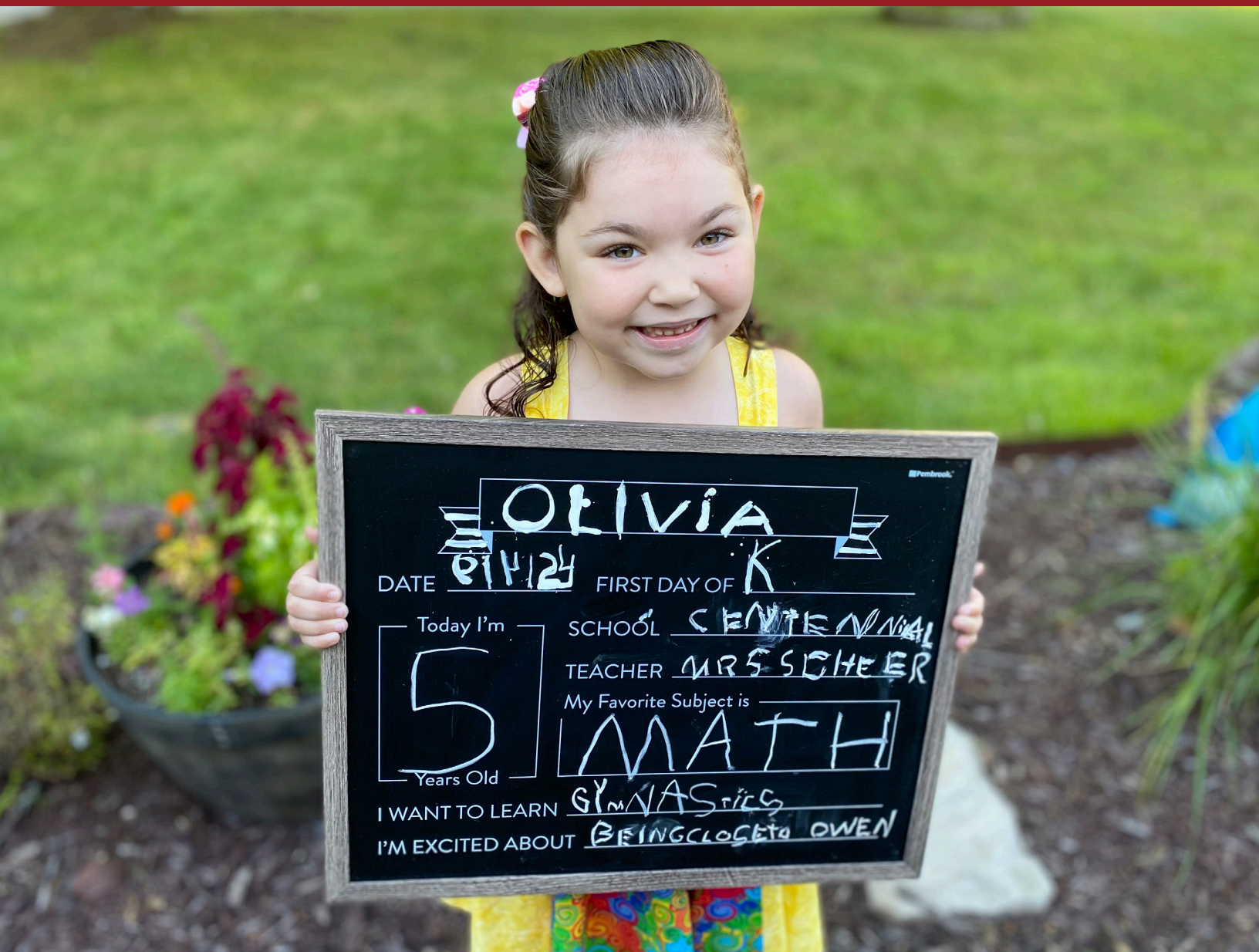
RICHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Board Member Handbook





Contents

Introduction 1

- About the School Board
- School Boards in Minnesota

RPS Beliefs & Values 2

Becoming a School Board Member 3

- Filling Vacancies

Board Member Role & Responsibilities 4

Expectations for Board Members 5

Board vs. Administration Responsibilities 7

Addressing Questions & Concerns 8

Election of Board Officers 9

Board Officer Roles 10

Types of School Board Meetings 11

Board Meeting Norms 12

What Happens at School Board Meetings 13

Voting Procedures 15

Public Comment 16

Annual Board Reports & Presentations 17

Student Board Representatives 18

Policy Review 19

- Policy Review Timeline
- Input Process
- Policy Revisions
- Writing New Policies

Represent-a-School & Board Liaison Assignments 21

Superintendent Evaluation 22

References & Other Relevant Board Policies 23

Introduction

Introduction

This handbook is intended as a comprehensive guide for new school board members of Richfield Public Schools. It can also be used to advise prospective school board candidates and to inform the community about how the school board functions. Note: In Richfield, the terms “school board” and “board of education” can be used interchangeably.

About the School Board

The Richfield Public School District is governed by a six-member school board. Each member is elected at large and serves alternating four-year terms. Board members elected in the years 2025 and 2027 will serve three-year terms. Elections are currently held in November of years ending with an odd number. School board members receive a monthly $600 stipend in exchange for their public service. There is an additional $300 per year for the member serving as clerk and $900 per year for the member serving as chair.

The board has approved a resolution to transition to even-year school board elections. Board members elected in the years 2025 and 2027 will serve three-year terms. Elections after 2027 will be held in even years. Beginning with the election of 2028, board member terms will revert to four years.

The school board is responsible for setting the District vision and goals, monitoring progress and ensuring accountability. The school board creates and updates District policies. The school board hires, directs and evaluates the superintendent. School board members are required to attend training in governance, school finance and education law. School board members are expected to prepare for and attend board meetings twice per month and additional committee meetings as needed. The school board votes on which of its members should fulfill the roles of chair, vice chair, clerk and treasurer.

School Boards in Minnesota

From MSBA 2024 Candidate’s Guide to School Board Elections: “Serving on a school board is more than just a volunteer role; it’s a chance to make a lasting impact on the success of each student. More than 2,400 dedicated individuals serve as school board members for Minnesota’s 331 public school districts. Every two years, board members are elected by voters for their local district to govern with integrity for a term of four years.”

