Cherokee County School District

Agenda Request Form

Meeting Date	Agenda Item Number
June 18, 2026	Action Item 5

Title

Annual Recommitment to School Board Member Code of Ethics Policy BH

Requested Action

School Board Consideration of Superintendent's Recommendation for Annual Recommitment to School Board Member Code of Ethics Policy BH

Summary Explanation and Background

The Board of Education is reaffirming its commitments to Board Policy BH (School Board Code of Ethics). This action reflects the Board's dedication to ethical governance, professional conduct, collaborative leadership, and effective stewardship in service to the students, staff, and community of the district. In order to support the application of School Board Code of Ethics, the School Board commits to the collectively developed norms and protocols that guide communication, constituent services, and school board information.

Financial Impact

N/A

Exhibits: (List) — Enter URL below

Policy Attached

Source of Additional Information — Open URL

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The Cherokee County Board of Education desires to operate in the most ethical and conscientious manner possible and to that end the School Board adopts this Code of Ethics and each member of the School Board agrees that he or she will:

Domain I: Governance Structure

1. Recognize that the authority of the School Board rests only with the School Board as a whole and not with individual School Board members and act accordingly.

2. Support the delegation of authority for the day-to-day administration of the School District to the Superintendent of Schools and act accordingly.

3. Honor the chain of command and refer problems or complaints consistent with the chain of command.

4. Recognize that the Superintendent serves as secretary, ex-officio to the School Board and should be present at all meetings of the School Board except when his or her contract, salary or performance is under consideration.

5. Not undermine the authority of the Superintendent or intrude into responsibilities that properly belong to the local superintendent or school administration, including such functions as hiring, transferring or dismissing employees.

6. Use reasonable efforts to keep the Superintendent informed of concerns or specific recommendations that any School Board Member may bring to the attention of the School Board.

Domain II: Strategic Planning

1. Reflect through actions that his or her first and foremost concern is for the educational welfare of children attending schools within the School District.

2. Participate in all planning activities to develop the vision and goals of the School Board and the School District.

3. Work with the School Board and the Superintendent to ensure prudent and accountable uses of the resources of the School District.

4. Render all decisions based on available facts and his or her independent judgment and refuse to surrender his or her judgment to individuals or special interest groups.

5. Uphold and enforce all applicable laws, all rules and regulations of the State Board of Education and the School Board and all court orders pertaining to the School District.

Domain III: Board and Community Relations

1. Seek regular and systemic communications among the School Board and students, staff and the community.

2. Communicate to the School Board and the Superintendent expressions of public reaction to School Board Policies and school programs.

Domain IV: Policy Development

1. Work with other School Board members to establish effective Policies for the School District.

2. Make decisions on Policy matters only after full discussion at publicly held School Board meetings.

3. Periodically review and evaluate the effectiveness of Policies on School District programs and performance.

Domain V: Board Meetings

1. Attend and participate in regularly scheduled and called School Board meetings.

2. Be informed and prepared to discuss issues to be considered on the School Board agenda.

3. Work with other School Board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during the discussion and resolution of issues at School Board meetings.

4. Vote for a closed executive session of the School Board only when applicable law or School Board Policy requires consideration of a matter in executive session.

5. Maintain the confidentiality of all discussions and other matters pertaining to the School Board and the School District during executive session of the School Board.

6. Make decisions in accordance with the interests of the School District as a whole and not any particular segment thereof.

7. Express opinions before votes are cast, but after the School Board vote, abide by and support all majority decisions of the School Board.

Domain VI: Personnel

1. Consider the employment of personnel only after receiving and considering the recommendation of the Superintendent.

2. Support the employment of persons best qualified to serve as employees of the School District and insist on regular and impartial evaluations of School District staff.

3. Comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and all School Board Policies regarding employment of family members.

Domain VII: Financial Governance

Refrain from using the position of School Board member for personal or partisan gain or to benefit any person or entity over the interest of the School District.

Conduct as Board Member

1. Devote sufficient time, thought and study to the performance of the duties and responsibilities of a member of the School Board.

2. Become informed about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed education and training.

3. Communicate in a respectful professional manner with and about fellow School Board members.

4. Take no private action that will compromise the School Board or School District administration.

5. Participate in all required training programs developed for School Board members by the School Board or the State Board of Education.

