Mussman	Director of Communications	952.226.0014	kmussman@plsas.org
Dan Powers	Director of Operational Services	952.226.0054	dpowers@plsas.org
Dr. Jennie Zumbusch	Director of Assessment & Improvement	952.226.0078	jzumbusch@plsas.org

Principals & Department Leaders

Name	Position	Phone Number	Email Address
Jeff Marshall	Activities Director	952.226.8680	jmarshall@plsas.org
Ashley Kruse	Kids' Company Coordinator	952.226.0378	akruse@plsas.org
Jeanna Miller	Edgewood School	952.226.0950	jeannamiller@plsas.org
Katy Schuerman	Five Hawks Elementary	952.226.0100	kschuerman@plsas.org
Jennifer Molitor	Glendale Elementary	952.226.0200	jmolitor@plsas.org
Sam Fredrickson	Hamilton Ridge Elementary	952.226.7800	sfredrickson@plsas.org
Patrick Glynn	Jeffers Pond Elementary	952.226.0600	pglynn@plsas.org
Richie Kucinski	La ola del lago	952.226.0300	rkucinski@plsas.org
Barb Yetzer	Redtail Ridge Elementary	952.226.8000	byetzer@plsas.org
Lisa Manders	WestWood Elementary	952.226.0400	lmanders@plsas.org
Joe Kuboushek	Hidden Oaks Middle School	952.226.0700	jkuboushek@plsas.org
Joe Kuboushek	Twin Oaks Middle School	952.226.0500	jkuboushek@plsas.org
Dr. John Bezek	Prior Lake High School	952.226.8600	jbezek@plsas.org
David Brown	Bridges Area Learning Ctr	952.226.0840	dbrown@plsas.org

DISTRICT FACILITIES

Building	Address	Phone Number
District Services Center	4540 Tower Street SE, Prior Lake, MN 55372	952-226-0000
Community Education	5061 Minnesota Street SE, Prior Lake, MN 55372	952.226.0310
Kids' Company	5061 Minnesota Street SE, Prior Lake, MN 55372	952.226.0375
Edgewood School	5304 Westwood Drive SE, Prior Lake, MN 55372	952.226.0950
Five Hawks Elementary	16620 Five Hawks Ave SE, Prior Lake, MN 55372	952.226.0100
Glendale Elementary	6601 Connelly Parkway, Savage, MN 55378	952.226.0200
Hamilton Ridge Elementary	8100 157 th Street, Savage, MN 55378	952.226.7800
Jeffers Pond Elementary	14800 Jeffers Pass, Prior Lake, MN 55372	952.226.0600
La ola del lago	5061 Minnesota Street SE, Prior Lake, MN 55372	952.226.0300
Redtail Ridge Elementary	15200 Hampshire Avenue, Savage, MN 55378	952.226.8000
WestWood Elementary	5370 Westwood Drive SE, Prior Lake, MN 55372	952.226.0400
Hidden Oaks Middle School	15855 Fish Point Road SE, Prior Lake, MN 55372	952.226.0700
Twin Oaks Middle School	15860 Fish Point Road SE, Prior Lake, MN 55372	952.226.0500
Prior Lake High School	7575 150 th Street W, Savage, MN 55378	952.226.8600
Bridges Area Learning Ctr	15870 Fish Point Road SE, Prior Lake, MN 55372	952.226.0843

Schedule a Facility Visit or Tour

You have the same right as a parent or community member to visit the schools in your district as long as you adhere to the procedures the district has for visitors. You may also visit the schools in an official capacity with the board's authority 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.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



VISION

A world-class district centered on students, driven by results

MISSION

Inspire and empower each student to reach their full potential

OUR PRIORITIES



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Students receive challenging, rigorous, and relevant instruction for their unique learning needs and goals, and to develop essential skills to be successful.



OPTIMIZE RESOURCES

Prioritize efficient and effective use of fiscal, human, and capital resources through excellence in governance, administration, and staff.



POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Foster a welcoming, inclusive, and safe learning environment, where staff are valued, and students can fully engage in learning.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Develop a culture of engagement through shared responsibility, and collaboration among students, staff, families, and community partners.

CORE BELIEFS

Accountability: We are transparent, take responsibility for actions and decisions, answer to our community, and uphold commitments and standards of excellence.

