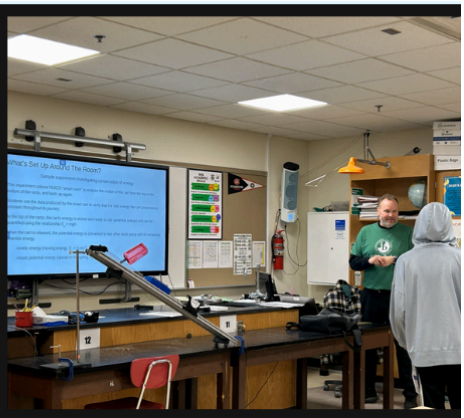
BOARD MEMBER HANDBOOK

2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR



OUR MISSION

In partnership with our communities and families, Rockford Area Schools provides challenging opportunities to engage, inspire, and educate globally-minded citizens.

www.rockford883.org | 6051 Ash St. Rockford, MN 55373 | 763-477-9165

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INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared as a guide for current board members and prospective board candidates on the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the Rockford Area Schools Board of Education. It is also intended to inform the general community on how the Board fulfills professional responsibilities.

BOARD POLICY GOVERNANCE

Like many school districts in the state of Minnesota and around the nation, the Rockford board utilizes the tenets of policy and governance to support its work and to assist it in defining the roles of the Board and the mission, vision, and values of the District. It is the Board's role with direction from the community to set policy, develop clear expectations for results, and to evaluate progress. The Superintendent, with the assistance of the district leadership team, carries out the district's daily operations in alignment with board policies and expectations. This allows the board to maintain a system-wide focus and supports an appropriate distinction between policy, management, and administration.

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

The community's voice is most directly heard in their vote for whom they select to represent them. *Each board member represents the whole district.* As elected representatives, Board members are responsible for making many decisions on behalf of the community. There are just a handful of exceptions where the board is allowed/required, by state law, to conduct a community-wide vote. Examples of this provision are when the school board moves forward with a levy referendum to raise taxes in the community to support the ongoing operation of the district and when the board may decide to move forward with a bond referendum to increase taxes to improve or expand district facilities or capital projects.

LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY
2026-2027

Jessica Johnson- Chair
jessica.johnson@rockford883.org

Eric Gordee- Vice Chair
eric.gordee@rockford883.org

Chris Morgan- Treasurer
chris.morgan@rockford883.org

Jamie Hillstrom- Clerk
jamie.hillstrom@rockford883.org

Dr. Beth Praska- Director
beth.praska@rockford883.org

Kevin Sjodin- Director
kevin.sjodin@rockford883.org

BOARD COMMITTEES

	SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEES	2026
1	FINANCE COMMITTEE	Morgan
		Hillstrom
		Sjodin
2	POLICY COMMITTEE	Gordee
		Hillstrom
		Praska
3		Gordee
		Johnson
	DISTRICT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE	Morgan
4		Johnson
		Sjodin
	NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE	Praska
	SCHOOL BOARD AD HOC COMMITTEES	**2026**
		Johnson
5	FACILITIES COMMITTEE	Morgan
		Sjodin
6	CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE	Hillstrom
		Praska
7	CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE	Hillstrom
		Morgan
8	COMMUNITY EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD	Gordee
		Johnson
		Hillstrom
9	COMMITTEE AT-LARGE	Sjodin
		Gordee
		Hillstrom
10	COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE	Sjodin
	SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATIVE	**2026**
		Sjodin
11	MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE (MSHSL)	Hillstrom
		Hillstrom
12	CHAMBER COMMITTEE	Gordee

13	LEGISLATIVE/MSBA DELEGATE ASSEMBLY	Gordee
		Hillstrom
14	ASSOCIATION OF METRO SCHOOL DISTRICTS	Johnson
		Gordee
15	MEEKER & WRIGHT SPECIAL EDUCATION COOPERATIVE (MAWSECO)	Johnson
		Sjodin
16	NORTHWEST SUBURBAN INTEGRATION SCHOOL DISTRICT (NWSISD)	Gordee
		Morgan
		Praska (Alternet)
17	SAFF	Hillstrom
18	MREA REPRESENTATIVE	Praska

EXECUTIVE TEAM

Superintendent - Dr. Jeff Ridlehoover
763-477-9165 Ext. 4002
jeff.ridlehoover@rockford883.org

Executive Assistant to the Superintendent - Courtney Neibert
763-477-9165 Ext. 4004
courtney.neibert@rockford883.org

Director of Technology - Jeff Kienitz
763-477-7540 Ext. 4008
jeff.kienitz@rockford883.org

Director of Community Education - Melissa Joseph
763-477-4563 Ext. 3804
melissa.joseph@rockford883.org

Consultant CFO - Bridget Peterson
bridget.peterson@rockford883.org

THE STORY OF THE ROCKFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Our History

Rockford Area Schools have a rich history and storied tradition, originating in 1856, two years before Minnesota became a state! From our earliest days, until the present, we have continued to educate and serve district residents with a commitment of strong academics and a comprehensive educational program that encompasses arts, activities, and the three magnet school programs offered today. For more information, and a detailed description of the history of Rockford Area Schools, please visit https://www.rockford.k12.mn.us/district/history.

Rockford Area Schools Today

The Rockford School District encompasses over 42.43 square miles. The district has a Pre-K through twelfth grade enrollment of approximately 1680 students and a total district population of 9,450 residents. Rockford Area Schools serves all or a portion of the communities of Buffalo, Rockford, Greenfield, and Corcoran and is located in Hennepin and Wright counties.

STRATEGIC PLAN

District Mission (Our Core Purpose)
In partnership with our communities and families, Rockford Area Schools provides challenging opportunities to engage, inspire, and educate globally-minded citizens.

Our Vision (What we Intend to Create)
Rockford Area Schools provides a supportive, rigorous, and relevant learning culture producing courageous learners prepared to enter a global society.

Our Core Values (What Drives Our Words and Actions)

- Excellence: To be our best, expect our best; to be inspired daily to become the very best we can be
- Students First: A safe, healthy environment to challenge, engage and inspire all students
- Community: It's about all of us, all the time
- Integrity: Align actions and words with values and beliefs while respecting differences
- Stewardship: Care and responsibility with our resources including natural and social environments
- Student Experience: All students have access to engage in a rich arts and academics environment, and an abundance of extracurricular opportunities

Strategic Directions (Drivers of Our Continuous Improvement)
Student Achievement and Growth

- Elevate instruction through quality curriculum and professional development, to provide our students with a robust schooling experience that encourages them to reach their full potential.

- Rationale: To provide each and every student with a comprehensive education that provides opportunities to pursue their own personal/professional goals and life aspirations.

Healthy and Supportive Learning Environment

- Definition: Promote respect and collaboration at all levels to foster secure relationships where people feel valued and safe, empowering them to share new and innovative ideas and advocate for their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others.
- Rationale: People do better when they feel better.

Community, School, and Family Partnerships

- Develop supportive and trusting relationships through community outreach and partnerships that encourage engagement that drives school and community growth.
- Rationale: Community and family engagement drives school success and enrollment. Partnerships where there is mutual trust and support helps to foster this involvement.

Culture of Collective Purpose

- Definition: Through interconnectedness and interdependence, we create a school community where each person belongs, contributes, and feels a sense of ownership.
- Rationale: To create a culture of connectedness where each individual understands their unique value and vital role as part of the collective entity.

Stewardship of Resources

- Managing our resources in a responsible and ethical way by effectively investing in our people, infrastructure, and finances.
- Rationale: To create systems and structures that allow our resources to be maximized and provide transparency and trust throughout the school community.

