

DARIEN BOARD OF EDUCATION

BOARD MEMBER HANDBOOK



Darien Public Schools
Darien, CT

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Darien Public Schools

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BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Chairperson

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Vice Chairperson

Sara D. Parent
Secretary

David A. Brown

Greg D. Grambling

Kadiatu M. Lublin

Dennis J. Maroney

John R. Sini, Jr.

Joanna Walsh

Welcome to the Board of Education,

This handbook is designed to help you navigate the fundamental aspects of your role as a Board of Education member. Serving on this board is a wonderful responsibility, one that involves fulfilling our vision of *preparing our students today to thrive in a changing world tomorrow*. It is a “living document” that must be reviewed regularly to ensure it is current, accurate and aligns with Connecticut statute and BOE policy.

Your role as a board member is complex and varied. A solid understanding of Robert's Rules of Order will be invaluable as we navigate our meetings and decision-making processes. In the coming months, we will delve into a wide range of topics, including policy development, budgeting, curriculum review, and facilities planning.

It's important to remember that our primary role is oversight. The day-to-day operations of our school district are the responsibility of our dedicated administrative team. By working collaboratively with them, we can ensure that our students receive the highest quality education possible.

A key principle of board service is keeping the lines of communication open.

- If you have questions about the Board, please email or call the Chairperson.
- For questions about the school district, please email the Superintendent and copy the Chairperson.
- If you know in advance that you'll want some information from the district as they present on a topic, please email your request to the Superintendent with the Chairperson in copy.
- While there are exceptions, generally emails about the board and the district will be shared with the rest of the board.
- Reach out to fellow board members to learn more about their experiences and perspectives.
- Board policy and CT statute guide the work of the Board and the manner in which it functions.
- To be an effective governance team, the Board must be committed to reflection and continued improvement.

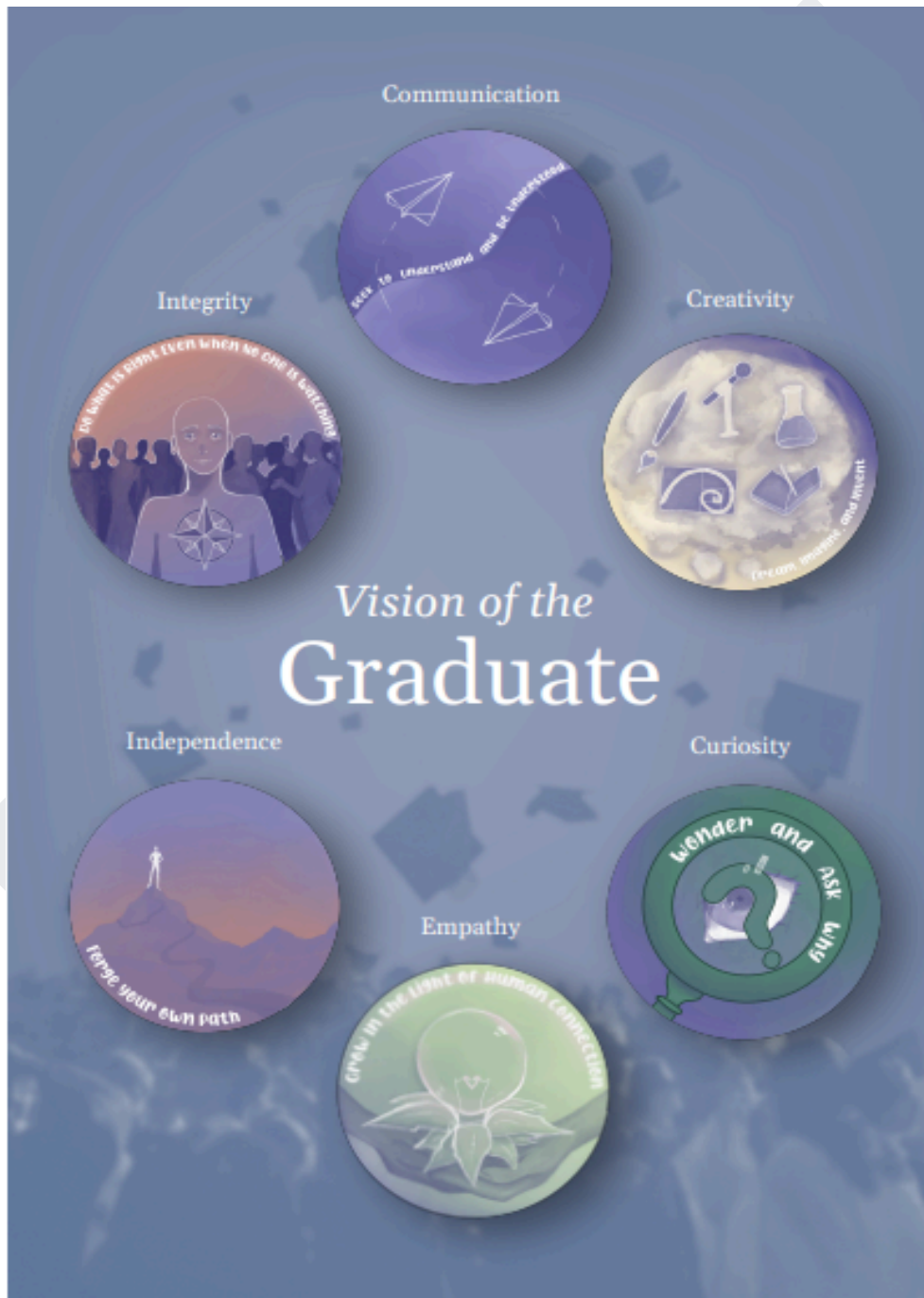
Thank you for agreeing to serve on this board. Many thanks for your care for our schools, our students and our community.

Sincerely,

D. Jill McCammon
Chairperson, Darien Board of Education

MISSION

Inspiring a love of learning in all students so they develop as critical thinkers and innovative creators who contribute to the world with integrity and purpose beyond themselves.



BOARD GOVERNANCE

The governance role of the BOE is to maintain focus on their unity of purpose, ensure that the District’s established mission and vision (Vision of the Graduate) are being upheld; approve and monitor the District’s short- and long-term goals; update and monitor policy; and vote on recommendations made by the Superintendent. As members of the governance team, the BOE should be asking the following: *What are we doing? Why? How does it benefit instruction and student achievement, wellbeing, civic participation? How much will it or has it cost? How well are we doing?*

The governance role of the Superintendent is to focus on the means, determine the strategies to achieve short- and long-term goals, develop regulations for policy implementation, document and report progress, and recommend courses of action to address the stated goals. As a member of the governance team, the Superintendent is responsible for addressing the following questions: *How are we doing the work to achieve the determined goals and mandates? Where are we doing such work? Who is doing such work? How are we doing the work to achieve the determined goals and mandates? When and where are we doing such work? Who is doing such work?*

BOARD MEMBER/SUPERINTENDENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES		
	BOARD OF ED	SUPERINTENDENT
Focus	End Results	Means
Sequence of Questions & Processes	1	2
Questions to be Addressed	What? Why? How much? How well?	How? When? Where? By whom?
Tools	Mission Goals Policies Alignment Standards	Strategies Procedures Regulations Assignments Documentation
Methods	Vote	Recommend

In summary, the role of the school board is not to run the schools, but to see that the schools are run well. To that end, it is imperative that the Board and Superintendent have a respectful, cohesive, and productive working relationship built on trust and open communication.