Respect: We appreciate the value, feelings, and rights of others, fostering an environment of mutual understanding and consideration.

Unity: We support each other, cultivating a sense of belonging, and collective strength, ensuring everyone is seen, valued, and heard as we pursue our common goals together.

Stewardship: We responsibly manage resources, ensuring their sustainability, and ethical use for the benefit of current and future generations.

6-17-24

More than 50 community members—including parents, students, staff, city leaders, and board members—collaborated to revise our strategic plan. Through community meetings and a survey, we reviewed hundreds of comments to ensure the plan reflects our community's needs and priorities.

This strategic plan serves as our guide for developing department and school improvement plans, with clear performance metrics aligned to our mission: to inspire and empower each student to reach their full potential.

References for Further Information

- [PLSAS Organizational Chart](#)
- [District Policy Manual](#)
- [District Strategic Plan](#)
- [Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness Report](#)
- [Results of District Stakeholder Surveys](#)
- [School Improvement Plan](#)
- [Student Performance Data](#)
- [District Report Card](#)
- [District Budget and Financial Reports](#)
- [District Technology Plan](#)
- [District Emergency Plan](#)
- [Facilities Assessments](#)
- [Student Handbooks:](#)
 - [Prior Lake High School](#)
 - [Twin Oaks and Hidden Oaks Middle Schools](#)
 - [All Elementary Schools](#)
- [Employee Collective Bargaining Agreements](#)
- [Meeting Schedules and Agendas](#)
- [Board Minutes](#)
- [List of curricular and extracurricular programs](#)
- [Reports on recent projects, programs, or initiatives](#)
- Social Media Platforms: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#)

Board Membership

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.

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 however, officially sworn in on the second Monday in January during our organizational meeting. [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 second 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 second 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:

- [MSBA's First Monday in January Handbook](#)
- [Policy 203.4 Order of the Organizational Meeting](#)
- [District Intake Documents](#)



Board Organization

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
- 4) not convicted of a felony.

[Minn. Stat. 123B.09](#); [Minn. Stat. 204B.06, Subd. 1.](#)

Terms of Office

Board members are elected to four-year terms and take office on the first Monday in January. 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, is removed, or ceases to be a resident of the district. All vacancies will be filled according to [Minn. Stat. 123B.09.](#)

Our procedure for filling a vacancy is as follows:

A. [Declaration of Vacancy](#)

- A resolution declaring a school board vacancy will be passed at the next regular or special meeting following the occurrence of the vacancy.
- If the vacancy occurs within the legal timeframe for a regularly scheduled election, the board will add the seat to the ballot for that election, and standard election procedures will apply to filling the vacancy.

B. [Application Process](#)

- Complete [Affidavit for Candidacy](#) and pay appropriate fees
- Applications will be accepted beginning seven (7) days after the signing of the resolution.
- The vacancy notice and application form will be posted on the district website.
- Any person qualified to hold a seat on the School Board may submit an application to the election clerk.

Applications will close at the end of business (4:00 pm) on the fourteenth (14th) day after the signing of the resolution.

C. [Candidate Review and Finalist Selection](#)

- The election clerk will record the name of each candidate, and all qualified candidates will be considered finalists. The list of finalists will be published on the district website.

D. [Special Meeting and Public Interviews](#)

- Three (3) business days after finalists are published, a special meeting will be called.
 - Each board member will receive all finalist applications the day before the special board meeting. The board members will then review all applications. There is no time limit on the review process.
 - After review each board member will conduct written ballot votes, voting for two finalists with ballots read aloud by the election clerk.
- Each finalist will have two (2) minutes to present their qualifications and reasons for seeking appointment.
- Each School Board member may ask each finalist up to two (2) questions. The questions should be related to the position in question and should be submitted to the election clerk for him/her to ask the finalist the same question.

E. Deliberation and Voting

- After all interviews, the School Board will deliberate in public session and attempt to reach consensus on a final candidate.
- When a presumed consensus is reached, the Chair will call for a voice vote. The candidate receiving a majority of votes will be appointed.
- In the event of a tie:
 - The tied candidates will each have five (5) minutes to address the Board, followed by one additional question from the Board.
 - A new vote will be held. If a tie persists, the Board will conduct written ballot votes, with ballots read aloud by the election clerk, repeating as necessary until a majority is reached.

