

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 719
PRIOR LAKE - SAVAGE AREA SCHOOLS

203 SCHOOL BOARD OPERATING NORMS

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide governing expectations, rules and consistency for the conduct of meetings of the school board.

II. DEFINITION

III. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Board members recognize that the highest care, management and control of the district is vested in the board. The board shall carry out this responsibility through the establishment of district policies by which the schools are to be administered. The administration of the educational and operational management shall be delegated to the superintendent.

1. The board shall cultivate a sense of group responsibility. The board shall be solely responsible and accountable for excellence in governing. The board shall use the expertise of individual Board members to enhance the ability of the board as a body but shall not substitute individual judgments for the board's collective judgment.
2. Board member accountability to the entire school district supersedes:
 - 2.1. Any loyalty a board member may have to other advocacy or interest groups.
 - 2.2. Any loyalty based upon membership on other boards or staffs.
 - 2.3. Any conflicts based upon the personal interests of any board member, including relatives.
3. How We Relate to One Another
 - 3.1. Board members are encouraged to express their honest opinions and beliefs about issues. Honest disagreements are legitimate and have an appropriate place on the board; however, board members shall respect one another's opinions and shall not criticize one another in an inappropriate manner.
 - 3.2. Board members shall focus on issues rather than personalities.
4. How We Communicate
 - 4.1. Board members shall establish and maintain open channels of communication with each other.
 - 4.2. All board members shall receive the same information and data which are necessary for decision making.

- 4.3. Information necessary for decision making will come from the office of the superintendent and s/he shall ensure that each member has equal access to this information.
- 4.4. Board members who are absent or late to meetings shall follow up with the board chair or superintendent to review what they missed. If board members know they are going to be absent, they must notify the board chair or the superintendent as soon as it is known the member is unable to attend.
- 4.5. Board members shall channel their requests for district information, and reports, as well as clarifications and questions through the superintendent and the board chair. Exceptions apply when there are allegations against the board chair or superintendent in which case they shall channel through the vice chair.
- 4.6. Board members shall remain informed concerning state and federal laws and regulations affecting education.
- 4.7. Board members shall exercise honesty in all written and interpersonal interactions.
- 4.8. When communicating with the public and with each other, board members shall ensure the integrity of information shared and ensure the information is validated.
- 4.9. Private and confidential data must always be protected in accordance with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. Communication among board members via email, or any other channel/form of communication, shall be in compliance with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

5. How We Govern

- 5.1. Board members shall seek and, whenever possible, support solutions that they believe will provide the greatest benefit to the largest number of students without negatively impacting others.
- 5.2. The board shall work in partnership with the superintendent, staff, students, parents and the community.
- 5.3. The board shall deliberate in many voices prior to board action but govern in one voice representing the district.
- 5.4. Once the board has taken action, board members shall abide by the official position of the district.
- 5.5. Board members should take risks in confronting differences of opinion. Board members are encouraged to fully participate and to disagree about issues to ensure full discussion in board meetings, however, they must be careful that adherence to a point of view does not unreasonably prolong discussion, information communicated is validated and not partisan.
- 5.6. When board members receive questions and concerns from members of the community or staff, it is necessary to follow the chain of command. They shall direct the individual to the appropriate policy or administrator in the district or the superintendent if appropriate administrator is unknown. Board members are encouraged to follow-up with the community or staff member to ensure the question was addressed.

- 5.7. Board members shall recognize and respect that their authority only exists when a quorum of the board meets and not as individual board members, except as authorized by law or delegated by the board, through board action. Board members have no authority to direct staff. Its only employee is the superintendent.
- 5.8. Individual board members shall not contact board legal counsel without approval of the board.
- 5.9. Legal matters, other than superintendent performance evaluation, shall be forwarded to the superintendent to investigate as necessary.
- 5.10. Board members recognize that the superintendent is bound only to directions and decisions made by a quorum of the board.
- 5.11. Board members shall have no direct authority over staff or operations. Management of staff and operations are the sole responsibility of the superintendent. The superintendent and staff are not required to act on any individual board member's opinions or instructions.
- 5.12. Board members shall not individually render judgments on the performance of the superintendent or staff apart from policies regarding staff evaluation.
- 5.13. Board members shall contact the superintendent by Friday at 4 p.m. prior to a board meeting if they have concerns or questions about agenda items and/or materials which will be sent the previous Monday before a board or study session. Late additions and/or changes shall contain the date and time for board member concerns and questions. This does not limit board discussion or questions after presentation of materials. Questions posed in meetings not previously disclosed to the superintendent, do not require a response by the superintendent in the meeting, nor be a reason for the board to not take action as described in the agenda.
- 5.14. Board members shall maintain focus on District Mission, Core Values, Vision and Strategic Directions.
- 5.15. The administration is responsible for following all policies and laws related to choosing and evaluating third party services and, as required by policy, to bring the proposal and/or results to the board for approval. Except for board-only products and service such as board professional development, and meeting materials, the board will not engage with school district vendors or third-party service providers.
- 5.16. The board will maintain the confidentiality of community members, staff, and students according to the applicable laws and receive permission from the subjects to share information as required by law or internal classification of the subject and materials.