To ensure effective governance and to maintain positive working relationships, it is important that trustees have a clear understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities. All Board members should:

- Govern in a dignified, professional manner, treating everyone with civility and respect
- Operate openly with trust and integrity
- Take collective responsibility for the governance's teams performance
- Maintain focus on the purposeful action of strategic oversight
- Recognize and respect differences of perspective and style on the Board and among staff, students, parents, and the community
- Understand the difference between Board and staff roles and refrain from performing management functions that are the responsibility of the superintendent and administration
- Understand that authority rests with the Board as a whole, not with individuals
- Keep confidential matters confidential

To ensure effective governance as a team, the Board of Education should:

- Establish strategic direction and related outcomes
- Communicate a common vision (rooted in the Vision of the Graduate)
- Keep the district focused on learning and achievement for all students
- Value, support and advocate for the work of the district and public education
- Provide ongoing policy direction and approval
- Oversight and accountability based in Board adopted policies and procedures
- Ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform Board deliberations

The Board of Education is the governing body of the school District. The Board is entrusted with the responsibility of developing policies under which the District is managed.

Complete and final authority on all educational matters, except as restricted by law, is vested in the Board.

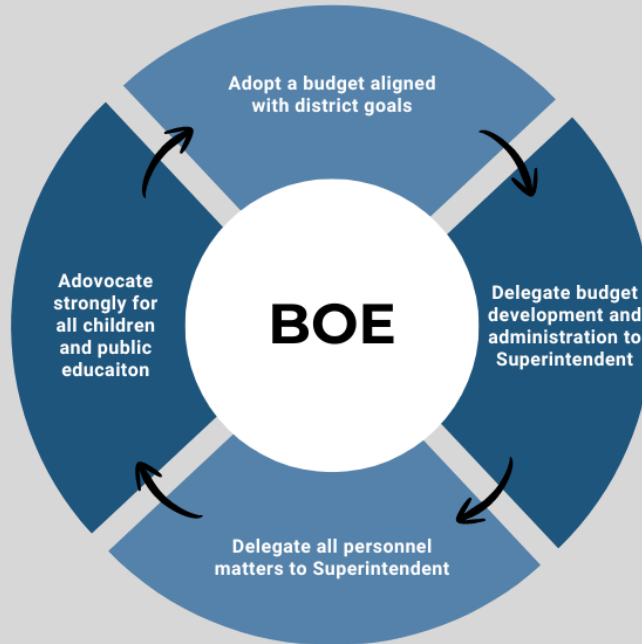
The duties of the Board may include, but are not limited to:

1. selecting a Superintendent of Schools and supporting him/her in the discharge of his/her duties;
2. carrying out all duties and responsibilities as set forth in the Connecticut Education Law;
3. reviewing and adopting policies for the operation of the schools;
4. establishing guidelines for and adopting an annual budget;
5. adopting salary schedules, personnel policies, and approving funding for District negotiations with bargaining units;
6. being responsible, along with the Superintendent, for negotiating terms and conditions of employment according to Connecticut Law;
7. receiving, considering, and/or approving reports of pending business and of the financial status of the school District;
8. considering recommendations for building improvements and expansions and determining the means for financing them;
9. representing the needs of the schools and the residents of the District; and
10. maintaining relations with local and state authorities to plan cooperatively for the improvement of services to District students.

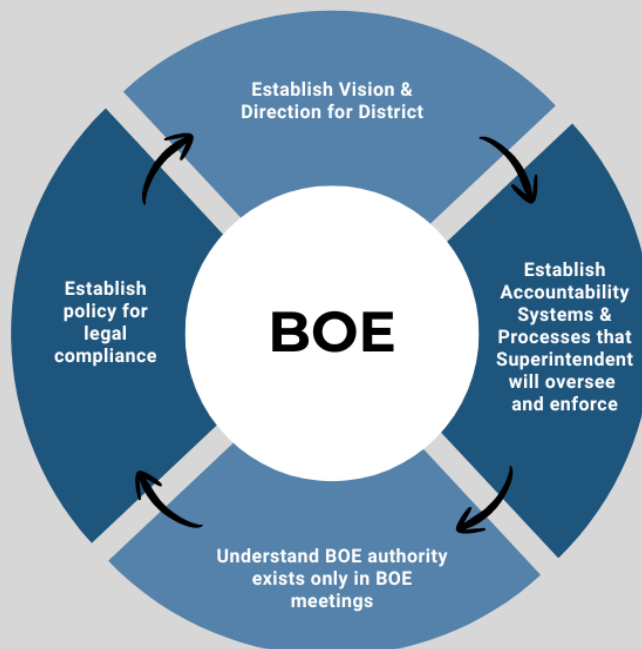
Any action by the Board shall be by resolution or motion adopted at a regular or special meeting by a majority of the Board. The Board shall not attempt to decide upon any question placed before it without examining and evaluating all information that can be made available on the subject, except in emergencies. The Superintendent shall be given an opportunity to examine and to evaluate all such information and to recommend before the Board attempts to make a decision.

Records shall be compiled of all Board actions, which shall be designated as Board minutes, the official public records of the Board.

GOVERNANCE ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES: BUDGET



BOARD OF EDUCATION GOVERNANCE ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES: POLICY

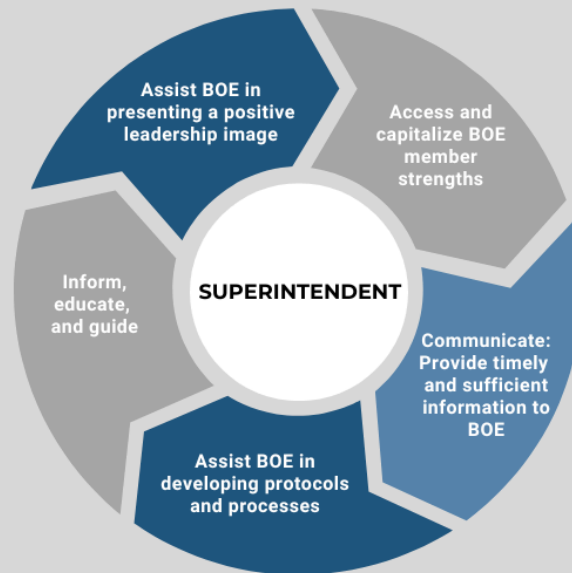


SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

The Superintendent of Schools is designated by the Board to manage the day-to-day operations of the District. All faculty and staff hired by the District report to the Superintendent. The Superintendent is responsible for managing the operations of the school District, and executing the policies and decisions of the Board of Education. The Superintendent keeps the Board informed, and recommends strategies, budgets and policies to the Board.



