



Kyrene School District Governing Board & Superintendent Handbook

Board Adopted on May 26, 2026

Kyrene School District Governing Board & Superintendent Handbook

Disclaimer:

The contents of this Handbook are not intended to supplant any policy of the Kyrene Governing Board. Where an established policy and this Handbook may differ, the Kyrene Governing Board policies will govern.

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PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

A highly effective Governing Board and Superintendent Governance team strives to improve student outcomes and build strong connections with diverse stakeholders to add value to every aspect of our children's school experience. The purpose of this handbook is to provide a framework for common operating procedures and practices that build and sustain a positive relationship between Board members, the Superintendent and with members of the school community, and define a culture of excellence, equity, and trust. In this handbook, unless otherwise noted, we define "community" to include Kyrene students, staff, families, business partners, and all other individuals and businesses within the greater geographic area encompassed by the Kyrene School District.

Prior to adoption of this handbook, the Governing Board has discussed the topics to be included in Board Retreats and Board Meetings. The Governing Board and Superintendent Handbook is approved by the Kyrene Governing Board.

Kyrene Promise

We promise to provide welcoming, inclusive learning environments in which every student is honored, valued, and feels a strong sense of belonging and purpose.

We promise to provide rigorous, responsive learning environments in which every student is given what they need to develop knowledge, skills, confidence, and a passion for learning.

We promise to provide vibrant, world class learning environments in which every student believes they are empowered and prepared to make a meaningful impact on a rapidly changing world.

Kyrene Key Values

CONNECTION: We build and maintain trusting relationships so that our students, families and staff are seen, heard and valued.

COMPASSION: We treat and respond to others with dignity, understanding, empathy and kindness.

COURAGE: We possess the moral and mental strength to do what is right, even when it is challenging.

COLLABORATION: Together, we make a difference, by learning and working in unity to deliver excellence for our students, colleagues and community.

CURIOSITY: We reach beyond our comfort zone to explore innovative and unconventional ideas with a sense of wonder.

Strategic Plan Goals

The Kyrene Strategic Plan 2023-28: Thrive! Ready for the Future is available online at www.kyrene.org/strategicplan. The plan has four central goals:

- Early Literacy
- Academic Progress
- Sense of Belonging
- Equity

BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT NORMS

The Board and Superintendent will operate with a shared commitment to serving the best interests of Kyrene's students and strive to reflect the eight characteristics of effective school boards.

Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards

Research conducted by the National School Board Association's Center for Public Education looked at key indicators of school board effectiveness. They concluded that school boards in high-achieving districts exhibit the [8 Characteristics of Effective School Boards](#):

1. Effective school boards commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision.
2. Effective school boards have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn, and of the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels.
3. Effective school boards are accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.
4. Effective school boards have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.
5. Effective boards are data savvy; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.
6. Effective school boards align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.
7. Effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.
8. Effective school boards take part in team development and training, sometimes with their superintendents, to build shared knowledge, values and commitments for their improvement efforts.

Board and Superintendent Norms

A. General Conduct

As a governance team, the Board and the Superintendent will model with each other the leadership and relationships we seek to build with others. Collaborative relationships based on trust, respect, transparency and accountability will build credibility and inspire confidence in our leadership, our vision and the work of the Kyrene School District.

B. Honoring Roles

The Board and Superintendent will work together based on a shared respect for the roles each plays in the leadership of the District. The Superintendent and District staff will be respectful of the role the Board plays as elected representatives of the Kyrene community and their role as defined in state statute. The Board will be respectful of the role of the Superintendent in managing the District and its staff and hold him/her accountable for its operation.

C. Communication

The Board and Superintendent will work together to share information with each other with as much lead time as possible and to avoid “surprises.” Board members will strive to communicate questions and concerns to the Superintendent, and the Superintendent will strive to keep Board members informed of information they need to be aware of as appropriate. Items that need to be discussed collectively will be placed as an agenda item at a future meeting rather than bringing up the issue, without notice, at the meeting.

D. Board Acts as a Collective Body

The Board recognizes that they act as a collective body and only the Board as whole has authority. Individual Board members do not have individual authority and will not take unilateral action. The Board President, in consultation with all other board members, will communicate the position(s) of the Board on controversial issues.

