



School Board Governance Procedure and Handbook

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Introduction

Navigating this Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to outline the board's operating procedures and norms. It also includes important information on policies, meetings, committees, partnerships, and communication. Its ongoing guidance is meant to enable each board member to fulfill essential governance duties and to exercise their responsibilities as a board member, while also providing expectations and standards of behavior for the conduct of the board.

Handbook Maintenance and Review Procedure

- Annually, (first meeting in July) the handbook will undergo a review by the board. As part of this review, the board will:
 - o Review mutual expectations of board norms;
 - o Seek input and feedback regarding best practices, as needed;
 - o Check the MSBA website for suggested handbook updates;
 - o Adopt the update by a majority vote of the board.
- Board members may propose additions/revisions to the handbook by sending an email to the chair and superintendent requesting to add “handbook discussion” as a topic for a study session.
- The handbook will be updated to reflect adopted policy changes without further board action;
- Hyperlinks within the handbook may be updated without further board action;
- The date this handbook was last reviewed, updated, and/or revised, is included on the cover page of this handbook

District Information

The effectiveness of your decisions as a board member hinges on your knowledge of the district's schools, staff, students, and the communities they inhabit. Recognizing the specific needs and aspirations of Robbinsdale Area Schools will empower you to advocate for policies and initiatives that truly enhance our educational outcomes. By engaging with this information, you will not only enhance your ability to make informed decisions but also build trust and credibility with fellow board members, the community, staff, and students alike. Let this knowledge serve as the foundation of your tenure, guiding your decisions and initiatives to foster an environment where every student can succeed.



District Identity

Robbinsdale Area Schools

- **History of the District** – Robbinsdale Area Schools has a rich history of educational excellence dating back to 1890 when the first school, Parker School, was built. By 1913, the school was expanded and renamed Robbinsdale Public School, serving students in grades K-8 until Robbinsdale High School was built in 1937. The district experienced rapid growth in the mid-20th century, becoming the fourth-largest school system in Minnesota by the 1950s. Over the decades, the district has continually evolved to meet the changing needs of its diverse community while honoring its longstanding commitment to student success.
- **Demographics** – In the 2025 school year, Robbinsdale Area Schools serves a student population of 10,321, reflecting a vibrant and diverse community. Of these students, 34% identify as White, 30% as Black, 17% as Hispanic/Latino, 10% as Two or More Races, 6% as Asian, and 2% as Indigenous. The district is home to an impressive linguistic diversity, with 89 home languages spoken by students and their families. Additionally, 59% of students qualify for educational benefits through free or reduced-price meal programs, highlighting the district's commitment to meeting the needs of a broad socioeconomic spectrum. This diversity enriches the learning environment and underscores Robbinsdale Area Schools' dedication to equity and inclusion.

- **Points of Pride** – Robbinsdale Area Schools takes immense pride in its achievements, programs, and the vibrant community it serves. The district participates in prestigious initiatives like the NASA HUNCH program, offering students unique opportunities to collaborate on real-world projects. Its fine arts programs stand out as a cornerstone of excellence, fostering creativity and talent from an early age. Robbinsdale is a place where students believe in their potential, feel a sense of belonging, and grow to become their best selves. Middle and high schools offer a wealth of robust activities, from athletics to arts and clubs, creating a dynamic and engaging environment for all learners. This success is made possible by the unwavering support of the Robbinsdale community, which plays a vital role in fostering a positive and nurturing atmosphere.
- **Programming** – Robbinsdale Area Schools offers a wide range of distinctive curricular and extracurricular opportunities that highlight the district's unique strengths. The district is known for its amazing fine arts programs, including elementary school band and orchestra, which provide students with early exposure to music education. Academic offerings include Advanced Placement courses, AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), and the nationally recognized BARR (Building Assets, Reducing Risks) program. Magnet schools, such as Robbinsdale Spanish Immersion, the School for Engineering and Arts, FAIR Pilgrim Lane, and FAIR Crystal, provide specialized educational pathways to meet diverse student interests. Middle and high schools boast robust activities, from athletics to arts and clubs. Innovative initiatives like Catalyst and Restorative Practices further support student success and foster a positive, inclusive learning environment.
- [Community Partnerships](#)

Leadership Directory

Board Members 2025-2026

Name	Board Position	Phone Number	Email Address
Helen Bassett	Director	763-504-7997	helen_bassett@rdale.org
ReNae Bowman	Clerk	763-504-7992	renae_bowman@rdale.org
Richard “DJ” Brynteson	Director	763-504-7994	richard_brynteson@rdale.org
Dr. Greta Evans-Becker	Chair	763-504-7998	greta_evans-becker@rdale.org
Aviva Hillenbrand	Treasurer	763-504-7995	aviva_hillenbrand@rdale.org
Caroline Long	Vice Chair	763-504-7993	caroline_long@rdale.org
Dr. Kenneth Wutoh	Director	763-504-7996	kenneth_wutoh@rdale.org

Note - Board Executive Committee Includes: Chair, Vice-Chair, Clerk, and Treasurer.

Superintendent's Office

Name	Position	Phone Number	Email Address
Dr. Teri Staloch	Superintendent	763-504-8012	teri_staloch@rdale.org
Dr. Robert McDowell	Assistant Superintendent	763-504-8070	robert_mcdowell@rdale.org
Kristen Hoheisel	Chief Financial Officer	763-504-8037	kristen_hoheisel@rdale.org
Molly Olson	Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and School Board	763-504-8012	molly_olson@rdale.org

Leadership Cabinet

Name	Position	Email Address
Dr. Robert McDowell	Assistant Superintendent	robert_mcdowell@rdale.org
Kristen Hoheisel	Chief Financial Officer	kristen_hoheisel@rdale.org
Amy O'Hern	Executive Director of Human Resources	amy_ohern@rdale.org
Anthony Williams	Executive Director of Community Education, Athletics and Activities	anthony_williams@rdale.org
Tracy Habisch-Ahlin	Director of Strategic Communications	tracy_habischahlin@rdale.org

District Facilities

Building	Address	Phone Number
Education Service Center (ESC)	4148 Winnetka Ave N, New Hope, MN 55427	763-504-8000
Armstrong High School	10635 36th Ave N, Plymouth, MN 55441	763-504-8800
Bus Garage	4124 Winnetka Ave N, New Hope, MN 55427	763-504-8105
Cooper High School	8230 47th Ave N, New Hope, MN 55428	763-504-8500
Crystal Learning Center	305 Willow Bend, Crystal, MN 55428	763-504-8300
FAIR School Crystal	3915 Adair Ave N, Crystal, MN 55422	763-971-4500
FAIR School Pilgrim Lane	3725 Pilgrim Ln N, Plymouth, MN 55441	763-504-8400
Forest Elementary	6800 47th Ave N, Crystal, MN 55428	763-504-7900
Lakeview Elementary	4110 Lake Dr N, Robbinsdale, MN 55422	763-504-4100
Meadow Lake Elementary	8525 62nd Ave N, New Hope, MN 55427	763-504-7700
Neill Elementary	6600 Medicine Lake Rd, Crystal, MN 55427	763-504-7400
Noble Elementary	2601 Noble Ave N, Golden Valley, MN 55422	763-504-4000
Plymouth Middle School	10011 36th Ave N, Plymouth, MN 55441	763-504-7100
Robbinsdale Middle School	3730 Toledo Ave N, Robbinsdale, MN 55422	763-504-4800
Robbinsdale Spanish Immersion School	8808 Medicine Lake Rd, New Hope, MN 55427	763-504-4400
Sandburg Middle School	2400 Sandburg Ln, Golden Valley, MN 55427	763-504-8200
School of Engineering and Arts	1751 Kelly Dr, Golden Valley, MN 55427	763-504-7200
Sonnesyn Elementary	3421 Boone Ave N, New Hope, MN 55427	763-504-7600
Warehouse	5440 Highway 169 Service Dr, New Hope, MN 55428	763-504-8131
Zachary Lane Elementary	4350 Zachary Ln N, Plymouth, MN 55442	763-504-7300

Schedule a Facility Visit or Tour

You have the same right as a parent or community member to visit the schools in your district as long as you adhere to the procedures the district has for visitors. You may also visit the schools in an official capacity with the board's authority or to fulfill a specific duty required of you as a board member. In any event, be sure to communicate with the superintendent and building administrator to schedule your visit.

You should use school visits to build good working relations with building principals and staff, to celebrate the positive accomplishments of the schools, and to show your pride as a member of the board. Look for opportunities to visit when a school is hosting a special event or recognition program for students and staff.

RAS Procedure: To request your building or program tour, email the superintendent and the superintendent will contact the building administrator to schedule.