From MSBA Qualifications and Characteristics of Being a School Board Member: “The governance of local school districts by elected individuals lies at the core of American democracy and the public education system, with board members chosen by voters every two years to represent their communities on local school boards. These elected officials are entrusted with the responsibility of reflecting the values and needs of their local communities. Public schools are uniquely positioned to serve all students across the United States without exception, ensuring that every child has access to a quality education. In doing so, they prepare young people to become informed and engaged citizens who contribute to the vitality of one of the world’s oldest continuous democracies.”

RPS Beliefs & Values

Our mission is to inspire and empower each individual to learn, grow and excel. As outlined in our strategic plan, all learners have access to rigorous learning opportunities. We strive to have all students achieve high-level academic outcomes that are not predictable by race, culture, socioeconomic status, language, gender, ethnicity or any other characteristic. Learners–both students and staff–will acquire an awareness of their own identity, value others’ similarities and differences, and gain a deep understanding of how all of us intersect with our global society.

We believe:

- in inspiring our students to grow, adapt and discover their place in the world
- all children have a right to quality education, high standards, rigorous curriculum and powerful instruction
- in providing instruction that supports the different ways people learn
- that valuing our diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives fosters unity and empowers all
- the collective efforts of students, home, school and community form the foundations for excellence
- that core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility will be modeled, taught and nurtured
- it is everyone’s responsibility to provide a safe, supportive and engaging environment

We will:

- provide a high-quality, competitive educational program
- accelerate achievement for ALL students
- engage family and community members as partners
- ensure an environment where ALL belong



Becoming a School Board Member

To be eligible for election to a Minnesota public school board, a candidate must:

- Be at least 21 years old at the time the term begins.
- Have resided in the school district for at least 30 days prior to the election.
- Be an eligible voter, which includes being a U.S. citizen.
- Not be convicted of a felony without having civil rights restored. You cannot run for school board if you are on the Predatory Offenders Registration list.
- Have no other affidavit on file for another election office — other than township board — during the same election.

Candidates must file affidavits of candidacy during the designated period, usually in late July to mid-August. Filing paperwork and the filing fee must be mailed or delivered in person to the school district election clerk (typically the assistant to the superintendent) at the District Office.

Candidates who receive contributions or make expenditures of more than $750 in a calendar year must submit an initial report within 14 days after reaching that threshold and again 10 days before the General Election and 30 days after the election. A Certification of Filing is due within seven days after the election.

The school board will canvass the election results within 3-14 days after the election. If elected, a candidate will receive a Certificate of Election. The District will provide a day of onboarding sometime during the month of December, which includes the official oath and acceptance of office. New board members will be ceremonially sworn in at the first meeting in January.

Filling Vacancies (Source: MN Statute 123B.09)

A vacancy on the school board occurs when a member dies, resigns, or ceases to be a resident of Independent School District #280. In addition, if a school board member is unable to serve on the board and attend its meetings for ninety (90) days or more because of illness or prolonged absence from the District, the board may declare a vacancy. All vacancies will be filled according to Minnesota Statutes. In some cases, this is an appointment by the board, and in some cases, a special election is required.

Minnesota Statute states that once the board approves an appointment, the appointed board member cannot be seated until 30 days after the appointment.

Board Member Role & Responsibilities

From MSBA Qualifications and Characteristics of Being a School Board Member: “School boards serve as the guiding leadership bodies for public school districts, with a primary role in shaping the educational vision and goals of the district. They work closely with their communities to set a strategic direction, ensuring that long-term educational goals are clearly defined and pursued. This involves making high-level decisions that influence the future of education within their jurisdiction.”

School boards are most effective when they focus on the big picture:

- Setting vision and goals, monitoring progress, holding accountability
- Making effective policy and ensuring policies are faithfully implemented
- Engaging stakeholders across and within the community

School boards delegate the statutory management of the school district to the superintendent.

School boards hire, direct, and evaluate the performance of the superintendent who handles the day-to-day management of the school district, along with the administration.

The school board is responsible for:

- Monitoring student achievement and educational programs
- Aligning resources with goals through budgeting
- Ensuring facilities are safe and adequate for students and staff
- Approving collectively bargained employee contracts
- Collaborating with community partners through meaningful engagements and communication
- Serving as advocates for public education

No one person, or group of persons, acts in the name of the school board. When an item of business comes before the school board in the form of a motion, it is necessary that a majority of votes be cast in favor of the motion for the board to act. Members of the board do not have the authority to act independently as individual board members. Once a motion has been passed by the board, all board members are expected to stand behind that action, even if they did not individually vote in favor of it.

Expectations for Board Members

Training

School board members must attend required training in governance, school finance, and education law issues. Generally, this includes MSBA's Phase I and Phase II workshops in the first year on the board, and subsequent training on an optional or as-needed basis. MSBA officers' training is recommended for board members who take on officer roles.

Meetings

The board holds two meetings per month (only one in July). Meetings are typically held at 7 p.m. on the first and third Monday of each month, though a few meetings each year will either be held on a Tuesday night or on a different Monday due to holidays and other scheduling needs. Board members are expected to attend each meeting either in person or virtually and to communicate about any absences to the superintendent as far in advance as possible. When board members are absent from a meeting, it is recommended to catch up by watching the YouTube recording at their convenience.

Study sessions are scheduled as needed, typically 2-4 times per year, often in the hour preceding a regular board meeting.

School board members are expected to prepare for board meetings by reading the draft packet and providing advance notice of questions when possible. Board members should read the policies up for review and provide suggestions on the first or second read of the policy, rather than the third (board policies are typically brought to the board for three meetings in a row before the board votes on any changes).

Liaison Assignments

Board members are expected to maintain connections to their designated RPS school and their board liaison assignments. It is not a requirement to attend every meeting of their liaison groups, but to generally stay informed and give the board relevant updates. Board members may also be asked to attend other school or district events, such as the high school graduation ceremony.