SUPERINTENDENT GOVERNANCE ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES



BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES & EXPECTATIONS

See [Policy 9110: Role of Board and Members](#)

See [Roles & Responsibilities](#)

RESPONSIBILITIES (from [CABE/CAPPS School Governance Position Statement 2016](#))

The primary responsibilities of the Darien Board of Education are:

1. To hire, support, evaluate and work effectively with the Superintendent of Schools.
2. To establish and regularly review all policies, ensuring they are lawful and designed to improve the quality of the schools district.
3. To adopt, advocate for and oversee the school budget, which is responsive to district goals and meets the needs of all students.

EXPECTATIONS

Board members are expected to do the following:

- Attend onboarding session(s) with legal and administrative teams.
- Attend all regular meetings, special meetings, executive sessions and committee meetings, as assigned. In the event a member cannot attend a meeting, the Board chairperson and/or committee chairperson should be notified as soon as possible.
- Read and be familiar with meeting materials in advance of the meeting start.
- Read and be familiar with all Board policies
- Maintain a professional demeanor in all public and private interactions, serving as an example to the community, District staff and students
- Serve on committees
 - [Assignment](#)
- Communication
 - Robert's Rules - Intention: Support & Facilitate Meetings
- [Policy 9180: Code of Conduct for Board Members](#)
 - Adhere to all Board policies, rules and regulations
 - Conduct themselves in a fair and impartial manner
 - Refrain from interfering with the implementation of a Board policy decision by the administration
 - Refrain from interfering with the duties of any school district official
 - Refrain from divulging to anyone any aspect of matters considered and discussed in executive session.

MEETING CONDUCT

We must debate measures and not members. Please treat each other with the same respect that you would want to be treated by them. Our goal is to do what is in the best interest of our students. Maintain a professional demeanor in all public and private interactions, serving as an example to the community, District staff and students

See [Policy 9310: Meeting Conduct](#)

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

See [Policy 9140: Conflict of Interest](#)

1. In the event a Board member is employed by a corporation or business or has a secondary interest in a corporation or business which furnishes goods or services to

the school district, the Board member shall declare his interest and refrain from debating or voting upon the question of contracting with the company.

2. No member of the Darien Board of Education (the “Board”) shall be employed for compensation by the Board in any position within the school system.
3. If any member of the Board is employed contrary to the provisions of this bylaw, the office to which he or she was elected or appointed shall become vacant.

STUDENT MEMBERS

[Policy 9280, Student Representatives on the Board of Education](#)

Student representatives shall:

- Provide updates to the Board at the start of each meeting.
- Participate in student government and serve as liaisons between the student body and the Board.
- Be expected to attend all the Board of Education meetings and be representative of the collective voice of the student body of the district.
 - At least one student representative should be present at each regular meeting of the Board of Education. If this is not possible, the representatives must advise the Principal and the Superintendent's office in advance of the meeting.

Student representative shall not:

- Be members of committees.
- Be able to cast an official vote on any motion or resolution.
- Be allowed to attend executive sessions, negotiation sessions or personnel portions of the regular or special meetings of the Board of Education.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Chairperson shall appoint members to standing or special committees.

All committee members are expected to do the following:

- Attend all committee meetings as assigned. In the event a member cannot attend a meeting, the committee chairperson should be notified as soon as possible.
- Read and be familiar with meeting materials in advance of the meeting start.
- Communicate through the committee chairperson and/or Board Chairperson.
- [Policy 9260: Committees](#)
 - Standing and special committees shall elect a chairperson and the Chairperson of the Board and the superintendent or their designee shall be ex-officio members of any such committee.

- Such special committees shall submit their reports at such regular meetings of the Board as may be determined, and when such reports have been submitted and accepted by the Board, shall be discharged.
- All standing and special committee reports, which could affect Board policy, shall be submitted in writing.
- A special committee's only authority is to make recommendations to the Board regarding matters that have been referred to it, unless the Board specifically authorizes otherwise and such action conforms to Connecticut General Statutes.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Committee chairpersons will be elected at the beginning of the first meeting following the annual election, by those serving on the committee.

All committee chairpersons are expected to do the following:

- Coordinate monthly committee meeting dates and times
- Run meeting
- Follow up
- Provide committee reports to the Board
- When a committee chairperson is absent a meeting may be rescheduled or a designee may chair the meeting
- Agenda Preparation
 - Agenda preparation should be handled with the committee chairperson and the administrative staff person responsible for presenting the meeting materials. Agenda preparation meetings should be confined to discussion of which items belong on the agenda.
 - Committee chairpersons may preview materials to ensure they are properly responsive to the agenda. Substantive questions about materials should be handled by the committee.
 - If additional resources are needed at a committee meeting (architectural, legal, subject matter expert, additional staff, et al), administration will arrange either for a brief or presentation and/or the presence of said resource(s).
- Communication (from “Guidance for committee Chairpersons”)
 - The Board Chairperson and Superintendent should be copied on all emails between the committee chairperson and Administrative Member responsible for the committee.

- Committee members can submit questions to the committee chairperson in advance of the meeting with the Board Chairperson and Superintendent in copy. Committee chairpersons should forward emails to remaining committee members. Questions (other than scheduling and simple factual answers) should be answered during the committee meeting.
- Governance (from “Guidance for committee Chairpersons”)
 - Committee chairpersons should be familiar with [Policy 9260](#) regarding the administration of said committees
 - While Board members should be conversant in all policies, committee chairpersons should ensure their members are particularly familiar with the policies that govern their committee’s work. For example, Finance – 3050; Policy – 9200 series.

OFFICERS

[Policy 9210](#): The Darien Board of Education shall, not later than one month after the date on which newly elected members take office, hold an organizational meeting and elect from its own members a **Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and a Secretary.**

If such officers are not chosen after one month from the date on which newly elected members take office because of a tie vote of the members, the town council, or, if there is no town council, the selectmen of the town shall choose such officers from the membership of the Board. The senior member of the Board shall serve as temporary Chairperson for purposes of electing Officers. Officers shall hold their respective offices for one (1) year, and until their successors are duly elected. Should a vacancy arise in an office of the Board, during the term of a Board officer’s service, the members of the Board (including, if applicable, the member vacating a Board office) shall elect a successor to fill the office until the next regular election for Board officers.