E. Chain of Command

The Board will respect established protocols for communication with the Superintendent and District staff. There shall be an agreed “chain of command.” For staff and community members, each inquiry is to be referred to the person who can properly and expeditiously address the issue. All personnel complaints and criticisms received by the Board or its individual members will be directed to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will ensure that responses to Board requests will be handled in a timely manner and share responses with the entire Board.

F. Board Meetings

The Board will conduct all meetings appropriately and professionally by:

- engaging in meaningful, focused and open discussions.
- actively listening, encouraging input and allowing others to express their voice.
- respecting one another's opinions.
- refraining from use of cell phones during meetings.
- conducting executive sessions only for appropriate subjects as determined by legal counsel and being mindful of the confidentiality of executive session discussions.
- being respectful of others' time.

G. Board Advisory & District/School Committee Meetings

When Board members attend a District or school administrative committee meetings, their role shall be limited to observer, not active participant, unless invited for an introduction or specific purpose. When Board members serve on a Board Advisory committee (governed by open meeting law), their role shall be defined as active participant. *See Board Advisory & District/School Committees

H. Accountability

The Board and the Superintendent will participate when possible in opportunities that provide professional growth, and commit to continuous improvement through an annual Board self-evaluation and an annual evaluation of the Superintendent's duties, responsibilities, and progress towards established goals.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The [Kyrene Governing Board Policy Manual](#) delineates the roles and responsibilities of the Governing Board and the Superintendent.

Role of the Governing Board

The role of the Governing Board is to set policy for the management of the District and to provide oversight of the Superintendent's management of the District. The Board as a whole is authorized to adopt all needed policies for the organization, evaluation, and governance in the District. The Board shall employ a Superintendent, who shall enforce State and Federal laws and the policies of the Governing Board.

Role of the Superintendent

The role of the Superintendent is to manage the day-to-day operations of the District and to translate the policies of the Board into administrative action. The Superintendent functions as the chief executive officer of the District and is accountable to the Board. The Superintendent may delegate the necessary authority to other employees and develop such procedures and protocols as the Superintendent considers necessary to ensure the efficient operation of the District. The Superintendent is accountable to the Board.

Board Members Role in Advocacy

Governing Board members' service includes advocacy for the District and its programs. The Board will participate in legislative programs through conferences with the state and national school boards associations. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to actively participate in the development of legislation that has a positive effect on educational programs of the District.

The Arizona School Board Association, to which the District belongs, advocates on behalf of its member boards at the Arizona State Legislature and at all levels of government. The Board has an opportunity to provide input into the ASBA Political Agenda each year. ASBA provides its members with representation at the legislature, and shares updates throughout the legislative session.

Board Advisory and District/School Committees

There are two basic types of committees, a Board advisory committee or a District or school administrative committee that a Board member may serve on or attend. A Board advisory committee is governed by the open meeting law and meetings require notice, agendas, and the ability for the public to attend. These committees invite, and at times require, the participation of a Board member, such as the Kyrene Employee Benefit Trust (KEBT). Other committees can be formed by the Board for a specific purpose, such as strategic goals of the District or aligned with the District's strategic plan. Due to the large nature of the work that these tasks require, an individual Board member or two may be appointed to these committees to provide a Board perspective and to serve as a liaison between the committee and the Board. During Board member reports, the Board member can (and should) provide updates regarding the work of these committees and any committee meetings that were held between Board meetings.

District or school administrative committees include the Superintendent councils, parent organizations, and site councils. These are the committees where Board member participation is discouraged unless specifically invited, usually for an introductory or other specific purpose. Board members may observe the work of District/Superintendent committees and councils and other school committees; however, they will refrain from active participation. Committee and council work may result in recommendations that will go to the board for consideration and possible action, and their participation in the development of those recommendations may create a conflict of interest. Board members will be mindful that their presence at committee and council meetings may influence the discussion and affect the ability of committee/council members to engage in candid discussion.

Board Members Visits to School Sites

Board members are encouraged to attend as many school events (e.g., sporting events, fine arts events, community events) as a spectator as their time permits. Board members wishing to visit a school in their capacity as Board members shall:

Schedule the visitations through the Superintendent's office. The Superintendent will check with the principal about the best time to visit, make the necessary arrangements and confirm with the Board member(s).