Obligations

School board members have a legal obligation to comply with all federal, state and local laws relating to work as a school board member, as well as all policies approved by the school board and all regulations published by the Minnesota Department of Education and other state and federal agencies. School board members must avoid conflicts of interest and refrain from using a school board position for personal gain. School board members must protect confidential information that is shared.

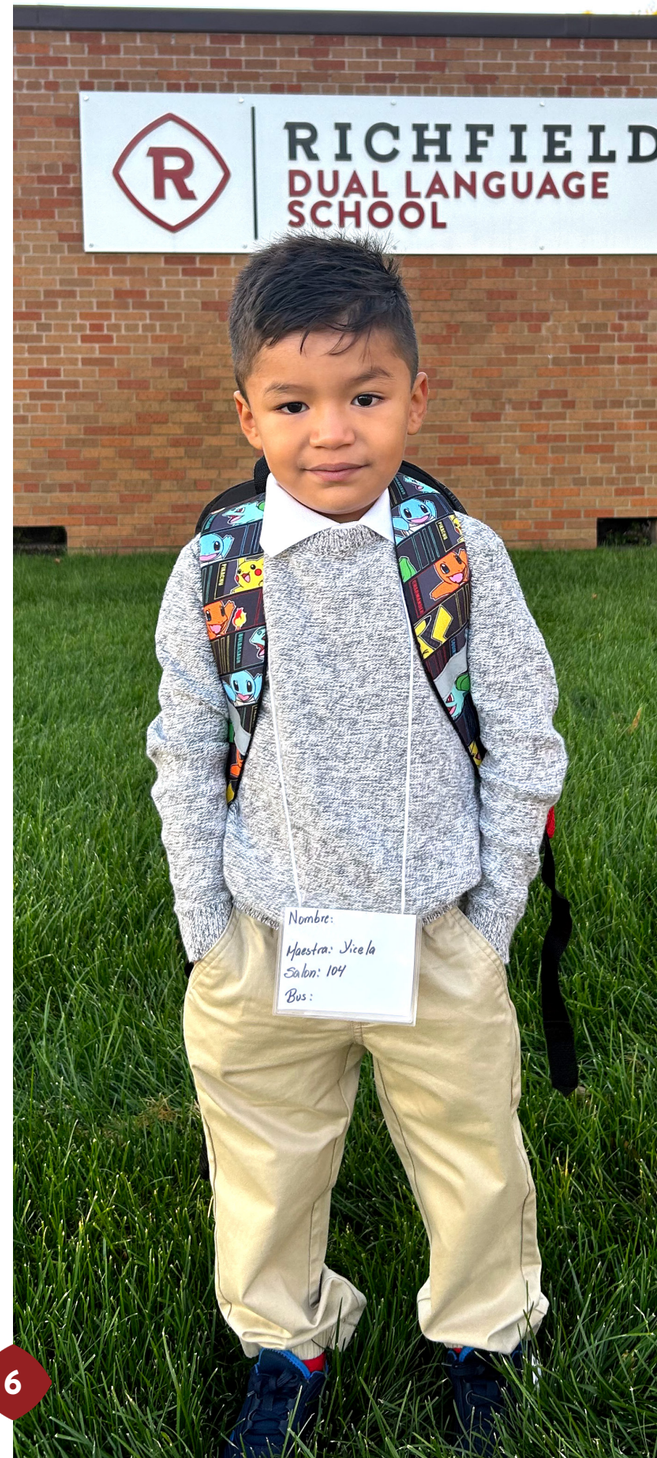
Open Meeting Law

Open meeting law (Minn. Stat. § 13D.05) outlines the requirement that a quorum (4 or more board members) may not meet or discuss any form of District business without it being considered a public meeting. School board members are expected to refrain from discussing District business, even with a smaller group of board members, without public knowledge. Typically, the RPS board does not meet in groups larger than 2 or send emails/texts to the full group, regardless of the topic.

Conduct

School board embers are expected to behave professionally and respectfully, to be generally accessible to the public of Richfield, and to be available to speak with the superintendent as needed and within reason. This includes the following:

- Respect the rights of others to have and express opinions
- Strive to provide the best possible education for all students in RPS
- Support the decision of the board, even if a board member's own position concerning the issue was different
- Recognize the integrity of school board predecessors and associates and appreciate their work
- Make no disparaging remarks, in or out of school board meetings, about other members of the school board, the superintendent, or their opinions
- Respect and thank members of the RPS community who bring forward concerns to individual board members and/or to the entire board during public comment
- Communicate individually with the superintendent on a regular basis
- Direct concerns from community members through appropriate channels and respond to the community members in a timely manner
- Read and respond to emails from the school board secretary



Board vs. Administration Responsibilities

	School Board	Superintendent/Administration
Board Policy	Review, revise, and ratify board policies based on recommendations from the superintendent.	Provide recommendations for policy updates and implement policies throughout the District.
Hiring, Supervision, and Evaluation of Staff	Hire, supervise, and evaluate the superintendent.	Hire, supervise, and evaluate all other staff.
Questions and Concerns Brought to Board Members by Community Members	Address questions and concerns related to board agenda items and the superintendent. Direct other questions to the appropriate administrator.	Address community questions and concerns that have been forwarded from board members. Direct questions to the appropriate administrator. Report resolution back to the board.
Budget and Finance	Annually approve the overall District budget, as well as specific contracts and purchases that require board approval.	Manage the budget and all decision-making regarding resources within the approved budget parameters. Bring recommendations to the board.
Community Input	Identify decisions that need input from the community and direct the administration to acquire feedback.	Establish methods for gaining demographically representative input from students, staff, and families on decisions as needed.
Legislative Advocacy	Advocate for the District and public education as a whole with lawmakers.	Advocate for the District with lawmakers. Provide background information to board members on issues that require advocacy.
Curriculum Selection	Approve policies that guide curriculum selection processes.	Review and select curriculum materials with appropriate stakeholder input and ensure they are implemented with fidelity.
Strategic Goals	Set the vision of the District and approve a strategic plan.	Take action to implement the board's vision and achieve strategic plan goals. Report back to the public with data related to goals.
Board Meetings	Regularly attend board meetings and provide input to the creation of the agenda as appropriate. Vote on action items.	Regularly attend board meetings and create the agenda in consultation with the board. Prepare all reports to inform the board with recommendations.

