

Board Agreement

As a board of education, we understand the value and necessity of working together as a governance team. In order to effectively govern the school district, we have established the following expectations for the board and its members:

Prior to a meeting:

- Members will not establish or publically state a position on a board issue until hearing recommendations, listening to deliberations and considering all facts and opinions on the topic. Simply put, we are going to keep an open mind.
- Members are expected to read and consider the research provided in the board packet.
- Questions from board members to the administration or other board members are encouraged in advance of the meeting (be aware of Open Meetings Act).
- Board members should be cautious in speaking to constituents regarding their stance on the issue as it has not been presented to the full board.
- Members may state, "I have not taken a position yet as I wish to hear from my fellow board members and gather information on the topic."
- Board member will let the administration do the work of providing information to the public prior to the meeting. This public relations function is administrative work on behalf of the full board of education and is intended to more effectively inform all stakeholders in the community. The board will discuss the initiative at a board meeting for input and feedback.

During the meeting:

- Board members are expected to show mutual respect for each other as equal, elected/appointed officials.
- Dialogue and non-verbal behavior is expected to be thoughtful and diplomatic.
- Listening to one another is as valued as speaking - side bar conversations are discouraged.
- The board will support the president's role as the facilitator of the group.
- Board members will stay on-topic.
- The board expects all members to express their opinions at the board table in order to benefit the entire governing team. In other words, we should all know where members stand on an issue at the meeting.
- The board vote is the only and final means to direct the superintendent or staff to conduct the work of the district.

After the meeting:

- All board members are expected to support the board decision. Once the decision has been made, it is time to move on to the next critical issue. Efforts by board members to revisit previous decisions or secure belated public support will only distract from the future work of the district.
- Member may wish to state, "I didn't vote for the proposal but the decision was made and I support the work of the full board." Members may explain their position without appearing to undermine the decision of the full board.
- Expressing your opinion (in previous bullet) to individuals is acceptable to fellow members. However, sending information electronically to groups is a function performed by the district on behalf of the full board.
- Media related interviews will be handled by the board president or the superintendent at their discretion. Individual members may conduct interviews after a meeting in order to assist the media in performing their work.
- Throughout these interactions, members will adhere to the governance agreements of the board.

General communication and in-between meetings:

- When contacted by community members, board members will listen to the concerns of the individual and explain the work of the full board (or advise them of the chain of command in the school district). Members will consider the opportunity to educate citizens regarding the authority of the full board at a meeting- "As I have no individual authority, you may wish to speak to the full board at a convened meeting so that all our members have an opportunity to hear your concerns."
- Throughout these discussion, members will remember they always represent the district and the board of education (In the eyes of the public, you always wear the board hat). Members will refrain from "selective encouragement" - or simply promote your own opinion as this undermines the important relationship members have with one another.
- Board members are always encouraged to contact the superintendent regarding communications with citizens, parents or staff. This courtesy helps to keep all parties informed.

Resource: From Illinois Association of School Boards meeting with District 116 Board of Education, April 18, 2012.

ADOPTED:

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