F. Appointment and Service

- The final candidate receiving the majority of votes will be formally appointed by resolution of the School Board at the same special or regular meeting.
- The appointed candidate will begin service at the first regular or special meeting occurring thirty (30) or more calendar days after the formal appointment and will serve until the vacancy is filled by a special or general election, as required by law.

To apply for the vacant position, please complete an application, which can be accessed by clicking the link provided.



Board Composition

School boards in Minnesota are made up of either six or seven members. Some exceptions have been created by special legislation, often for consolidated districts. In PLSAS, we have seven members. The superintendent is an ex-officio (non-voting) member of the board.

Associated Policies [Minn. Stat. 123B.09.](#) | [Policy 201 – Legal Status of the School Board](#)

Board Officers

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 35](#) for information regarding nominating and voting procedures.

Role of the Chair

- The chair shall preside at all meetings of the school board, can make motions, and shall have a vote on motions placed before the school board for action.
- The agenda for meetings of the school board shall be the responsibility of the chair and vice-chair, in collaboration with the superintendent.
- The chair is the official spokesperson of the school board.
- The chair shall sign, on behalf of the school board, such documents as may require his/her signature.
- The chair shall represent the board in deliberations with other school boards, school districts or agencies.
- The chair shall appoint all committees and liaisons, unless otherwise specified by the school board.
- The chair shall perform all duties as prescribed by law for said office.

Role of the Vice-Chair/Clerk

- In the absence of the chair, the vice-chair/clerk shall preside at school board meetings.
- The vice-chair/clerk will further perform all other duties as delegated by the chair.
- The vice-chair/clerk will assist the chair in performance of the duties associated with the role of chair.
- The vice-chair/clerk shall perform such duties as required by the Minnesota Election Law or other applicable laws relating to the conduct of elections.

Role of the Treasurer

- The treasurer shall sign on behalf of the school board such documents as may require his/her signature.

Associated Policy: [Policy 202: School Board Officers and Membership](#)



Board Compensation

Unless otherwise provided by law, the members of the board shall receive such compensation as may be fixed by the board. All members of the board may receive reimbursement for transportation at the rate provided for in [Minn. Stat. 471.665](#). No board member or district employee shall receive any compensation or benefits based on incentives or other money provided to the district by or from a source of group insurance coverage referenced in [Minn. Stat. 471.6161, Subd. 1](#), except for a refund provided under [Minn. Stat. 123B.75, Subd. 10](#), or a wellness plan that is mutually agreed upon by the district and the exclusive representatives of employees.

Compensation is set at the organizational meeting in January. The current rate is as follows: Compensation will stand at \$6,000 per year, plus \$20 per meeting for official standing committee assignments, district wide committee assignments, and external committees and agency representatives (unless compensated by agency), as appointed by the chair with the exception of certified negotiator, which will be compensated at \$50 per meeting. The board chair will receive an additional \$500, the board vice-chair/clerk will receive an additional \$300 and the board treasurer will receive an additional \$300 for service during the year. School board member compensation shall be paid semi-annually. Committee meeting reimbursement shall be paid once at the completion of the year of service.

Associated Policy: [Policy 203.4 – Organizational Meeting](#)

Expense Reimbursement

All expense reimbursements should be submitted in a timely fashion to the superintendent's office.

Board expense reimbursement is referenced in the following policies:

- [Policy 212 – School Board Member Development](#)
- [Policy 214 – Out of State Travel](#)
- [Policy 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 – All school 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.
- Committee Participation – Board members will be assigned or appointed to advisory committees, councils, and agencies by the board chair in consultation with the board. Board members will be assigned at the organizational meeting in January. Each board member should be assigned to at least one committee.
- Informal Meetings – Work with the superintendent to schedule one on one monthly meetings with him/her and informal meetings when needed with key staff members to discuss specific areas of interest. These one-on-one interactions 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.

Our orientation program is structured to ensure you receive a balanced combination of printed materials, hands-on training, and personal mentorship.

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.

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.](#)

Below is a full list of MSBA’s Learning to Lead Phase Workshops.

