BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION

MEMBER HANDBOOK

Adopted October 2011

Revised December 2011

Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.

- John Dewey

Preamble

The Berlin Board of Education understands that access to a quality public education is not just a constitutional requirement, but is also a moral imperative to ensure that all individuals have an opportunity to fully develop their talents, moral imagination and essential humanity. Accordingly, all Berlin students are entitled to a quality educational experience that prepares them to be lifelong learners.

In order to provide the necessary and appropriate leadership for the Berlin Public Schools, the Berlin Board of Education, both collectively and individually, is committed to governing as a professional board of directors. This means a commitment to the principles and practice of professional governance, the sharing of a common understanding of Board policies, practices, procedures and principles, a focus on continuous learning and improvement, and a willingness to serve as a model of effective moral leadership to students, staff and the community. This handbook is an attempt to set down in writing the Board's procedures and principles for the benefit of current and future members of the Berlin Board of Education.

Mission Statement

The Berlin Board of Education is committed to continuous improvement leading to student achievement and student success.

Board Goals

Student Achievement

Each and every student in the Berlin Public Schools will achieve established, rigorous performance standards in all areas of student learning by becoming independent strategic readers, problem solvers, and critical thinkers.

Communication

The Berlin Board of Education will establish reciprocal communication that is accessible and understandable, and that unites all citizens around the belief that high-quality public education is a community's most valuable asset.

Facilities and Educational Adequacy

The Berlin Board of Education will ensure all students have the opportunity to learn and achieve in safe and educationally adequate facilities by meeting the needs of the district with respect to adequate space and the quality of learning environments.

Board Governance

The Berlin Board of Education will institutionalize a focus on continuous improvement leading to student achievement and student success through its development of policy, ongoing evaluation, and commitment to individual and Board professional growth.

Core Values

The Board will:

1. Deliberate in many voices, but govern in one.

2. Cultivate a sense of group responsibility; understanding that it is the Board, not the staff or administration, which is responsible for excellence in governance.

3. Be an active part of the school district's leadership team, striving to lead the district through a clear mission statement, an articulated vision for the district, shared and commonly understood goals, broad and clearly written policies, and a continual monitoring of the school and student performance.

4. Be willing to hold itself to high standards of excellence in governance and professional responsibility, including a willingness to hold individual Board members and the Board itself accountable for its actions.

5. Continually monitor its own process, performance and progress.

6. Vigorously and intelligently advocate for the school district and its students on the local, state and national level.

7. Commit, both individually and collectively, to being well-informed and educated on local, state and national educational issues, initiatives and practices.

8. Regularly communicate with all stakeholders about school district performance, direction, initiatives, issues and ideas.

9. Formally and informally recognize and celebrate school, staff and student success.

10. Insist on the pursuit of excellence on the part of all with a role in the school district – staff, students and board members.

11. Always strive to act in the interest of what is best for all students, believing that all students can learn and succeed at a high level.

12. Serve as a model of positive professional and ethical conduct.

Key Work of School Boards

In addition to its Mission Statement and Board Goals, as well as responsibilities defined by law, the Board subscribes to the *Key Work of School Boards*. This framework for planning and action, developed by the National School Board Association, is based on the system's concept that no action or progress is accomplished in isolation. The eight essential areas for Board focus and action are as follows:

> Vision – establishing a clear vision of student achievement as a top priority of the Board, staff and community.
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> Standards – setting clear standards for student performance.
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> Assessment – establishing regular and valid assessments to measure district and student progress.
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> Accountability – establishing a process that holds the school system accountable for student success.
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> Alignment – aligning of all district resources to focus on student performance.
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> Climate – creating a positive climate throughout the school district to promote student success.
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> Collaborative Relationships – building collaborative relationships with the community to promote and develop a consensus and understanding of the priority of student achievement.
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> Continuous Improvement – committing all individuals within the school district to the idea of continuous improvement in the pursuit of student achievement and success.

Board Authority and Responsibility

The Board of Education is ultimately responsible for ensuring that Berlin residents have access to a free, quality education through high school. Connecticut law imbues the Board with specific and often broad authority over the administration of Berlin schools. For example, the Board of Education exercises control over school buildings and property, employs and supervises the superintendent of schools, adopts a budget, and approves textbooks. A lengthier and more specific listing of the Board's authority can be found in Chapter 10 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

While the Board has broad authority over the Berlin schools, much of this authority is delegated to the superintendent of schools and other district employees. The Board of Education functions, not as management responsible for the administration of the school

district, but as a board of directors responsible for establishing a vision for Berlin's schools, and monitoring its progress in reaching that vision.

