

Madison Elementary School District
Governing Board

Roles, Responsibilities and Protocols



MADISON
SCHOOL DISTRICT

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARDS:

- Commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction
- Define clear policies and goals toward that vision
- 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
- Are accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement
- Have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals
- Embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement
- Align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals
- Lead as a united team with their superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust
- Take part in team development and training, sometimes with their superintendent, to build shared knowledge, values and commitments for their improvement efforts

INEFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARDS:

- Are slow to define a vision, mission and goals for the district
- Do not read agendas, or prepare for Board meetings
- Spread gossip and innuendo, negatively impacting the District
- Micro-manage day-to-day operations, destroying trust
- Disregard the lines of authority when getting complaints
- Are only vaguely aware of school improvement initiatives, and seldom able to describe actions being taken to improve student learning
- Have little understanding or coordination on staff development for teachers
- Focus on external pressures as the main reasons for lack of student success such as poverty, lack of parental support, societal factors, or lack of motivation
- Are quick to describe others as barriers to community outreach, rather than taking responsibility for communication with their community/superintendent
- Look at data from a “blaming” perspective, describing teachers, students and families as major causes for low performance
- Do not participate in or learn from professional development together as a Board
- Routinely surprise their superintendent or others

GOVERNING BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

GOVERNING BOARD	SUPERINTENDENT
Sets the Direction via a Strategic Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision, Mission, Goals 	Follows the Direction set by Governing Board via an Operational Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accomplishes Vision, Mission, Goals
Establishes the Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets policy • Reviews procedures 	Follows the Direction set by Governing Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implements policies • Writes and implements procedures
Provides Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approves a budget that supports goals • Approves staffing to support goals 	Meets Goals set by Governing Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops a budget to support goals • Hires staff to accomplish goals
Ensures Accountability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly reviews budget vs. actual expenses • Reviews academic performance 	Meets Goals set by Governing Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitors and adjusts to meet operational and academic district goals • Responsible for district performance
Act as Community Leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates and advocates with the community, provides feedback to the Superintendent 	Is the leader of the District <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains communication with community leaders and directly communicates with district staff and the Board

DUTIES OF THE GOVERNING BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT

The Superintendent functions as the administrative manager of the District and is, throughout his or her exercise of responsibilities, accountable to the Board. This role exposes both the Superintendent and Board to some confusion regarding their responsibilities. This confusion, in turn, can result in tension that interferes with the performance of appropriate duties and responsibilities and can compromise district leadership. The following chart defines some of the significant differences in the roles of these officials:

Administration	
Governing Board	Superintendent
The Board hires a Superintendent and delegates responsibility for administrative functions.	The Superintendent is responsible for providing administrative leadership and managing the District's day-to-day operations.

Policy Making	
Governing Board	Superintendent
The Board establishes policy for the governance of the school system after considering the Superintendent's recommendations.	The Superintendent is responsible for designing and implementing procedures to effect the requirements of policy.

Hiring & Evaluating Personnel	
Governing Board	Superintendent
The Board employs professional personnel in accordance with policy upon recommendation of the Superintendent and reviews and acts on other personnel recommendations from the Superintendent.	The Superintendent recommends personnel to be hired; is responsible for performance evaluations; and makes recommendations for renewal, non-renewal and dismissal of personnel, as provided by policy.

Hiring Process	
Governing Board	Superintendent
In accordance to Policy GCF and its Administrative Regulations, the Board expects the Superintendent to follow a hiring process and passes on any information to the Superintendent regarding potential hires.	The Superintendent delegates to the HR Department the responsibility of following a systematic hiring process that includes, but is not limited to, background and reference checks.

Program Evaluation

Governing Board	Superintendent
The Board approves courses to be offered and requires periodic reports on the status of educational programs offered by the District, making revisions in policy needed. The Board publishes an annual education performance report at the district and each campus and holds a hearing for public discussion.	The Superintendent serves as the education leader for attainment of student performance objectives and submits to the Board reports on the curriculum, keeping the Board informed about the evaluation of school programs.

Planning Goals

Governing Board	Superintendent
The Board establishes education goals for the District, based on the input of district staff and community members, through various planning activities.	The Superintendent provides administrative leadership and makes recommendations to the Board concerning the development and implementation of and progress toward the education goals approved by the Board.

Budget

Governing Board	Superintendent
The Board communicates the District's priorities to the Superintendent through identified goals, reviews the budget submitted by the Superintendent, makes necessary revisions and adopts the budget.	The Superintendent prepares a budget, recommends budget expenditures to the Board, makes revisions as requested by the Board and administers the budget adopted by the Board.

Facilities Planning

Governing Board	Superintendent
The Board adopts plans for facilities after considering the recommendations of the Superintendent and delegates supervision of the building program to the Superintendent.	The Superintendent leads the administrative effort to plan for, operate, and evaluate facilities and to supervise improvements.