- [Learning to Lead – School Board Basics: Phase I Workshop](#)
- [Leadership Foundations – School Finance and Management: Phase II Workshop](#)
- [Building a High-Performance School Board Team: Phase III Workshop](#)
- [Representing Your Community Through Policy and Engagement: Phase IV Workshop](#)

Other MSBA Professional Development Opportunities – To learn more about these opportunities, see the Workshops and Events section of the [MSBA website](#).

In District Workshops	Events
Mutual Expectations Workshop	Leadership Conference
School Board Self-Evaluation Workshop	Summer Seminar
Superintendent Search Workshop	Delegate Assembly
Superintendent Evaluation Workshop	Day at the Capitol
Regional Workshops	Advocacy Tour
Officers’ Workshop	Coffee and Conversation Series
Negotiations Seminars	Board Chair Chat
	Monthly Webinars

Associated Policy: [Policy 212: Board Member Development](#)

MSBA Series of Publications

New board members automatically receive the following publications to stay current on education related news.

- [eClippings](#) – Receive daily links to K-12 news from around the state.
- [Leader Newsletter](#) – Monthly updates regarding MSBA news and events, topical news items, administrative topics, and much more.
- [Journal Magazine](#) – Bimonthly magazine includes school features, exploration of leadership issues, in-depth stories on education trends, and a directory of vendors.

Board Member Violations Procedure

The board must model accountability, respect, unity, and stewardship when leading the community on behalf of the district.

Each member brings valuable knowledge and life experience, but it is essential to approach discussions with openness and respect for differing views. A high-performing board fosters professionalism, trust, and collaboration, acting with integrity and remembering the honor of public service.

Achieving the district's mission and strategic goals requires shared responsibility. Every member is accountable not only for individual actions but also for the board's collective conduct.

Board members are encouraged to resolve personal conflicts and discuss concerns with each other privately. If the conflict remains unresolved and there is a perceived violation proceed to step 1 below.

Step 1: Addressing a Violation

1. Private Conversation: Any board member who perceives a policy violation can address their concern directly with the member in question.
2. Referral to Board Chair: The Chair facilitates a private meeting, between between the complainant and the board member in question to discuss the perceived violation; the meeting is held in a private setting, recommendations may be made for additional training, and then the conversation is reported to the rest of the board.
3. Full Board Discussion: For serious or continuing violations, the matter will be brought before the full board at a scheduled regular meeting. The member in question will receive advance written notice and have an opportunity to respond.

Step 2: Review and Discussion

After review and discussion, the board may pursue one or more of the following remedies, as appropriate to the circumstances:

1. Issuing a statement regarding the board's interpretation of policies and any instances of noncompliance.
2. Removal from committees
3. Censuring the board member
4. Referral to law enforcement or another agency
5. Removing the board member (per state statute)

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. Let the Code of Ethics in [District Policy 209](#) guide you in navigating the complexities of governance with unwavering moral clarity and purposeful dedication.

Board Time Commitment

The time required to complete your board responsibilities will most likely 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 member of the school board, you are required to conduct all district business in strict compliance with state conflict of interest laws, ensuring that neither actual nor perceived impropriety undermines public trust. You must refrain from any personal financial involvement in district contracts, sales, or leases that you are authorized to influence, and you are prohibited from personally benefiting from such transactions. Should a situation arise where your interests intersect with district business, full disclosure is mandatory, and you must abstain from related decisions. In rare cases where statutory exceptions apply—such as contracts with certain financial institutions, official publications, or employment relationships—these must be handled transparently, with either unanimous or majority board approval as required, and thorough documentation of all relevant facts. Any exception must clearly serve the best interests of the district, and all procedures, including public disclosure and abstention from voting, must be rigorously followed. This commitment to transparency and integrity safeguards the district's reputation and ensures that all actions are taken solely for the benefit of students, staff, and the community. 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: [Board Policy 210 \(Conflict of Interest\)](#)

Working as a Board Team

At the foundation of our district's governance stands the school board, empowered by both statutory and constitutional mandate to guide the care, management, and control of our public schools. With diligence and prudence, the board embraces its mission to deliver the highest standards of public education, ensuring that every decision aligns with the ideals of excellence in education and achievement for all. Operating as a unified governing body, the board's authority is exercised collectively during official sessions, where each member's voice contributes to a shared vision for the district's future. Through careful stewardship of resources, adoption of policies, and oversight of administration, the school board safeguards the interests of students, staff, and the broader community. By upholding its legal and ethical responsibilities, the board not only manages the business and facilities of the district but also fosters opportunities for innovation, growth, and community engagement—advancing the educational journey for all.