Addressing Questions & Concerns

Situations & Best Practices for Board Response

General Guidance for When a Board Member is Contacted with a Concern

- Get contact information for the person who has reached out.
- Attempt to understand the concern, but do not make any commitments other than to communicate about the concern with the superintendent if necessary.
- Do not agree to confidentiality.
- Be available for contact in the future if redirecting the person to the appropriate staff member.
- Notify the superintendent if the issue cannot be addressed by redirecting the person to the appropriate staff member.
- Thank the person for coming forward with their concern.

A Board Member is Contacted with a Concern

- If contacted by **a student**, redirect them to the principal or assistant principal and notify the superintendent.
- If contacted by **a parent/guardian**, redirect them to the teacher, principal, or administrator and notify the superintendent.
- If contacted by **a staff member**, redirect them to their supervisor and notify the superintendent.
- If contacted by **a community member** who does not fall into any of the above categories, such as a Richfield resident, redirect them to the appropriate management team member and notify the superintendent.
- If the person indicates they have already spoken to the appropriate staff member and their concern has not been addressed, connect them directly with the superintendent via email or by taking a message for follow-up.

A Board Member is Contacted by Email

- It is important to send an acknowledgment email to the person who emailed, thanking them for reaching out and letting them know that their concern has been forwarded to the superintendent. If the entire board has been copied on the message, the chair will take the lead in responding (though individual board members can choose to respond as well). DO NOT REPLY ALL!

Misinformation About the District, School Board, or a School Board Member on Social Media

- As a school board member, it is not generally advised to engage in social media debates and criticisms.
- Contact the superintendent directly to make them aware of the issue so that the appropriate staff person can quickly provide factual information on the social media platform, if warranted, or so that any safety or confidentiality concerns can be addressed.

Election of Board Officers

The school board meets annually on the first Monday in January or as soon after as practical, and elects a chair, vice chair, clerk and treasurer. This is called the organizational meeting. The previously appointed chair continues to serve as the chair until a new chair has been selected.

The new chair officiates the selection of vice chair, clerk and treasurer. Unless removed by the board from their position, the officers will hold office for one year and until their successors are elected by the board.

The chair must call for nominations for each role three times. The board can elect officers with a majority vote, or if there is only one nominated board member after three calls for nominations, the officer can be elected by acclamation.

In Richfield, the board has typically followed a tradition of electing the same board chair for two years in a row in order to maintain continuity, and then electing the vice chair as the next chair following those two years. However, the board has the authority at the organizational meeting to elect any board member for any board officer role with a majority vote.



Board Officer Roles

Duties of the Chair

- Lead all board meetings and ensure the meetings are run efficiently.
- Assist in setting board agendas.
- Serve as a spokesperson for the board in communications with other organizations and the media.
- Perform various ceremonial duties, including speaking on behalf of the board at various District functions.
- Serve as board liaison in communications with the superintendent.
- Coordinate the annual superintendent evaluation process.
- Hold responsibility for board member discipline if necessary.
- Lead the superintendent contract negotiations process (typically every 3 years).
- Perform other duties as are required by law.

Duties of the Vice Chair

- Serve as chair in the absence of the chair.
- Support the annual superintendent evaluation process.
- Support the superintendent contract negotiations process (typically every 3 years).
- Serve on behalf of the chair as requested by the chair.

Duties of the Clerk

- Sign board documents, including employee contracts and approved board resolutions.
- Perform other duties as required by law.
- Clerk Duties that are Delegated to the Board Secretary:
  - Keep a record of the proceedings of the board.
  - Keep on file all reports, communications, papers and documents relating to the business of the board.
  - Issue notices of board meetings.
  - Maintain responsibility for the annual school board election and any other elections called by the board.

Duties of the Treasurer

- Sign all financial documents requiring board signature.
- Perform other duties as required by law.

Types of School Board Meetings

Regular Meetings

Typically, regular meetings of the school board are held on the first and third Mondays of each month at 7 p.m. in the boardroom of the District Office. A schedule of the regular meetings of the school board is approved by the board in May or June for the following school year and is posted on the District website. Board members may attend meetings in person or virtually through Google Meet. Meetings are open to the public and livestreamed on the District YouTube channel.

If a board member attends a meeting virtually, there are some additional requirements. All board members must still be able to see and hear each other throughout the meeting. The reason for remote participation must be stated in the meeting minutes. When there is a virtual participant, all board votes must be taken by roll call. At least one board member must be present in the boardroom.

Study Sessions

Study sessions are scheduled as needed, typically 2-4 times per year. They are technically regular meetings of the board and must be open to the public. However, no board action takes place at these meetings, so no meeting minutes are recorded. The agenda for the study session is posted online. Some study sessions are livestreamed, such as legislative study sessions with local legislators or the Richfield city council and informational study sessions about running for school board. Other study sessions, such as opportunities for the board to engage in professional development, are not typically livestreamed. The RPS board has also typically held a board retreat once every few years, which is a longer meeting that is also considered a study session.

Closed Sessions

Meetings can only be closed for specific legal reasons. The most common that occur are for labor negotiations strategy or for superintendent evaluation. Closed sessions typically occur at the end of a regular board meeting. During a closed session, the board will move into a different conference room within the District Office. The audio from closed sessions is often recorded, as specified in Minnesota statute, and minutes from the closed session must be taken.

Special Meetings

Special meetings only occur when the board needs to take action on something between regular meetings. Special meetings must have 3 days published notice with the specific items to be discussed. Only the item specified in the notice may be discussed at the meeting.

Board Meeting Norms

- The board follows Robert's Rules of Order as its Parliamentary Procedure.
- Board members typically address each other as "Chair [Last Name]" or "Director [Last Name]" during board meetings. This is respectful while also keeping the focus on the individual's role as a board member, rather than any other titles they may have earned.
- The RPS board has typically maintained a relatively informal and relaxed atmosphere during board meetings. It is not necessary to raise a hand in order to speak or to point out mistakes in parliamentary procedure. Board members simply take turns speaking and support each other with reminders of proper procedure when necessary.
- Board members should not expect immediate, on-the-spot answers to questions that have not been brought up in advance of the meeting. It is common for district leaders and the superintendent to call upon each other to answer questions in their area of expertise and to circle back to the board with answers at a later date.