Strategic Framework

Robbinsdale Area Schools

- [Strategic Plan Document 2025-2026](#)
- [Strategic Plan Document 2024-2025](#)
- [Strategic Plan Framework Document](#)

References for Further Information

Robbinsdale Area Schools

- [District Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Strategic Plan Document 2025-2026](#)
- [Strategic Plan Document 2024-2025](#)
- [Strategic Plan Framework Document](#)
- [2024-2025 Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness \(CACR\)/Achievement and Integration \(S&I\) Annual Report](#)
- [2023-2024 World's Best Work Force Annual Report](#)
- Stakeholder Surveys
 - o [Executive Summary - 2024 Student Survey Results](#)
- School Improvement Plan (SIP)
SIPs are located on each school's website. Go to the desired school's site, at the top of the page under the "Discover" dropdown menu - select "About Us". Scroll down on the page to the SIP dropdown to select the button connected to the current SIP
- [2024 Graduation Rates Summary](#)
- [2024 State Accountability Assessment Results](#)
- [District Scorecard](#) October 2025
- [District Budget and Financial Reports](#)
- [District Technology Plan](#) (link will bring you to a page where the plan can be downloaded for review)
- Emergency Plan

An effective emergency management plan in Robbinsdale Area Schools is essential to ensure the safety and well-being of students, staff, and visitors in each building. Regular training and drills are key to helping everyone understand and practice emergency protocols, fostering a calm, organized response during an actual emergency.

Each building identifies staff members for their Incident Command Team (principal, assistant principals, support staff, and teachers) and the Care and Support Team (includes school psychologists, social workers, counselors, and nurses). The building and district work closely together and coordinate with the local emergency responders.

Building principals plan and conduct drills throughout the school year, including five lockdown drills, five fire drills, and one tornado drill annually. Principals train and update staff on emergency procedures during workshop week and continue to reinforce these practices throughout the year.

The district has adopted and utilizes the Standard Response Protocol developed by the “I Love You Guys” Foundation. Each building has the posters below to identify the 5 areas of response.

- HOLD - Medical Emergency/Individual Crisis
- SECURE - (inside) Threat OUTSIDE the building
- SEVERE WEATHER - Threat OUTSIDE the building
- LOCKDOWN - Threat INSIDE the building
- EVACUATE - Threat INSIDE the building

[Emergency Response Plan](#)

The district office oversees the plan’s implementation, ensuring consistency and responsiveness across all buildings and facilitating ongoing reviews and improvements to address emerging safety needs and challenges.

- Facilities Assessments
 - [Reimagine Rdale Vision 2030 Recommendations Report](#)
- [Staff Handbook](#)
- [A Guide to Student Support and Behavior](#)
- [Office of the Superintendent](#)
- Chain of Command - [Superintendent’s Cabinet](#) (click link at left, then follow the sub-bullet instructions below to get to the various organizational charts)
 - On “Superintendent’s Cabinet” page, third line down - select Leadership Chart (PDF) dropdown
 - Scroll to bottom of Dr. Bob McDowell’s information, to select Assistant Superintendent Organizational Chart (PDF)
 - Scroll to bottom of Kristen Hoheisel’s information, to select Chief Financial Officer Organizational Chart (PDF)
 - Scroll to bottom of Amy O’Hern’s information, to select Executive Director of Human Resources Organizational Chart (PDF)
 - Scroll to bottom of Anthony Williams’ information, to select Executive Director of Community Education and Activities Organizational Chart (PDF)
- Employee Collective Bargaining Agreements:
 - [American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees \(AFSCME\)](#)
 - [Cabinet](#)
 - [Custodial](#)
 - [Educational Assistants](#)
 - [Nutrition Services](#)
 - [Principals](#)
 - [Program Assistants](#)
 - [Program Directors](#)
 - [Robbinsdale Equity Allies](#)
 - [Teacher](#)
- [School Board Meeting Calendar](#)
- [School Board Meeting Agendas and Minutes](#)

Board Membership

When considering your governance role, embracing the procedural steps that underpin the integrity of the democratic process is paramount. From post-election procedures to the establishment of board offices, each action reflects your commitment to transparency and accountability. By being diligent in these duties, you acknowledge the trust placed in you by constituents. Prioritizing effective governance ensures you serve the community and prioritize the needs of students.

Photos to be inserted when available

Current Board Members

Helen Bassett,

ReNae Bowman,

Richard “DJ” Brynteson,

Dr. Greta Evans-Becker,

Aviva Hillenbrand,

Caroline Long

Dr. Kenneth Wutoh

Superintendent Dr. Teri Staloch, ex-officio

Post-Election Procedures

Canvass and Declaration of Results

Between the third and tenth days after a district election, the board must canvass the returns and declare the results of the election. [Minn. Stat. 205A.10, Subd. 3.](#)

Certification of Results

The district clerk shall certify the results of the district election to the county auditor. [Minn. Stat. 205A.10, Subd. 3.](#)

Issuance of Certificate of Election

After canvassing the election and the time for contesting an election has passed (seven days after the canvassing board has declared the result of the election), the board shall issue a certificate of election to the candidate for each office who received the largest number of votes cast for the office. If there is a contest, the certificate of election to that office must not be issued until the outcome of the contest has been determined by the proper count. [Minn. Stat. 205A.10, Subd. 3;](#) [Minn. Stat. 204C.40, Subd. 2.](#)

Campaign Financial Report Certification of Filing

The Certification of Filing is due no later than seven days after the general election. [Minn. Stat. 211A.05.](#)

Taking Office

Board members take office the first Monday in January. [Minn. Stat. 123B.14, Subd. 1.](#)

Official Oath of Office

The official oath of office is administered once elections have been canvassed, the candidates have turned in their certificate of campaign filing report, and the seven-day contest period has ended. When the contest period ends, the school election officer should give each winning candidate the certificate of election. Each winning candidate then has thirty days to sign the official oath and acceptance of office form in front of a notary. By signing this document, the individual officially becomes a board member on the first Monday in January. [Minn. Stat. 358.05.](#)

Ceremonial Oath of Office

The ceremonial oath of office is usually administered at the organizational meeting on the first Monday in January (or as soon thereafter as practicable). While the official oath of office is required, the ceremonial oath of office is optional.

Organizational Meeting

On the first Monday in January each year, newly elected board members' terms of office begin, and boards must meet to organize for the year. [Minn. Stat. 123B.14, Subd. 1.](#) During this meeting, ceremonial oaths of office may be administered, officers are elected, committee assignments are established, and meeting schedules are adopted. This process lays the groundwork for the board's operations, emphasizing collaboration and effective governance to serve the district and its stakeholders.

For more regarding organizational meetings see, [MSBA's First Monday in January Handbook.](#)

District Intake Paperwork

Robbinsdale Area Schools will provide:

- Providing a copy of the board handbook
- Providing a copy of school and board calendars
- Providing access to district electronic resources
- Setting up a district email
- Scheduling a one-on-one meeting with the superintendent and cabinet
- Scheduling a one-on-one meeting with a board mentor
- Providing MSBA login information
- Providing MSBA's contact information (Phone: 507-934-2450; [Online Inquiry Form](#))

Candidate-elect will:

- Complete onboarding paperwork including campaign finance final report
- Provide contact information including home address, and cell phone number
- Schedule photo session with Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and School Board
- Complete payroll paperwork
- Complete a background check

Board Organization

Eligibility Requirements

To run for a board seat, you must be (1) at least 21 years old, (2) an eligible voter, (3) a district resident for at least 30 days prior to election/appointment, and (4) not convicted of a felony.

[Minn. Stat. 123B.09](#); [Minn. Stat. 204B.06, Subd. 1](#).

Term of Office

Board members are elected to four-year terms and take office on the first Monday in January. The term of a member who has been appointed to fill a vacancy will be for the remainder of the predecessor's term until the date of the district's next general election. There is no limit on the number of consecutive terms a board member can serve. [Minn. Stat. 123B.09](#).

Filling Vacancies

A vacancy on the board can occur for a number of reasons including when a member dies, resigns, or ceases to be a resident of the district. All vacancies will be filled according to:

- [Minn. Stat. 123B.09](#)
- [RAS Policy 215 - School Board - Vacancies and Procedures for Filling of Vacancies](#)

For more information, regarding filling vacancies see: [Steps to Fill a School Board Vacancy with Sample Application and Interview Questions](#) on the MSBA website.

Board Composition

Robbinsdale School Board is comprised of seven members. The superintendent is an ex-officio (non-voting) member of the board. [Minn. Stat. 123B.09](#).

Board Officers

Officers of the board include chair, vice-chair, clerk, and treasurer. These positions are determined annually at the organizational meeting. All board members, regardless of office, maintain equal rights and equal voices. See **Election of Board Officers** section on page 38 for information regarding nominating and voting procedures for board officers.