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 school board oversees administration functions, adopts and revises policy, and is the final body for appealing administrative decisions.
- The school board shall govern the schools of the school 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 school 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 school 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 cocurricular 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: [Board Policy 201: Legal Status of the School Board](#)



Board Governance Model

The [MSBA Board Governance Model](#) 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.

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](#) developed by the MSBA. 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.

School Board Self-Evaluation

School Board self-evaluations can be an invaluable tool for assessing and enhancing the effectiveness of our governing body. This process allows us to reflect on our collective performance, identifying strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. Engaging in a self-evaluation enables us to gain insights into individual contributions and understand the dynamics and overall functioning of the board. It also fosters open communication, promotes accountability, and strengthens teamwork among board members. By participating in the process, we can gain insights that will empower us to make informed decisions, enhance our effectiveness in serving the community, and contribute to the continuous improvement of the board's performance and impact.

The Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools (PLSAS) board conducts a self-evaluation to understand how it's performing and to meet its goals. The board chair coordinates the self-evaluation process through MSBA School Board Self-Evaluation (SBSE). MSBA emails the SBSE instructions which includes a message and a link to the evaluation. The board and the superintendent complete the survey. An overview report will be compiled by MSBA and emailed to the superintendent and board prior to an in-service to review the report.

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

The superintendent contract, duties and evaluation along with job description is outlined in [Policy 304.](#)

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](#) 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. Each board member should review the superintendent's employment contract to determine the evaluation-related provisions, if any, that may be included. 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.

The school board evaluates and assesses, in writing, the performance of the superintendent at least once per year. The evaluation process is listed on the timeline listed in [Policy 304.](#)

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. 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. MSBA can help with a custom board in-service tailored to the board's specific situation.

Guidelines for Interacting Outside a Board Meeting

- **Do Not Discuss Board Business.** Focus on topics such as general education trends, personal updates, or board training and development without steering into specifics of pending decisions or board business.
- **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 – Policy 205: Open Meetings and Closed Meetings](#)

Situation	District Protocol
I have general questions about board governance and/or operation.	Inquire with Board Chair; reference orientation manual/handbook
I have a concern or questions regarding board governance.	Inquire with Board Chair
I have a concern or questions regarding district operations.	Inquire with Superintendent

Communication with the Superintendent

You need to establish a productive working relationship with the superintendent. 1:1 monthly meetings will be scheduled with the superintendent. 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.

Situation	District Protocol
I have general questions about the district.	Inquire with Superintendent
What if I disagree with a report or presentation to the board from the superintendent or other staff member?	Have discussion with Superintendent and Board Chair

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. Some board members have indicated their significant others frequently take the lead in speaking to their children's teachers. 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

Communication Protocols and Messages sent to Board Members

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.
- Do not attempt to work 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.

A communication sent to the entire board will be responded to by the board chair with the remainder of the board cc'ed.

Situation	District Protocol
If I get a phone call, email, or stopped in public from a constituent with concerns regarding the district.	Thank them for their inquiry and if further action is needed, refer the matter to the Superintendent who will address accordingly
If I get a phone call, email, or stopped in public from a constituent regarding the board's decisions.	Thank them for their inquiry and if further action is needed, refer the matter to the Board Chair who will address accordingly
If I get an email that is addressed to the entire board with concerns from a constituent.	Allow the Board Chair to reply on behalf of the entire Board.
There is a situation that requires the district's legal counsel to be contacted.	Refer this matter to the Superintendent who will address accordingly

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.

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.

Associated Policies:

- [Policy 612.1 – Development of Parent and Family Engagement Policies for Title I Programs](#)
- [Policy 202: School Board Officers and Membership](#)

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.	All questions are directed to the superintendent's office or the Director of Communications. If the Chair chooses to make a statement on behalf of the board, he/she should work with the Communications director and the full board to agree on the statement within the specified time frame.