- Check in with the principal upon arrival.
- Follow campus guidelines for visitors (sign in, guest badge, escort, etc.).
- Respect staff time and allow staff to perform their duties.
- Not evaluate staff.
- Not give direction to any staff or students.
- Not accept gifts (other than nominal tokens) or favors from any District employee.

When visiting with teachers of their own children/family members, Board members will make it clear that they are acting as parents/family members rather than Board members.

Board members can directly accept invitations to attend school events that they receive in their capacity as Board members. When such an invitation is accepted, Members shall let the Superintendent's office know prior to the event.

GOVERNING BOARD MEETINGS

The Governing Board conducts all business at official meetings of the Board. All meeting notices are officially posted in compliance with the requirements prescribed by A.R.S. 38-431.02, Arizona Open Meeting Law.

Types of Board Meetings

Regular Meeting

Regular meetings are held in public to conduct the business of the District. Agenda items include action items such as personnel matters, consent agenda, and policy adoptions; presentations about agenda items or future agenda items; recognition of students, staff and volunteers; items for future consideration and public comment.

Study Session Meeting (As Needed)

Study session meetings are held in public, usually before a regular meeting, for District staff to present information about a program, issue or upcoming regular meeting agenda item. During a study session, the board may have a discussion, but no vote or official action is taken and there is no public comment during the study session.

Executive Session Meeting (As Needed)

Executive session meetings are held in a closed session without public attendance. Agenda items are limited to those outlined in A.R.S. § 38-431.03 (personnel matters; confidential records; legal advice; contract negotiations; salary negotiations; intergovernmental negotiations; purchase, sale or lease of property; school safety operations, plans or programs; and security and safety of facilities, operations and critical infrastructure). During an executive session, the board may have discussion and instruct legal counsel, but no vote is taken.

Board Retreat (As Needed)

Board retreats are held in public and are usually for the purpose of the Board to engage in training. During a board retreat, the board may have a discussion, but no vote or official action is taken and there is no public comment during the Board retreat.

Special Meeting (As Needed)

Special board meetings may be called if approval is needed on an item before the next regularly scheduled board meeting or to address an emergency situation.

Meeting Preparation

Agenda Setting

The Board President will work with the Superintendent to develop board meeting agendas. In general, board agendas are drafted the Friday following a Tuesday board meeting. The final agendas are confirmed the next Friday before the board meeting. Meeting and supplemental information is available to board members in Executive Content on the Friday prior to the meeting. Information and the final agenda for the meeting is made live at least 24 hours before the meeting, usually on the Monday prior to the meeting (unless the Monday is a holiday). Board members are provided with background information in preparation for board meetings through Board Prep meetings and Board Memos.

Board Prep Meetings

The Superintendent and District leadership will usually conduct board prep meetings with board members the week prior to each board meeting. Board prep meetings are conducted with no more than two Board members in attendance at a time. During the board prep meeting District staff will provide an overview of the content to be presented in the board meeting so that Board members are prepared for the board meeting. Board members may also present questions that they would like to see addressed at the Board meeting so that District leadership can ensure that relevant information is provided at the Board meeting.

Board Memo

Board memos will include information related to upcoming board meeting agenda items as well as updates on District activities. The board memo sent the Friday before a board meeting will include the approved agenda and background on agenda items. Board memos will be sent to board members no later than noon on Friday. If the Board memo will be sent later than noon the Board will be notified.

The Superintendent will provide Board members with background information on policy review/changes in Board memos, in enough time to allow for review and clarification in advance of items being placed on Board meeting agendas for first reading. Board members will give the Superintendent time for staff to research and provide answers to clarifying questions about agenda or action items in either board prep or no later than the end of the day on

Monday prior to the board meeting and not delay asking for clarification until the Board meeting.

Board members are expected to have reviewed information contained in Board memos prior to Board meetings.

Regular Meetings

Superintendent Report

The Board meeting agenda will include time for the Superintendent to provide a briefing on the work of the District to the Board and community. Superintendent reports are intended to update the community on items of community interest, celebrations and participation in school/community activities. Reports should be brief and consistent with the expectations of communications as outlined in this Handbook. No action is taken on the Superintendent's report.