Role of The Chair

The chair is the presiding officer during board meetings and study sessions. The Chair, when present, shall preside at all meetings of the board, countersign all the orders allowed by the board, represent the district in all actions and perform all the duties a chair usually performs. (RR 47:5) Duties include:

1. Collaborate with the Superintendent and Vice-Chair to develop meeting agendas:
 - a. Administrative Agenda items, submitted by the Superintendent for action and approval by the Board. Items may be current issues, but many items are routine and non-controversial in nature and guided by an administrative “calendar.”
 - b. The board will use the administrative and board calendars that include:
 - i. Scheduled meeting dates of the board
 - ii. Tasks that must be completed at dates specified by statute
 - iii. Strategic plan monitoring
 - iv. District results monitoring
 - c. Board Agenda items can include such topics as policies, appointments, information requests, committee reports and updates. Requests from board members regarding placing an item on the agenda, request for professional development, conferences or other training/travel and other factual information or procedural information are directed to the Chair.
 - d. In general, those allowed to attend agenda settings are at the discretion of the Chair and Vice Chair. Under the current governance policies, one of the Chair’s duties is to “develop board meeting agendas in consultation with the Superintendent and input from board members.”
 - i. A duty of the Vice Chair is to participate in meetings with the Chair and Superintendent to develop the Board agendas.
 - ii. To prevent violations of the open meeting law, members may attend by invitation of the chair or by advance request of a board director.
2. The chair will manage meetings through the use of an agenda.
 - a. Agendas will be prepared a minimum of four days before the meeting.
 - b. Individual board members may submit agenda items to the chair for consideration during agenda planning.
 - c. The board may vote to add an agenda item or remove an agenda item at the board meeting.
 - d. A consent agenda will be used for the passage of routine and noncontroversial items or items of a similar nature.

3. Open the meeting at the appointed time and facilitate discussions to stay within the time limits established for discussion.
4. Ensure the orderly conduct of the meetings: Ensure deliberations are fair, open, thorough, efficient, timely and follow Robert's Rules for governance.
 - a. Deliberation management tools can include,
 - i. Assistance from a parliamentarian and/or board council to help enforce/interpret board policies, protocols, and behaviors. Utilize a timekeeper to stay on track with the agenda.
 - ii. Put an item to a vote.
 - iii. Manage or end discussions that become redundant, repetitive, grandstanding or obviously dilatory* in nature, including but not limited to:
 - Stating obvious truths
 - Stories not germane to the topic
 - Changing the topic, side tracking, going off topic
 - Distorting facts, attempting to deceive the board
 - Engaging in power struggles
 - Purposely making misleading statements or exaggerations to the board
 - Misinterpretation of policy, statute, or Robert's Rule for personal gain
 - Stating unrelated ideas
 - Intimidating other board members
 - b. Expedite business in every way compatible with the rights of members and the needs/requests and/or requirements of the superintendent.
5. When questions arise, the chair acts as the go between for the board and the board's contracted services such as professional development providers, superintendent search firms, policy experts, and legal counsel, statements to the press, etc. The board chair is the only board member allowed to contact board legal counsel.

Note: Legal counsel serves/advises the board as a whole and does not provide individual legal counsel.
6. Sign necessary documents.
7. Declare the meeting adjourned when the board so votes or at the time prescribed in the agenda, or at any time in the event of a sudden emergency affecting the safety of those present.

8. The chair is a meeting facilitator whose role it is to ensure order, fairness, and transparency. While providing strong leadership, the chair should be fair, never get excited and never be unjust to even the most troublesome members or take advantage of such members' lack of knowledge on parliamentary law. (For more information see: RR 47:14-19)
9. In addition to the function of presiding over the meetings, the chair has duties as an executive officer, these duties are outside the scope of parliamentary law and the chair has authority only insofar as the bylaws provide. Routine items/duties including:
 - a. Serve as the voice of the board through acknowledgement of correspondence/communication to and from the board.
 - i. Official communications from the board
 - ii. Official communication to speakers attending Listening Time. (designee)
 - iii. Communication from professional organizations to the board/chair.
 - iv. Receive and respond to requests from board members regarding placing an item on the agenda, other factual information or procedural information.
10. The chair communicates for the board. The will of the board is defined as a simple governing majority where a majority of board members are present, "the will" is always a majority voice. The will of the board is defined through action at the table, whether it is a vote on a specific agenda item or a "thumbs up," at a study session to get a sense of the board's will.

Any agreement by four (4) members outside of a noticed meeting could be in violation of the open meeting law.
11. Affix facsimile of signature to official documents when required.
12. In case of absence at a meeting, the Vice-Chair will preside.

Role of the Vice-Chair

1. Per the Robbinsdale School Board By-laws: the role of the Vice-Chair is to:
 - a. Perform the duties of the chair in the event of the chair's temporary absence,
 - b. Assist chair as requested in the execution of chair responsibilities.
 - c. Participate in meetings with the chair and Superintendent to develop Board Agendas.

Role of the Clerk

1. The board shall appoint, through the office of the superintendent, a Clerk Designee who will perform the statutory duties of the Clerk Designee and other such duties as may be assigned by the School Board or the Superintendent of schools.
2. The role of the Board Clerk includes:
 - a. Take attendance of the board members and record roll call votes during board meetings.
 - b. Verify accuracy of meeting minutes prior to board approval.
 - c. Assist when called upon to compile an informal vote or help facilitate study session proceedings.
 - d. Sign or affix facsimile of signature to official documents when required.
 - e. Perform the duties of the chair in the temporary absence of the chair and vice chair.
 - f. Record all closed session meetings as required by law.

Role of the Treasurer

1. The board shall appoint, through the office of the superintendent, a Treasurer Designee who will perform the statutory duties of the Board Treasurer and other such duties as may be assigned by the School Board or the Superintendent of schools.
2. The Board Treasurer will:
 - a. The treasurer shall perform the duties of the chair in the temporary absence of the chair, vice-chair, and clerk.
 - b. Serve as the Board Representative on the Financial Advisory Council (FAC).
 - c. Sign appropriate documents.

RAS Policy - [202 Policy - School Board Officer](#)

Board Compensation

The clerk, treasurer, and superintendent of any district shall receive such compensation as may be fixed by the board. Unless otherwise provided by law, the other members of the board shall also receive such compensation as may be fixed by the board. All members of the board may receive reimbursement for transportation at the rate provided for in [Minn. Stat. 471.665](#). No board member or district employee shall receive any compensation or benefits based on incentives or other money provided to the district by or from a source of group insurance coverage referenced in [Minn. Stat. 471.6161, Subd. 1](#), except for a refund provided under [Minn. Stat. 123B.75, Subd. 10](#), or a wellness plan that is mutually agreed upon by the district and the exclusive representatives of employees.

Robbinsdale Area Schools Board Compensation

- Board compensation is an agenda item at the organizational meeting in January
 - \$7,800 for Directors or \$650/month
 - \$8,400 for Vice Chair or \$700/month (includes \$50 stipend)
 - \$9,000 for Chair or \$750/month (includes \$100 stipend)
- Board members are paid monthly in the second pay period

Expense Reimbursement Policy and Procedures

RAS Policy: [412 Policy - Expense Reimbursement](#), and [214 Policy - Out-of-State Travel by School Board Members](#)

- [Reimbursement Processes and FAQ's](#)
- [Mileage Reimbursement Process](#)
- [Mileage Reimbursement Form](#)
- [US General Services Administration](#)

Learning the Job

Learning from Board Colleagues

One of the most valuable resources at your disposal, outside of this handbook, is the wealth of experience and knowledge possessed by your fellow board members and district staff (through the Superintendent's office). Learning from the Superintendent and staff can significantly enhance your understanding of board operations, policies, and educational best practices. Your colleagues on the board bring diverse backgrounds and perspectives that can provide invaluable insights. Here are a few ways to leverage their experience:

Study Sessions and Retreats – Participate actively in board workshops and retreats. These sessions are designed not only to address key issues but also to foster team building and collective learning.

Committee Participation – Join [board committees](#) that align with your interests and expertise. Working closely with other members on specific topics will deepen your understanding and contribute to your professional growth.

Informal Meetings – Work with the superintendent to schedule informal meetings to discuss specific areas of interest. These interactions can offer a more personalized learning experience and help you build strong working relationships.

Mentorship

The Robbinsdale School Board currently does not have a formal program for mentoring new board members. This could be a future board assignment.

Ongoing Professional Development

Continuous learning is crucial for effective governance. Board members are encouraged to participate in school board and related workshops and activities sponsored by local, state, and national school boards associations, as well as in the activities of other educational groups. Each board member shall receive training in school finance and management developed in consultation with the Minnesota School Boards Association. [Minn. Stat 123B.09, Subd. 2](#). Below is a full list of MSBA's Learning to Lead Phase Workshops.