What Happens at School Board Meetings

According to Policy 208: Open Meeting and Closed Meetings, the general order of business at regular board meetings is as follows:

I. CALL TO ORDER: The chair calls the meeting to order.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The board must vote to approve the agenda. Later changes to the agenda cannot occur without an additional vote.

III. INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS -- NON-ACTION ITEMS

A. Receiving of Delegations: Includes Public Comment as well as any special guests being recognized. Commendations typically occur as the last item in Information and Proposals - Non-action Items.

B. Reports and Information from School Sources: Part of the "Superintendent Update" in the meeting agenda. The principal or building leader of each school presents to the board once per year. These presentations typically occur at the first meeting of the month.

C. Communications from Non-School Sources: Part of the "Superintendent Update" in the meeting agenda. Directors also present to the board at least once per year, and there are a few coordinators/ supervisors who make an annual report as well. These presentations, as well as any presentations by the superintendent or from outside consultants, occur after the school presentations in the meeting agenda.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Routine Matters: The minutes from the previous board meeting are always included in Routine Matters, along with the financial statements from the previous meeting, and the most current financial statements. Investment holdings are included once per month. A year-to-date finance update is typically included once per month. Once per year, in July, several additional documents are included in Routine Matters, including designating the individuals who can sign financial documents for the district and complete wire transfers, approving the official newspaper, legal counsel, and associations we will be working with, approving the board secretary role, and designating the identified official with authority for MDE approvals.

B. Personnel Items: The personnel items are included for approval at each meeting. The public information is included in the board packet, and the board members receive a separate document with confidential information related to the personnel items (such as resignation and leave of absence request letters).

Other items could be included in the consent agenda on occasion, such as approval of contracts for food service vendors, etc.

V. OLD BUSINESS: Old business means items for board review or action that appeared on the agenda of a prior meeting but have not yet been approved. Most board meetings will have second and third reads of board policies that have already been brought to the board for a first read at a prior meeting. Other items that sometimes take more than one meeting to approve include the RPS legislative platform, represent-a-school and board liaison assignments, board honorarium, board meeting calendar, etc.

VI. NEW BUSINESS: New business means items for board review or action that have not appeared on a prior meeting agenda.

Items that may appear under new business include: the annual budget; authorizations for large purchases; authorization for a board member to be employed on a casual/temporary basis; bid awards; change orders; contracts, collective bargaining agreements and pay rates; cooperative sponsorship agreements; the district calendar; insurance renewals; levy certifications; required election-related actions; resolutions discontinuing positions; resolutions supporting grants; and more.

The first read of a policy for review appears in new business. Donations are typically the last item under new business.

VII. ADVANCE PLANNING

A. Legislative Update: The superintendent and/or the board member assigned as a liaison to the Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD) will provide the board with a quick update of any relevant legislative actions occurring federally or at the state level.

B. Information and Questions from Board: The board can use this opportunity to bring up any topic they want to inform the board about. Generally, any information that board members are bringing to the full board from professional development opportunities or from board liaison groups would be shared at this time.

C. Suggested Agenda Items: The board can use this opportunity to ask for future board discussion on a topic.

D. Future Meeting Dates: The chair will announce the next two board meeting dates as well as any study sessions occurring within that time window.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT: The chair adjourns the meeting. If a closed session is needed, it would occur before the adjournment.

Voting Procedures

Step 1: Any board member can make a motion by saying, “I move to approve…”. The chair typically does not make motions, but they have the ability to do so.

Step 2: Another board member seconds the motion.

Step 3: The chair will state who made the motion and the second and call for any further discussion before the vote.

Step 4: The board will vote. Typically, the chair will say, “All in favor, please say ‘aye,’” and “all opposed, please say ‘nay,’” in order to indicate when the board members should vote. If a roll call vote is required because a board member is participating virtually, the chair will call on each board member individually to say “aye” or “nay.” The RPS board also follows this procedure of polling the board members individually for action items that are presented as a formal resolution.

Step 5: The chair will state their own vote and whether or not the motion passed or item was approved. A motion passes if the majority of the board votes in favor.

Abstentions

A board member can abstain from voting on an item, but they should only do this if they have a potential conflict of interest related to the item. As a matter of courtesy, the board member should state upfront that they plan to abstain from the vote before the vote occurs. In determining whether a motion passes, any abstentions count with the majority of votes.

Exceptions

There are a few special cases in which a 2/3 majority is required for a vote to pass, such as the approval of donations to the District. A unanimous vote is required in a few cases, such as the initial hire of a teacher who is related to a board member. An authorization for a board member to be employed by the District on a casual/temporary basis must pass with a majority of votes at a meeting when all board members are present.

Other Motions

When there is a motion but the board has not yet voted, a board member can make a subsidiary motion to table or postpone the motion until another time. Tabling would be until later in the meeting, and postponing would be until a later date.