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. 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.	Contact the Director of Communications
I saw a post containing false or misleading information regarding the board or district.	Share this information with the Board Chair and/or the Superintendent and they will address accordingly

Personal vs. Official Use for Social Media for Public Officials (MSBA)

Using a District Email

Email Communication Protocols

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 compliance with the Minnesota Open Meeting Law ([Minn. Statute 13D](#)), one-way communications to the School Board shall be distributed by the Board Chair, Superintendent, senior leadership, or the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and School Board.

Example:

- Subject Line: "DO NOT REPLY ALL" (Subject)
- To: Leave Empty
- CC: Superintendent, Senior Leader and any additional appropriate individuals
- BCC: schoolboard@plsas.org

Avoid:

- Reply all
- Emails constituting a serial meeting
- Using BCC: in Individual Board Member communication

In general, all non-governance questions and concerns should follow a chain of command when being addressed. The proper chain of command for non-staff constituents is teacher, principal, superintendent, then the school board. For staff, the first step in the chain of command is their supervisor. The superintendent should be the first chain of command when an issue involves multiple schools or when the issue is unresolved after already contacting a principal.

Situation	District Protocol
I have questions regarding an email I received from the board chair or superintendent.	Share your questions directly with the Board Chair and/or Superintendent
Another board member emailed me regarding board business.	Confer with MSBA
I have important information that everyone on the board needs to know before the next board meeting.	This information can be shared with the Board Chair and Superintendent to determine if and how this information will be shared with the entire Board

Associated Policies:

- [Policy 205: Open Meetings and Closed Meetings](#)
- [Policy 215: Electronic Communications](#)

References for Further Information

- [All district policies](#)
- [A copy of most recent school board self-evaluation](#)
- [The Superintendent's Job Description](#)
- [PLSAS School Finance Guide](#)
- [Legal Requirements for School Board Members](#)
- [MSBA's Board Development and Recognition Program](#)
- [MSBA Legal Requirements for School Board Members](#)
- [MSBA Common Acronyms Used in Education](#)
- [MSBA Glossary of Educational Terms](#)
- [MSBA School Finance Guide](#)
- [MDE – School Finance Reports](#)
- [MN House Research – Minnesota School Finance: A Guide for Legislators](#)

Board Meetings and Governance

Types of Meetings

Regular Board Meeting

Regular meetings of the board are held according to an established schedule. The schedule must be kept on the district website. No additional notice required unless the date, time, or place of the regular meeting is changed. [Minn. Stat. 13D.04, Subd. 1](#). At business meetings, boards take action on policies, contracts, bid awards, personnel appointments, etc. This meeting may be a regular, a special, or an emergency meeting. Regular Board Meetings are recorded and live streamed on the PLSAS Youtube page.

Associated Policy: [Policy 203.2: Order of the Regular School Board Meeting](#)

Board Study Session

Study sessions are for board members to receive detailed reports, for district staff to introduce recommendations, and also provides time for the board to discuss topics prior to board action. Board members should utilize this time to ask clarifying questions, and request additional information. Work sessions are recorded and live streamed. This meeting may be a regular or a special meeting.

Associated Policy: [Policy 203.3: Order of the Study Session Meeting](#)

Retreat/Workshop

This is a leadership team meeting for board members and the superintendent, often led by a professional facilitator and dealing with evaluation and/or development issues. This is usually a special meeting.

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](#).

Meetings Cancelled Due to Weather

If a meeting is canceled due to inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances, it will be rescheduled to the next business day, same location and time if two members of the board can make it to the board meeting place, as per Roberts Rules of Order. If two board members are unavailable a special meeting will be scheduled.

Committee Meetings

Board committee meetings are covered by the OML. Other committee meetings that include board members may also be covered by the OML. [Minn. Stat. 13D.01, Subd. 1](#).

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/clerk and treasurer
- Setting the dates, time, and location(s) for regular board meetings
- Setting board member compensation
- Establishing standing committees and committee members
- Passing a Resolution for Combined Polling Places (only if changing from the one on file)
- Determining time, place, and manner for public comments
- Designating district depositories
- Selecting the official newspaper and the district's legal counsel

Associated Policy: [Policy 203.4 – Organizational Meeting](#)

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 and, in general, meetings of its committees and subcommittees. 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.