6. File annually with the local superintendent and with the State Board of Education a written statement certifying that he or she is in compliance with this Code of Ethics.

Conflicts of Interest

1. Announce potential conflicts of interest before School Board action is taken.

2. Comply with the conflicts of interest Policy of the School Board, all applicable laws and Appendix B of the Standards document.

Upon a motion supported by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, the School Board may choose to conduct a hearing concerning a possible violation of this Code of Ethics by a member of the School Board. The School Board member accused of violating this Code of Ethics will have thirty 30 days' notice prior to a hearing on the matter. The accused School Board member may bring witnesses on his or her behalf to the hearing, and the School Board may elect to call witnesses to inquire into the matter. If found by a vote of two-thirds of all the members of the School Board that the accused School Board member has violated this Code of Ethics, the School Board will determine an appropriate sanction, including suspension from participation in meetings of the School Board and school activities for no more than 90 days, public or private censure, a fine not to exceed $1,000 or other sanctions as determined by the School Board. A School Board member subject to sanction may, within 30 days of such sanction vote, appeal such decision to the State Board of Education in accordance with the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education. A record of the decision of the School Board to sanction a School Board member for a violation of this Code of Ethics will be placed in the permanent minutes of the School Board.

ADOPTED: January 20, 2011
REVISED: July 16, 2020

Cherokee County Board of Education

School Board-Superintendent
Norms & Protocols

Operate in a manner that reflects professionalism and courtesy. Always put students first when making decisions and keep student achievement as the priority.

A. Governance Roles and Responsibilities (*Policy BA - Goals and Objectives*)

The governance team agrees to:

1. Recognize the role of the Superintendent in the day-to-day operations and avoid micromanagement.
2. Lead as a united team honoring respective roles with strong collaboration and mutual trust.
3. Prioritize the sharing of information regarding student learning, success and achievement.
4. Always follow the chain of command (as described in "C" below) and instruct and encourage others to do so when necessary.
5. Always direct questions and information requests to the Superintendent (or Chief of Staff as designee) as the first step in the chain of command.

B. Chief Executive Officer – Superintendent and School Board Relationship (*Policy BA – Goals and Objectives)*

The governance team agrees:

1. To designate the Superintendent as Chief Executive Officer fully delegating authority to provide educational leadership, manage day-to-day operations and perform all duties assigned by law. The Superintendent is the only employee of the Board of Education and is responsible for all other staff.
2. To hold the Superintendent accountable for day-to-day operations and student performance through mutually agreed-upon School District goals.
3. Respect the Superintendent's professional recommendations and decisions and other School Board Members even when there is disagreement.
4. School Board Members should provide specificity and clarity in regard to concerns or matters that require the Superintendent's attention.
5. Individual School Board Member requests for information should be sent to the Superintendent:
   a) and information that is readily available or readily known will be provided to all School Board Members as quickly as possible or an estimated turn-around timeline will be shared.
   b) If the information is not already available or already developed, the request will be shared with the Chair who will determine School Board consensus (four members) for the Superintendent to then direct time and resources to the development of requested information.
6. ~~The Superintendent will provide regular email communication/meeting updates pertaining to Divisional/Department Work Projects.~~
7. The Chief of Staff serves as the Superintendent's designee.
   a) Board Members may need to directly contact a member of the Superintendent's Cabinet. The Cabinet Member will notify the Superintendent and keep the Superintendent informed and updated to promote and ensure coordination among the board members and team.