LISTING OF DISTRICT FACILITIES/SCHOOLS

Facilities Maps

Rockford Area Schools District Office

- 6051 Ash Street | Rockford, MN 55373
- Ph. 763-477-9165
- Fax 763-477-5833

Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School (REAMS)

- 7650 County Road 50 | Rockford, MN 55373
- Ph. 763-477-5837
- Fax 763-477-5025
- Principal: Brenda Nyhus
- Principal email: breanda.nyhus@rockford883.org
- Serves grades PreK-4

Rockford Middle School – Center for Environmental Studies (RMS-CES)

- 6051 Ash Street | Rockford, MN 55373
- Ph. 763-477-5831

- Fax 763-477-5832
- Principal: Paul Warzecha
- Principal email: paul.warzecha@rockford883.org
- Serves grades 5-8

Rockford High School - IB (RHS)

- 7600 County Road 50 | Rockford, MN 55373
- Ph. 763-477-5846
- Fax 763-477-6123
- Principal: Paul Menard
- Principal email: paul.menard@rockford883.org
- Serves grades 9-12

Rockford Community Center (RCC)

- 7650 County Road 50 | Rockford, MN 55373
- Ph. 763-477-5846
- Fax 763-477-6123
- Director of Community Education: Melissa Joseph
- email: melissa.joseph@rockford883.org

BECOMING A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

Requirements for School Board Candidates

School District #833 Board of Education members are elected officials. Elections are held in November of even-numbered years. To avoid having all six seats up for election simultaneously, the seats are scheduled for election on an alternating basis, with three seats open one year and the remaining three being open two years later. This pattern and process then repeats itself.

Eligibility Requirements (Source: *Minnesota School Boards Association*)

To be eligible for a School Board seat, you must be:

- At least 21 years old
- An eligible voter
- A district resident for at least 30 days prior to the election/appointment
- Not a convicted sex offender

Term of Office

Board members are elected to four-year terms commencing on January 1 of the year following the November election and ending on December 31, four years later. A member who has been appointed to fill the unfinished term of a member will need to run for election depending on when they were appointed. There is no limit on the number of consecutive terms a member can serve.

Filling Vacancies (Source: *MN Statute 123B.09)*

A vacancy on the Board shall occur when a member dies, resigns, or ceases to be a resident of District #833. In addition, if a member of the Board of Education is unable to serve on the Board and attend its meetings for ninety (90) days or more because of illness or prolonged absence from the District, the Board may, at any regular or special meeting thereof, through resolution declare a vacancy to exist. All vacancies will be filled according to Minnesota Statutes.

The term of a member elected during a special election shall not exceed the term of the member they are replacing. Nor can the term of a Board of Education member be lengthened by the Member's resignation and subsequent selection by the Board.

Minnesota Statute requires that once the Board approves an appointment, the appointed board member cannot be seated until 30 days after the appointment.

STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL BOARD LEADERSHIP

(Source: *MSBA 2017 and TeamWorks International)*

School boards are most effective when members focus on the big picture: creating policy, setting goals, and engaging stakeholders, all with the ultimate goal of improving student achievement. When boards focus on administrative issues, school districts suffer. Divided boards lead to a divided community, Rockford Board members vote according to district interests as they interpret, listen, and seek to understand the diverse perspectives of individuals and group interests on any issue or situation.

The Rockford Board strives for excellence in governance, operates in partnership with the Superintendent, strives for excellence in management, and partners for excellence in consultation with students, families, the general public, and staff.

Standard 1: Conduct and Ethics

The School Board, as a whole, provides leadership to the community on behalf of the school district by conducting its business in a fair, respectful, legal, and responsible manner.

An effective, high-performing school board strives to meet the following benchmarks:

1. Recognizes that the School Board team consists of school board members and the Superintendent and evaluates its performance at least annually.
2. Takes full responsibility for its activity and behavior, at and away from the school board table.

3. Encourages its members to express their individual opinions, respect others' opinions, and vote according to their convictions.
4. Speak with one voice after reaching a decision.
5. Spending time on board governance work rather than staff work – focuses on the ends and not the means.
6. Provide for orientation, onboarding, and ongoing training for all School Board members.
7. Follow established policies, including the chain of command, by directing families, members of the general public, and staff to the appropriate person to resolve their concern.
8. Set an example of respectful and civil leadership.

Standard 2: Vision

The School Board in close collaboration with the Superintendent and with community input, envisions the educational future of the community and then formulates the goals, defines the outcomes, and sets the course for the school district.

An effective and high-performing School Board strives to meet the following benchmarks:

1. Use clear, focused, attainable, and measurable goals and outcomes to support gains in student achievement.
2. Develop a multi-year plan, which includes well-crafted school district belief statements, a mission statement, a vision statement, strategic directions, and an annual district operational plan (DOP) with goals and objectives that enable the school board to evaluate school district performance.
3. Regularly monitor the district operational plan (DOP) to evaluate progress toward goal achievement and school district success.
4. Ensure that the school district belief statements, mission statement, vision statement, strategic directions, and operational plan goals and objectives are reflected in School Board policies, mirrored in the budget planning and implementation efforts, and supported district-wide.
5. Communicate the strategic directions and progress on the annual operational plan goals to the community.

Standard 3: Structure

To achieve its vision, the School Board establishes organizational and physical structures for student and staff success.

An effective, high-performing School Board strives to meet the following benchmarks:

1. Create organizational and physical structures in which all students and staff have the resources and support to maximize achievement and success. The School Board creates the conditions for success throughout the district.
2. Advocate and provide for learning through a rigorous curriculum, effective technology, and a safe and secure environment.

3. Select and employ one person – the Superintendent – as the school district's chief executive officer to lead and manage the school district.
4. Hold the Superintendent accountable for school district performance and compliance with written school board policy.
5. Delegate the authority to the Superintendent to recommend and evaluate all school district staff within the standards established through written school board policies.
6. Accept ultimate responsibility for the care, management, fiscal oversight, and control of the district while understanding that the day–to–day operations will be conducted by the staff.

Standard 4: Accountability

The School Board is accountable to the community for constantly monitoring the conditions affecting the school district as a whole. The School Board and individual members are also accountable to themselves, students, families, other Board members, the Superintendent, and staff.

An effective, high-performing School Board strives to meet the following benchmarks.

1. Recognize the duty to itself and the community to determine whether the authority delegated to the Superintendent is being used as intended.
2. The School Board shall engage in a self-evaluation process at least annually to determine how successfully they have performed in meeting the expectations established in district policies, the district mission statement, vision statement, core values, strategic directions, and district operational plan.
3. Evaluate the Superintendent's performance annually.
4. Use student achievement data and other agreed-upon indicators as the basis for assessing progress toward school district goals and compliance with School Board policies and state and federal laws.
5. Recognize the distinction between "monitoring data" (data used by the school board to address accountability) and "management data" (data used by staff for making operational decisions).

Standard 5: Advocacy and Communication

The School Board advances its vision at the local, regional, state, and national levels.

An effective, high-performing School Board strives to meet the following benchmarks.

1. Focus on community-wide concerns and values that best support student achievement and a positive daily student experience rather than being overly influenced by special interests.
2. Develop communication strategies to build trust between the School Board and the Superintendent, staff, students, and community.
3. Utilize a public relations strategy that supports the flow of information in/out of the district.
4. Engage and build relationships with both public and private stakeholders.

5. Advocate on local, state, and national levels.

In general, Board members are expected to follow a code of ethics that will guide their decision-making as it relates to the unique expectations and needs of the Rockford Area Schools. MN Statute 123B.09 as well as the District's Code of Ethics Policy 209 which expectations, functions, and legal obligations for board members: Source ISD #883 Policy 209.