- [Learning to Lead – School Board Basics: Phase I Workshop](#)
- [Leadership Foundations – School Finance and Management: Phase II Workshop](#)
- [Building a High-Performance School Board Team: Phase III Workshop](#)
- [Representing Your Community Through Policy and Engagement: Phase IV Workshop](#)

Other MSBA Professional Development Opportunities – To learn more about these opportunities, see the [Workshops and Events](#) section of the MSBA website.

In District Workshops Workshops & Events – Minnesota School Boards Association	Events
Mutual Expectations Workshop School Board Self-Evaluation Workshop Superintendent Search Workshop Superintendent Evaluation Workshop	Leadership Conference Summer Seminar Delegate Assembly Day at the Capitol Advocacy Tour Coffee and Conversation Series Board Chair Chat Monthly Webinars
Regional Workshops	
Officers' Workshop Negotiations Seminars	

Robbinsdale Area Schools Travel Policies

- [Professional Learning Travel Authorization Process](#) and [PD Travel Authorization Form](#)
- [214 Policy - Out-of-State Travel by School Board Members](#)

School board members are eligible for reimbursement of expenses incurred during official district-related out of state travel (214 Policy linked above). To ensure consistency and proper use of district funds, the following guidelines apply:

1. Reimbursable Expenses

Expenses eligible for reimbursement include transportation, meals, lodging, registration fees, required materials, parking fees, tips, and other reasonable and necessary costs directly related to school district business.

2. Pre-Approval for Out-of-State Travel

Any travel to out-of-state meetings that requires reimbursement from the district must receive prior approval from the school board.

3. Reimbursement Procedures

- Reimbursement amounts for meals are determined by: [US General Services Administration](#). The Board of Education is required to review the daily per diem rate for the place of travel.
- All reimbursement requests must be itemized on the official district reimbursement form and submitted to the designated administrator.
- Receipts for lodging, transportation, registration fees, and other approved expenses must be attached to the form.
- Mileage for personal automobile travel will be reimbursed at the rate set by the school board, and commercial transportation will be reimbursed at economy rates for the actual cost of travel.

4. Budget and Limitations

Reimbursements are subject to the school board's approved budget allocations. This includes attendance at workshops and conventions.

5. Meeting Limits

School board members may attend and be reimbursed for one out-of-state meeting per calendar year.

By adhering to these guidelines, school board members can ensure transparency and accountability in district-related travel and expenses.

MSBA Series of Publications – New board members automatically receive the following publications to stay current on education related news.

- **eClippings** – Receive daily links to K-12 news from around the state.
- **Leader Newsletter** – Monthly updates regarding MSBA news and events, topical news items, administrative topics, and much more.
- **Journal Magazine** – Bimonthly magazine includes school features, exploration of leadership issues, in-depth stories on education trends, and a directory of vendors.

Individual Board Membership

Duties as an Individual Board Member

The position of board member carries with it a profound responsibility to uphold the highest ethical standards. A commitment to integrity, transparency, and accountability will not only enhance the effectiveness of educational policies but also strengthen the community's confidence in the board's decision-making. Remember that your actions and decisions will help shape the future of our students, schools, and community. Let the Code of Ethics in District Policy 209 guide you in navigating the complexities of governance with unwavering moral clarity and purposeful dedication.

RAS Policies – [209 RAS Policy - Code of Ethics](#), and [209 RAS Policy - Statement of Compliance](#)

Board Time Commitment

The time required to complete your board responsibilities will most vary by time of year. It will depend on how many meetings are scheduled, which committees you serve on, what issues are going on in the district at the time, and how much time you need to prepare for upcoming meetings. For example, if the district is going through a building project, hiring a superintendent, or developing the district budget, the time needed for board meetings may be more extensive. On average, however, you can anticipate spending about nine to twelve hours a month on board service.

Board Business Meeting and Study Session Packets are published via email to the Board on the Thursday prior to the meeting. Expectations include a thorough review of meeting materials prior to the meeting. Questions regarding meeting materials must be submitted in advance no later than the day before the meeting, to allow the Superintendent time to gather answers.

Conflict of Interest

As a board member, you are expected to uphold the highest standards of integrity by actively avoiding any conflicts of interest in your official capacity. This means refraining from any personal financial involvement in district transactions such as sales, leases, or contracts you oversee or participate in. If a potential conflict arises, you must fully disclose your interests and ownerships, and abstain from decision-making processes related to those interests and ownerships.

You will operate under stringent guidelines to ensure that any exceptions to this rule are handled transparently, with unanimous consent and clear documentation. This approach maintains the community's trust and ensures all decisions are made solely in the best interest of the district and its stakeholders. See linked 210 Policy on next page.

RAS Policy

- [210 Administrative Procedure - Conflict of Interest School Board Members](#)

Working as a Board Team

At the heart of educational excellence lies the steadfast commitment of the board, entrusted with duties that shape the very fabric of our district's future. Defined by statute, yet driven by a passion for progress, the board's responsibilities encompass a profound dedication to nurturing thriving learning environments and supporting the endeavors of our administration. Crucial to fulfilling these responsibilities is the **collaborative spirit of board teamwork**, where collective wisdom and shared vision pave the path toward transformative change. By fostering an environment of mutual respect and collaboration, the board can harness its collective strength to address challenges, capitalize on opportunities, and ultimately, advance the educational journey of every student in our district.

Powers and Duties

201 RAS Policy - Legal Status of the School Board, Adopted 2022

I. PURPOSE

The care, management, and control of the schools is vested by statutory and constitutional authority in the school board. The school board shall carry out the mission of the school district with diligence, prudence, and dedication to the ideals of providing the finest public education.

The purpose of this policy is to define the authority, duties, and powers of the school board in carrying out its mission.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

1. The school board is the governing body of the school district. As such, the school board has responsibility for the care, management, and control over public schools in the school district.
2. Generally, elected members of the school board have binding authority only when acting as a school board legally in session, except where specific authority is provided to school board members or officers individually. Generally, the school board is not bound by an action or statement on the part of an individual school board member unless the action is specifically directed or authorized by the school board.

III. DEFINITION

“School board” means the governing body of the school district.

IV. ORGANIZATION AND MEMBERSHIP

1. The membership of the school board consists of seven elected / appointed directors. The term of office is four years.
2. There may be other ex officio members of the school board as provided by law. The superintendent is an ex officio member.
3. A majority of voting members constitutes a quorum. The act of the majority of a quorum is the act of the school board.

V. POWERS AND DUTIES

1. The school board has powers and duties specified by statute. The school board authority includes implied powers in addition to specific powers granted by the legislature.
2. The school board exercises administrative functions. It also has certain powers of a legislative character and other powers of a quasi-judicial character.
3. The school board shall govern the schools of the school district; adopt rules for their organization, government, and instruction; prescribe textbooks and courses of study; and make and authorize contracts.
4. The school board shall have the general charge of the business of the school district, its facilities and property, and of the interest of the schools.
5. The school board, among other duties, shall perform the following in accordance with applicable law:
 1. provide by levy of tax, necessary funds for the conduct of schools, the payment of indebtedness, and all proper expenses of the school district;
 2. conduct the business of the schools and pay indebtedness and proper expenses;
 3. employ and contract with necessary qualified teachers and discharge the same for cause;
 4. provide services to promote the health of its pupils;
 5. provide school buildings and erect needed buildings;
 6. purchase, sell, and exchange school district property and equipment as deemed necessary by the school board for school purposes;
 7. provide for payment of claims against the school district, and prosecute and defend actions by or against the school district, in all proper cases;
 8. employ and discharge necessary employees and contract for other services;
 9. provide for transportation of pupils to and from school, as governed by statute; and
 10. procure insurance against liability of the school district, its officers, and employees.

6. The school board, at its discretion, may perform the following:
 1. provide library facilities, public evening schools, adult and continuing education programs, summer school programs, and intersession classes of flexible school year programs;
 2. furnish school lunches for pupils and teachers on such terms as the school board determines;
 3. enter into agreements with one or more other independent school districts to provide for agreed upon educational services;
 4. lease rooms or buildings for school purposes;
 5. authorize the use of school facilities for community purposes that will not interfere with their use for school purposes;
 6. authorize co curricular and extracurricular activities;
 7. receive, for the benefit of the school district, bequests, donations, or gifts for any proper purpose; and
 8. perform other acts as the school board shall deem to be reasonably necessary or required for the governance of the schools.