Community Relations

Governing Board	Superintendent
The Board adopts a program of school-community relations and remains responsive to the community.	The Superintendent recommends and implements a program of school-community relations and keeps the community informed about district performance, policies, programs and procedures.

Communication with District Employees

Governing Board	Superintendent
The Board follows Policy BHC which states, in part, "Official communication between the Board and employees will occur as follows: An employee will first communicate on school- or employment-related matters at the administrative level." Requests for information and/or documents by a Board member shall be made through the Superintendent.	The Superintendent follows Policy BHC which states, in part, "Official communications, policies, directives, Board concerns and Board actions, as appropriate, will be communicated to employees by the Superintendent." Information and/or document requests from a Board member shall be provided to all Board members

GOVERNING BOARD MEETING PROTOCOLS

GOVERNING BOARD AGENDA AGREEMENTS

1. Any Board member may request that items be placed on the agenda but must do so at least five (5) business days in advance (Policy BEDBA).
2. The Board president will meet with the Superintendent no less than 4 business days prior to a meeting to review and approve the draft agenda.
3. A consent agenda will be used for items not requiring discussion.
4. Any Board member may ask to have an item pulled from the consent agenda to allow for discussion or individual consideration. The Board member will notify the Superintendent by phone 1 day prior to the meeting of the intent to pull an item off of consent and what additional information may be required. The Superintendent will then inform the Board president as soon as possible (No surprises!).
5. Pulled consent items will be discussed after the consent agenda vote.

MEETING PREPARATION AGREEMENTS

1. Board members will come to the Board prep meetings prepared to discuss items on the agenda.
2. Board members and the Superintendent will meet to go over the Board Meeting Agenda ahead of the meeting.
3. Board members will refrain from taking a position on an issue until all relevant information is presented during the Board meeting when other Board members can share their opinions on the matter.
4. Board members will notify the Superintendent about positive and negative comments received from the community about the District or specific agenda items.
5. The Superintendent will notify the Board about positive and negative comments received from the community about the District or specific agenda items.
6. Board members will give the Superintendent time to research clarifying questions about agenda items and not spring surprises at the Board meeting.
7. The Superintendent will come to the meeting prepared to respond to questions and provide any additional information requested by Board members prior to the meeting.

DURING THE MEETING AGREEMENTS

1. Meeting agendas are available to the public.
2. Procedures for public comment are clear and available at the meeting site.
3. Only the Board president will respond to public comment during the meeting.
 - a. The Board president may recognize the Superintendent for factual information.

- b. The Board president may recognize a Board member to respond to a personal attack or to respond to a matter of high importance.
4. The Board president will ensure that only one person speaks at a time and that each member has an equal opportunity to participate.
5. The public only has a right to participate in the meeting during the public comment time.
6. Board members will model the behaviors expected of students, staff and community members.
7. Issues, not people, will be attacked during meetings.
8. Members will listen respectfully to each other and staff (no side conversations).
9. Monitor for compliance with law (OML) and policy.
 - a. Superintendent, assistant, and all Board members have responsibility.
 - b. Use “point of order” to interrupt and get meeting back on track.
10. Board members will refrain from taking a position on an issue until all relevant information is presented and/or after the issue is discussed.
11. The focus of Board meetings will be Board work and not administrative/staff work.
 - a. Is the item to celebrate a success?
 - b. Is the item a policy decision?
 - c. Is the item something that requires Board action?
 - d. Is the item needed to ensure accountability?
12. Members will not make long, unnecessary speeches.

AFTER BOARD MEETING AGREEMENTS

1. Board members and administration will support (or stay silent - not undermine) the decision of the Board.
2. Board members and administration will abide by confidentiality laws of executive sessions.
3. Ensure that all documents, records, reports, etc., are processed and maintained in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, policies, etc.

NON-BOARD MEETING AGREEMENTS

1. Board members are encouraged to attend as many school events (sporting events, fine arts events, community events) as a spectator as their time permits.
2. Board members wishing to visit a school shall:
 - a. Check with the Superintendent’s office, who shall consult with the principal, about the best time to visit.
 - b. Check in with the principal upon arrival.
 - c. Follow campus guideline for visitors (sign-in, guest badge, escort, etc.).
 - d. Respect staff time and allow staff to perform their duties.

- e. Not evaluate staff.
 - f. Not give direction to any staff or students.
 - g. Not accept gifts (other than nominal tokens) or favors from any district employee.
3. When visiting with teachers of their own children, Board members will make it clear that they are acting as parents rather than Board members.
 4. If a Board member observes an issue on a campus that needs administrative follow-up, the concerns will be communicated to the Superintendent.