EXPECTATIONS OF A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

Source: School District #833 Policy 209, Code of Ethics

Norm of Practice for School Board Member Communications AROUND ISSUES OR SCHOOL RELATED BUSINESS

(References to Minnesota Policy, Statute, and Open Meeting Law)

1. Email from Superintendent of Schools to the Entire Board

   - Response Protocol: Board members should not reply to all as this could inadvertently create a "meeting" under Minnesota's Open Meeting Law (Minn. Stat. § 13D.01). Any response should be directed privately to the superintendent or board chair/vice chair.
   -Discussion: Discussions that require board deliberation must take place in an open meeting to comply with Open Meeting Law, ensuring that any substantive discussions remain public.

2. Email from a Staff member, Parent or Community Member to the Board

   - Response Protocol: Individual board members should not respond. A formal response should come only from the Superintendent of Schools or Board Chair/Vice Chair.
   - Followup response Protocol: When any party communicates with the board, the superintendent or the board chair will promptly inform all board members of follow up communication. The follow-up will include minimum necessary detail to ensure that the board remains focused on governance while clearly delineating that management responsibilities rest with the superintendent. This approach reinforces accountability and keeps the board aligned with its strategic role.
   - Inclusion: If any person is mentioned in your communication, they should be included in the response.
   - Compliance: In compliance with Minnesota's Open Meeting Law (Minn. Stat. § 13D.01), avoid engaging in discussions via email that may constitute board deliberation. Forward the matter to administrative channels for further resolution.

3. Email from a Staff Member to an individual Board Member

   - Response Protocol: Politely acknowledge the message and include the appropriate leadership in your reply. Board members should refrain from engaging in operational matters, which are the purview of the administration. Ensure compliance with Minn.

Stat. § 13D.01 to prevent any communication from becoming an inadvertent "serial meeting."
- Inclusion of Superintendent, Board Chair, or Vice Chair: The superintendent and/or board chair/vice chair should be included in the response to ensure transparency.
- Inclusion: If another person is mentioned in your response, they should be included in the response.

4. Email from a Parent About a School or Student Issue to an individual Board Member

- Response Protocol: Board members should acknowledge the concern but direct parents to the appropriate school-level administrators for individual issues, respecting the chain of command. Avoid discussing specific student matters, in compliance with privacy laws such as FERPA, and adhere to Open Meeting Law by ensuring discussions that require board action are conducted publicly.
- Inclusion of Superintendent, Board Chair, or Vice Chair: Responses should include the superintendent and/or board chair/vice chair to ensure proper channels handle the issue.
- Inclusion: Any individual mentioned in your communication should also be included in the response.

5. Email from a Community Member to an individual Board Member
- Response Protocol: Acknowledge the communication, referring the community member to appropriate district channels (e.g., district office or board meeting) for further discussion. Avoid engaging in direct decision-making through private communication, as this could violate Minn. Stat. § 13D.01 if discussions amount to board deliberation outside of a public meeting.
- Inclusion of Superintendent, Board Chair, or Vice Chair: Any response should include the superintendent or board chair/vice chair to ensure proper follow-up.
- Inclusion: Any individual mentioned in your communication should also be included in the response.

6. Phone Call or Personal Conversation Related to the District
- Response Protocol: Listen respectfully and direct the individual to proper channels. Document significant points and share them with board leadership if necessary. Ensure that no commitments are made that could bypass the board's governance process. Personal conversations should not be used for board deliberations to comply with Minnesota's Open Meeting Law.
- Inclusion of Superintendent, Board Chair, or Vice Chair: Any follow-up or formal action resulting from the conversation should include the superintendent and/or board chair/vice chair.

- Inclusion: Any individual mentioned in your communication should also be included in the response.

7. Messaging from Staff, Parent, or Community.

- Response Protocol: Acknowledge the communication, in response alert the sender of the appropriate channel for written communications are email and to please send your message to district email.

In all scenarios, board members must adhere to Minnesota Open Meeting Law (Minn. Stat. § 13D.01), which requires that board deliberations on school district matters be conducted openly and in a public forum. Any communication where a person is mentioned should include that person in the response. Additionally, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) should guide any communications involving student information to ensure privacy compliance.

8. Getting stopped in public (school event, grocery store, garage sale, etc.) by a concerned staff, student or parent.

-Response Protocol: Check the name, status, and get a phone number for contact. Always seek to identify the situation or interest, but generally, do not agree or commit to resolve personally.

Redirect the staff member to their supervisor, and notify the Superintendent's Office. CAUTION: Do not get involved in employment/contractual issues.

Redirect parent to teacher/principal/administrator as appropriate and notify the Superintendent's Office. CAUTION: Don't attempt to deal with issues of groups, only the individual parent.

Redirect the student to their principal and notify the Superintendent's Office. CAUTION: If a safety concern is raised, follow district procedures.

Overall:

- Do not agree to confidentiality or commit to limiting your options of notification.
- Be available for contact in the future if redirecting does not address the concern.
- Be alert to patterns of like concerns, and if present, notify the Superintendent's Office.
- If the concern raises governance or political questions/concerns, contact the Board Chair in addition to the Superintendent's Office.

9. Information about yourself, the school board, or the school district is incorrectly referenced in a social media post

-Response Protocol: CAUTION! As a School Board member, it is not advised to engage in social media debates and criticisms.

Inclusion of the the Board Chair and the Superintendent's Office: Make them aware of the issue so that, if warranted, appropriate district staff can quickly provide factual information on the social media platform. Also, it may be determined that legal counsel and/or law enforcement may be contacted if there is a concern regarding confidentiality or safety.
Ideally, the school district will have staff and community advocates who will participate in social media groups regularly to communicate district information and monitor news and activity that pertains to the school district.

10. Having a concern or complaint as a school board member

-Response Protocol: Contact the Board Chair and the Superintendent directly, preferably in person or by phone to express your specific concern. Don't engage in serial meetings with other board members (a violation of the Open Meeting Law). Be clear as to the nature of your concern, is it about another board member, an administrator, a staff member, a policy, or a current issue before the board? Be clear as to:

1. What you have experienced.
2. What your thoughts are about the issue?
3. What are your feelings about the issue and the circumstances related to it?
4. What do you want to see happen to address your concern?

Identify what in your concern is governance work and what is management work.
Seek to increase your understanding, with an assumption of trust and competence for your board colleagues and district staff.
Don't represent other individual's interests or other group interests as your own.
Don't raise issues as a surprise in work sessions or business meetings. Allow the Board Chair and Superintendent time to research and prepare for a board discussion, if warranted.

11. Having a disagreement with a report or presentation to the Board?

Response Protocol: Submit questions and concerns to the Superintendent's Office following the existing Board protocols. Reflect and identify the specific reasons for your concern/s. Request a meeting with the Superintendent to discuss your concern/s. Do not surprise administrators or board colleagues in business meetings or work sessions with your disagreements and/or concern/s. Praise publicly and confront privately.

Attendance, Participation, and Professionalism in Meetings:

- Attend all School Board meetings, including work sessions, committee meetings, Board retreats, and required professional development sessions.
- Come to meetings prepared for discussion of the agenda items.
- Listen to the opinions and views of others including, but not limited to other school board members, administration, staff, students, and community members.
- Whenever possible (and as soon as possible), email the Superintendent and Chair with questions or concerns that arise when reviewing materials for a meeting, along with any

errors that you may notice. This will allow the administration to prepare and address the questions in their presentations, along with correcting any errors in advance of the meeting.

- Vote your conscience after informed discussion unless abstaining because of a conflict of interest.
- Support the decision of the Board even if it differs from your position concerning the issue.
- Recognize the integrity of your predecessors and associates and show appreciation and respect for their work.
- Be motivated by a desire to provide the best possible education for the students of our district.
- Consistently remind yourself about the proper duties and functions of a school board member.