RAS Policy

- [201 Policy - Legal Status of the School Board](#)

Board Governance Model

The [MSBA Board Governance Model](#) delineates the distinct roles and responsibilities of the board and the superintendent, ensuring both governance and management functions are clearly articulated and understood. It outlines the board's role in setting expectations and parameters through policy adoption, budgeting, contracting, and focusing on student achievement for all. It also highlights the superintendent's responsibilities in providing leadership and supervision, thus ensuring policies and strategies set by the board are effectively implemented.

The Board has used the book “the Governance Core” by Fullan and Campbell for professional development.

Standards for Board Leadership

The board is responsible to the community to govern efficiently and lead effectively to provide students an equitable education that results in high achievement. To assist in this journey, see the [Standards for School Board Leadership](#) developed by the MSBA. This document outlines best practices for board members and provides the standards we should strive to meet as part of a high-performing board team.

Attributes of High-Performing Board Teams

1. Everyone clearly understands the mission, goals, and role of the board; everyone knows who is, and who should be, doing what.
2. Board members are skilled in group leadership and/or membership functions.
3. Board members have a high degree of trust in one another.

4. Interaction occurs in a supportive atmosphere. Suggestions, comments, ideas, information, and criticism are all offered in a manner that is helpful. Respect is shown for varying team viewpoints.
5. Expectations for the group and its members are high. Goals are stretched.
6. The board is not dominated by an individual or sub-group; everyone participates and has the opportunity to influence the discussion.
7. The board has established procedures for operation including decision-making, conflict resolution, and meeting management.
8. The board is future focused. Decisions are made with long-term consequences and benefits in mind.
9. The board evaluates its performance periodically.

School Board Self-Evaluation

School Board self-evaluations can be an invaluable tool for assessing and enhancing the effectiveness of our governing body. This process allows us to reflect on our collective performance, identifying strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. Engaging in a self-evaluation enables us to gain insights into individual contributions and understand the dynamics and overall functioning of the board. It also fosters open communication, promotes accountability, and strengthens teamwork among board members. By participating in the process, we can gain insights that will empower us to make informed decisions, enhance our effectiveness in serving the community, and contribute to the continuous improvement of the board's performance and impact.

RAS Policies

- [BoE 2024-25 Goals, Agenda and Working Document](#)
- Learn about [MSBA's School Board Self-Evaluation in-district workshop](#).

Role of the Superintendent

The board employs a superintendent to lead and manage the district. The superintendent is an ex-officio, non-voting member of the board and the Chief Executive Officer of the school system. The superintendent's duties and responsibilities are derived largely from three sources: statute, the employment contract, and the job description. Superintendents are responsible for the management of the schools, the administration of all board policies, and are directly accountable to the board. The superintendent must annually evaluate each principal assigned responsibility for supervising a school building in the district. Also, the superintendent may delegate responsibilities to other district personnel but shall continue to be accountable for actions taken under such delegation. [Minn. Stat. 123B.143](#).

Hiring a Superintendent

One of the most critical responsibilities of the board is the hiring of a superintendent. The selection of the superintendent is a decision that shapes the future of the district, influencing the quality of education, the effectiveness of school management, and the overall success of students. The importance of this decision cannot be overstated.

The superintendent's vision and leadership directly impact educational outcomes and the district's ability to achieve its strategic goals. Therefore, it is imperative that the board conducts a thorough and meticulous search process, considering candidates' experience, leadership style, and alignment with the district's values and objectives. This decision requires careful deliberation and a commitment to finding a leader who will foster a positive educational environment, promote innovation, and address the diverse needs of the school community. In essence, the hiring of a superintendent is not just a routine administrative task but a defining moment that sets the course for the district's future.

Duties of the Superintendent Robbinsdale Area Schools

- [Job Description](#)
- [Current Superintendent Contract](#)
- [MN Rules 2020, Part 3512.0510](#)
- [RAS Superintendent Vacancy Brochure](#)

Tenets of an Effective Board-Superintendent Relationship

Understanding and fostering a productive relationship between the board and the superintendent is critical for the success of our educational institution. The [17 Tenets of an Effective Board-Superintendent Relationship](#) provides a comprehensive guide outlining key principles and best practices for maintaining a collaborative and effective partnership. This document highlights essential responsibilities and expectations for both the board members and the superintendent, promoting a clear understanding of each party's role in governance and administration. By adhering to these tenets, our board can ensure decisions are made efficiently, communication remains open and transparent, and the strategic goals of our district are met.

[203.7 RAS Policy - Board/Superintendent Relationship](#) Adopted Dec. 2022 States:

1. The Board employs one person—the Superintendent—and holds that person accountable for the performance of the entire District. The Board directs the Superintendent only through decisions of the Board acting as an entity. The Board delegates authority to the Superintendent to pursue District Goals. The Board/Superintendent relationship is based on mutual respect for their complementary roles.
2. The Board will make official decisions by formal, recorded vote in order to avoid any lack of clarity.
3. The Board, acting as an entity, may provide direction to the Superintendent in a posted meeting.
4. The Superintendent is neither obligated nor expected to follow the directions or instructions of individual Board members, officers and committees unless the Board has specifically delegated such exercise of authority.
5. If individual board members or board committees request information or assistance without Board authorization, the Superintendent may refuse such requests that, in the Superintendent's opinion, are disruptive, unreasonable, or require an excessive amount of resources or staff time.
6. If individual board members or board committees request public information or assistance without Board authorization, all board members will receive a notice that the requested information is available.

Evaluating the Superintendent

Evaluation of a superintendent's performance is one of the board's most important responsibilities. The evaluation of the superintendent is an inherent managerial right of the board. Each board member should review the superintendent's employment contract to determine the evaluation-related provisions, if any, that may be included. Done correctly, an evaluation is a useful governance tool that helps drive school improvement. In fact, a high-quality evaluation process enhances positive school-superintendent relationships, improves communication, clarifies leadership roles, creates common understandings, and provides a mechanism for accountability and communication.

RAS Policies

- The superintendent evaluation process is determined between the superintendent and the Board, with a mid-year review in December and a year end evaluation in May or June, summarized and reported publicly at a June Business Meeting
- [BoE 2024-25 Goals, Agenda and Working Document](#)
- [BoE 3 Year Agenda 2024-2027](#)
- [2024-2025 District Strategic Plan Priority Work](#)
- [Establishing Goals - Superintendent](#)

Board Communication Guide

Communication Between Board Members

Adhering to guidelines for effective and lawful communication with your fellow board members is crucial. While open and collaborative communication is vital for the board's success, remember that discussions outside of official board meetings must be handled carefully to avoid violating the Minnesota Open Meeting Law (OML). This law requires any gathering of a quorum of board members, where official business is discussed, must be conducted in public and notice must be provided to ensure transparency. (See exceptions in the Closed Meeting Chart). Therefore, while informal discussions can be valuable for building relationships and exchanging ideas, avoid veering into areas of official board business unless they are part of a scheduled public meeting.

A serial meeting, particularly in the context of open meeting laws, involves a series of communications outside of a formal meeting where a majority of a governing body is involved, but no single communication involves a quorum.

Example: do not send or reply to all in emails. If a board member needs to communicate to the full board, information needs to go through the school board chair.

These communications, which can be in-person, phone calls, emails, or other forms, are considered a violation of open meeting laws because they allow a majority of a governing body to collectively deliberate and take action without public access.

Key characteristics of a serial meeting:

Series of communications:

- Instead of one formal meeting, there are multiple, informal interactions.

Majority involvement:

- A majority of the governing body is involved in the communications, even if not all are present in every interaction.

Collective deliberation or action:

- The purpose of the communications is to discuss or decide on public business.

Violation of open meeting laws:

- A board member individually contacts a majority of other board members to discuss a specific agenda item
- One board member communicates with another, who then communicates with a third, and so on, in a chain of communications
- Representatives of board members meet to discuss issues on behalf of their respective members
- A board member acts as a "hub" and shares information with a majority of other board members

Building Collaborative Relationships Fosters Consensus - Establishing and nurturing **collaborative** relationships among board members, administrators, and stakeholders is essential to fostering group **consensus**. When individuals engage respectfully, communicate openly, and work toward shared goals, it creates an environment where diverse perspectives are valued and collective decisions can be reached more effectively.

School governance is founded on the belief that a group of very different people representing various constituencies in their district can make better decisions than any one person alone. That diversity is the board's strength. *It's best to be open-minded about the opinions of your fellow board members. Your goal should not be to change them to your point of view, but rather to determine the best solution to an issue by working together to try and accommodate all views. You want the students to be the "winners" — not one board member or another.*

Addressing Team Dysfunction – Open communication is critical to the proper functioning of the board. If you feel the board is not functioning well, it may be appropriate to suggest a workshop where the board reviews its ground rules, board policies on board operations, and board/administrative relations that establish how the leadership team will function. If these ground rules and policies are not effective, then consider modifications to them. The board may want to hire a facilitator to assist with discussions to improve the board's working relations. MSBA can help with a custom board in-service tailored to the board's specific situation.