6. How We Conduct Meetings

- 6.1. Generally, the board shall conduct one business meeting and one work session each month. Business meetings shall take place on the second Monday of the month and work sessions shall take place on the fourth Monday of the month, with exceptions in cases of holidays, school vacation conflicts, or other unanticipated conflicts. The annual calendar of meetings is established at a board meeting annually in March for the following calendar year.
 - 6.1.1. During work sessions, the board shall discuss such things as planning, orientation and learning on specific issues, and other topics deemed appropriate

by the board or the superintendent and chair. Work sessions may provide an opportunity for the board to discuss items of interest for future work sessions or business meetings, in consultation to the board chair and superintendent. Work sessions may also be a time for either a listening session with the public on issues as prescribed by the board or open to public feedback.

- 6.1.2. The board may vary from the number and/or timing of business meetings and work sessions in order to accommodate the business of the district in compliance with the requirements of the Minnesota Open Meeting Law.
- 6.1.3. The board is responsible for maintaining the integrity and compliance of all members. The board has adopted the following rules to ensure that compliance with Minnesota Open Meeting Law and to avoid the public perception or actual violations of Open Meeting Law when members attend events in which district business may be discussed:
 - 6.1.3.1. Board members are responsible for stating their intent to attend or be absent from district business, committee, or advisory meetings in a timely manner.
 - 6.1.3.2. It is the responsibility of the chair and the office of the superintendent to inform the members in advance of attendance on any district business, committee, or advisory meetings of the potential for a quorum and possible violations of statute or policy.
 - 6.1.3.3. Committees and advisory meetings have assigned board members for the purpose of board representation. Those committee and advisory group assignments are limited to a maximum of three board members to avoid a quorum.
 - 6.1.3.4. It is the responsibility of the assigned members to provide updates to the board in their monthly board reports at a public meeting.
 - 6.1.3.5. When board members attend a committee or advisory meeting outside of their assignment, they may do so as an observers. The member(s) will inform the chair and the office of the superintendent of their intention to attend in order for the office of the superintendent or the chair to provide instructions and ensure arrangements are made to prevent a quorum.
 - 6.1.3.6. Board members, except the chair, will not send any written communication to all board members to avoid possible violation of Open Meeting Law. The board chair will validate Open Meeting Law compliance with the office of the superintendent prior to sending any communication to all board members.
- 6.2. A special meeting of the board may be called by providing written notice at least three days before the date of the meeting. Notice shall include the date, time, place and purpose of the meeting and shall be posted on the district's website, the front window of the administrative office of the district and mailed or otherwise delivered to each person who has filed a written request for notice of special meetings with the district.
- 6.3. An emergency meeting of the board may be called by the chair, or a quorum, by telephone or by any other method to notify the members of the board. Notice shall be provided to each news medium which has filed a written request for notice as soon as reasonably practicable after notice has been given to the board members. Notice shall

include the subject of the meeting. Posted or published notice of an emergency meeting is not required. No action shall be taken at an emergency meeting, except related to emergency for which it is called.

- 6.4. The first meeting in January shall be an organizational meeting. During this meeting, the board shall select a chair, vice chair/clerk, treasurer and other officers as the board sees fit and shall establish any changes to the annual schedule of regular monthly meetings of the board.
- 6.5. Meetings of the board shall be open to the public, unless closed by the board pursuant to the Open Meeting Law.
- 6.6. The board recognizes the importance of public notice of all meetings. Prior to each meeting, the district shall post the agenda on the district website and furnish a copy of the agenda to district's official newspaper and to any citizen who requests the information.
- 6.7. Board members shall make all reasonable effort to attend all board meetings and work sessions.
- 6.8. Board members shall prepare for discussions in advance and review the materials distributed prior to a meeting. Neither the superintendent nor individual board members shall put one another in a position to discuss items or make recommendations in the absence of appropriate information and preparation.
- 6.9. The board shall transact all business at meetings of the board with a quorum of members, in accordance with the Open Meeting Law.
- 6.10. Board meetings shall be conducted according to Minnesota Statute where applicable and then by Robert's Rules of Order for small boards as prescribed by Minnesota School Board Association, using the authority normally vested in the board chair as described in Robert's Rules of Order.
- 6.11. Work sessions will be facilitated by the board chair and are not subject to Robert's Rules of Order.
- 6.12. Board members shall limit discussion to the agenda.
- 6.13. Prior to the board business meeting or work session, the superintendent, in consultation with the board chair, shall prepare the agenda for each meeting.
 - 6.13.1. Board members may request to have an item(s) added to a business meeting or work session by:
 - 6.13.1.1. Making a request at a board work session to add the topic to an upcoming meeting agenda. If the addition of the topic is supported by a majority of board members, the recommendation shall be forwarded to the board chair.
 - 6.13.1.2. Generally, items shall not be added to the agenda during a meeting unless they cannot be delayed until a subsequent meeting. Board members should make every effort to submit their request for the addition of an agenda item through discussion at a board work session; however, if an item cannot be delayed until a subsequent meeting, during the "Accept Agenda" portion of the meeting, a board member may make a motion to add it to the