The Functions and Work of a School Board Member:

- Focus on governance and policy work as much as possible.
- Remember, your responsibility is to set policy – not to implement policy.
- Consider yourself a trustee of public education and do your best to protect, conserve, and lead the work.
- Recognize that your responsibility, exercised through the actions of the school board as a whole, is to see that the school district is effectively managed and operated – not to manage it yourself.
- Work in partnership with the Superintendent/chief executive.
- Delegate the implementation and management of School Board decisions to the Superintendent.
- Develop new district policies as needed and review existing Board policies on a scheduled basis.
- Develop a vision for the district along with strategic directions to guide the work of the board and administration.
- Collaborate with the Superintendent to develop the priority goals for the annual district operational plan.
- Establish a plan for consistently monitoring progress in reaching the goals in the operational plan.
- Align the annual budget and allocation of resources with the priorities identified in the annual operational plan.
- Ensure that facilities are safe, and secure and meet the needs of students and staff.
- Communicate effectively with all stakeholders.
- Collaborate with community partners.
- Advocate for preK–12 public education at the local, state, and national levels.
- Provide by levy of tax, necessary funds for the operation of the school district.
- Approve and/or negotiate contracts with employee groups and with other entities for services appropriate and necessary for the operation of the school district.
- Hire and annually appraise the Superintendent.
- Perform other acts as the School Board shall deem reasonable and necessary for the operation and governance of the school district.

- Commit to ongoing professional development both as individual board members and collectively as a board.

Legal Obligations of a School Board Member:

- Comply with all federal, state, and local laws related to work as a school board member.
- Comply with all school district policies as adopted by the School Board.
- Abide by the rules and regulations as promulgated by the Minnesota Department of Education and other state and federal agencies with jurisdiction over school districts.
- Recognize that school district business may be legally transacted only in an open meeting of the School Board.
- Avoid conflicts of interest and refrain from using a school board position for personal gain.
- Take no private action that will compromise the school board or administration.
- Guard the confidentiality of information that is protected under applicable law.

ADDRESSING SCHOOL BOARD ACCOUNTABILITY AND SELF-EVALUATION

The Board and each of its members must be committed to faithful compliance with the provisions of the board's policies. Failure to deal with violations of its policies risks the loss of public confidence in the Board's ability to govern effectively. In the event of a member's violation of policy or other forms of misconduct, the board shall address the issue by using the following steps:

1. Conversation in a private setting between the offending member and the school board Chair or other individual members; such conversation will be reported to the balance of the board.
2. Discussion in a public meeting between the offending member and the full school board.
3. Public censure, by simple majority vote, of the offending member of the school board, as well as removal from committees and leadership positions, to which the member has been appointed or elected.
4. Removal from the School Board for proper cause by a concurrent vote of at least four members. The Board member to be removed will be duly notified of the time and place of the meeting for which the vote is to be taken and for the reasons for the proposed removal. The Board member will be given an opportunity to be heard in defense against the removal (MN 123.B.09; Subd. 9).

NOTE: Most Board member issues and situations are intended to fall into Category 1. Categories 2, 3, and 4 are intended for extreme and/or repeated instances of violations where Category 1 has not resulted in a change in member behaviors.

School Board Self Evaluation:
Effective School Board leadership practice recommends that a board go through a process of self-evaluation on at least an annual basis. Self-evaluation is a proactive step that a School Board can take to hold themselves collectively accountable for monitoring their ongoing

effectiveness. The purpose of the self-evaluation is to provide the board with an opportunity to reflect on their work over the previous year and identify areas where they could benefit from further discussion and/or training. Suggested components of the self-evaluation process are:

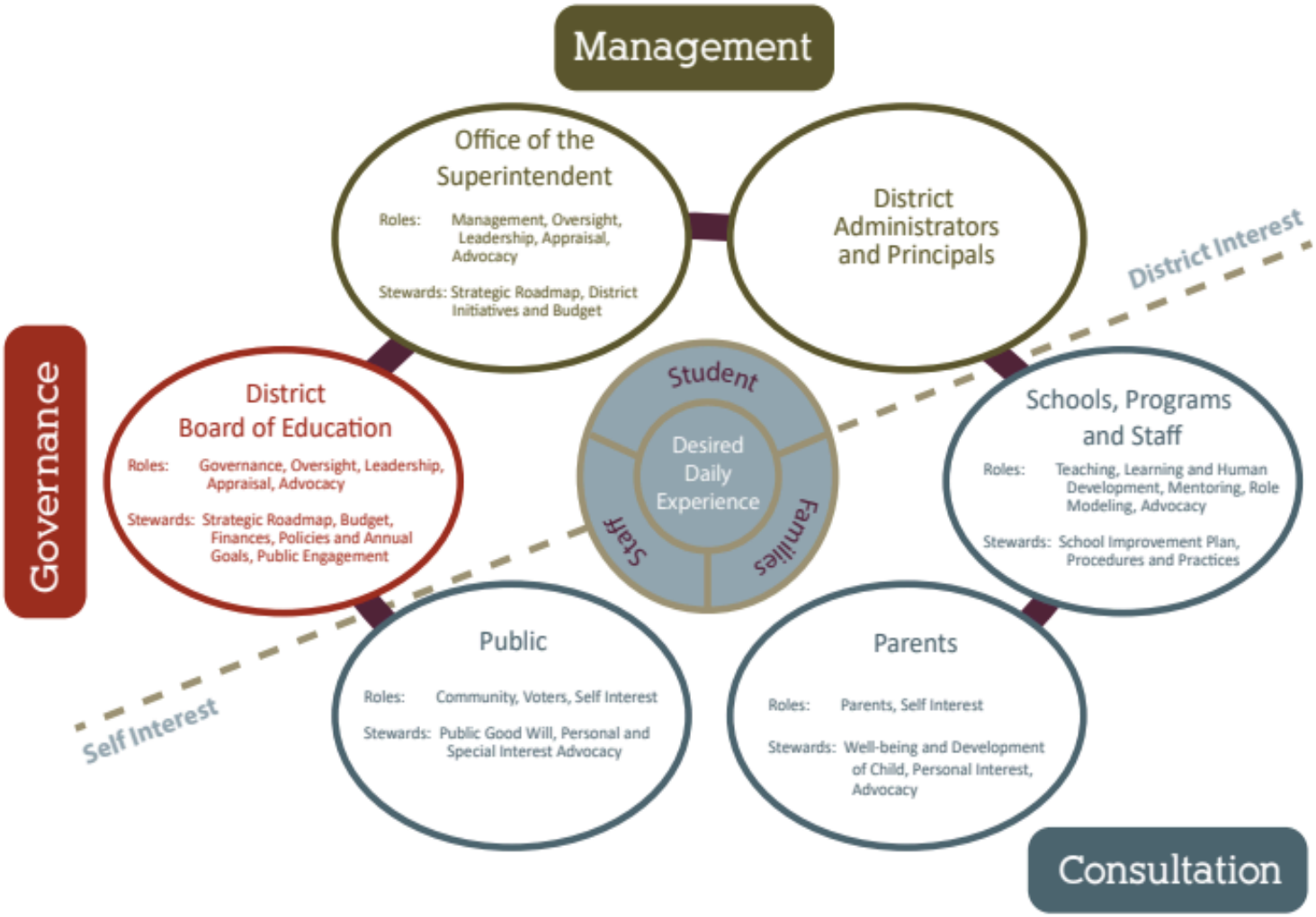
- Collectively identifying the most important categories of board work in the previous year (or those categories that have been previously identified as high priorities).
- Board members are allowed to individually and with anonymity to respond to a survey regarding these categories. NOTE: This information is typically sent to the administrative assistant, who supports the school board, to be collated and then all responses are shared with board members.
- A work session is then scheduled for the Board in which discussion can take place to identify themes that have emerged from the survey.
- Based on this discussion an action plan is developed to address the issue/s which have been identified.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARDS

Source: MSBA; Center for Public Education, 2019

- Effective School Boards commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision.
- 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.
- Effective School Boards are accountability-driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.
- Effective School Boards have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communication structure to inform and engage internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.
- Effective School Boards are data-savvy; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.
- Effective School Boards align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.
- Effective School Boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each form their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.
- Effective School Boards participate in team development and training, sometimes with their Superintendents, to build shared knowledge, values, and commitments for their improvement efforts.