Guidelines for interacting outside a board meeting

- **Do Not Discuss Board Business.** Focus on topics such as general education trends, personal updates, or board training and development without steering into specifics of pending decisions or board business.
- **Be Cautious with Written Communication.** Exercise caution with emails, texts, and social media interactions among board members. Avoid group messages or email chains discussing board business that could be construed as a meeting. Avoid responding to ALL, all communications should go through the chair and superintendent.

- **Be Transparent with Your Intentions.** Always make the purpose of any gathering clear, ensuring it is social or educational in nature and not meant for making decisions or deliberations that should be reserved for official meetings, not for promoting ownerships/memberships or personal causes.
- **Consider Public Perception.** When planning to meet outside of formal board meetings, consider how such gatherings might be perceived by the public. It's crucial to remember any appearance of conducting board business or decision-making outside of the designated public meetings could undermine community trust and confidence.

RAS Policy – [205 AP– Open Meetings and Closed Meetings](#) -

Situation	District Protocol
I have general questions about board governance and/or operation.	Contact Chair/Directors/Superintendent
I have a concern or questions regarding board governance.	Contact Chair/Directors/Superintendent
I have a concern or questions regarding district operations.	Contact Superintendent

Communication with the Superintendent

You need to establish a productive working relationship with the superintendent. To do this, you need to communicate with that individual. If you have questions, it is better to contact the superintendent and discuss them before the board meeting rather than surprise the superintendent at a public meeting. If the questions are concerns or relate to negative feelings from the community, superintendents appreciate knowing about them in advance of the board meeting so they can come prepared to address them. It is appropriate to call the superintendent, set up a meeting to discuss questions, or send an email for simple questions or requests.

When contacting the superintendent, it is important for you to keep the scope of such contacts within reason, to permit adequate time to receive a response, and to generally remain cognizant of the superintendent's other responsibilities and demands on their time.

Communication with the superintendent is a time to deep learn issues concerning the operation and administration of the district. Care must be taken to prevent micromanaging time or lobbying for pet issues.

Disagreements with the Superintendent – Always treat your fellow board members, the superintendent, and other administrators with respect. However, don't be afraid to disagree on an issue. In fact, a discussion about an issue that reflects two or more views usually results in a better decision than if everyone agrees with the first solution offered. Be certain to debate the issue, not the person, and maintain decorum in debate. Find common ground to work together for the benefit of the district/students.

Situation	District Protocol
I have general questions about the district.	Contact Superintendent - cc: Chair
What if I disagree with a report or presentation to the board from the superintendent or other staff member?	Contact Superintendent/Chair

Communication with District Administrators and Staff

You will likely come in contact with district employees, including administrators, teachers, and other staff members. While there's nothing wrong with talking to district staff, keep in mind that complaints should follow the chain of communication. Additionally, understand individual board members do not have authority to direct the work of district staff members. Directing requests through the superintendent can assist with appropriate prioritization, identifying information that may be readily available, and determining when it may be appropriate to have the full board weigh in regarding certain requests and project ideas.

Discussing Your Child with Staff – This can be a tricky area. No matter what you say about “speaking as a parent, not a board member,” it may be difficult for some teachers to separate your role on the board from your role as a parent. Some board members have indicated their significant other or a designated other takes the lead in speaking to their children's teachers. Make sure you're not using your position as a board member to secure special treatment for your child. *If there are issues you wish to discuss with a teacher, you should follow the normal procedures for contacting your child's teacher to discuss them.* Keep in mind that you do not relinquish your parental rights now that you're a board member.

Communication with Constituents Including Staff, Students, Parents, and Community

Identify the person contacting you and ensure you have their contact information. Seek to understand the situation or interest but, generally, do not agree or commit to resolve it personally as that is not the role of individual board members. Here are some general expectations:

- Do not agree to confidentiality or commit to limit your options of notification.
- Do not get involved in staff employment or contractual issues.
- Do not attempt to work with a parent who is working on behalf of an organized group rather than on behalf of their own student.
- When applicable, redirect the person to the appropriate staff person or administrator to address the concern. [Parent Guide for Addressing Concerns](#) (Ask if the person has been in contact with the appropriate staff person or administrator first, if not, help them find who to contact.
- Be alert to patterns of like concerns and notify the superintendent's office of the possibility.
- If the concern raises governance or public relations questions, contact the board chair in addition to the superintendent.
- Avoid forming and communicating opinions about a board decision before the board has discussed it in a board meeting.

Situation	District Protocol
If I get a phone call, email, or stopped in public from a constituent with concerns regarding the district.	Listen, get contact information, and ask for the constituent's expectation for resolution.
If I get a phone call, email, or stopped in public from a constituent regarding the board's decisions.	Listen, and discuss with constituent.
If I get an email that is addressed to the entire board with concerns from a constituent.	Chair/Superintendent will respond to the constituent on behalf of the Board.
There is a situation that requires the district's legal counsel to be contacted.	Chair/Superintendent will make contact with legal counsel.

Engaging with the Community

Be proactive. The board can engage key stakeholders by inviting and appointing them to participate in standing and ad hoc committees, advisory panels, focus groups, forums, and surveys to describe a vision for the district, set its goals, plan strategically, align resources with goals, and other actions offering them an opportunity to learn about public education and to influence governance decisions. Encourage all members of the community to visit their schools. Invite them to extracurricular activities, schedule a grandparents' day, and offer tours. In public education, familiarity often breeds support.

Use a variety of means to engage community members, inform them about the district, and learn about their interests, priorities, and concerns. Print and electronic media, social media (be mindful of emerging trends for younger parents), the district's website, and face-to-face conversations all play important roles in a year-round district campaign to inform and to be informed.

While accentuating the positive — student successes and district progress — don't neglect the negative. Be the first to let the community know about clouds looming on the horizon, and what the board is doing to dispel them. The board should be ambassadors for the district by scheduling dialogues with a cross section of the community — preferably in their neighborhoods as well as in online forums. And be prepared to address negative comments and feedback in a positive, proactive manner.

In addition, consider the varying expectations of the district's constituents. The parents of seniors may have far different expectations than the parents of kindergartners, and elderly community members with no students in the district may want completely different types of communication.

RAS Policy

- [612 RAS Policy: Development of Parental Involvement Plans for Title I Programs](#)

Communication with the Media

It's important to handle media interactions with care to maintain the veracity and unified voice of the board. Maintaining a unified voice is crucial as it ensures all board communications are consistent, clear, and reflect the collective decisions and strategic direction of the board. This unified approach helps to build trust and credibility with the community, stakeholders, and the media.

Situation	District Protocol
If I am approached by the media regarding a concern or board decision.	• Chair/Superintendent speaks with the media on behalf of the Board • If the Chair/Superintendent are not available, there is no response to the media • The Chair will notify the Board when there has been a request from the media

Communication on Social Media

Social media plays a significant role in board members' responsibilities. To use social media effectively while avoiding potential pitfalls, remember your posts should reflect well on your role and set a good example for students and the community. Be careful not to share personal, confidential, or legally protected information about students, employees, or board

members. Opt for face-to-face or telephone conversations for private matters instead of using social media. Control your emotions and avoid posting in anger or frustration, as negative statements can have lasting consequences and may lead to legal issues. Always use polite language and refrain from abusive, profane, or offensive comments. Additionally, avoid posting on behalf of the district or sharing commercial messages linked to the district. Use social media primarily for listening, making announcements, and gathering feedback rather than conducting board business. Finally, ensure you comply with all relevant laws and district policies, including those related to acceptable use, harassment, discrimination, and privacy. Your online actions should always reflect the values and responsibilities of your position within the district.

Situation	District Protocol
I know about an upcoming district event that should be featured on social media.	Bring it to the Superintendent
I saw a post containing false or misleading information regarding the board or district.	Bring it to the Chair/Superintendent

Using a District Email

You should use a district email account for your board communications. While this creates another account to monitor, the extra effort is well worth it. As an elected official, your communications related to your office are presumed to be public data unless a provision of law makes part or all of the email private. Your emails may contain private personnel data ([Minn. Stat. 13.43](#)), private educational data ([Minn. Stat. 13.32](#)), correspondence with a private individual ([Minn. Stat. 13.601](#)), or protected medical information.

Public Requests for Access to Public Government Data

Government entities must respond to these requests, and any work required to separate private data from public data, known as redaction, cannot be charged to the requester. The government entity must keep public data readily accessible, and redacting private data is its responsibility. Often, decisions about redaction need to be made by legal counsel, which adds to the expense.