Public Comment

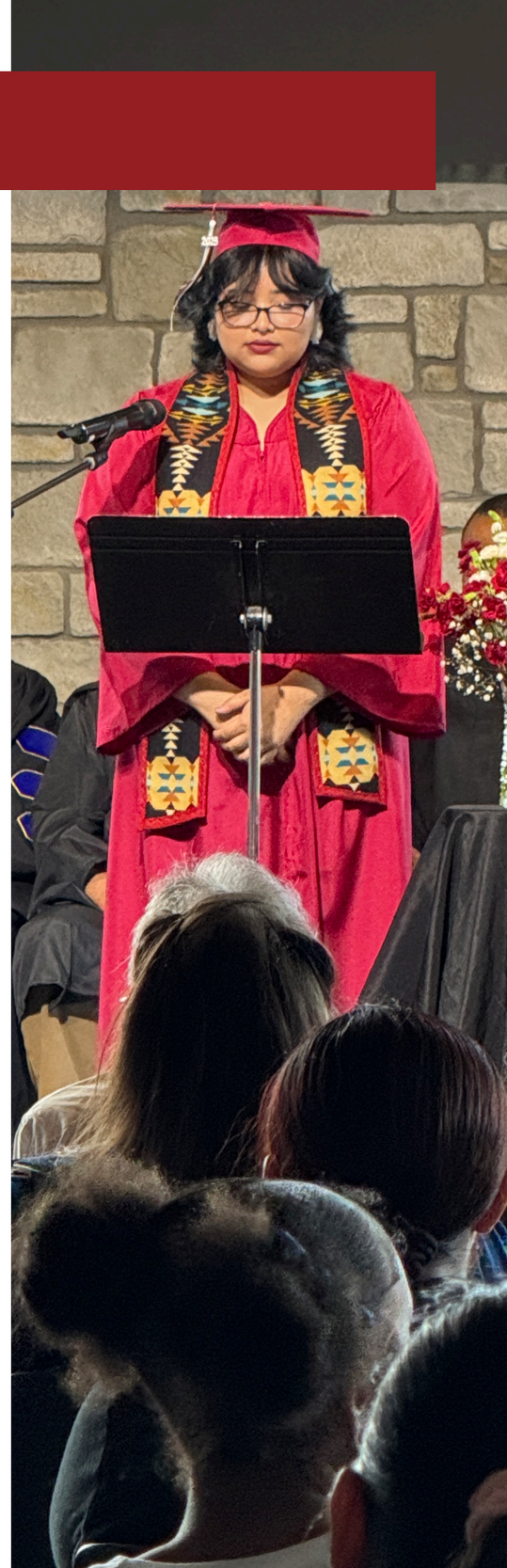
RPS board members welcome comments from Richfield community members at any time via email and are happy to schedule calls or meetings with individuals as appropriate. While emailing board members is often the most effective way to share input, public comment at board meetings provides an opportunity to speak directly to the entire board publicly.

Public comment is held once per month and begins immediately after the agenda is approved. The session lasts up to 30 minutes, with speakers limited to three minutes each (six minutes with interpretation). A “30-second warning” and “time’s up” notice will be given. Comments must end when time expires. To speak during public comment, individuals must sign up in advance by contacting the board secretary or using the form on the District website. Sign-up closes at noon on the day of the meeting. Speakers are called in the following order: students, those addressing specific agenda items, then others by sign-up order—with preference to those who haven’t spoken in the past six months.

If public comment is not on the agenda, written comments may be submitted to the board secretary for distribution to board members.

The school board takes into consideration comments made during public comment, but does not hold a two-way dialogue or interactive discussion during public comments. The board may provide a response at a later time and/or may provide clarification of points of fact as appropriate during the meeting.

Comments must not include allegations, charges, or complaints against students or staff. These must be submitted in writing to the superintendent or HR department. Personal attacks are not permitted and may result in the speaker being removed, banned from future meetings, or referred to law enforcement. Disruptive conduct that hinders the board’s ability to conduct business is not tolerated.



Annual Board Reports & Presentations

The principal or building leader of each school presents to the board once per year. These presentations typically occur at the first meeting of the month. Directors also present to the board at least once per year, and there are a few coordinators/supervisors who make an annual report as well.

January: The Where We Are in Enrollment report is typically presented each January. This report gives details on our student enrollment and demographics, as well as class sizes, based on the October 1 count. There is also usually a presentation on extended learning programs that occurs in January (this includes all our extracurricular programming that does not fall under community education or athletics & activities).

February: The Director of Student Support Services usually presents in February, with information about social-emotional learning, mental health, chemical health, the Richfield Health Resource Center, etc. The Indigenous Parent/Guardian Advisory Committee (IPAC) also typically provides a report to the board in February alongside the Native American/Indigenous Education Coordinator. February is also the month when the superintendent provides a mid-year update on his goals as well as a mid-year presentation on vision cards (our method for tracking progress on our strategic plan).

March: The Special Education Child Count presentation occurs in March, with information about our students receiving special education services and their demographics and disability categories. The Safe Routes to School Coordinator also typically presents in March.

April: The Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education present in April, usually jointly, with information about current initiatives in the Teaching & Learning Department. The results from the annual survey for staff and parents/guardians are also typically presented in April, and the revised current year budget is often presented to the board in April, though it could be March or May.

May: While the other school presentations can vary as to when they occur throughout the year, the RCEP presentation almost always appears on a May agenda. The Technology Department and the Nutrition Services Department also typically present to the board in May. The preliminary budget for the following school year is typically presented in May.

June: The Q Comp Annual Report occurs in June, as well as a presentation from the Facilities and Transportation Department that includes the annual health & safety report. The superintendent provides an end-of-year presentation on his goals and on vision cards. The final budget for the following school year is also presented in June for approval.

July: The Health Services Department typically presents at the July meeting.

August: An overview of summer programs is presented in August.

September: The superintendent shares back to school information and a draft of his goals for the year in September.

October: The superintendent presents a final version of his goals for the year in October.

November: The HR Department presents the annual staffing report in November. This presentation has information about overall staffing changes from year to year, employee demographics, and teacher education and experience levels (as a group).

December: The first meeting in December is typically scheduled for the Truth-in-Taxation Hearing. This presentation provides overall budget information and information about how the RPS community is affected by school taxes. The second meeting in December typically includes the Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness (previously World's Best Workforce) report from the Teaching & Learning Department, which includes specific state-required academic data points. The annual financial audit report also usually takes place in December (it could be January).

While the superintendent and board secretary take care to spread out presentations throughout the year in order to even out the length of board meetings overall, there is still an extent to which spring and early summer are the busiest time for board presentations. December can be busy, too. Shorter board meetings can be expected in mid-late summer and fall, barring unexpected events. Board members can also make a request for a board presentation on a particular subject of interest to the board (this happens a couple times per year), with the understanding that the presentation may be scheduled for a few months later.

Student Board Representatives

At the beginning of each school year, the RHS administrators advertise openings for student representatives, and interested juniors or seniors can fill out an application. The RHS administration interviews the interested students and selects representatives. Students then meet with the superintendent and board chair to ensure they understand the expectations and want to commit to the role. Student board representatives are eligible to receive a stipend of $600 per calendar year in which they serve on the board, or to decline the stipend and count the time as volunteer service hours.