Rockford Area Schools operate under the tenants of the Educational Leadership Support Systems Framework, created and shared by *Teamworks International* (outlined below). This framework places the desired daily experience of students at the center and outlines the parameters and partnership of effective governance, management, and consultation.



ROLES OF THE SCHOOL BOARD AND ADMINISTRATION

Source: TeamWorks International

While there is some degree of overlap in roles and responsibilities, it is more important to understand the difference between the groups, especially in teams of authority.

Governance, Management, and Consultation:

Acting as a group, the **School Board** has the sole authority (no other entity has it) of school district ***governance*** and the board has six primary responsibilities:

- Create the conditions in the district for all students to be successful and for all staff to be able to do their best work.
- District governance and policy review and development.
- Operational performance oversight and organizational direction.

- Board governance policy.
- Superintendent relations.
- Public engagement, community relations, and advocacy for public education.

Roles Related to Board Responsibilities:

- Establishing, reviewing, and updating policies based on legislative changes and recommendations from the Superintendent.
- Hiring and evaluating the Superintendent, the chief administrator, and the only employee whom the Board supervises.
- Addressing questions and concerns about items on the Board/s agendas and/or the Superintendent.
- Annually approving budget parameters, and the subsequent annual overall budget established within the parameters.
- Identifying decisions that require community engagement and directing the administration to seek input and/or feedback before board action.
- Advocating for students and the school district with legislators.
- Approving policies, as recommended by the Superintendent, that will support/guide the management and operation of the school district.
- Working with the Superintendent to establish goals aligned with the district's strategic directions and monitoring progress toward the attainment of those goals.

*The above roles are primary examples and are not intended to be a full and complete list of all roles and responsibilities of the Board of Education.

District administration has the sole authority (no other entity has it) of school district ***management*** and the administration has six primary responsibilities:

- Resource management: financial, human and physical.
- Instructional leadership at the district and principal levels.
- Performance management & appraisal and professional development.
- Continuous improvement.
- Aligning procedures and practices with district policy.
- Relationships with parents, community members, and staff.

Roles Related to administrative responsibilities:

- Implement policy and make recommendations for policy updates and changes.
- Hiring, supervising, and evaluating all staff and all operations.
- Addressing questions and concerns about school/district operations including questions and/or concerns about staff members (other than the superintendent).

- Allocating and managing resources (financial, human, and physical) within the board-approved budget and budget parameters. Examples include determining specific class sizes and class offerings within the board's parameters.
- Engage in ongoing efforts to assess and develop meaningful relationships with parents and the general community.
- Support the board's advocacy including but not limited to, information gathering and issue identification.
- Review, select, and implement curriculum, including materials, in a manner consistent with board-approved policies.
- Develop and implement in collaboration with the board an annual district operational plan to achieve district goals. This process is focused on continuous improvement, system accountability, professional development, and a robust communications plan to inform all internal and external stakeholder groups of progress toward goal attainment

*The above roles are primary examples and are not intended to be a full and complete list of all roles and responsibilities of the Board of Education.

Staff, students, parents, guardians, and the general public have the sole authority (no other entity has it) of ***consultation*** and these entities have four primary responsibilities.

- Voice of self and collective interest.
- Assessing risks and merits of various options as part of the decision-making processes and/or the daily operations of the district.
- Responsibly resisting or opposing change.
- Provide input and feedback to the School Board and the administration.

Application of Excellence in Governance

NOTE: The following scenarios are intended to provide examples of how it is recommended that School Board members address various types of concerns from the general public, parents, staff, and students.

COMPENSATION AND REIMBURSEMENT

Compensation
Board compensation is reviewed annually by the board during the organizational meeting and voted on for approval. All board members receive a base yearly stipend. Additional stipends are given based on officer status, participation in required school board committees and attendance at ad hoc committee meetings. All compensation details are provided in the School Board Compensation guide.

Reimbursement Procedures
Board members are expected to fill out a board report voucher monthly indicating any meetings attended that month along with the duration of each meeting. For board members actively involved in negotiations indicate your monthly activity on the voucher. This form is provided in the board members folders at each board meeting and is to be given back to the administrative assistant to be processed in a timely manner.

ELECTION AND ROLES OF SCHOOL BOARD OFFICERS

Source: Rockford Public Schools Policies 201 and 202.

Election of Officers
The Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Clerk of the Board are elected annually at the Board's January Organizational Meeting. Before the Organizational Meeting, during a December work session, the Board will have a conversation and discussion regarding officers for the subsequent year. In the event of an election year, newly elected board members will be invited to the December work session and asked to partake in the board conversation and discussion to ensure sound transition plans by exiting board members and create a positive collaborative environment to facilitate the subsequent year planning. To elect Board Officers, Board policy and MSBA first meeting in January guidelines will be used to determine the acting chair. The new acting chair will guide the elections of the remaining board officers by following the Board policy and MSBA processes and procedures. In the case of a stalemate, the Board will follow proper MSBA processes and procedures to elect officers. Once elected and sworn into office, the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Clerk will immediately assume their duties. In the event of an election year, newly elected board members will be invited to the December work session to ensure sound transition plans by exiting board members and create a positive collaborative environment to facilitate the subsequent year planning.

Roles of Board Officers
There are four official officers of the School Board: Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Clerk. These positions are determined annually at the Board's Organizational Meeting. Officers must be elected to maintain the order of meeting proceedings. In addition, all board members maintain equal rights and equal voices.

Role of the Chair:
Provides leadership to the Board, ensures the faithful execution of the Board's processes, exercises responsibilities with integrity, reflects the spirit and intent of the Board's policies, and serves as the Board's official spokesperson. The Chair has the following specific authority and duties:

- Monitor Board actions to ensure that they are consistent with the Board's own rules and policies and with other obligations imposed by agencies whose authority supersedes the Board's authority.
- Conduct and monitor Board meeting deliberations to ensure that Board discussion and attention are focused on Board issues, as defined in Board policy.
- Assure that Board meeting discussions are productive, efficient, orderly, and open.
- Conduct Board meetings using the authority as described in Robert's Rules of Order.

- Represent the Board as its official spokesperson about issues decided by the Board and other matters related to official Board business.
- The Chair is not authorized to exercise any power as an individual to supervise or direct the Superintendent or any employee of the district.
- The Chair may delegate authority, when appropriate to other Board members but the Chair remains accountable for members' use of that delegated authority.
- Execute all documents authorized by the Board , except as otherwise provided by law.
- Countersign all orders upon the Treasurer for claims allowed by the Board, represent the district in all actions and perform all the duties usually incumbent on the Chair.
- Facilitate the process of assigning board members to district committees and as liaisons with other organizations.
- On behalf of the Board and in concert with the Superintendent and Vice-Chair, develop proposed meeting agendas for business meetings, work sessions and retreats.