If you use a personal or work email account, access to the public data may require you to turn over the personal or work device on which the emails are stored. (Best practice indicates the use of your district provided email is best for all district communication.) If you use a district email address, the district's computer system can be searched to respond to public data requests. As a result, you do not have to worry about your personal or work devices being unavailable or about your personal or work information being shared with others.

Using a separate email account also separates your board work from personal or business correspondence. This reduces the number of emails that need to be searched in preparation for responding to a public data request, saving the district time and money.

Another reason this separation is helpful is in how you think about your emails related to board work. Remembering the presumed public status of what you write in emails to other board members, the superintendent, and other district personnel about board work can save you from explanations and embarrassment. Public data may end up on the local news or social media, so it is wise to keep this in mind as you compose emails related to board work.

A final consideration is the potential to violate the OML. If a two-way communication about board business occurs among a quorum of the board (or a quorum of a board committee), it results in an OML violation, and the emails create a record of the violation.

In Minnesota, school board member emails should generally be retained for at least 6 years, as they fall under the category of general records. This is because they are often considered part of the district's broader financial records, payroll, or other transactional records. However, In some cases, records, including emails, might need to be retained for longer periods, especially if they are related to specific legal or regulatory issues, audits, or investigations. Minnesota State Statutes [15.17 subd.2](#) and [138.17 sub.7](#).

Policy 515 Protection and Privacy of Student Records: Destruction and retention of records by the school district shall be controlled by state and federal law. This policy pertains to students and parents.

Record retention relates to official records, not emails. All email data is subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

Communicating with Board Members Via Email or Text – To ensure OML compliance, you are strongly discouraged from using email or text to communicate with other board members about issues within the board's realm of authority, except for procedural elements like establishing meeting dates and locations. Generally, you should use email only for one-way communications to and from the board chair or superintendent to distribute information.

Situation	District Protocol
I have questions regarding an email I received from the board chair or superintendent.	Contact the Chair/Superintendent for clarification, and discussion.
Another board member emailed me regarding board business.	Respond only to the board member being cautious in what you say.
I have important information that everyone on the board needs to know before the next board meeting.	Contact the Chair/Superintendent to prevent serialized meetings.

References for Further Information

- [MSBA Board Self-Evaluation Information](#)
- [MSBA's Board Development and Recognition Program](#)
- [MSBA Legal Requirements for School Board Members](#)
- [MSBA Common Acronyms Used in Education](#)
- [MSBA Glossary of Educational Terms](#)
- [Minnesota School Finance Overview](#)
- [MSBA Resource Library](#) (MSBA login required)
- [MDE – School Finance Reports](#)

Board Meetings and Governance

Board meetings are pivotal gatherings that dictate the course of educational policies and decisions within a district. Governed by a structured framework, these meetings encompass various types, from regular sessions to emergency convenings, each serving distinct purposes and following legal mandates outlined in Minnesota statutes. Moreover, the operational norms, roles of board officers, and adherence to parliamentary procedures shape the conduct of these meetings, ensuring efficiency, transparency, and accountability. In this comprehensive overview, we delve into the intricacies of board meetings, covering everything from meeting types and legal obligations to procedural guidelines and public participation protocols.

Meetings of the Board

Types of Meetings

Regular Meeting – Regular meetings of the board are held according to an established schedule. The schedule must be kept on file at the district office. No additional notice required unless the date, time, or place of the regular meeting is changed. [Minn. Stat. 13D.04, Subd. 1.](#)

Special Meeting – The board may hold a special meeting to conduct business as needed. A special meeting can provide extra time for presentations, such as review of building-level outcomes, or to deal with an issue that arises but is not likely to be ongoing. A special meeting requires three days' notice (posted on the district's main bulletin board and either published in the official newspaper or mailed/delivered to those persons requesting notice) of the date, time, place, and purpose of the meeting. Board discussion and action must fall within the posted purpose(s) of the meeting. [Minn. Stat. 13D.04, Subd. 2.](#)

Emergency Meeting – The board may hold an emergency meeting called to deal with a situation that requires immediate board consideration and possible action, such as a response to a school fire, a school safety issue, etc. The board determines when an emergency meeting is needed. Good faith effort must be made to notify the news media that have requested notice in the same manner as notice is given to board members. If the situation allows for a three-day notice, hold a special meeting. [Minn. Stat. 13D.04, Subd. 3.](#)

District Meeting Definitions

- **Business:** At business meetings, boards take action on policies, contracts, bid awards, personnel appointments, etc. This meeting may be a regular, a special, or an emergency meeting.
- **Study Session:** A study session is a meeting of the board with selected staff or presenters to study and discuss in depth matters which potentially will come before the board. This meeting may be a regular or a special meeting.
- **Professional Development:** This is a leadership team meeting for board members and the superintendent, often led by a professional facilitator and dealing with evaluation and/or development issues. This is usually a special meeting.
- **Committee:** Board Standing and Ad Hoc committee meetings are covered by the OML. Other committee meetings that include board members may also be covered by the OML. [Minn. Stat. 13D.01, Subd. 1.](#)

- **Listening Time:** Public forum for community input, where the Board listens but does not respond. Listening Time is held prior to the first Business Meeting of the month (except when the calendar does not permit).

Organizational Meeting – The first meeting in January will be devoted to business required for the proper organization of the board. The agenda may include:

- Seating new members including administering the ceremonial oath of office
- Electing officers for chair, vice-chair (optional), clerk, and treasurer
- Setting the dates, time, and location(s) for regular board meetings. (our School Board generally approves calendar for the coming SY in the spring)
- Setting board member compensation
- Establishing standing and Ad Hoc committees and committee members
- Designating district depositories
- Selecting the official media sources (newspaper, TV) as in state statute and district legal counsel.

Additional Organizational Meeting Topics

Open Meeting Law (OML)

The Open Meeting Law ([Minn. Stat. Ch. 13D.](#)) is intended to preserve the rights of the public to observe actions and decisions of its representatives. To satisfy this, all meetings of the board will be open to the public for attendance, and a schedule of the board's regular meetings and study sessions will include times and locations and shall be kept on file at the district office. (See the Closed Meeting Law Chart link below for exceptions). Additionally, the board will ensure a schedule of meetings is posted on the district's website. The OML applies to all meetings of the public body and, in general, meetings of its committees and subcommittees. For the law to apply, a quorum (a majority of the members of the board) must be present. Although the responsibility to ensure meetings are properly noticed lies with the board, this operational activity is typically carried out by the staff member who functions as the clerk to the board.

Closed Meetings

Minnesota's OML requires all board meetings to be open to the public with few exceptions. A public body must begin in an open meeting and state on the record the specific grounds permitting the meeting to be closed and describe the subject to be discussed. A majority vote is needed to close the meeting, with the time and place announced at the public meeting before going into closed session. Please review [Minn. Stat. 13D.05](#) before proceeding to close a meeting. For specific questions, consult with legal counsel.

For more information regarding closed meetings, see [MSBA's Closed Meeting Law Chart](#).

Meetings Conducted by Interactive Technology

In the ever-evolving landscape of governance, technology has become an indispensable tool for facilitating communication and collaboration. Section 13D.02 of the Minnesota Statutes acknowledges this reality by outlining the conditions under which meetings governed by section 13D.01 can be conducted using interactive technology.

A board member may attend a meeting remotely by being in a location open to the public and the location published at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

For more information regarding remote meetings, see [Minn. Stat. 13D.02 Meetings Conducted by Interactive Technology](#) and [Minn. Stat. 13D.04 Notice of Meetings](#).

Meeting Operations

Attendance of Meetings

All board members are expected to attend all meetings. However, it is recognized that scheduling conflicts will occur. If you are unable to attend, please contact the Chair, Superintendent, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and School Board.

Acceptable Dress Code and Language

To ensure that both staff and students maintain a respectful and professional environment, it is important that the dress code outlined in the [Staff Handbook](#) and [504 Administrative Procedure - Student Dress and Appearance](#) is consistently upheld by everyone, including school board members. All employees are expected to present themselves in a well-groomed, modest, and professional manner. This includes practicing good hygiene, limiting the use of fragrances, and wearing attire that is appropriate for their assignments.

Key guidelines from [504 Administrative Procedure - Student Dress and Appearance](#) that all must follow include prohibitions against:

1. Clothing that bears lewd, vulgar, or obscene messages.
2. Apparel promoting illegal products or activities, particularly those not suitable for minors.
3. Clothing, jewelry, or accessories displaying emblems, symbols, or messages that are racist, sexist, derogatory, associated with gang affiliation, or that promote harassment or violence against others, as defined by [413 Policy - Discrimination, Harassment, and Violence](#).

By adhering to these standards, school board members, like staff and students, support a professional and respectful learning environment that fosters inclusivity and safety for everyone.