Reference: BOE Policy 9075

Authority of Individual Board Members

Individual Board members have no authority except when they are meeting as a Board of Education. The Board of Education is a collective body and, by statute, can only act when a quorum is assembled in a legally constituted meeting. The statements or actions of individual Board members do not bind the Board of Education, except when that statement or action has been authorized by an official act of the Board. Board members should be careful not to act or speak in a manner that suggests they are speaking or acting on behalf of the board of education or the school district when they have not been so authorized by the Board.

Reference: BOE Policy 9075

Board Committees

The Board understands that not all of its work can be accomplished at regularly scheduled meetings of the entire Board, and that in order to dedicate the necessary time, expertise and focus on individual issues it is necessary to utilize committees of the Board. The Board's committee structure was developed so that it is aligned with the Board's goals to better focus Board activity and action on its stated priorities.

The Board of Education has three standing committees. These committees are: Student Achievement; Communications; and Educational Resources. Each committee is composed of three Board members appointed by the Board president, with each member serving on one committee.

In addition to the three standing committees, when a particular issue calls for the expertise of more than one committee – such as the review of proposed Board bylaws – the Board will utilize a Leadership Committee consisting of the chairs of the three standing committees and the Board president, if he/she is not a chair of one of the three standing committees. The Board will also rely on ad hoc committees, appointed by the Board president, for those tasks that require a committee of the Board and do not fall within the parameters of the standing committees (i.e. disciplinary and residency hearings).

Reference: BOE Policy 9001

Student Achievement Committee

The Student Achievement Committee is responsible for reviewing and overseeing appropriate metrics to evaluate student, staff and district performance. The responsibilities of this committee include: (a) work with the administration concerning the development of appropriate measures and metrics for all areas of district, school and student performance; (b) work with the administration concerning the development, establishment and maintenance of a program for curriculum review; (c) actively participate in the review, evaluation, and development of the district's curriculum; and (d) primary responsibility for the development and review of the Board and superintendent evaluation processes.

Reference: BOE Policy 9001

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee is primarily responsible for the alignment of all constituencies with regard to the district's Continuous Improvement goals. The responsibilities of this committee include: (a) developing and maintaining a system-wide engagement and communication plan; (b) monitoring of the effectiveness of communications, citizen involvement and community awareness of Berlin's schools and their goals; and (c) keeping abreast of current educational information and best practices relating to continuous improvement and student achievement.

Reference: BOE Policy 9001

Educational Resources Committee

The focus of the Educational Resources Committee is to obtain and manage the resources that are needed to increase the district's capacity to lead, teach and learn. The responsibilities of this committee include: (a) monitoring of metrics to ensure that district resources are utilized effectively, efficiently, and equitably to improve student achievement; (b) work with the superintendent of schools and director of business operations regarding the development of the district's annual budget; and (c) monitor community demographic information and facility usage to ensure a safe and optimal learning environment.

Reference: BOE Policy 9001

Election of Board of Education Members

The Berlin Board of Education is a nine member, non-partisan Board. Board members serve three-year terms, with three members up for election each year.

In order for an individual to be placed on the November ballot, he/she must obtain a petition form from the town clerk and obtain the signatures of 1% of the registered voters in Berlin. Upon the certification of candidate's signatures by the town clerk, the individual's name will go on the ballot with no party designation. The top three vote-getters fill the three vacancies on the Board.

Reference: Town of Berlin Charter, Section 2-6.

Board Member Qualifications

Individuals must be registered voters in Berlin in order to serve on the Board of Education. Employees of the Board of Education may not serve on the Board.

Beyond the minimum statutory requirements for Board service, it is expected that Board of Education members will share a commitment to providing an exceptional educational experience for each student, a willingness to work and study to become well-versed in public education and Berlin schools, and a sincere desire to be part of a high-functioning governing body that takes the responsibilities of public service seriously.

Resignation of Board Members

Board members who wish to resign from the Board of Education must submit a letter of resignation to the town clerk, with a copy to the Board president. A member's resignation is not effective until it is filed with the town clerk. The Board of Education does not have the authority to either accept or reject a member's resignation.

Reference: BOE Policy 9015

Exit Interview

Board members who leave the Board, either through resignation or election, will be asked to complete an exit interview questionnaire. It is hoped that the honest and thoughtful reflections of departing members will provide valuable information and ideas for Board self-evaluation and improvement efforts.

Filling a Vacancy on the Board

A vacancy may be filled by a vote of the majority of the members of the Board. If the Board intends to fill a vacancy on the Board, it will publicize the vacancy and interview candidates. New members are appointed by a majority vote of the Board members present. The appointment by the Board of an individual to fill a Board vacancy will only be until the next general election, when the appointed member's seat will be on the ballot.