Student board representatives attend board meetings and provide board members with their perspectives on agenda items. They are key to providing student voice at the board level, and they frequently bring issues back to their high school peers and share what they hear with the board. Ideally, student board representatives are brought on as juniors and serve on the board for two years. They are not expected to attend board meetings during the summer.

On some occasions, board members have been asked if they would be willing to write recommendation letters for student board representatives' applications for college scholarships, etc.

Policy Review

There are three broad categories of policies that have been approved by the RPS board. First, policies that are required by statute and/or are rooted in statutory language typically follow the MSBA model policy very closely and may not be open to much input. Second, some policies, such as the Equity Policy, are original policies drafted by RPS staff members with significant feedback from stakeholders across the District. These policies tend to have a more in-depth process each time they are reviewed by the board. Lastly, there are many policies that are a combination of both required statutory elements and Richfield values and procedures. These policies may be brought to committees for review or may simply have changes that are recommended by specific RPS departments.

Policy Review Timeline

The school board reviews most policies on a 5-year cycle. Certain policies are required to be reviewed annually (or every 2 years) based on statute or requirements within the policies themselves. The board secretary keeps track of when policies have been most recently updated and the planned cycle for upcoming policy review.

Many policies have administrative guidelines that are associated with them. When the board reviews and updates a policy, it reviews the associated guidelines along with it. However, while policy changes require board approval, administrative guidelines can be changed at the discretion of the administration. This process typically still involves a board review.

The board or administration may request to make changes to policies before their 5-year review for a variety of reasons. Sometimes policies are reviewed ahead of schedule due to changes in statute. However, updates based on statute can often be deferred until the 5-year review, knowing that the District must always follow law and statute first, then policy language second.

Most board meetings include 3 or 4 policies as individual agenda items, either as a first, second, or third read. Policy reads are intentionally spread out throughout the calendar year.

Input Process

The RPS board places a high value on feedback from staff, parents/guardians, and students when it comes to policy language. Depending on the policy, input may come from administration, specific departments, advisory committees, or broader community groups.

The **Safe & Supportive Schools Committee** plays a key role in policy feedback. It includes parents/guardians and secondary students who meet four times per year—parents in the evenings and students during the school day (one group per secondary school). Participants are recruited to reflect RPS's overall demographics, and meetings are facilitated by Student Support Services staff and/or school administrators. It is important to remember that the Safe & Supportive Schools Committee can only review 3-4 policies per year.

Policy Revisions

When a policy is under review, it is first presented to the school board for a **first read**—an opportunity for board members to review current language and share feedback either during the meeting or afterward. **Before the second read**, proposed revisions are incorporated as tracked changes. The board secretary:

- Edits for clarity, style, and alignment with District branding.
- Checks the MSBA model policy (if applicable) for updates to laws or recommendations.
- Reviews and integrates stakeholder feedback as appropriate.

The superintendent reviews the revised draft, and full cabinet input is sought if needed. At the **second read**, the board discusses the proposed changes and may request further edits. Typically, policies are **approved at the third read** after final adjustments. Some policies may go through four or more reads if additional input or revisions are needed.

Policies that are required to be approved annually are reviewed and approved as a group in the fall during a single read and vote. If any of these require significant changes, they are pulled from the group for a full three-read process.

Policies may also be considered for repeal if they are obsolete or unnecessary or may be combined together if it makes sense to do so. This creates greater efficiency in the policy review process and decreases the total number of policies that must be reviewed by the board each year.

Once the board approves policy revisions, the policy is updated on the District website. All RPS staff complete required safety and other virtual trainings through Safe Schools each fall. The board secretary creates a custom training through Safe Schools to require staff to read through the policies that have been updated in the past year.

Writing New Policies

Over the past five years, the RPS school board has approved nine new policies and six new administrative guidelines. One policy, related to the pandemic, has since been repealed. When drafting a new policy or guideline, the board secretary:

- Reviews the MSBA model policy (if available)
- Researches similar policies in nearby districts

If the MSBA model is used closely, minimal revisions may be needed before board approval. Otherwise, the board secretary drafts a policy based on research and the identified need, often consulting the full RPS management team for feedback and revisions.

New policies typically follow the standard three-read review process, though they may require more time and input than policy revisions.

Represent-a-School & Board Liaison Assignments

Each January, board members collaboratively discuss and agree upon represent-a-school and board liaison assignments for the upcoming calendar year. Each board member is assigned to 1-2 school buildings and 2-5 liaison assignments. The level of commitment varies for each assignment.

From Administrative Guideline 926.2: “One of the objectives of the board of education is to foster a positive climate by increasing board member visibility in the schools. One way by which this objective can be accomplished is to have each board member “represent a school,” attempting to schedule occasional visits during the school day and participating in selected school activities throughout the school year.

In “representing” a building, each board member will try (as their schedule permits) to attend late afternoon or evening functions that facilitate exposure to students, staff, and parents. From time to time, a board member liaison may also wish to visit during school hours, as arranged with the principals.

The “representation” is not meant to be a burden either to the board member or to the school that the board member is representing. The representation is not intended to alter the respective roles of board members as districtwide policymakers; principals as building managers and leaders; and the superintendent as the conduit for bringing issues and concerns which have policy, personnel or financial implications to the board for discussion and action.”

Board liaison assignments are either District advisory committees, community organizations that are connected to RPS, or assemblies of educational advocacy groups that RPS is part of. District advisory committees serve as a place to offer community voice and gather recommendations for the District administration to bring to the school board. The current board liaison opportunities are as follows:

- Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD)
- BrightWorks Representative Assembly
- Business/Career & Technical Education Advisory Board
- Community Education Advisory Council
- Competitive Activities Advisory Committee
- District Construction Committee
- District Curriculum Advisory Committee (DCAC)
- District Insurance Advisory Committee & Negotiations Representatives
- District Technology Advisory Committee (DTAC)
- Fiscal Planning Advisory Committee (FPAC)
- Friends of Wood Lake (FOWL) Board of Directors
- Health, Wellness & Safety Committee
- Intermediate District 287 School Board
- Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL)
- Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) Delegate Assembly
- Richfield City Council
- Richfield Historical Society
- Richfield Human Rights Commission
- Richfield Spartan Foundation
- Safe & Supportive Schools Advisory Committees
- Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
- Work Experience Advisory Committee

Board members are expected to maintain connections to their designated RPS school and their board liaison assignments. It is not a requirement to attend every meeting of their liaison groups, but to generally stay informed and give the board relevant updates.