C. Communication Protocols

Title	Purpose	Schedule	Staff Responsible
School Board Meeting Materials	School Board Work Session Agenda School Board Work Session Reports School Board Business Meeting Agenda School Board Business Items Preview of Personnel (G-1)	**Email** **Once Monthly** Preview: Friday Before meeting Final Draft: Monday of Board meeting week	Executive Assistant Sheryl Puccio
School Board Meeting Personnel Items	Principal and Director+ notification Outcomes of Employee Investigations that led to end of employment	**Phone call** **Once Monthly** Friday before School Board Meeting	Chief Human Resources Officer Amy Graham
Weekly Board Report	Division and Department Updates Individual School Board Member Requests (being shared to full board) Athletic Schedule Performing Arts Schedule Pertinent Reminders	**Email** **Once Weekly**	Superintendent Mary Elizabeth Davis
Daily News	Student awards and recognitions Employee awards and recognitions Media requests District news	**Email** **Once Daily**	Communications Officer Barbara Jacoby
School and District Matters	School-based incidents that prompt family communication (i.e. school threats, code yellow, code blue, power outage, mechanical failure, etc…) Employees placed on administrative leave.	**Email** **Once Daily**	Chief of Staff Tyler Gwynn
Constituent Matters	Constituent concerns forwarded by SBM to Chief of Staff Constituent concerns to Staff that copy any SBM	**Email** **As Needed**	Chief of Staff Tyler Gwynn
Emergencies and Urgent Matters	Active medical emergencies Code Red (False alarm and Active Alarm) Mechanical failures prompting evacuation Disruptions to normal school operations	**Text** **As Needed** **Email Follow/up** **(as needed)**	Superintendent Mary Elizabeth Davis Chief of Staff Tyler Gwynn Chief School Leadership & Operations Debra Murdock
Invitations and Events for SBM Involvement **[You're Invited: XYZ]** **Color-Coded: Blue**	School Board Meetings and Trainings School Board School Visits (School Lunches) District-wide Events for SBM participation	**In Development**	
FYI Events **[FYI-Only Event: XYZ]** **Color-Coded: Gray**	District events to have on your radar. You are always welcome to attend but there is not a defined role for SBMs. If attending, notify the Chief of Staff so you can be recognized.	In Development	
School-based Events	Invitations from School-based Personnel for specific school activities If attending, notify the Chief of Staff so you can be recognized.	**Email from School-based Personnel**	

D. Communication with Constituents and Chain of Command (*Policy CD – Line and Staff Relations*)
The governance team agrees:

1. The School Board will educate the public about the chain of command and encourage them to follow it when approached with requests about day- to-day and operational issues.

a) Questions and concerns of employees and constituents should be handled as close to the matter as possible (Policy KN).

b) The School Board Member will acknowledge receiving the communication.

c) Board Members will forward staff, parent, student, and constituent matters/questions to the Superintendent or Chief of Staff to be handled by the appropriate staff member as aligned with Policy KN.

d) The Superintendent or Chief of Staff will confirm receipt of the communication and provide an update on the matter to the School Board Member within the week.

e) All School Board Members should be kept informed on this communication when the constituent has emailed multiple School Board Members.

2. The Superintendent will draft the most effective resolution process/procedure for common matters and the governance team will refer employees and the public to it. To streamline communication with constituents and align with Policy KN, School Board Members will work the matter through the Superintendent or Chief of Staff to expedite action and response.

a) Procedure (Employee Matter): refer to Supervisor, Human Resources

b) Procedure (Parent): refer to Teacher, School Administration, School District Office, Superintendent (or designee), School Board.

c) Procedure (Community Member): As an example: This matter is probably best handled by the Superintendent's team, let me forward your concern to them for their follow-up.

3. If it is a School Board related issue, one School Board member or designee selected by the Board Chair will respond.

E. Decision Making Process (*Policy BH – Board Ethics*)
The governance team agrees:

1. The CCSD School Board will put students and student achievement first when making decisions and will remain knowledgeable of educational issues and topics.

2. The superintendent will provide transparent and pertinent information in a timely manner to support all decisions made by the School Board and/or administrative team.

3. Once a decision is made, all School Board Members will support the majority decision, and;

a) Thoughtfully consider the different experiences of each School Board Member.

b) Be respectful of all opinions by thinking before responding

c) Assume good intentions first – of fellow School Board Members and staff

- Staff should be ready to receive feedback
- Questions should focus on clarification and insight and come from a place of assuming good intentions

4. To be open-minded and respectful of all opinion; even when disagreeing School Board

Members will publicly support the decisions of the majority of the Board.

F. School Visits

The governance team agrees:

1. School Board Members will notify the Superintendent in advance of a school visit so that the school can be notified, and the visit can be supported by the Superintendent (or identified member of the Superintendent's Extended Cabinet).
2. ~~The Superintendent or designee will send separate invitations to school and District events via email.~~
3. If a school wants a School Board Member to attend and participate in an event, an invitation/request should be sent via email. The organizers of the event will then recognize the School Board Member during the event.
4. School Board Members are welcome to attend school functions open to parents/public (i.e., school plays, sporting events, academic competitions, concerts, etc.).
5. When invited to a school by a Principal, the Principal will notify the Superintendent (or designee).