Board Member Statements

The Board meeting agenda will include time for Board members to provide a statement and/or report to fellow Board members, the District, and the community. Board statements and/or reports are intended to update the community on items of community interest, celebrations and participation in school/community activities, provide updates on Board committees and to provide Board members an opportunity to make a general statement. Reports/statements should be brief and consistent with the expectations of communications as outlined in this Handbook. No action is taken on a Board members statement or report.

Consent Agenda

The consent agenda will include items not requiring discussion. Any Board Member may ask to have an item pulled from the consent agenda to allow for discussion or individual consideration. The process to have an item pulled is as follows:

- Board members will endeavor to notify the Superintendent of the intent to pull an item off the consent agenda as soon as possible and preferably no later than noon the day of the meeting.
- The Superintendent will endeavor to provide board members with any additional information that may address the reasons for pulling the item off the consent agenda in order to allow the item to be retained on the consent agenda, if appropriate.
- An item that is pulled from the consent agenda will either (1) be discussed after the consent agenda vote; or (2) be scheduled as an action item for that meeting's agenda or placed on a future meeting agenda, as appropriate.

Requests to Speak to the Governing Board

Input from the community is very important to the Governing Board as they consider the business of the District. There will be a call to the public at each meeting. Individuals who wish to speak may fill out a "blue" card and will be given up to 3 minutes to speak during the call to the public. State statute prohibits the Governing Board from discussing or addressing an item that is not on the agenda, but they can listen and request that staff follow up on any concerns. Only the Board President will acknowledge, as appropriate, public comments during the meeting. The Board President may recognize the Superintendent to correct factual information. At the conclusion of the call to the public, the Board President, at his/her discretion, may recognize a Board member to respond to a personal attack if such Board Member so chooses.

Monday prior to the board meeting and not delay asking for clarification until the Board meeting.

Board members are expected to have reviewed information contained in Board memos prior to Board meetings.

Procedures for public comment are clear and available at the meeting. In order to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to address the Governing Board, the President may also set a time limit for individual comments, based on the number of comments submitted, as follows:

- 1–15 speakers: 3 minutes
- 16–30 speakers: 2 minutes
- 31+ speakers: 1 minute

Individuals will not be allowed to yield their time to another individual.

Items for Future Consideration

Any board member may suggest an Item for Future Consideration. Items for Future Consideration will be compiled and tracked in a document which will be reviewed by the Board President and the Superintendent as part of agenda setting on a regular basis. The document shall be provided to board members in board memos. Items listed as “Items for Future Consideration” cannot be discussed during Board meetings unless and until they have been placed on a meeting agenda. Items suggested for future consideration that are not placed on a future meeting agenda will be addressed either in a board memo or during board prep.

Meeting Minutes

Written and recorded minutes will be taken for all regular and special Board meetings, including study sessions, retreats and executive sessions, and shall include the information required by A.R.S. 38-431.01. The format for written meeting minutes will include the agenda item number/title, a brief description of the item, and a description of any action taken. Following are key agenda items and what will be included in the minutes:

Requests to Speak to the Governing Board

Minutes will include the name of the person submitting the comment and a sentence that describes the comment.

Consent Agenda Items

Minutes will include the action to be taken (i.e. approve the personnel action item), the motion by (name of Board Member), final resolution and ayes/nays (Names of Board Members).

Presentation/Action Items

Minutes will include a brief description of the presentation, the recommended action to be taken and the motion by (name of Board Member), final resolution and ayes/nays (Names of Board Members), if applicable.

Items for Future Consideration

Minutes will include the name of the Board member making the request and a description of the requests for future consideration.

COMMUNICATIONS

Board and the Superintendent

- A. The Superintendent will notify the Board as soon as possible for any school, student or staff emergencies. Notification will be by the most appropriate means depending on the type of emergency for:
 - a. School emergency (e.g., lock down, fire)
 - b. Student emergency (e.g., arrest, injury, death)
 - c. Staff emergency
- B. The Superintendent will ensure that all board members receive the same information.
- C. The Superintendent will report to the Board President absences of more than three business days due to professional obligations, vacation time, illness or other circumstances prior to the absence (preferably) or when the absence occurs.
- D. The Board will only give direction to the Superintendent at Board meetings when the Board majority votes to give direction.
- E. Board members will refer emails, letters, and telephone calls to the Superintendent to resolve issues or concerns from parents, staff and community, as appropriate.
- F. Board members, the Superintendent and staff will support decisions of the Board.
- G. Board members, the Superintendent and staff will abide by confidentiality laws governing executive session discussions and will respect the privacy interests of students and staff.
- H. The board memo is the avenue for communicating information to the board ahead of staff and family announcements when possible.
- I. The District will provide FAQs to the board when necessary to support community questions or concerns about district activities