Role of the Vice-Chair:

- The Vice-Chair shall perform the Chair's duties in the event of the Chair's temporary absence.
- Serves in an executive capacity, participating in all governance prep meetings with the Superintendent and Board Chair.
- Facilitates Board Work sessions.
- Conduct and monitor Board meeting deliberations to ensure that Board discussion and attention are focused on Board issues, as defined in Board policy, in partnership with Board Chair.
- Assure that Board meeting discussions are productive, efficient, orderly, and open, in partnership with the Board Chair.

Role of the Treasurer:

- Works closely with the Director of Business Operations.
- Serves as chair of the finance committee consistent with policy 213.
- Makes all reports which are called for by the Board and which are consistent with Minn. Stat. 123B.14

Role of the Clerk:

- The Clerk shall keep and maintain permanent records of the Board, including records of the minutes of school board meetings and other required records of the school board. All votes taken at meetings required to be open to the public pursuant to the Minnesota Open Meeting Law will be recorded for that purpose. Public records maintained by the school district shall be available to members of the public during the school district's regular business hours. Minutes of school board meetings shall be available for review at the school district's administrative offices after they have been prepared. Minutes of a school board meeting shall be approved or modified by the school board at a subsequent meeting.
- Serves as chair of the policy committee consistent with policy 213.
- Review meeting minutes with the Executive Assistant prior to approval of the board.
- Other duties of the Clerk as defined in Minn. Stat. 123B.14
- Performs the duties of the Chair in the absence of temporary absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Meetings and Expectations

Standard Operating Procedures

The Rockford Area School Board's standard operating procedure for general meetings closely follows Robert's Rules of Order, which is a widely used manual for parliamentary procedure. Here's a breakdown of how this works in practice, including specific elements like not interacting with the audience, being recognized by the presiding officer to contribute, and the process for motions, discussions, questions, and approvals:

1. Order and Decorum

    Meeting In public

    - School Board meetings are meetings in Public not public meetings that follow a published and approved agenda for the purpose of governance and approval of items for effective and efficient operations of the business of the district.
    - During the meeting, board members and participants are not permitted to engage directly with the audience. This helps maintain order and ensures that the meeting progresses smoothly.
    - Audience members have designated times for public comments, and these are structured into the agenda. While it is best practice to have a process to garner public comments, it is not required. Currently, the public comment portion is held at the beginning of the regular session board agenda. The chair reads a standard templated notice to the audience for how public comments are received. While important to hear the public, it is equally important not to promise or comment in the moment. Individuals might be providing feedback for a planned agenda item that evening or might be suggesting the Board consider an issue in the future. If a direct response back is warranted, best practice is to have the chair, designee, or Superintendent follow-up with the individual, as needed, after appropriate research has occurred to the issue being raised.

2. Recognition by the Presiding Officer

    - Members wishing to speak must first be recognized by the presiding officer. This involves raising a hand or signaling to the presiding officer.
    - Once recognized, the member can then proceed to speak. This prevents multiple people from talking at once and ensures orderly communication.

3. Process of Motions

    - A member makes a motion to introduce new business or a decision to be made. This is done by saying, "I move that..."
    - The motion must be seconded by another member, indicating that at least one other person believes the matter deserves discussion.

- Once a motion is seconded, the presiding officer opens the floor for discussion. Members can express their views, ask questions, and debate the merits of the motion.
- The presiding officer ensures that the discussion remains focused and orderly, calling on members who wish to speak.

4. Questions and Deliberation
   - During discussion, members may ask questions to clarify details about the motion. They must direct their questions through the presiding officer.
   - The presiding officer may answer directly or call upon the relevant member or staff to provide the necessary information.
5. Requesting Gallery Participation
   - From time to time, a staff member with additional knowledge of a subject at hand might be in the audience. It is inappropriate for any board member or superintendent to call upon that individual without recognition by the presiding officer.
   - If the situation arises where a Board Member or Superintendent would like to request the staff speak, the request must be presented to the presiding officer and ultimately the presiding officer decides to recognize or not recognize the additional person.
   - If the presiding officer chooses not to recognize the requested individual, generally, this is to maintain decorum and order, and is handled situation by situation.
6. Approval of Items
   - After sufficient discussion, the presiding officer will call for a vote on the motion. Some votes are required to be roll-call and may be called by the clerk.
   - The motion passes if it receives the required majority, as specified by the governing rules (simple majority, two-thirds, etc.)
   - A board member is required to abstain from voting on any item that may have direct or family impact.
   - Abstentions will be added to the final vote associated with the majority.
7. Adjournment
   - Once all business has been addressed, a motion to adjourn can be made and seconded.
   - The presiding officer will then call for a vote on adjourning the meeting.

By adhering to these structured procedures, school board meetings can function efficiently and democratically, ensuring that all members have the opportunity to contribute while maintaining order and focus on the agenda.

Board Meetings

A quorum of members is defined as four (4) or more members of the Board and a quorum must be present for a Board meeting to be official and before any action can be taken by the board. All meetings of the Board are considered public meetings, including committee meetings, and therefore shall be open to the public to attend.

At the organizational meeting (held no later than January 15th each year) the Board will set its meeting schedule for the upcoming year. Additional "special" meetings may be called, as needed, throughout the year. All meetings not previously approved during the organizational meeting are considered special meetings and must be properly noticed to the public.

The Board Chair presides over all meetings, and along with the Vice-Chair and Superintendent, sets the agenda for the committee-of-the-whole and regular board meetings. Meetings are conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules Order.

Attendance at Board Meetings
All Board members are expected to attend all meetings (including work sessions, committee meetings, special meetings, and Board retreats). However, it is recognized that sometimes scheduling conflicts will occur. Therefore, a member should notify the Board Chair and the Superintendent, or the Executive Assistant to the School Board at least 24 hours (and preferably sooner) before the meeting whenever they are unable to attend a scheduled meeting.

Organizational Meeting
The Board is required to hold an organizational meeting no later than January 15th of each year. The primary purpose of this meeting is to elect members to serve as Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Clerk. The Rockford School Board also uses this meeting to establish regular meeting dates for the year as well as a number of other business items.

Regular Business Meetings
The school board conducts their regular Board Business Meetings on the third Monday of each month. Odd months are held after the board work session beginning at 6:30 pm, even months beginning at 5:30 pm. Regular business meetings are held in the boardroom of the Rockford Area Schools District Office, located 6051 Ash St. Rockford, Minnesota.

Work Sessions
Odd months are held prior to the regular meeting of the board beginning at 5:30 pm. Even months are held on the first Monday of the month beginning at 5:30 pm. Work Sessions are held in the boardroom of the Rockford Area Schools District Office, located at 6051 Ash St. Rockford, Minnesota.
The work session is used to provide the Board with additional information regarding important topics that are either currently in front of the Board or those that will be coming to the Board soon. These sessions also provide board members with additional time for discussion of the items.

Board Retreats
The School Board will schedule retreats as needed during the year for planning work and for professional development sessions.

Special Meetings
A meeting is labeled a "special meeting" if it is called after the meetings for the year have been scheduled and approved by the Board at the Organizational Meeting in January.

For a special meeting, the School Board will post written notice of the meeting's date, time, place, and purpose/s. The School Board's actions at the special meeting are limited to those topics included in the notice. The notice will also be delivered, by standard or electronic mail, to each person who has filed a written request for notice of special meetings. The notice will be posed and mailed, or delivered at least three days before the date of the meeting.

Emergency Meetings
An emergency meeting is a special meeting called because of circumstances that, in the judgment of the school board, require immediate attention. If the school board discusses or acts upon any matters not specifically related to the emergency, the minutes of the meeting must include specific descriptions of those matters.