G. Communication Among School Board Members/Superintendent (*Policy BH – Board Ethics*)

The governance team agrees:

1. To expect the Superintendent to communicate with all School Board Members regularly with all receiving the same information through an agreed upon mode of communication.
2. To maintain open communication and mutual respect, especially during School Board meetings, while exhibiting clear structure and professionalism.
3. To share information early and often to support informed decision-making and build trust.
4. The Superintendent and School Board Members agree to "no surprises" in school board meetings and throughout regular operations.

H. Communication with Staff (*Policy BCBD – School Board Meetings and Policy KN - Complaints*)

The governance team agrees:

1. The Superintendent is the only employee that reports directly to the Board of Education.
2. Positive rapport and relationships between School Board Members and employees are valued:
   a) School Board Members will go through the Superintendent (or Chief of Staff) when wanting to communicate with staff regarding School District business and daily operations of the School District. Requests for "readily available" information will be processed as soon as possible or a timeline will be provided for responding. Readily available information is information or materials that already exist in distributable form.
   b) School Board Members will consult the Superintendent when contacted by any staff member when pertaining to School District business and on matters pertaining to daily operations of the School District.
3. School Board Members will provide questions or requested information to the Superintendent prior to the monthly School Board Meeting through the School Board Agenda Review and Study sessions as aligned with Norm and Protocol B5 and Board Policy BCBD.

   These requests include:

   - Information
   - Reports

- Questions about School Board agenda items

4. All School Board Members will receive information provided in response to any one School Board Member's request.

I. Self-Assessment (*Board Policy BA – Goals and Objectives*)

The governance team agrees:

1. The School Board's annual self-assessment evaluation tool should align with the Georgia Standards for Effective Board Governance and include school board members, staff, and stakeholder perspectives.
2. The School Board's self-assessment meeting also should include an annual review of the School Board's Norms and Protocols with opportunity for revision.
3. As part of the School Board's self-assessment process, all School Board Members will sign certification of the individual and collective commitment to the Georgia State Standards for School Boards and the Code of Ethics.
4. The School Board's annual self-assessment meeting should be conducted separately from the Superintendent's annual evaluation.
5. After reviewing the School Board's self-assessment data as a whole, the School Board will develop an action plan. Whole Board Governance training should be aligned with the action plan.

J. Strategic Planning (*Board Policy BA – Goals and Objectives*)

The governance team agrees:

1. The vision should be clear and be the guiding principle in all decisions.
2. To commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement, quality instruction and resources, and define clear goals toward that vision.
3. To have strong beliefs and values define the limitless possibilities for student learning with confidence in the School District's ability to teach all children at rigorous levels.
4. To review progress on School District goals annually.

K. Superintendent Evaluation (*Policy CEI – Superintendent Evaluation*)

The governance team agrees:

1. To establish the Superintendent's annual performance goals jointly with the Superintendent in alignment with the strategic plan or annual priorities.
2. To be fair and timely with the Superintendent's evaluation.
3. School Board Members will review the Superintendent evaluation and rate the Superintendent on the goals and submit to the School Board Chair.
4. The School Board Chair will review the evaluation with the School Board Members and then build consensus.
5. The School Board Chair will present the evaluation to the Superintendent, who will have a chance to add in his/her comments about the evaluation.

Timeline for Evaluation of Superintendent

October – Executive Session

Superintendent presents an Annual Evaluation Report, with artifacts, aligned with the Evaluation Instrument in Executive Session.

- School Board Members receive a notebook of artifacts to take for further review.
- School Board Members receive a blank evaluation document with self-addressed, stamped envelope from School Board Attorney.
- School Board Members return individually completed evaluation document by TBD to School Board Attorney.
- School Board Attorney compiles into one document and prepares for School Board Review and discussion.

November – Executive Session

School Board to review and discuss compiled evaluation document and determine final summary score in Ex Session with School Board Attorney.
Following Executive Session, School Board Chair and School Board Attorney will present Superintendent with Evaluation Results.