Board Members and Open Meeting Law

In order to stay compliant with open meeting law:

- A. Information that a Board member wishes to share with all members of the Board must be routed through the Superintendent.
- B. Board members should refrain from discussing the content of a conversation (either verbal or written) with one Board member to another Board member (i.e., serial conversations).
- C. To avoid serial communications via email, Board members will be bcc'd on any email sent by the administration. Board members are also reminded to be careful about replying all to any email that may be sent to them from an outside source to avoid the possibility of inadvertently violating the Open Meeting Law.

Board Members and the Community

For purposes of this section, “community” is defined as students, staff, families, local residents, businesses and other partners.

- A. Board members are ambassadors to the community and should represent the District in a respectful manner in all interactions with the community.
- B. Board members should understand processes being utilized with various District initiatives and projects in order to educate the community.
- C. Board members should refer people to existing processes and groups for how they can participate, advocate or share information, as appropriate.
- D. Board members should consistently refrain from making assurances to groups or individuals about resolving their issues and concerns.
- E. Board members should maintain independence as a single member when speaking with individuals or groups.
- F. Board members should refer staff and community members to appropriate administrators to address administrative issues. Board members should be respectful of the “chain of command” and direct community members who contact them with a complaint accordingly.
- G. Individuals interested in contacting the Board may do so by emailing Board members individually or by sending an email to governingboard@kyrene.org. This email address will automatically transmit the message to all Board members and the Superintendent’s Office. In order to comply with Open Meeting law requirements and the Board’s communication protocols, individual email responses may be limited. Emails are reviewed and will be forwarded to administration to address concerns and to follow up, as appropriate. The email will be filed in accordance with public records requirements.
- H. Any written or electronic correspondence sent to Board members or staff concerning District matters is in most cases not confidential. Such correspondence is part of the public record and may be disclosed if requested by members of the public, including news media.
- I. When speaking as an individual, Board members can share opinions but should clearly state they are not speaking for the Board and should not provide any assurances about impending items that may be considered by the entire Board.

Board Members and the Media

- A. The Board recognizes its responsibility to provide information to the community and actively seeks to establish a good working relationship with local news media.
- B. To promote a positive relationship between the District and the media, the Board shall respond as appropriate to requests from the media concerning the programs and activities of the District as well as matters pending before the Board.

- C. All communication with the news media for the purposes of seeking or arranging news coverage, providing official statements from the District, or responding to requests from the news media shall be channeled through the office of the Superintendent.
- D. The Board President will speak on behalf of the Board when appropriate and/or refer members of the media to the designated District spokesperson.
- E. All Board members and the Superintendent will be notified (in advance, when possible) when the President will speak on behalf of the Board.
- F. The Executive Director for Communications and Engagement will share written communications for the media or community with the Board (prior to their release, when possible and appropriate).
- G. When speaking to the media as an individual, Board members shall:
 - a. Consider Open Meeting Law requirements.
 - b. If the subject relates to an item on which the Board may take action, avoid discussing the voting process to assure the community that you have not already decided on your vote prior to a discussion with the entire Governing Board.
 - c. If the subject relates to an item on which the Board has voted, support (or stay silent and be careful to not undermine) the decision of the Board, consistent with this Handbook.
 - d. Stress that you are speaking as an individual and not for the Board or the District.
 - e. Keep your remarks positive and respectful.

Board Members Use of Social Media

Board members will be mindful of their use of digital communications. In addition, Board members:

- A. Should be aware of the implications of multiple Board members' commenting or sharing social media with regard to Open Meeting law. To avoid this, Board members should consider limiting social media comments regarding Kyrene to their individual, official accounts.
- B. Should refrain from answering questions on behalf of the Board, and respond only as an individual.
- C. Should direct stakeholders to official Kyrene social media accounts and other official Kyrene communication channels for factual information, to support consistency and accuracy.