



Title: **Conduct of Individual Board Members**

Code: 011.1

Book: Policy Manual

Section: 000 Local Board Procedures

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to articulate the parameters and limitations established by the Board of School Directors regarding the authority of individual Board Members to act independent of the Board. This policy shall not in any way limit, restrict, or remove the rights, powers, and authority of individual Board Members as may have been granted in other policies of the Central Greene School District Policy and Procedures Manual, or by state or federal law.

The Board desires to ensure that the Superintendent and other administrative staff members take direction from a majority of the full Board, and that their time in performing their essential functions is not limited or compromised by having to address concerns or follow instructions of individual Board members.

Authority

As a Board, the Public School Code, as amended, provides the nine (9) elected Board Members (hereinafter "collective Board" or "Board") with the authority to govern the operations of the Central Greene School District. Much of the Board's authority to oversee the day-to-day operation of the school district has been delegated by the Board to the school district's Superintendent and administrators. These administrators, as well as other school

district employees, are ultimately accountable to the collective Board. Individual Board Members do not have the authority to direct the duties or activities of the administrators, or other school district employees, without a prior delegation of authority from the collective Board. It is hereby declared to be the policy of this Board that individual Board members shall not direct the activities of the administrative or professional staff members except upon approval by the Board President and Superintendent or the majority of the Board. To more fully accomplish the goals of this policy, administrative and professional staff members are advised not to take direction from or to spend time at the request of individual Board members except upon approval of the Board President and Superintendent or upon official action by a majority of the full Board in executive session or at a public meeting.

It is not the intention of this policy, and this policy shall not be construed to restrict or limit the statutory rights of any individual Board member.

Operational Philosophy

The collective Board should work with and through the Superintendent and/or Business Administrator to address all matters of concern regarding the educational, financial, operational and other affairs of the school district. In order to accomplish this objective, individual Board Members must refrain from using their positions as Board Members to independently pursue or address matters which are reserved unto the collective Board or the administration. The school district cannot be run in an effective and efficient manner if individual Board Members violate the policies and procedures established by the Board.

Staff Communications

The Board, through the Superintendent, will maintain open channels of communication between the Board and the staff.

Board communications to staff – All official communications, policies and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the Superintendent; and the Superintendent will employ all such media as are appropriate to keep staff fully informed of the collective Board's concerns and actions.

Staff communications to Board - All communications or reports to the Board or any Board committee from principals, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members shall be submitted through the Superintendent. This necessary procedure shall not be construed as denying the right of any employee to appeal to the Board administrative decisions on important matters, provided that the Superintendent shall have been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the Board's policy on complaints and grievances. Staff members are also reminded that Board meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to observe firsthand the Board's deliberations on problems of staff concern.

Procedures

1. Requests for Information.

- a. Information requested by Board Members on behalf of a committee shall be made by the respective committee chairperson or, in the chairperson's absence, by the Board President. Requests shall be communicated by email wherever possible so as to cause the least disruption of the functioning of the administrative staff.
- b. Information requests by Board Members not on behalf of committee tasks shall be conveyed through the Board President to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will effectively and efficiently convey

the request to the appropriate department.

- c. Information requested by Board Members which is not directly related to the current functioning of the Board shall be completed by administrative employees in a reasonable time frame, as their current tasks allow.
- d. If the answers and/or requested information are in the possession of a school district vendor or a contracted service provider, the Superintendent or designee shall forward the request so that the vendor or contracted service provider can prepare written answers to the Board member's questions and/or submit the requested information to the Superintendent or designee.
- e. Upon receipt of the answers and/or information, the Superintendent shall forward the same to all nine (9) Board members.

2. Board Member's Visits to School.

Board Members' visits to school shall be regarded as informal expressions of interest in school affairs and not as inspections or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes. Official visits by Board Members will be carried on only under Board authorization and with the full knowledge of staff, including advance notice to the Facilities Committee Chairperson, Superintendent, principals and other supervisors.

Board Members who visit schools of their own volition or by invitation have no more authority than any other citizen. Board Members have authority only in regularly called meetings of the Board or when delegated specific tasks by Board action. Such visits should be made in accordance with the following guidelines:

- a. Board Members will sign in at the office and obtain the appropriate visitor's pass.
- b. Board Members may exert no authority while on such visits; they will function solely as observers.
- c. Such visits will be for the purpose of becoming acquainted with school programs, personnel, operation, and facilities.
- d. A Board Member will not give directions to personnel during the visit. If a school visit leaves a Board Member with a concern, this concern should be addressed through appropriate channels, by following the chain of responsibility.
- e. A Board Member may also visit a school as a parent/guardian, and in such instances shall follow the policy as noted above. In those instances, the Board Member should make it clear that he/she is visiting as a parent/guardian and not as a member of the Board.

3. Complaints and the Chain of Responsibility

Members of the Central Greene School Board recognize that they are representatives of the community and elected to be an important link between the community and the school system. The Board welcomes inquiries from the citizens of the district and encourages such communication.