CHAIRPERSON (*from [CABE/CAPPS School Governance Position Statement 2016](#))

By nature of the position, the Board Chair plays a key role in ensuring the effective functioning of the governance team. The Chair serves as the liaison between the Board and the superintendent. The Board Chair will often have a very different relationship with the superintendent of schools than others on the Board. Because of this relationship, it is crucial that Board Chairs be chosen carefully. Ability to serve as representative of the Board, and as appropriate, partner with the superintendent, should be critical considerations in selecting the Board Chair.

The Chair should also recognize that their role is dependent upon the support of the Board, and that action generally requires the vote of the Board.

The Chair has the unique role of communication with all Board members and provides appropriate information on any issues that arise in the district.

The Chair has a responsibility to ensure that the Superintendent can do their job without undue outside interference. The Chair must also ensure that individual Board members understand their roles and responsibilities, not only in terms of the Board/superintendent relationship, but also as the Board relates to students, community, staff, government agencies, and others affected by the Board. Understanding that Board members are individuals, with different opinions and agendas, the Board Chair still has the responsibility, to the extent possible, for keeping everyone “on the same page.” In particular, the Chair must make every effort to ensure that once district policy has been properly established, the Board speaks “in one voice” as the Superintendent implements that policy.

For more information on the work of the Board Chair, please see the CAFE publication, “Who’s In Charge? A Guide for Board of Education Chairs”.

OFFICIAL DUTIES - CHAIRPERSON ([Policy 9220](#))

1. The Chairperson shall preside at all of the meetings of the Board of Education (the “Board”).
2. The Chairperson shall serve as the Board's spokesperson.
3. The Chairperson shall appoint members of all committees. The Chairperson shall serve as ex officio member on all committees.
4. The Chairperson shall act as the Board’s representative for the purposes of consultation with Board legal counsel when appropriate, and may authorize other Board members to consult with Board counsel when appropriate.
5. The Chairperson shall serve as a link with other Town bodies.
6. The Chairperson shall serve as a liaison to the Superintendent and plan the agenda for meetings with the Superintendent.
7. The Chairperson shall call regular and special meetings.
8. The Board Chairperson shall submit to the Town at its annual meetings a report of the doings of the Board.
9. The Chairperson shall perform such other duties as may be delegated to the Chairperson by the Board, in accordance with CT Gen Stat 10-224 and Board Policy 9240.

Legislative Duties- CHAIRPERSON

The Chair oversees and delivers legislative testimony, which can take the form of either written submission or in-person appearance. The content may be based on

a formal Board vote or authored by the Chair (for the Board) and the Superintendent (for the district) to articulate official positions.

Legislative Timeline

- Bill Introduction
- A legislator or committee can introduce a bill.
- The bill is given a number and referred to the appropriate committee.
- Committee Action
- The committee considers the bill, and public hearings may be held.
- The [Legislative Commissioner's Office](#) (LCO) can draft the bill in formal statutory language.
- The committee can issue a favorable report, an unfavorable report, or take no action.
- Floor Debate and Voting
- If the committee reports the bill favorably, it is placed on the calendar for consideration by the full House or Senate.
- The bill is debated, and amendments can be made.
- The chamber votes on the bill.
- Referral to the Other Chamber
- If the bill passes one chamber, it is sent to the other chamber for the same process of committee review and floor debate.
- Enactment
- If the bill passes both chambers with the same language, it is sent to the Governor.
- The Governor can sign the bill, veto it, or take no action, which results in it becoming law automatically.
- If a bill is vetoed, a two-thirds vote in both the House and Senate is required to override the veto.
- Publication
- Once a bill becomes law, it is referred to as a "Public Act" and is eventually codified into state law.

VICE-CHAIR

OFFICIAL DUTIES VICE-CHAIR ([Policy 9230](#))

In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson shall assume and carry out the duties and responsibilities of the Chairperson.

SECRETARY

OFFICIAL DUTIES - SECRETARY (Policy 9240)

1. The Secretary of the Board shall keep the minutes or cause minutes to be kept of all meetings of the Board, and shall cause copies of such minutes to be forwarded to each member of the Board.
2. In accordance with the General Statutes, the Board Secretary shall cause a copy of the minutes of all Board meetings to be placed on file in the Board Office and posted on the District's website, if available, no later than seven (7) days after the date on which Board shall have met. Such minutes will be available for public inspection, except that such minutes will not be termed "official minutes" until approved by the Board of Education at a duly convened meeting of the Board.
3. The Board Secretary shall also make provision that members of the Board are notified of all regular and special meetings.
4. The Board Secretary shall approve Town Treasurer's orders for expenditures for the operation of the school system.

REPORTING CONCERNS

See [Policy 9180: Procedures for Censure or Other Disciplinary Actions](#)

See [Policy 9170 for Removal of Board Officers](#)

All Board members are expected to bring concerns, complaints, or issues requiring attention first to the Board Chair. This process aims to ensure that matters are addressed in an organized, efficient manner that respects the Board's governance structure. If a Board member does not feel comfortable approaching the Board Chair directly, or if the Board Chair is unable to resolve the matter satisfactorily, the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) is available as a resource to facilitate conflict resolution.

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Connecticut Freedom of Information Act

The Connecticut Freedom of Information Act, Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 1-200 through 1-241, inclusive (the "FOIA"), represents Connecticut's commitment to open government and a strong policy in favor of public access to meetings and records. Subject to narrow exceptions, which are strictly construed, the FOIA mandates that the public has access to (1) meetings of public agencies and (2) records that are developed and/or maintained by public agencies.

An exhaustive description of the Board’s obligations under the FOIA is beyond the scope of this document. Relevant highlights of such obligations are included here for reference. The complete text of the FOIA is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/foi/regulations/the-foi-act/2024-foi-act>.

Meeting Requirements

“Public agencies” in Connecticut must comply with the meeting requirements of the FOIA. The FOIA defines a “public agency” to include “[a]ny executive, administrative or legislative office of the state or any political subdivision of the state and any state or town agency, any department, institution, bureau, **board**, commission, authority or official of the state or of any city, town, borough, municipal corporation, **school district**, regional district or other district or other political subdivision of the state, **including any committee of, or created by**, any such office, subdivision, agency, department, institution, bureau, board, commission, authority or official.” (Emphasis added).

The FOIA defines a “meeting” to include “[a]ny hearing or other proceeding of a public agency, any convening or assembly of a quorum of a multimember public agency, and any communication by or to a quorum of a multimember public agency whether in person or by means of electronic equipment, to discuss or act upon a matter over which the public agency has supervision, control jurisdiction or advisory power.”