December – Executive Session

School Board is updated by Board Chair and Attorney regarding the presentation of the evaluation to the Superintendent.
The Superintendent provides School Board Members with a Growth & Improvement plan reflective of School Board evaluation feedback.
School Board considers any modifications to the evaluation instrument for calendar year 2026.

January

Board finalizes instrument with agreement with the Superintendent.
Superintendent publishes instrument on website.

June/July

Superintendent presents a Mid-Year representation of artifacts and progress toward Board Goals in Ex Session.
Process continues.

Process continues…

* If GADOE production of performance results is delayed, evaluation timeline could be delayed.

L. Communication with the News Media (*Policy KBCA – News Releases*)

The governance team agrees:

1. The Superintendent of Schools or a designee will be the news media liaison for coordinating the release of information concerning the School District and action of the School Board. (Policy language)
2. The Board Chair will be the official spokesperson for the School Board and the School District, except as this duty is delegated to the Superintendent. (this is exact Policy language)
3. If contacted by the media, School Board Members will forward to the Chief Communications Officer who will keep the Superintendent informed.

M. Social Media Communications

The governance team agrees to:

1. Use social media as a tool to promote positive and important news about the School District.
2. Not engage with the public on controversial, divisive and/or political topics.
3. Refrain from speaking on social media about School Board meeting items.
4. Not engage in an open forum in platforms such as Messenger or group chats other than from the Superintendent.
5. Stay away from responding during a crisis and rely on the School District social media sites to relay critical information.

N. School Board Meetings (*Policy BCBD – School Board Meetings*)

The governance team agrees:

1. All School Board Members should come prepared to the meeting by reviewing materials in advance of the meeting and by participating in an agenda study and review session and bringing the necessary provided resources to the meeting.
   a) A School Board Meeting preparation schedule will be developed by the Superintendent and honored by the Cabinet team and School Board Members to promote positive and productive discussion around the business of the School Board. Board Member items for the agenda are due 8 days prior to the School Board Mtg.

b) Agenda Study and Review sessions will be scheduled for each School Board Member in order to ensure adequate preparation, communication, and information is provided by the Superintendent and staff to every School Board Member.

c) Agenda Study and Review sessions are designed to provide School Board Members dedicated time to thoroughly review the matters that come before them in a School Board Meeting and to ensure that each School Board Member has time to process the information and prepare for meaningful dialog at the public meeting.

2. To refrain from surprise questions and work through the Superintendent as it relates to any questions/concerns.

a) School Board Members commit to sharing questions or concerns in advance with the Superintendent in order to reduce unexpected issues during public sessions, ensure accurate and thorough information is prepared, and to support collaborative problem-solving.

3. School Board Member questions during a School Board report should be directed to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee providing the report. Questions beyond the School Board report should first be directed to the Superintendent and then the Superintendent may elect to defer to a designee.

a) School Board Members agree to maintain open, respectful and solution-oriented communication.

b) Topics requiring significant explanation will be addressed privately and with adequate notice before public discussion with the Superintendent and other School Board Members.

4. To limit the use of cell phones during Work Sessions, Trainings, and School Board Meetings.

5. The Superintendent will develop materials associated with an agenda item according to an agreed upon schedule to promote public transparency to promote School Board discussion.

~~a) Friday prior to School Board Meeting –~~

- ~~Preview of Draft Agenda and Accompanying Materials provided via email in digital form.~~
- ~~First Draft of Personnel Recommendations provided via email (this will be subject to change).~~
- ~~Personal Phone Call from Chief HR Officer regarding Principal/Director and above positions.~~

~~b) Monday prior to School Board Meeting –~~

- ~~Final Agenda and Accompanying Materials sent to all School Board Members via email in digital form.~~
- ~~Final Agenda and Accompanying Action Item Materials posted to the district website~~

~~c) Tuesday prior to School Board Meeting –~~

- ~~Final Draft of Personnel Recommendations provided via email~~
- ~~Final Agenda will be updated with Personnel Recommendations on the district website~~

6. There will be no surprises during staff reports at School Board meetings.

O. School Board Trainings

The governance team agrees to:

1. Actively participate in School Board Retreats or scheduled School Board Trainings.

2. Review and revise the School District's Core Beliefs, Student Achievement Goals and Key Priorities/Strategic Plan as needed.