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

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](#).

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

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.](#)

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

Meeting Operations

Attendance at Meetings

All board members are expected to attend all meetings. However, it is recognized scheduling conflicts will occur. If you know in advance you will not be at a meeting, please email or call the board chair. Board members may participate by interactive technology as permitted by [Minnesota Statute 13D.02](#). Minutes will reflect you attended virtually.

Location of Meetings

All board meetings are held at the District Services Center, located at 4540 Tower Street SE in Prior Lake, MN. The meetings are held in the board room/large conference room.

Addressing Others

When addressing others, during regular board meetings – it is appropriate to use official titles followed by last name:

Chair (last name)	Vice Chair (last name)	Director (last name)
Superintendent (last name)	Principal (last name)	Assistant (last name)
etc.		

Addressing others during work sessions – it is appropriate to use first names.

Presentations

Presenters at board meetings will address the entire board prior to their presentation. There will be a question and answer period at the end of the presentation.

If a board member requests a certain presenter to speak to the board, it should be brought to the board chair and the superintendent's attention and they will use their discretion to schedule it.

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 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

Regular and Organizational Board Meetings shall be conducted according to Minnesota Statute where applicable and then by Robert's Rules of Order.

Associated Policies:

- [Policy 203 – Board Operating Norms](#)
- [Policy 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/clerk will perform the duties of the chair. Should both the chair and vice-chair/clerk be 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.

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 should meet as often as necessary to accomplish their work and should meet only when there is substantive work to be done.

The board committee representation is assigned at the organizational meeting in January.

The 2026 school board committees are listed in this [link](#).

- Associated Policy – [Policy 213 – 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.

Election of Officers Procedure

- The acting chair asks for nominations. Any member of the board may nominate any other board member, and nominations do not require a second.
- If no other nominations are immediately offered, the acting chair should pause and repeat the call for nominations.
- The acting chair should again pause and repeat the call for nominations a third time to ensure that any board members wishing to make a nomination has ample opportunity to do so.
- After the third call for nominations, if no other nominations are forthcoming, the acting chair should close the nomination for the office.

Script for the Nomination Procedure

- Acting Chair: "Nominations are now in order for the office of chair."
- Director _____: "I nominate Director _____."
- Acting Chair: "The Acting Chair recognizes Director _____ as being nominated to Chair. Are there any other nominations for the office of chair?"
- Acting Chair: "Are there any further nominations for the office of chair?"
- Acting Chair: "Are there any further nominations for the office of chair?"
- Acting Chair: "If there are no further nominations ... [pause] ...Hearing none, nominations for the office of chair are closed."

Script for Voting Procedure

All votes must be recorded as required by Minnesota's Open Meeting Law

1. If a single nomination
 - Acting Chair: " Director _____ is the only candidate nominated for the office of chair for the school board for _____, and I hereby declare him to be elected by acclamation and direct the acting clerk to record the minutes. MOVE TO STEP 3
2. If multiple nominations, vote is required and will be in the order of the nominations
 - Acting Chair: "If there are no further nominations ... [pause] ...Hearing none, nominations for the office of chair are closed."
 - Acting Chair: This will require a roll call vote as we have _____ number of candidates. I will call on you individually, starting on the end of the table, and indicate your preference for the position of _____."

Roll call vote proceeds, with each board member verbally indicating their choice.

The votes are tallied aloud. by the acting chair.

Acting Chair: "Director _____ received a majority of the votes cast and is elected chair of the school board for the _____ calendar year." **MOVE TO STEP 3**

3. The newly elected chair then immediately moves seats and assumes the duties of the presiding officer and conducts the election of other officers following the same procedure. A recess will be held after the elections of the other officers to take their proper seating positions.

For more information regarding officer elections, see

- [MSBA's First Monday in January Handbook](#)

Associated Policies:

- [Policy 202: School Board Officers and Membership](#)
- [Policy 203.4: Organizational Meeting](#)



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](#) 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.