Meetings include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Anytime a quorum of a public agency convenes or engages in interactive communication to discuss or act upon a matter for which it has responsibility.
- A conference call or other communication (e.g., emails, text messages) by means of electronic equipment.

The following are not considered “meetings” under the FOIA and therefore do not need to comply with the meeting requirements of the FOIA:

- A meeting of a personnel search committee for an executive level candidate search (the Board may appoint itself).
- Any chance meeting, or a social meeting neither planned nor intended for the purpose of discussing matters relating to official business.
- Strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining.

- A caucus of members of a single political party notwithstanding that such members also constitute a quorum of a public agency.
- An administrative or staff meeting of a single-member public agency.
- Communication limited to notice of meetings of any public agency or the agendas thereof.

Records and Communications Requirements

The FOIA defines “public record” broadly as “[a]ny recorded data or information relating to the conduct of the public’s business prepared, owned, used, received or retained by a public agency, whether such data or information be handwritten, typed, tape-recorded, printed, photostatted, photographed or recorded by any other method.” Except as otherwise provided by any federal or state law, all records maintained or kept on file by any public agency shall be public records.

Email communication on Board business by Board members to each other (or to or from the Superintendent to Board members) is permissible. Such emails typically will be subject to public disclosure unless they are exempt from disclosure, even if they were created using a Board’s members personal email address or personal cellular phone.

Where email communication is **unilateral**, it will likely not be considered a “meeting” that would trigger FOIA concerns. Where such a communication generates responses that are shared with a quorum of the Board, it is possible that a “discussion” (and hence a “meeting” in violation of the FOIA) will be found.

Communication and Information-Sharing

The following protocols for Board communication and information-sharing are important to help ensure operational efficiency, legal compliance (e.g., confidentiality and due process protection; adherence to the FOIA), and adherence to the Code of Conduct for Board Members (Policy 9180).

Communications with the Superintendent

The Superintendent generally shares information with the Board through the Board meeting materials in advance of Board and/or committee meetings, through other regular updates (e.g., weekly emails), and as otherwise necessary (e.g., to address emergencies). Such updates are not intended to solicit excessive feedback or questions. Any such discussions should happen during Board or committee meetings, as applicable.

Answers to questions/information requests that Board members direct to the Superintendent should be copied to the full Board to ensure all Board members have the same information. However, it is important to avoid discussing such information (including “reply all” responses) outside of a properly noticed meeting.

The Superintendent is also available to meet with members of the Board. As topics may be relevant to the full Board, the Superintendent may share details with the full Board. Meetings with the Superintendent may be scheduled through the office of the Executive Secretary to the Superintendent.

Communications with Staff/Administration/Cabinet

The Board works primarily through the Superintendent to address administrative matters and should work directly with the staff/administration/cabinet only as necessary and appropriate. Board members should adhere to the following guidelines when considering communications with Board employees other than the Superintendent:

- Avoid directing staff/administration/cabinet to perform any work, such as responding to burdensome information requests (other than those authorized by the Board).
- Information requests that may be burdensome may be considered for approval by the Board.
- Refrain from private fact-finding or soliciting off-line information from employees.
- The Superintendent communicates the Board’s information to the staff/administration/cabinet.

Communications with Community

Consistent with the Code of Conduct for Board Members (Policy 9180), Official Duties of the Chairperson (Policy 9220), and best practice, Board members should adhere to the following guidelines when communicating with the community:

- Support Board positions once approved.
- Use district email for Board business.
- Avoid speaking/writing/responding on behalf of the Board if you are not the Chairperson, remembering that the Chairperson is the Board’s spokesperson and serves as a link with other Town bodies.

- Divulging to anyone any aspect of matters considered and discussed in executive session and any other confidential matters (e.g., those related to students and personnel) is prohibited.
- Avoid “problem-solving” and direct public questions and concerns to follow the appropriate chain of communication..
- Avoid posting about Board business on personal social media accounts.
- Avoid engaging directly with speakers during public comment.

RULES OF PROCEDURE

The purpose of these guidelines is to create a culture of professionalism and decorum based on parliamentary procedures. We must debate measures and not members. Please treat each other with the same respect that you would want to be treated by them. Our goal is to do what is in the best interest of our students.

- I. Regular Meetings
- II. Special Meetings
- III. Executive Session
- IV. Emergency Meetings
- V. Quorum
- VI. Voting
- VII. Materials
 - A. Executive Session
 - B. Regular Meetings
 - C. committee Meetings
- VIII. Public Comment
 - A. Emails to the Board

Series 9300 - Board Meetings

- [9320 Time, Place and Notice of Meetings](#)
- [9330 Public Meetings and Executive Session](#)
- [9340 Construction and Posting of Agenda](#)
- [9350 Quorum and Voting Procedures](#)
- [9360 Minutes](#)

REGULAR MEETINGS

See [Policy 9320: Time, Place and Notice of Meetings](#)

Normally the Board shall schedule regular meetings on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month of the year except December, July and August when the Board meets once in regular session.

Typically, board meetings will begin at 7:30 pm in the Board of Education meeting room at 35 Leroy.

SPECIAL MEETINGS

See [Policy 9320: Time, Place and Notice of Meetings](#)

Special meetings may be held when determined by the Board, when so called by the Chairperson, or upon written request of three members of the Board.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

See [Policy 9330: Public Meetings and Executive Session](#)

The public may be excluded from meetings of the Board which are declared to be executive sessions. Executive Session can be scheduled before, during or after a regular meeting (typically scheduled before the start of a regular meeting).

Executive sessions may be held for any reasons permissible under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, as it may be amended from time to time, including one or more of the following purposes:

- Discussion concerning the appointment, employment, performance, evaluation, health or dismissal of a public officer or Darien Public Schools Darien, Connecticut employee, provided that such individual may require that discussion be held at an open (public) meeting.
- Strategy and negotiations with respect to pending claims and litigation to which the Board or a member of the Board, because of his or her conduct as a member of the Board, is a party until such claims or litigation have been finally adjudicated or otherwise settled.
- Matters concerning security strategy or the deployment of security personnel, or devices affecting public security.
- Discussion of the selection of a site or the lease, sale or purchase of real estate when publicity regarding such site, lease, sale, purchase or construction would adversely impact the price until such time as all of the property has been acquired or all proceedings or transactions concerning same have been terminated or abandoned.
- Discussion of any matter that would result in the disclosure of public records or the information contained therein described in Conn. Gen. Stat. §1-210(b).