Location of Meetings

Robbinsdale Area Schools Education Service Center, 4148 Winnetka Ave N, New Hope, Minnesota 55427 in the Boardroom and Room 306

Addressing Others

Robert's Rules of Order/Parliamentary Procedure - titles , Director, chair, and surnames, and/or Mr./Ms./Dr.

Voting

Each elected member of the board will have one vote. A roll call vote will be taken when required by law or when requested by any board member. Any vote involving a money related decision will be a roll call vote.

District norms for regular voting: Robert's Rules of Order/Parliamentary Procedure

Quorum of the Board

In order for a board meeting to be official and before any action can be taken by the board, at least a quorum of board members must be present. In the absence of a quorum, the only official action that the board may take is to adjourn the meeting. The gathering of a quorum constitutes a meeting if "members discuss, decide, or receive information as a group on issues relating to the official business of the district."

Parliamentary Procedure During Meetings

Meetings are conducted according to Roberts Rules of Order.

RAS Policies – [203.1 Policy - Conducting Board Business and Meetings](#). For MSBA Policy Services Subscribers, this is MSBA Policies 203 – Operation of the School Board – Governing Rules and 203.1 – School Board Procedures; Rules of Order.

Presiding Officer

The chair will preside over all board meetings. If the chair is unable to preside, the vice-chair will perform the duties of the chair. Should both the chair and vice-chair be unable to preside, the clerk will perform the duties of the chair. In the unlikely event that the chair, vice-chair, and clerk are unable to preside, the treasurer will perform the duties of the chair.

Superintendent's Role in Board Meetings

The superintendent is a key person at all board meetings. The superintendent, chair, and vice chair commonly plan the meeting agenda together. The superintendent makes certain the meeting room is set up as required and all tools needed are available, such as audio or visual recording equipment, internet access, microphones, etc. Each item on the agenda is introduced by the chair; however, for discussion or action items, the superintendent or a designee is often asked to explain the issue. The superintendent's recommendation should be solicited before a vote is taken.

Board Committees

Committees may be established to address recurring needs of the board. Committees are in place to make the board's work more efficient and effective. They serve in advisory capacities and bring recommendations to the full board for decision making. Board committees should meet as often as necessary to accomplish their work and should meet only when there is substantive work to be done.

Robbinsdale Area Schools - Board Standing Committees

- Legislative Action Coalition (LAC)
- Financial Advisory Committee (FAC)
- Policy Committee
- All committees with current Board representation are in this document. [School Board Committee Assignments](#)

RAS Policy – For MSBA Policy Services Subscribers, reference [MSBA Policy 213 – School Board Committees](#)

Election of Board Officers

Minnesota law is silent on the method of electing officers, except that the election must be by open vote and not by any form of secret ballot. [Minn. Stat. 13D.01, Subd. 4.](#) Subsequently, the board may establish its own procedures, including procedures for nominating officers and voting procedures. The board will establish procedures in advance of the meeting so that everyone will know what to expect from the outset. The board must follow the procedures, but the procedures can be changed if the majority of the board members agree.

For more information regarding officer elections, see [MSBA's First Monday in January Handbook](#).

RAS Procedures

- Procedures for nominating officers – Board members can nominate other board members or themselves. Nominations do not require a second.

Guide to Board Meeting Roles and Responsibilities

Effective management and clear understanding of roles are essential for the smooth operation of board meetings. The MSBA [Guide to Board Meeting Roles and Responsibilities](#) provides a detailed outline of the duties and expectations for board members, the chair, the superintendent, and administrative staff before, during, and after meetings. This comprehensive guide helps ensure all participants are well-prepared, meetings are conducted efficiently, and follow-up actions are clearly defined. It covers everything from agenda preparation and legal advice to maintaining a positive meeting atmosphere and accurate record-keeping.

Data Privacy

It's essential to understand how data privacy relates to board meetings. When discussing district matters in board meetings, we encourage open dialogue. However, we need reasonable restrictions to ensure orderly proceedings and protect individuals' privacy and due process rights. These rights extend to both employees and students of the district. For employees, this includes the privacy of their personnel data. Similarly, students have privacy rights concerning their educational data. To uphold these privacy rights, we have procedures in place for handling agenda items and complaints. **If you are unsure if it is private data, ask before disclosing any information.**

RAS Policies – [406 RAS Policy: Public and Private Personnel Data](#), [515 Policy: Protection and Privacy of Student Records \(1\)](#), [515 Policy: Protection and Privacy of Student Records \(2\)](#)

For MSBA Policy Services Subscribers, this is *MSBA Policies 406 – Public and Private Personnel Data* and *515 – Protection and Privacy of Student Records*.

Public Comments to the Board

The board recognizes the value of participation by the public in deliberations and decisions on district matters. However, the board retains the right to determine whether and how public comment may occur.

RAS Procedures: protocols regarding public comments at board meetings:

- The board currently allows public comment at the start of the Business meeting for the **Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness (formerly WBWF)** presentation, and the **Truth in Taxation Public Hearing** prior to the first Business meeting in December.
- Currently RAS has **Listening Time** once a month before the first Business meeting.

RAS Policy – [Policy 206 – Public Participation in School Board Meetings/Complaints About Persons at School Board Meetings and Data Privacy Considerations](#).

Agendas and Minutes

Agenda Procedures

The board will conduct business during meetings through an adopted agenda that advances board work and district goals. The agenda serves as a roadmap for the meeting, outlining topics such as reports, presentations, discussions, and decisions. It is expected all board members will read the agenda and any supporting documents prior to the meeting. Each board member has the right to request additions, amendments, or revisions to the agenda prior to its adoption, and the board will determine if those changes are to be made.

RAS Agenda Procedures – District norms regarding agendas:

The agenda setting process is guided by the annual district/board calendar, which is managed by the superintendent's office. A sample for a model board agenda calendar in [MSBA Sample School Board Meeting Agenda](#).

It is the duty of the chair and vice-chair to work with the superintendent to set the agenda.

The Board agenda is guided by the following process:

1. Administrative/operational need/requirements (calendar and operational need)
 2. A board table discussion and majority agreement is necessary for an item (beyond calendar items) to be placed on the agenda
 3. Individual board member input:
 - a. Members contact the chair in writing with requested agenda items. Please provide specific and supporting documents that can be shared with other members.
 - b. Items of interest not placed on the agenda are kept in the Board's "Parking Lot" documents located in the shared drive.
- Robert's Rules will be the protocol used to make additions, amendments, motions, etc.
 - Procedure for distributing the tentative agenda and supporting documents - Thursday prior to the Monday/Tuesday meeting via email from the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and School Board
 - Procedure for asking questions about the agenda and supporting documents - All questions to be submitted to the Superintendent prior to 9 p.m. on the Sunday prior to the meeting via email
 - Procedure for addressing clerical errors in the agenda and supporting documents - Email any clerical errors to the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and School Board prior to noon on Friday prior to the meeting

RAS Policy– For MSBA Policy Services Subscribers, this is [MSBA Policy 203.5 – School Board Meeting Agenda](#).

Consent Agenda

The superintendent, in consultation with the board chair, may place items on the consent agenda. A consent agenda is a part of the agenda that includes items typically approved together in one motion. These items may include meeting minutes, routine reports, personnel appointments, and other administrative matters. By grouping these items together, the board can streamline the meeting process and focus on more substantive discussions. If any board member wishes to discuss or vote separately on an item listed in the consent agenda, they can request to have it removed for individual consideration.

RAS Policy – For MSBA Policy Services Subscribers, this is [MSBA Policy 203.6 – Consent Agendas](#).

Meeting Minutes

Minutes will be carefully recorded to include all actions of the board and all votes taken at a board meeting by the board's clerk or designee. Minutes do not include discussion or editorial comments. Summary of Study Session are not approved by the Board.

RAS Policy – *District norms regarding meeting minutes:*

- [204 RAS AP: School Board Meeting Minutes](#)
- For MSBA Policy Services Subscribers, this is [MSBA Policy 204 – School Board Meeting Minutes](#).

References for Further Information

Robbinsdale Area Schools – Resources that will help board members gain a deeper understanding of their role as a board member and how to work as part of a board team. Consider creating hyperlinks to each document for easy access to these resources instead of providing printed copies. Resources include:

- Copies of Meeting Minutes from the past year can be found on the website under [School Board Meeting Agendas, Packets & Minutes](#)
- [MSBA Sample Board Meeting Agenda](#)
- [MSBA School Board Ceremonial Oath of Office](#)
- [MSBA Guidelines with Meeting Minutes](#)
- [MSBA First Monday in January Booklet](#) (regarding the Organizational Meeting)
- [MSBA Parliamentary Procedure Overview](#)