GOVERNING BOARD OPERATING PROTOCOL

For the purpose of enhancing teamwork among members of the Board and between the Board and the administration, we the members of the Madison Senior Leadership Team, do hereby publicly commit ourselves collectively and individually to the following operating protocol:

1. **Don't spring surprises** on other Board members or the Superintendent. Surprises to the Board or the Superintendent will be the exception, not the rule. There should be no surprises at a Board meeting. We agree to ask the Board President or the Superintendent to place an item on the agenda instead of bringing it up unexpectedly at the meeting. **(Policy BEDBA)**

2. **Communication** between staff and the Board is encouraged as long as it follows Board policy. The senior leadership team recognizes that "good", "timely", "open" and "constant" communication regarding school district issues are extremely important. We will strive to anticipate issues that may become important or are sensitive to our school district and district stakeholders. **(Policy BHC)**

3. **Follow the lines of authority.** The last stop, not the first, will be the Board. We agree to follow the lines of authority and insist that others do so. While the Board is eager to listen to its constituents and staff, each inquiry is to be referred to the person who can properly and expeditiously address the issue. Board requests that will likely require considerable time or have political implications are to be directed to the Superintendent. All personnel complaints and criticisms received by the Board or its individual members will be directed to the Superintendent. **(Policies BHD and CCB)**

4. **Own the collective decision-making process.** The senior leadership team will support decisions made by the Board and/or the administrative team once a decision is made. We will support the majority decision(s).

5. **Exemplify the governance role.** The Board and Superintendent will support the policies our district currently has in place. We will continue to annually study and review policies for effectiveness and appropriately engage key stakeholders in the development or deletion of policies and policy revisions. We will maintain and apply district policies consistently while being cognizant of and recognizing the potential uniqueness of any given situation.

6. **Annually conduct a self-assessment/evaluation.** The Board will address its behavior by yearly self-evaluation and by addressing itself to any individual problems, such as poor meeting attendance or leaks of confidential information. **(Policy BAA)**
7. **Clearly state goals.** The Board will set clear goals for themselves and the Superintendent. The Board and the Superintendent will set clear goals for the District.
8. **Utilize CEO input.** The Superintendent is the Chief Executive Officer of the senior leadership team and should make recommendations, proposals or suggestions on most matters that come before the Board. **(Policy CB)**
9. **Board acts only as a body.** Individual Board members do not have authority. Only the Board as a whole has authority. **(Policy BBAA)** We agree that an individual Board member will not take unilateral action. The Board President will communicate the position(s) of the Board on controversial issues during a public meeting.
10. **Meeting protocol.** Conduct at a Board meeting is very important. We desire to have a legacy of a well-functioning, effective Board. We agree to avoid words and actions that create a negative impression on an individual, the Board or the District. We will be open minded and willing to “deeply listen” to all speakers/presenters. We agree that we can disagree and will do so using common courtesy and respect for others. We will not react to impromptu complaints on the spot, but will assure any individual(s) that the District identifies, will follow-up.
11. **Avoid marathon Board meetings.** To be efficient and effective, long Board meetings must be avoided. Points are to be made in as few words as possible; speeches at Board meetings will be minimal. If a Board member believes s/he doesn’t have enough information or has questions, either the Superintendent or Board President is to be called before the meeting.
12. **Practice efficient decision-making.** Board meetings are for decision-making, action and votes, not endless discussion. We agree to move to the question if the discussion is repetitive.
13. **Speak to agenda issues.** The Board will not play to the audience. We agree to speak to the issues on the agenda and attend to our fellow Board members. Facts and information needed from administration will be referred to the Superintendent.

14. **Executive/closed sessions** will be held only for appropriate subjects. Executive sessions will be held only when specific needs arise. Board members will be extremely sensitive to the legal ramifications of their meetings and comments.

15. **Children's interests come first.** The Board will represent the needs and interests of all the children in our District.

CODE OF ETHICS FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

As a member of my local Board of Education, I will strive to improve public education, and to that end I will:

- Insofar as possible, attend all meetings of the Board, and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings;
- Recognize that a Board member should endeavor to make policy decisions only after full discussion at publicly held Board meetings;
- Render all decisions based on the available facts and my independent judgment, and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups;
- Encourage the free expression of opinion by all Board members, and seek systematic communications between the Board and students, staff, and all elements of the community;
- Work with other Board members to establish effective Board policies and to delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the Superintendent;
- Communicate to other Board members and the Superintendent expression of public reaction to Board policies and school programs;
- Inform oneself about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed information, such as those sponsored by my state and national school boards association;
- Support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as school staff, and insist on a regular and impartial evaluation of all staff;
- Avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest, and refrain from using my Board position for personal or partisan gain;
- Take no private action that will compromise the Board or administration, and respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable laws, and
- Remember always that my first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the public schools.

Reference: Governing Board Policy BC