Closed Sessions
Minnesota Statutes govern what constitutes a closed session. They are the Labor negotiations strategy, Bureau of Mediation Services, preliminary considerations of charges, performance evaluations, attorney-client meetings, dismissal hearings, coaches' opportunity to respond to non-renewal, discuss certain non-public data, purchase and sale of property, and security matters. For additional information on how the Rockford School Board addresses closed sessions reference Board Policy #205.

Annual Review Items
Some items are reviewed as a part of an annual rotation. These items are updated by the District office.
Call to Order
The following call to order statement is read at the beginning of each board meeting.

> As a reminder, this is a meeting in public, not a public meeting. Public input shall be taken during the Public Comment section of the agenda.
>
> The School Board's purpose is to ensure that the educational system within our jurisdiction operates effectively and efficiently to meet the needs of students, parents, teachers, and the community at large under 6 main tenants
> 1. Setting Vision and Direction
> 2. Policy Creation and Oversight
> 3. Budget Approval and Financial Oversight
> 4. Hiring and Evaluation of Superintendent
> 5. Community Engagement
> 6. Advocacy and Leadership
>
> Overall, the school board's role is to provide strategic leadership and governance to ensure that all students have access to a high-quality education that prepares them for success in school and beyond.

Definitions

- Setting Vision and Direction- The school board is responsible for setting the overall vision and direction for the school district. This involves establishing goals, priorities, and objectives that align with the needs and expectations of the community.

- Policy Creation and Oversight- School boards develop policies that govern various aspects of the educational system, including curriculum, student conduct, staff hiring and evaluation, budgeting, facilities management, and more. These policies provide a framework for decision-making and ensure consistency and fairness across the district.

- Budget Approval and Financial Oversight- School boards play a crucial role in approving the district's budget and ensuring that financial resources are allocated appropriately to support educational programs and initiatives. They also oversee financial management practices to ensure accountability and transparency.

- Hiring and Evaluation of Superintendent- The school board hires and evaluates the superintendent, who serves as the chief executive officer of the school district. The superintendent is responsible for implementing the board's policies and managing the day-to-day operations of the district. This is the only employee the board has authority. All other employees fall under the superintendent's management responsibility.

- Community Engagement- School boards serve as a link between the school district and the community, representing the interests and concerns of various stakeholders. They engage with parents, teachers, students, and other community members to gather input, address issues, and foster collaboration.

- Advocacy and Leadership- School boards advocate for the needs of the district and its students at the local, state, and sometimes national levels. They may work with legislators, government agencies, and other organizations to promote policies and initiatives that support educational excellence and equity.

COMMITTEES OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

There are numerous committees on which Board members serve. Some of these are internal committees that operate within the purview of the district and others which may be governed by external entities. Committee meetings (formal meetings in which a quorum of the Board is in attendance) convened by the school board are subject to the Open Meetings Act of Minnesota, meaning that they are open to the public to attend.

It is the responsibility of the School Board to assign members to serve on committees as well as liaisons to the various organizations and partnerships affiliated with the school district.Board committee assignments for the subsequent year are discussed during the December work session and the slate is approved at the annual organizational meeting in January. The work session discussion is to ensure board alignment between member interest/s, abilities, and time commitment with the committees on which they serve. Many of the roles on Board Committees are connected to officer appointments; therefore, officer appointment is a critical consideration when discussing official Board Committees. Board committees consist of 3 members each, Finance Committee (Chair, Treasurer & Director), Policy Committee (Clerk & 2 other board members), District Operations Committee (One officer and two board member), and Negotiations (One officer and two board members).

Rockford Area Schools have four main committees:

Finance:
The finance committee meets with the District Director of Business Services and Superintendent to discuss key issues related to the financial health of the district. These items typically include budget planning, enrollment & revenue projections, potential levy or bonding needs, and the impact of current and future employee contracts.

Policy:
One of the primary responsibilities of a School board is to develop new policies and to review existing policies. The Board Policy Committee reviews policies and recommends them to the full Board for review, discussion, and approval. The committee meets quarterly to review policies that arise either from legislative changes (due to changes in state statute or federal law) or from administrative changes (arising from district staff or board members). Once reviewed and approved by the Policy Committee, the policies are brought forward to the Board, which presents them to the community for a "first reading" by placing them on the regular business meeting agenda.

"First Readings" serve as an introduction of the policy or changes to the policy, to district staff and the community. It is a way of providing notice that the Board is seeking to implement these rules and regulations. The public is afforded two additional school board meetings to review the proposed policy and to provide feedback.

District Operations:
This meets with the District Director of Business Operations and/or Superintendent and other related designees as needed to review the status and needs of the physical resources. This includes all infrastructure needs of the district with a priority placed on deferred and current maintenance needs of all district buildings and athletic facilities.

Negotiations:
The negotiations committee meets with the Superintendent, Finance Director, and other members of the district administrative team to develop strategies for contract negotiations with all district employee groups. Committee members also attend all negotiations meetings with bargaining units.

AD HOC COMMITTEES

Board members serve as liaisons to various organizations and partnerships affiliated with the school district. It is the Board's responsibility to assign members to these ad hoc committees and this is typically done at the Board Organization Meeting in January. Ad hoc committee assignments for the subsequent year are discussed during the December work session. The assignments from the previous year are reviewed and the Board considers as a whole if any committee assignments should be added or removed for the subsequent calendar year. The Board then discusses and determines assignments during the December work session. The work session discussion is to ensure board alignment between member interest/s, abilities, and time commitment with the committee roles they are asked to serve. Committee assignments

will be confirmed at the January Organizational Meeting. Examples of liaison roles are listed below:

Facilities Committee
Board Chair and Treasurer serve on this committee with community business representatives, Director of Operations and Superintendent. Meets three times per year to review finance and business topics as well as buildings and grounds projects as needed.

Continuing Education Committee
Serve as Rockford Board representative. The purpose of the committee is to promote professional growth of certified staff. It will also verify Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and requirements for clock hours for relicensure. Meets regularly as needed.

Curriculum Advisory System Accountability Committee
Serve as Board representative on this advisory committee. The purpose of the committee is to provide community input for new initiatives and curriculum instruction. Committee plans to meet two to three times per year; meeting time and location TBD.

Community Education Advisory Committee
Serve as Rockford Board representative on committee. The advisory board makes program recommendations to the school board. Meets quarterly, usually in the evening. This committee also includes the ECFE/School Readiness Advisory Committee. Committee meets four times a year as needed in the evening.

Meeker & Wright Special Education Cooperative (MAWSECO)
Serve as Rockford representative on MAWSECO governing board. Usually meets monthly in the evening on the fourth Tuesday at the MAWSECO building in Howard Lake. For more information, go to www.mawseco.k12.mn.us.

Northwest Suburban Integration School District (NWSISD)
Is a collaboration of seven school districts in the northwest metro region. The member districts are Anoka–Hennepin, Brooklyn Center, Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose, Elk River, Fridley, Osseo, and Rockford. The purpose of the collaboration is to establish educational programming at one or more sites located within the boundaries of the seven school districts. The programming shall include comprehensive performance-oriented curricula and instruction, including magnet school programming, and may include, but shall not necessarily be limited to, early childhood education, elementary education, secondary education, adult learning, extended day/extended year learning opportunities, childcare, parent education, and community outreach.

Schools Advocating for Fair Funding (SAFF) & Minnesota Rural Educators Association (MREA)

- SAFF: In collaboration with approximately 30 other K-12 school districts, SAFF advocates for improved tax equalization to address the unfair tax burden on taxpayers in low-property wealth school districts. SAFF does so by engaging with state leaders,

facilitating collaboration between both administrators and school board members, and by providing financial analysis and comparison to highlight the funding needs.

- MREA: Focuses, lobbies, and educates member districts on topics that are of highest importance to schools in greater Minnesota. This includes funding sources and equitable distribution as well as other resources such as human capital, technology, and instructional needs.