EMERGENCY MEETINGS

See [Policy 9320: Time, Place and Notice of Meetings](#)

When a majority of the members agree that an emergency exists which has made a regular notice impossible, such a meeting may be called at a time or place which may be most convenient. In case of such emergency meeting, a copy of the minutes setting forth the nature of the emergency and the proceedings occurring at such meeting shall be *filed with the Town Clerk no later than seventy-two (72) hours following the holding of such a meeting.*

QUORUM

See [Policy 9350: Quorum and Voting Procedures](#)

The majority of all members of the Board shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

MATERIALS

REGULAR MEETINGS

For regular meetings held on Tuesday, the Board generally receives meeting materials via email by the end of business the Friday before. Materials will be posted publicly to the Board website no less than 24 hours in advance of the meetings. Materials should be considered confidential in the time between Board members' reception and when the materials are made public.

[Policy 9430: Posting of Agenda](#)

- At least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the time of the regular (or special) meeting, an agenda will be constructed and posted by the Superintendent of Schools for the Board.
- An agenda will be posted at Town Hall, the Board's Administrative Offices, and on the Board's Internet web site. Any associated documents that may be reviewed by members of the Board at such meeting shall be posted on the Board's Internet web site, provided such documents are not exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.
- The Board may add items to the agenda of any regular meeting by a two-thirds vote of those Board Members present and voting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Materials for Executive Session are confidential in nature and may be distributed and re-collected at the beginning and end of the session, and in accordance with state law.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Committee meeting materials will be sent out in advance of the meeting with the agenda (typically 2 business days before the meeting).

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Darien Board of Education holds public comment at the beginning and end of each regular meeting. Typically, the Board does not answer questions in real time nor respond to public comment.

EMAILS FROM THE PUBLIC

Emails received by the Darien Board of Education will be responded to by the Board Chairperson and forwarded to the full Board.

See [Policy 3210: Meeting Conduct, Section 6 - Public Address](#)

The Board may permit any individual or group to address the Board concerning any subject that lies within its jurisdiction, during a portion of the meeting so designated for such purpose.

- No boisterous conduct shall be permitted at any Board meeting. Persistence in boisterous conduct shall be grounds for summary termination, by the Chairperson, of that person's privilege of address.
- All speakers must identify themselves by name and town of residence.
- Three (3) minutes may be allotted to each speaker. The Board, by majority vote of members present, may modify these limitations at the beginning of a meeting if the number of persons wishing to speak makes it advisable to do so.

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

Robert's Rules of Order—Simplified

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Everyone has the right to participate in discussion if they wish, before anyone may speak a second time.
- Everyone has the right to know what is going on at all times. Only urgent matters may interrupt a speaker.
- Only one thing (motion) can be discussed at a time.

A motion is the topic under discussion (e.g., “I move that we add a coffee break to this meeting”). After being recognized by the chairperson of the board, any member can introduce a motion when no other motion is on the table. A motion requires a second to be considered. If there is no second, the matter is not considered. Each motion must be disposed of (passed, defeated, tabled, referred to committee, or postponed indefinitely).

HOW TO DO THINGS:

You want to bring up a new idea before the group.

After recognition by the chairperson of the Board, present your motion. A second is required for the motion to go to the floor for discussion, or consideration.

You want to change some of the wording in a motion under discussion.

After recognition by the chairperson of the Board, move to amend by adding words, striking words or striking and inserting words.

You like the idea of a motion being discussed, but you need to reword it beyond simple word changes.

Move to substitute your motion for the original motion. If it is seconded, discussion will continue on both motions and eventually the body will vote on which motion they prefer.

You want more study and/or investigation given to the idea being discussed.

Move to refer to a committee. Try to be specific as to the charge to the committee.

You want more time personally to study the proposal being discussed.

Move to postpone to a definite time or date.

You are tired of the current discussion.

Move to limit debate to a set period of time or to a set number of speakers. Requires a 2/3rds vote.

You have heard enough discussion.

Move to close the debate. Also referred to as calling the question. This cuts off discussion and brings the assembly to a vote on the pending question only. Requires a 2/3rds vote.

You want to postpone a motion until some later time.

Move to table the motion. The motion may be taken from the table after 1 item of business has been conducted. If the motion is not taken from the table by the end of the next meeting, it is dead. To kill a motion at the time it is tabled requires a 2/3rds vote. A majority is required to table a motion without killing it.

You believe the discussion has drifted away from the agenda and want to bring it back.

“Call for orders of the day.”

You want to take a short break.

Move to recess for a set period of time.

You want to end the meeting.

Move to adjourn.

You are unsure the chairperson of the board announced the results of a vote correctly.

Without being recognized, call for a “division of the house.” A roll call vote will then be taken.

You are confused about a procedure being used and want clarification.

Without recognition, call for "Point of Information" or "Point of Parliamentary Inquiry." The chairperson of the board will ask you to state your question and will attempt to clarify the situation.

You have changed your mind about something that was voted on earlier in the meeting for which you were on the winning side.

Move to reconsider. If the majority agrees, the motion comes back on the floor as though the vote had not occurred.

You want to change an action voted on at an earlier meeting.

Move to rescind. If previous written notice is given, a simple majority is required. If no notice is given, a 2/3rds vote is required.

Unanimous Consent:

If a matter is considered relatively minor or opposition is not expected, a call for unanimous consent may be requested. If the request is made by others, the chairperson of the board will repeat the request and then pause for objections. If none are heard, the motion passes.

You may Interrupt a speaker for these reasons only:

- to get information about business – *point of information*
- to get information about rules – *parliamentary inquiry*
- if you can't hear, safety reasons, comfort, etc. – *question of privilege*
- if you see a breach of the rules – *point of order*
- if you disagree with the chairperson of the board's ruling– *appeal*
- if you disagree with a call for Unanimous Consent – *object*

BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICIES

One of the most important responsibilities of the Board of Education is to prepare and adopt policies that govern the operations of the Darien Public Schools (DPS). On a regular basis, the Darien Board of Education reviews and revises its policies and administrative regulations to ensure currency, consistency, and compliance with state and federal laws. As older policy statements are rescinded, new policy statements adopted by the Board are posted to the district website to provide ready access to the DPS staff and community.

Board members are expected to be familiar with all Board policies. While the Darien Board does not have “by-laws”, the 9000 Series essentially functions in this capacity. Board members are especially encouraged to review this series regularly.