Associated Policies:

[Policy 203 – Board Operating Norms](#)

[Policy 203.1 – School Board Procedures-Rules of Order](#)

[Policy 203.5 – School Board Meeting Agenda.](#)

Parliamentary Authority During Meetings

Robert's Rules of Order will govern the board in its deliberations of "Action Items" during Regular and Organizational Board Meetings. The board must discuss and vote on each "Action Item" one motion at a time. All motions that require a second, shall receive a second prior to discussion or debate. The member that makes the motion, has the first opportunity to speak to the motion. Additional members may speak to the motion, by raising their hand to request the floor. When a member has the floor, no other member shall interrupt unless allowed per Robert's Rules. Once a motion has been made and received a second, all discussion should be focused on the motion that is on the table.

Motion: A member makes a motion or the chair may ask for a motion & a second

Second: Another member seconds the motion

Restate Motion: The chair restates the motion

Discuss/Debate: The members debate/discuss the motion

Vote: The chair restates motion and asks for affirmative votes, and then negative votes

Announce Vote: The chair announces the results of the vote

Public Comments to the Board & Data Privacy

The school board provides an Open Forum during its meetings, allowing individuals to address the board on various topics within certain guidelines. A sign-up sheet is made available at the meeting site at least 10 minutes before the start, and up to five individuals may speak for a maximum of three minutes each. The board chair oversees the forum, recognizing speakers one at a time and maintaining order by ruling out comments from those not called upon. Disruptions, interruptions, or failure to follow these rules may result in individuals being asked to leave the meeting.

Certain topics are restricted from public discussion, including those involving data privacy, preliminary allegations, or potentially libelous or slanderous content, which the board will handle in accordance with applicable laws. Discussions or comments that violate privacy laws or include personal attacks are not permitted and may terminate the speaker's privilege. Additionally, to maintain a respectful environment, signage such as flags or banners is not allowed within the meeting room, and individuals refusing to comply with these expectations may be directed to leave. The board retains discretion to impose further restrictions as necessary.

Associated Policies:

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

[Policies 406 – Public and Private Personnel Data](#)

[Policy 515 – Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records](#)

Agendas and Minutes

Agenda Procedures

The school board will conduct its business at meetings using an agenda developed to facilitate efficient and effective advancement of board work and district goals. The agenda acts as a structured guide for the meeting, outlining items such as reports, presentations, discussions, and action items. All board members are expected to review the agenda and any supporting materials prior to the meeting.

The board chair and vice-chair, in collaboration with the superintendent, are responsible for preparing the meeting agenda. Board members wishing to place an item on the agenda must submit their request to the board chair. This item should include the purpose, desired action, and relevant background information. The chair and superintendent will determine whether to include the requested item on the tentative agenda.

A draft agenda will be distributed to all board members seven days before the scheduled meeting, with supporting documents provided upon finalization. Board members are encouraged to submit questions or seek clarification on agenda items by 12:00 p.m. (noon) on the Friday prior to the meeting; responses will be shared with the entire board. While questions may arise during the meeting, staff are not required to provide immediate answers to questions not submitted in advance, but these questions should not impede discussion or board action. Any unanswered questions raised during the meeting will be addressed by the superintendent or designee and shared with the board before the next meeting.

Changes to the agenda, including additions, may only be made through a motion adopted at the meeting. Any such changes and related actions will be documented in the meeting minutes. Board members will be notified of updates to the agenda or supporting materials through BoardBook or a similar notification system.

In compliance with the Open Meeting Law, copies of all printed and electronic materials relating to agenda items will be available in the meeting room for public inspection during the meeting.

Associated Policies:

- [Policy 203.1 School Board Procedures–Rules of Order](#)
- [Policy 203.5 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 and are considered to be routine in nature. 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 – [Policy 203.6 Consent Agenda](#)

Meeting Minutes

Minutes will be carefully recorded and will be maintained per Minnesota Statute, to include all actions of the board and all votes taken at a board meeting by the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and School Board. Minutes do not include discussion or editorial comments.

Minutes from the previous month are included in the consent agenda at the next business meeting. The approved minutes are housed on the district website and physical copies are stored in the superintendent's office.

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



References for Further Information

- [Previous Meeting Minutes](#)
- [MSBA Sample Board Meeting Agenda](#)
- [MSBA School Board Ceremonial Oath of Office](#)
- [MSBA Guidelines with Meeting Minutes](#)
- [MSBA First Monday in January Booklet](#) (regarding the Organizational Meeting)
- [MSBA Parliamentary Procedure Overview](#)