District Staff Development

Serve as board representative on the District Staff Development Committee. Committee meets with the board representative as needed.

Committee At-Large

Serve as Rockford board representative. The committee meets as needed to discuss items under study such as activities, technology, transportation, food service, student data support, referendum steering committee, spearheading of superintendent search and other district needs.

Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD)

Rockford Area Schools along with approximately 40 other K-12 school districts, is a member of the AMSD organization. The mission of AMSD is to advocate for metropolitan school districts and advance legislation that supports student achievement. AMSD is a strong voice for public education both at the Legislature and in the media with a proactive agenda and a commitment to action. AMSD's primary task is to lobby at the state level for the needs of metropolitan school districts. However, AMSD's Board believes that its lobbying efforts are most effective when the organization plays a role in shaping the broader public debate on K-12 issues and advocates for policies that benefit the State as a whole.

Communications Committee

This committee is composed of two board appointees with the Board Chair serving in an advisory capacity. Meetings will occur as needed.

Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL)

Serve as board representative to the Minnesota State High School League. Receives mailings and usually has state level meetings at MSBA Leadership Conference. For more information, go to www.mshsl.org

Chamber Committee

Serve as Rockford School District representative to the Rockford/Greenfield Chamber of Commerce. Meets on a regular bi-monthly basis during the day in Rockford. Only one member, representing the board, can attend the meetings.

Minnesota School Board Association (MSBA)

The Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) is a private, nonprofit organization that exists to support public school boards and public education. The MSBA is a leading advocate for public education: supports, promotes, and strengthens the work of public school boards through professional development opportunities, policy development and maintenance, legislative guidance and information, and legal advice.

MSBA offers a four-phase training program for board members which supports them in developing a foundational understanding of their work as educational leaders.

POSITIONS THAT REPORT TO THE SCHOOL BOARD

NOTE: There is only one position that reports to the school board.

Role of the Superintendent

The Superintendent of Schools reports directly to the board and holds all executive and administrative authority and responsibility for the effective operation of the school, excluding those areas of control that are required by statute to be exercised directly by the Board. The Superintendent acts as the district leader with the support of the district's administrative team. The Superintendent may delegate specific powers or duties to assistants and subordinates while maintaining final responsibility for any actions taken. The Superintendent is also responsible for evaluating her/his leadership team.

<u>Key Functions and Responsibilities of the Superintendent</u>

- Vision, Continuous Improvement, And Focus of District Work.
    1. Partner with the board to design a vision for high student achievement and for every student to have a high-quality daily school experience.
    2. Responsible for the structure, practices, and outcomes for continuous improvement in all aspects of school and district functions, in alignment with the district strategic directions and annual district operational plan (DOP).
    3. Facilitate the process of identifying/executing the district's goals and objectives.

- Communication and Collaboration
    1. Interact effectively with the School Board.
    2. Establish and maintain effective internal and external communication systems.

- Policies and Governance
    1. Develop procedures that define how policy will be implemented.
    2. Work with the Policy Committee to draft policy for the full board.
    3. Recommend to the Board policies on all school system functions.
    4. Implement Board policies.
    5. Demonstrate effective leadership skills and professionalism in the daily management of the school district.

- Instruction
    1. Lead the district in the development and implementation of a rigorous and relevant curriculum that leads to increased student achievement.
    2. Set clear expectations for district-wide high-quality instruction and comprehensive assessment.
    3. Set clear expectations for a district-wide commitment that every student will have a positive daily school experience.
    4. Provide full access and full opportunity for all students.

5. Develop and maintain a leadership culture where professional development is highly valued and all staff are expected to grow and develop their skills to meet the needs of all students.

- Resources
    1. Recommend to the Board the employment and selection of the administrative, instructional, and support staff.
    2. Assign, evaluate, and support district staff.
    3. Oversees and administers the procurement and use of district funds and facilities to maximize efficiency and minimize waste.
    4. Identify and address specific district tasks or problems that emerge (such as the need for new facilities or the need for a levy campaign).

- Allegations raised against person under the authority of the Board

  If allegations are raised against the one person under the direct authority of the Board (the Superintendent), it is imperative to follow a fair process when reviewing these allegations. The standard operating recommendations are as follows:

  1. If a member of the Board obtains or receives any evidence or documentation related to allegations against the Superintendent, they must promptly provide this information to the board Chair or Vice Chair, along with a clear explanation of how it was obtained.
  2. The Chair has delegated authority from the Board to contact the District legal counsel. In matters such as this, it is imperative to exercise that authority. The Chair should contact legal counsel immediately, including the Vice Chair.
  3. There are some instances when the primary District legal counsel will recommend securing alternative legal counsel to avoid any presumed or real conflicts of interest.
  4. Best practice is for two members of the Board to work together on the issue. It is recommended that the Chair and Vice Chair serve in this capacity together.
  5. Chair and Vice Chair will jointly meet with the legal counsel to review the allegations charged against the Superintendent.
  6. Legal counsel will guide the Chair / Vice Chair on appropriate next steps.
     a. Determine if an investigation is required
     b. If an investigation is recommended, determine type of investigation required, likely requiring securing a third-party investigator
     c. Determine communication with the alleging party, as appropriate
     d. Determine if a leave of absence is required to carry out an investigation
     e. Determine communication plan with the Board to ensure alignment with data privacy and open meeting law considerations. There are instances where one-way communication makes sense to inform the Board of factual information, with an implicit reminder that this is one-way communication and not a time for discussion/feedback

f. If a leave of absence is required, determine broader communication plan

i. Communication with Direct reports
ii. Communication with Staff
iii. Communication with parents
iv. Communication with community

g. Based on the allegations and/or outcome of the investigation, legal counsel will also help navigate necessary communication with government agencies or law enforcement as applicable.

h. Determine timing for formal board meeting to discuss allegations. Typically, this will occur in a closed meeting session and legal counsel will help to determine timing of that meeting. According to MN Statue, a closed meeting can only occur one time per allegations; the balance of meetings must be held in open format.

i. Resolution of allegations/next steps will be recommended by legal counsel and it is recommended they attend closed meeting sessions with the investigator to present findings and discuss next steps.

TITLE IX

Rockford Area Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any educational program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX, including employment.

All Title IX reports and concerns should be directed to the Superintendent of Schools

More information can be found at
https://www.rockford883.org/district/departments/human-resources/title-ix

SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES

Policy 201 - Legal Status of the School Board
Policy 202 - School Board Officers
Policy 203 - Operation of School Board - Governing Rules
Policy 203.1 - School Board Procedures; Rules of Order
Policy 203.2 - Order of the Regular School Board Meeting
Policy 203.5 - School Board Meeting Agenda
Policy 203.6 - Consent Agenda
Policy 204 - School Board Meeting Minutes
Policy 205 - Open Meetings and Closed Meetings
Policy 206 - Public Participation in School Board Meetings/Complaints about Persons at School Board Meetings
Policy 207 - Public Hearings
Policy 208 - Development, Adoption and Implementation of Policies
Policy 209 - Code of Ethics
Policy 209 - Code of Ethics Addendum
Policy 210 - Conflict of Interest - School Board Members
Policy 211 - Criminal or Civil Action Against School District, School Board Member, Employee or Student
Policy 212 - School Board Member Development
Policy 213R - School Board Committees
Policy 214 - Out-of-State Travel by School Board Members

WORKS CITED

Eligibility Requirements for School Board Members, Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA)

Rockford Public Schools 200 Series Policies

Standards for School Board Leadership, Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA)
Governance and Management, TeamWorks International

Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) School Board Workshop Series

Last updated: _____
This handbook will be reviewed and updated each summer.