Individual Board Members have no authority to resolve complaints, and the Board will not consider, investigate or act upon any such complaint until after an investigation has been completed through the appropriate chain of responsibility. The Board believes that complaints and grievances are best dealt with and resolved as close to the origin as possible and that the professional staff should be given every opportunity to consider the issues and render

decisions prior to the involvement of the Board.

This policy does not supersede any employee's or citizen's right to contact Board Members directly. However, whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board, Board Members shall refer the complainant to the appropriate individual responsible for resolving the issue.

The Board advises the public that the appropriate chain of responsibility for complaints involving instruction, discipline, transportation, or learning materials is as follows:

CHAIN-OF-RESPONSIBILITY

Curriculum/Instruction	Student Discipline	Facilities/Transportation/ Athletics
Teacher	Teacher	Appropriate Assistant Principal, Principal or Athletic Director
Appropriate Assistant Principal or Principal	Appropriate Assistant Principal, Principal and/or Special Education Director	Appropriate District Administrator
Appropriate District Administrator/Superintendent	Superintendent	Superintendent/Transportation Committee/Athletic Committee/Facilities Committee
School Board	School Board	School Board
State Department of	State	State Department of

Education	Department of Education	Education
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ANY ISSUES OUTSIDE OF THIS CHART SOULD BE DIRECTED
FIRST TO THE APPROPRIATE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OR
PRINCIPAL

Anonymous complaints provide no avenue for response or redress of the complaint. Therefore, it will be the policy of this Board that anonymous complaints shall not be pursued. Anonymous complaints will not be read or acted upon at any meeting of the Board and will not be brought to the Board by any individual Board Member, administrator, or other employee. Further, the Board will not direct the district to investigate anonymous complaints.

The Board prohibits retaliation against complainants. The Superintendent or designee at his/her discretion may keep a complainant's identity confidential, except to the extent necessary to investigate the complaint.

Personal Opinions

The Board recognizes and acknowledges that as elected officials, individual Board Members have the right to express their opinions regarding the educational, financial, operational and other affairs of the school district.

However, without a prior delegation of authority from the collective Board, individual Board Members do not have the right to speak or act on behalf of the Board and/or the administration.

Officers elected by the Board such as the Board President and First Vice President have the right to speak on behalf of the Board as long as they represent the will of the entire Board. A Board Member who has been appointed to serve as a Committee

Chairperson has the right as the Committee's Chairperson to speak on behalf of the Committee.

The Board does not authorize, endorse or condone the use of social media sites, networks or forums by Board Members. The Board does not have the authority to prohibit Board Members from utilizing social media sites, networks or forums. However, if a Board Member chooses to communicate information that the Board Member has obtained in his/her capacity as a Board Member via social media sites, networks and/or forums, such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, etc., the Board Member's actions are individual in nature and are undertaken in contradiction to the collective Board's policy regarding this matter. Individual Board Members are strictly prohibited from posting nonpublic, confidential and/or privileged documents on social media sites, networks or forums.

Electronic Communications

The Board is obligated to conduct its business in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, including Pennsylvania's Sunshine Act. The Board and the administration may utilize emails and other forms of electronic communication to coordinate and schedule Board meetings, executive sessions and committee meetings; to timely inform the Board of events at the school district; to provide the Board with information, meeting agendas, legal opinions and copies of documents; and to communicate regarding matters that are exempt from the Sunshine Act, such as, personnel and legal matters. The collective Board should not use emails or other forms of electronic communication to discuss matters that are before the Board or matters that may come before the Board for action because such discussions may be in violation of the Sunshine Act.[\[1\]](#)

Communication With Media

The Superintendent or designee is responsible for official communications with the press regarding district matters. The Board President or designee is responsible for communicating with the press regarding official School Board business.

Undue Influence

Each individual Board Member has contact at varying degrees with the school district's employees, coaches, volunteers, and other individuals associated with the school district. In addition, each individual Board Member participates in varying degrees in events and activities sponsored, hosted or participated in by the school district. Without a prior delegation of authority from the collective Board, individual Board Members are prohibited from using or attempting to use their position as a Board Member to gain information without regard to the chain of responsibility or to gain preferential treatment related to any such events or activities, including event and activities that occur off of school district property.

Self-Governance

As individual members of the board of education, we will each strive toward ideal conditions for the most effective school board service to our community in a spirit of teamwork and devotion to the continual improvement of our local public schools. Each member shall devote time, thought and study so that as a collective Board, we may provide effective and creditable service, exhibiting honest and good faith and using care, skill, common sense and informed judgment.

Whenever any member believes that another has violated this Code of Conduct, it is his or her responsibility to bring the issue to that member first and attempt to resolve the matter. In the event that the matter is not resolved, the issue should then be brought to the attention of the Board President who shall

immediately investigate the allegation and, if substantiated resolve the matter. If the matter continues to be unresolved with the individual Board Member, the President shall bring the issue to the full board for discussion at the next public meeting.

Adopted: **June 24, 2014**

Legal References:

- [1. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 701 et seq](#)
 - Pol. 006
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