The full policies of the Darien Board of Education can be found here:

<https://www.darienps.org/board-of-education/policies>

Series 1000: Community/Board Operation

Series 2000: Administration

Series 3000: Business

Series 4000: Personnel

Series 5000: Students

Series 6000: Instruction

Series 9000: Board

Series 9100 - Legal Status of the Board

Series 9200 - Organization of the Board

Series 9300 - Board Meetings

Series 9400 - Board Policies

Series 9500 - Board Operations

Series C-19-02

Series 1000: Community/Board Operation

- [1025 Automatic External Defibrillators](#)
- [1050 Possession of Deadly Weapons or Firearms](#)
- [1075 Green Cleaning Programs](#)
- [1100 Pesticide Application on School Property](#)
- [1125 Pool Safety Plan](#)
- [1150 Sexual Offenders](#)
- [1175 Prohibition Against Smoking](#)
- [1200 Use of School Facilities](#)
- [1225 Visitors](#)
- [1250 School Volunteers, Student Interns and Other Non-Employees](#)
- [1275 Freedom of Information and Freedom of Information Request Log](#)
- [1300 Non-Discrimination](#)
- [1310 School Security and Safety](#)
- [1320 Civility and Respectful Conduct](#)

Series 2000: Administration

- [2250 Superintendent of Schools – Evaluation](#)
- [2260 Unavailability of the Superintendent](#)
- [2310 Administrative Team](#)
- [2420 Uniform Treatment of Recruiters](#)
- [2700 Retention of Electronic Records and Information](#)
- [2800 Hold on Destruction of Records \(Litigation\)](#)

Series 3000: Business

- [3025 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Fiscal Compliance](#)
- [3050 Board Budget Procedures and Line Item Transfers](#)
- [3075 Disposal of Obsolete or Surplus Equipment, Materials](#)
- [3100 Gifts, Grants, and Bequests to the District](#)
- [3125 Purchasing](#)
- [3150 School Activity Funds](#)
- [3175 Code of Conduct for Federal Procurements](#)
- [Student Activities Accounting Manual 2018-19](#)

Series 4000: Personnel

- [4000 C-19-03: Families First Coronavirus Response Act Leave](#)
- [4025 Reports of Suspected Abuse or Neglect of Children](#)
- [4050 Reports of Suspected Abuse or Neglect of Adults](#)
- [4075 Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Free Workplace](#)
- [4100 Concussion Training for Athletic Coaches](#)
- [4111 Equal Opportunity for Employment/Affirmative Action and Non-discrimination \(Personnel\)](#)
- [4118 Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace \(Personnel\)](#)
- [4125 Evaluation, Termination and Non-Renewal of Athletic Coaches](#)
- [4150 Bloodborne Pathogens](#)
- [4175 Prohibition on Recommendations for Psychotropic Drugs](#)
- [4225 Increasing Educator Diversity](#)
- [4250 Employee Checks](#)
- [4275 Family and Medical Leave](#)
- [4300 Employee Use of the District's Computer Systems and Electronic Communications](#)
- [4325 Hiring of Certified Staff](#)
- [4350 Hiring of Non-certified Staff](#)
- [4400 Social Media](#)
- [4430 Sudden Cardiac Awareness for Athletics](#)
- [4425 Criminal Justice Information](#)
- [4450 Section 504 ADA \(Personnel\)](#)

Series 5000: Students

- [5025 Management Plan & Guidelines for Students with Food Allergies and/or Glycogen Storage Disease](#)
- [5050 Administration of Student Medication in the Schools](#)
- [5075 Physical Activity and Student Discipline](#)
- [5100 Restraint and Seclusion of Persons at Risk](#)
- [5110 School Attendance Districts](#)
- [5125 Section 504 Of The Rehabilitation Act Of 1973](#)
- [5130 Student Attendance and Truancy](#)
- [5150 Admission of Resident, Non-Resident and Exchange Students](#)
- [5175 Bullying Prevention and Intervention and Safe School Climate Plan](#)
- [5200 Homeless Children and Youth](#)

- [5220 Student Discipline](#)
- [5225 Drug and Alcohol Use by Students](#)
- [5230 Chemical Health Policy for Student Athletes and Students Participating in Extracurricular Activities](#)
- [5250 Misconduct Related to Voluntary School Organizations and Activities](#)
- [5255 Search and Seizure](#)
- [5265 Confidentiality and Access to Education Records](#)
- [5270 Pledge of Allegiance](#)
- [5275 Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment](#)
- [5280 Dress Code](#)
- [5300 Student Use of the District's Computer Systems and Electronic Communications](#)
- [5310 Insurance Program](#)
- [5325 Student Privacy](#)
- [5350 Immunization Requirements](#)
- [5375 Suicide Prevention and Intervention](#)
- [5380 Student Wellness](#)
- [5395 Transportation](#)
- [5410 Awards and Scholarships](#)
- [5610 Gifts](#)
- [5620 Fundraising Activities](#)
- [5710 Non-Discrimination of Students](#)
- [5820 Student Sunscreen Application](#)
- [5830 Meal Charging](#)

Series 6000: Instruction

- [6210 Program of Instruction, Curriculum, Textbooks, and other Instructional Material](#)
- [6220 Challenges to Instructional Materials](#)
- [6330 Curricular Exemptions](#)
- [6350 Equitable Identification of Gifted and Talented Students](#)
- [6510 Class Size](#)
- [6630 IDEA - Alternative Assessments](#)
- [6710 Field Trips](#)
- [6820 Homework](#)
- [6840 Graduation Requirements](#)
- [6845 Transfer of Credits](#)

- [6850 Promotion and Retention](#)
- [6910 Parent-Teacher Communication](#)
- [6920 Weighted Grading for Honors Classes](#)
- [6930 Parental Access to Instructional Material](#)

Series 9000: Board

Series 9100 - Legal Status of the Board

- [9110 Role of Board and Members](#)
- [9120 Transaction of Business](#)
- [9130 Oath of Office](#)
- [9140 Conflict of Interest](#)
- [9150 Qualifications of Board Members](#)
- [9160 Filling Vacancies on the Board](#)
- [9170 Removal of Board Officers](#)
- [9180 Code of Conduct for Board Members](#)

Series 9200 - Organization of the Board

- [9210 Officers](#)
- [9220 Official Duties – Chairperson](#)
- [9230 Official Duties – Vice Chairperson](#)
- [9240 Official Duties – Secretary](#)
- [9250 Board-Superintendent Relations](#)
- [9260 Committees](#)
- [9280 Student Representatives on the Board of Education](#)

Series 9300 - Board Meetings

- [9310 Meeting Conduct](#)
- [9320 Time, Place and Notice of Meetings](#)
- [9330 Public Meetings and Executive Session](#)
- [9340 Construction and Posting of Agenda](#)
- [9350 Quorum and Voting Procedures](#)
- [9360 Minutes](#)

Series 9400 - Board Policies

- [9420 Formulation, Adoption, Amendment or Deletion of Bylaws](#)
- [9430 Formulation, Adoption, Amendment or Deletion of Policies](#)
- [9440 Formulation, Adoption, Amendment or Deletion of Administrative Regulations](#)
- [9450 Suspension of Policies, Bylaws or Administrative Regulations](#)

Series 9500 - Board Operations

- [9510 Orientation for Board Members](#)
- [9520 Expense Reimbursement for Board Members](#)
- [9530 Insurance](#)
- [9540 Board Evaluation](#)

Series C-19-02

COVID-19 Policies and Regulations

[Policy Concerning Health & Safety Protocols Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic \(New\)](#)

GLOSSARY & ACRONYMS

GLOSSARY

CABE: Connecticut Association of Boards of Education

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education serves local and regional boards of education. It is a membership organization made up of Connecticut Boards of Education.

