

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
3. How We Relate to One Another
 - 3.1. Board members should feel free to express their opinions and beliefs about issues. Discussions will be open and candor encouraged. 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. Board members shall receive the same information and data which are necessary for decision making. Information will come from the office of the superintendent and s/he shall ensure that each member has equal access to this information.

- 4.3. Board members who are absent or late to meetings shall follow up with the board chair or superintendent to review the meeting and what they missed. If board members know they are going to be absent, they must notify the board chair or the superintendent.
- 4.4. Board members shall channel their requests for district information and reports, as well as clarifications and questions through the superintendent or the board chair. Exceptions exist for allegations of illegal conduct, harassment or discrimination of the board chair or superintendent.
- 4.5. Board members shall remain informed concerning state and federal laws and regulations affecting education.
- 4.6. Board members shall exercise honesty in all written and interpersonal interactions.
- 4.7. Board members shall protect the integrity and promote the positive image of the district and one another.
- 4.8. 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.
- 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 support 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 prolong discussion.
- 5.6. When board members receive questions and concerns from members of the community or employees, it is necessary to follow the chain of command. They shall direct the individual to the appropriate administrator in the district or the superintendent if appropriate administrator is unknown.
- 5.6. 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.
- 5.7. Individual board members shall not contact board legal counsel without approval of the board.
- 5.8. Legal matters, other than superintendent performance evaluation, shall be forwarded to the superintendent to investigate as necessary.

- 5.9. Board members recognize that the superintendent is bound only to directions and decisions made by the board.
- 5.10. Board members shall contact the superintendent by Monday 9:00 am prior to a board meeting if they have concerns or questions about agenda items and/or materials which will be sent by Thursday at noon. 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.
- 5.11. Board members shall maintain focus on District Mission, Core Values, Vision and Strategic Directions.

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 in March.
 - 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 after the meeting, limited to items discussed during the work session.
 - 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.
- 6.2. 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 and deliberations shall be conducted according to Minnesota Statute where applicable and then by Robert's Rules of Order, using the authority normally vested in the board chair as described in Robert's Rules of Order. The use of Robert's Rules may be suspended at any meeting by a majority vote. Work sessions do not use Robert's Rules of Order.
- 6.11. Board members shall limit discussion to the agenda.
- 6.12. Prior to the board business meeting or work session, the superintendent, in consultation with the board chair, shall prepare the agenda for each meeting.
 - 6.12.1. Board members may request to have an item(s) added to a business meeting or work session by:
 - 6.12.1.1. 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.
 - 6.12.1.2. 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.
- 6.13. 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. Individuals who wish to address the board may do so on a topic not on the agenda.
 - 6.13.1. 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.

- 6.13.2. 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.
 - 6.13.3. 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.
 - 6.13.4. Speakers unwilling to conform to the rules or time constraints may be told his/her privilege of speaking has ended.
 - 6.13.5. 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.
 - 6.13.6. If follow-up by administration is necessary, the chair shall request that the superintendent follow up on the matter.
 - 6.13.7. 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. 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.
- 6.14.1. The minutes of the preceding meeting shall be approved by the board at the next regular business meeting.
 - 6.14.2. 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.
 - 6.14.3. The official minutes shall be kept as the permanent record of the board after being reviewed by the clerk of the board.
 - 6.14.4. 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.
 - 6.14.5. 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.
- 6.15. 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.

School Board Adoption: October 12, 2020

An Equal Opportunity School District