Superintendent Evaluation

The school board is responsible for conducting an annual evaluation of the superintendent using multiple sources:

- Staff and parent/guardian annual survey results
- A year-end report from the superintendent on goal achievement
- Feedback from staff who report directly to the superintendent via a performance survey
- Individual board member evaluations across key areas

With all of this information gathered, the board chair and vice chair meet with the superintendent for a preliminary discussion of his evaluation. Then the board meets with the superintendent in a closed session to determine the final evaluation and performance award. At the following board meeting, the board chair shares a summary of the closed session discussion.



References & Other Relevant Board Policies

Board Policies & Administrative Guidelines

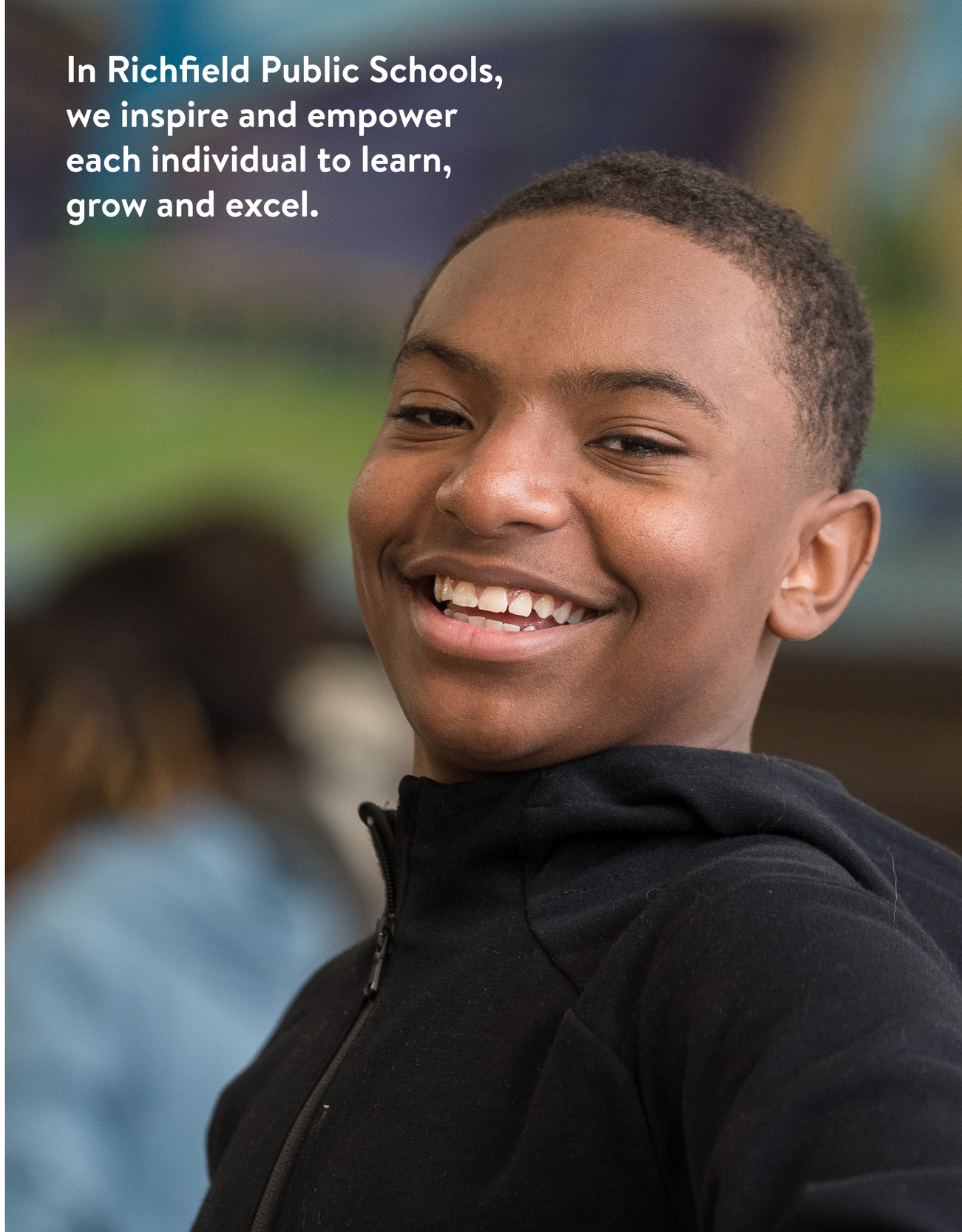
- Board Policy 201: Legal Status of the School Board
- Board Policy 202: School Board Member Code of Ethics
- Board Policy 203: Organization of the Board of Education - *this policy includes details about the annual organizational meeting and board officer roles.*
- Board Policy 204: Board Member Orientation and Development
- Board Policy 207: The Superintendent - School Board Working Relationship
- Board Policy 208: Open Meetings and Closed Meetings - *this policy includes the order of business at regular and special board meetings and the allowable reasons for closed sessions to occur*
- Board Policy 209: Board Self-Evaluation & Administrative Guideline 209.1: Board Self-Evaluation Form
- Board Policy 210: Conflict of Interest - School Board Members
- Board Policy 216: Public Comment & Administrative Guideline 216.1
- Board Policy 303: Evaluation of the Superintendent & Administrative Guideline 303.1
- Administrative Guideline 926.2: Represent a School Program

From the MSBA "Running for School Board" webpage:

- MSBA 2024 Candidate's Guide to School Board Elections
- MSBA Qualifications and Characteristics of Being a School Board Member

MN Statutes:

- MN Statute 123B.09
- MN Statutes 13D.03-13D.05



RICHFIELD
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Board Member Handbook
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