agenda. If there is a second to the motion and majority support, the item shall be added.

- 6.14. Input from students, staff, parents, and community members in major decisions can be a valuable form of assistance to the board. Open forum is an opportunity to address the board.
 - 6.14.1. At least 10 minutes prior to each meeting, a sign-up sheet will be available at the meeting site for individuals to sign up to address the board. Only those whose names and addresses appear on the sign-up sheet at the time the meeting is called to order shall be permitted to address the board.
 - 6.14.2. Up to 5 speakers shall be provided a maximum of three minutes (15 minutes total) to address the board unless an exception is granted by the board chair.
 - 6.14.3. Speakers will not be allowed to verbally attack, disparage, or potentially defame individual board members, employees or students, nor may speakers use vulgar or profane language. Also, speakers may be precluded from disclosing personally identifiable private data regarding employees or students.
 - 6.14.4. Speakers unwilling to conform to the rules or time constraints may be told his/her privilege of speaking has ended.
 - 6.14.5. Board members shall listen respectfully to issues brought to them by the community, but not engage the individuals during their time. The board shall not deliberate or take action during the open forum regarding an issue presented.
 - 6.14.6. Speakers may request follow-up by administration on the public forum sign up form. Should immediate follow up be necessary, it is at the discretion of the chair and superintendent, barring any violation of policy.
 - 6.14.7. When the board chair proceeds with the meeting, audience comments are no longer in order; however, the board members retain the right to call on district administrators for information to assist the board in its deliberations.
 - 6.14.8. During all board sessions, board members are prohibited from communicating board business outside of the public purview. The board will avoid the perception of influence on board actions from external entities and non-public communications during the session. This includes electronic communications between board and non-board members.
- 6.15. The minutes of the proceedings of the board at the previous meeting, together with the next agenda and related materials, shall be provided to the board before the time of the next regular meeting. A DRAFT agenda will be sent to all board members on the Monday preceding the board meeting.
 - 6.15.1. The minutes of the preceding meeting shall be approved by the board at the next regular business meeting.
 - 6.15.2. A copy of all motions and resolutions shall be carefully recorded. The names of those who make motions, those who second motions, and those voting “aye” or “nay” shall be recorded, except when the vote is unanimous.
 - 6.15.3. The official minutes shall be kept as the permanent record of the board after

being reviewed by the clerk of the board.

- 6.15.4. All records of the board shall be available to citizens for inspection primarily through the district website and also at the District Services Center (DSC), except data classified as private or confidential under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.
 - 6.15.5. The official proceedings of the board or a summary of the proceedings must be published in the official newspaper within 30 days of the meeting at which the proceedings occurred.
- 6.16. The school board will, at all regular school board meetings, follow an agenda order similar to:

1. Call to Order by Chair
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
4. Open Forum
5. Approval of Agenda
6. Consent Agenda
7. Laker Pride, Special Recognitions, or Program Presentations
8. Personnel
9. Unfinished Business
10. New Business
11. Policy
12. Board and Administrative Reports
13. Adjournment

The school board may depart from the order of business with consent of the majority of members present.

- 6.17. The school board will, at all work study sessions, follow an agenda order similar to:

1. Welcome
2. Roll Call
3. Public Forum
4. Purpose & Agenda
5. District Governance & Policy
6. Oversight of Operations
7. Board Governance Policy
8. Superintendent Relations
9. Information Items
10. Future Agenda Topics
11. Adjourn

7.0 Board Professional Development

- 7.1 The board will schedule professional development for board members and data retreats for district planning and strategy at least twice annually. In addition, board members will attend a minimum of one Minnesota School Board Association conference per year.
 - 7.1.1 Topics and speakers will be related to board professional development and governance.
 - 7.1.2 All topics will remain non-partisan and non-religious affiliation unless the development and education topic are for the purpose of understanding student needs and cultures.
- 7.2 Individual board members may engage in training and other professional development with approval from the chair and available budget.
- 7.3 The operating norms for board professional development and data retreats apply.

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An Equal Opportunity School District