CAPSS: CT Association of Public School Superintendents

The Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents is a statewide, nonprofit, educational administration organization whose membership includes Connecticut public school superintendents, assistant superintendents, central office administrative personnel, state department of education officials, and college and university professors.

FOIA: Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Commission was created by the General Assembly in 1975 with the passage of the Freedom of Information Act. The Act provides the public with rights of access to records and meetings of public agencies.

ACRONYMS

ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act

CABE - Connecticut Association of Boards of Education

CAPSS - CT Association of Public School Superintendents

CCSS - Common Core State Standards

CEA - Connecticut Education Association

CIAC - Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference

CSDE - Connecticut State Department of Education

CIRMA - Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency

ECS - Educational Cost Sharing

EL - English Learners

ESL - English as a Second Language

FAPE - Free and Appropriate Public Education

FERPA - Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

FOIA - Freedom of Information Act

IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IEP - Individualized Education Program

LRE - Least Restrictive Environment
NEASC - New England Association of Schools and Colleges
NGSS - Next Generation Science Standards
NSBA - National School Board Association
OCR - Office of Civil Rights
PPT - Planning and Placement Team
PSAT - Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test
SAT - Scholastic Aptitude Test
SRBI - Scientific Research-Based Intervention

VISION OF THE GRADUATE

In March of 2020, the Darien Public Schools assembled a coalition of stakeholders - students, parents, teachers, administrators, community leaders, and Board of Education members - with the purpose of defining a Vision of the Graduate, a statement of what it means to our community to prepare students from prekindergarten through high school graduation for a successful future. Two aspirations emerged from community input: That all students would have the confidence and capacity to be self-directed, independent adults who live purposeful, happy and fulfilling lives, and that they would become citizens who contribute collaboratively and innovatively to their local and global communities.

In an era of rapid change to education and to the workforce, the Darien Public Schools recognized the need to identify through this Vision the skills and dispositions required to raise compassionate, resilient problem-solvers and leaders: **Communication, Creativity, Curiosity, Empathy, Independence and Integrity.**

The Darien Public Schools is committed to giving all of our students multiple opportunities to master these competencies and to acquire these dispositions, throughout their experience in our schools and their engagement with our curriculum, from kindergarten through graduation. As a result, we believe we will graduate individuals who have a strong academic foundation and are prepared to use the knowledge and skills they have acquired to cast and fulfill a purposeful vision for themselves, their communities, and the world.

Darien Public Schools
The Vision of the Graduate

We believe our graduates will be forever shaped by the learning environments we provide within our school district. From these environments, our graduates will take with them an understanding that the successful pursuit of meaningful ideas requires:

Communication	Creativity	Curiosity	Empathy	Independence	Integrity
<p>Effective collaboration will depend on your ability to listen with a discerning ear and express your ideas with clarity and passion. Communication is a two-way exchange. Listen before you speak. Hear what is behind the words. Craft your communication with purpose and choose your words carefully - they hold great power. Know that your actions also tell your story. Find your own voice and dare to use it to build your community and change your world.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Seek to understand and be understood</i></p>	<p>Pursuing new ideas will inspire you and others. Connect all that you have learned in order to generate novel thinking, design solutions, and innovate. Embrace the trial and error process. See mistakes as opportunities. Problems are solved by thinking about what can be rather than what has been. Seek and appreciate the beauty within each discipline. Believe in your vision and give form to your ideas.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Dream, imagine, and invent</i></p>	<p>Approaching the world with childlike amazement will lead you to new questions and inspire learning for life. Pursue knowledge as it provides the bedrock for thinking. Turn your mind to inquiry while pursuing your passions. Engage with others' thinking and question with persistence to deepen your understanding. Commit to fearless exploration of the unknown because it will open doors to new possibilities.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Wonder and ask why</i></p>	<p>Understanding other people's experiences will enable you to form meaningful relationships and empower you. Open your heart and mind to the ideas and feelings of others and, as a result, learn more about yourself. Radiate kindness. Act with compassion. Embrace diversity and stand up for others and for inclusion. Honor the humanity of each person and contribute to a community that provides all with a sense of belonging.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Grow in the light of human connection</i></p>	<p>The life you build for yourself will be founded on how much you trust and rely on your unique talents and thinking. Self-reliance frees you to become who you are meant to be. Persist when you encounter obstacles and know that you can seek guidance to help you grow. Set goals and work hard to reach them. Diligence has its own rewards. Confidently choose what's best for you, balancing life's demands.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Forge your own path</i></p>	<p>Those who earn the respect of others conduct themselves honestly and adhere to principles in the face of adversity and social pressures. Tell the truth no matter how difficult. Accepting responsibility earns trust and reveals strength of character. Advocate for justice. Lead by example. Know who you are and let your actions speak for you. Develop your moral compass and demonstrate the courage to honor it.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Do what is right, even when no one is watching</i></p>

RESOURCES

DISTRICT RESOURCES

Contact List

- [Board Members & Student Representatives](#)
- [District Administration](#)

[DPS Strategic Plan](#)

[Board Goals](#)

[Master Agenda](#)

[Calendar of Meetings](#)

[Calendar of committee Meetings](#)

- [Committee Assignments](#)

[Darien Public Schools](#)

(www.darienps.org)

[Darien Board of Education](#)

(www.darienps.org/board-of-education)

[Darien Board of Education Agendas, Minutes, and Materials](#)

(www.darienps.org/board-of-education/agendas-minutes-and-materials)

[Darien Board of Education Policies](#)

(<https://www.darienps.org/board-of-education/policies>)

[Connecticut Statutory Indemnification Provisions](#)

[Connecticut Statutory Personal Liability Provisions](#)

STATE RESOURCES

[CABE/CAPPS School Governance Position Statement 2016](#)

[CABE: Connecticut Association of Boards of Education](#)

(www.cabe.org)

[Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents](#)

(www.capss.org)

[Connecticut State Department of Education](#)

(<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE>)

[The Dual Roles and Responsibilities of Local and Regional Boards of Education](#)

A Practical Guide to Connecticut School Law, Thomas B. Mooney, 8th Edition

- *A hardcopy will be given to all new board members at Onboarding Meeting*

NATIONAL RESOURCES

[National Association of Schools Boards \(\[www.nasb.org\]\(http://www.nasb.org\)\)](#)

[Robert's Rules of Order, Simplified](#)