Reference: BOE Policy 9015

Conflict of Interest

A Board member has a conflict of interest when he/she has an interest which is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of his/her duties or employment in the public interest and of his/her responsibilities as prescribed in the Connecticut General Statutes and the laws of the Town of Berlin, if he/she has reason to believe or expect that he/she will derive a direct monetary gain or suffer a direct monetary loss, as the case may be, by reason of his/her official activity. He/she does not have an interest which is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of his/her duties in the public interest and of his/her responsibilities as prescribed by the Connecticut General Statutes and the laws of the Town of Berlin if any benefit or detriment accrues to him/her as a member of a business, profession, occupation or group to no greater extent than any other member of such business, profession, occupation or group.

In addition to the definition set forth in the Town Charter, Board members are expected to identify whenever they have a personal or professional interest in an issue that might compromise or call their judgment into question. In all of their actions and statements, Board members are asked to be beyond reproach.

Reference: Town of Berlin Charter, Section 9-3

Discipline of Board Members

Although the Board of Education cannot remove individuals from service as Board members, it does have the authority and ability to discipline individual members. Since service as a Board officer is a privilege and not a right, Board officers can be removed from their position as an officer by a majority vote of the membership of the Board.

Board members who violate the rules, regulations or policies of the Board, interfere with the orderly and efficient operation of the Board, or act in ways that are contrary to the best interests of the school district can be subject to a vote of censure by the Board. A censure vote is an expression of disapproval concerning an individual member by the Board and, hopefully, will be used rarely, if at all.

Reference: BOE Policy 9070

Board Member Orientation

As part of its commitment to having highly-trained individuals as part of a professional governing board, the Board will provide orientation opportunities for new members and candidates. Once the list of candidates is finalized, the Board president (or other Board member if the president is a candidate) and the superintendent of schools will offer candidates an opportunity to learn about service on the Board of Education by providing a candidate orientation. As part of the orientation, candidates will be provided a package of materials including the Board member handbook, the Board of Education budget document, a copy of the most recent Board self-evaluation, and other appropriate materials.

Upon their election to the Board, newly elected Board members will be provided an additional orientation opportunity, including the opportunity to attend professional development opportunities such as the CABE/CAPSS Convention.

Board Member Professional Development

The Board is committed, both individually and as an organization, to the principles of continuous improvement and ongoing education, and understands that in order to perform as a high-functioning professional organization its members must be well educated about the Berlin schools, board governance and educational best practices. The Board will look to identify and provide professional development opportunities for Board members, and Board members will be encouraged to participate in these learning opportunities. The Board will reimburse members for reasonable, pre-approved expenses for professional development.

Examples of these professional development opportunities, but by no means the only opportunities, are the CABE/CAPSS Annual Convention, as well as seminars conducted by the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education.

Board members are also expected to read the same professional articles that are utilized by school administrators, as well as share and exchange professional articles among themselves.

Board Officers

The Board of Education has two officers, president and secretary. The Board elects officers at its Annual Meeting held in November following the election. Officers are elected by a majority vote of those members present and voting.

The Board president presides at all meetings and serves as the Board spokesperson. He/she is responsible for appointing Board members to committees, and signs documents, contracts and checks on behalf of the Board. The Board president works

closely with the superintendent of schools to plan meeting agendas and may call special meetings of the Board.

The Board secretary is responsible for the minutes of Board meetings and shall attend to the official correspondence of the Board. The secretary presides over meetings when the president is absent.

Reference: BOE Policies 9050, 9050.1, 9050.2

Superintendent's Responsibilities

The superintendent of schools, pursuant to state law, is the CEO of the Berlin Public Schools. He/she is responsible for leading and managing the school district, hiring and supervising personnel, developing and administering the budget, and advising the Board on educational developments, board policies and applicable laws. The superintendent of schools shall regularly communicate to the Board the status of student learning and the district's progress in meeting its stated goals.

The superintendent of schools attends all meetings of the Board and works closely with the Board in developing goals and initiatives, and is responsible for the implementation of these initiatives. Although the superintendent of schools is directly employed and supervised by the Board, his/her working relationship with the Board is such that he/she is generally considered the Board's "tenth member."

Board Policies

One of the primary responsibilities of the Board is to develop policies to govern the school district and the Board, which will serve as guideposts and guidelines for the effective and efficient operation of a school district committed to providing an exceptional educational experience for each student. Board policies are developed according to requirements set forth in Connecticut Statutes, State Department of Education recommendations, and the Board's own bylaws, policies and mission statement. In order for Board policies to effectively perform their stated purpose, it is important that they are regularly reviewed and updated. In order to ensure that Board policies are current and in compliance with statutory requirements, the Board may utilize attorneys or other outside consultants. While the Board may be advised concerning its policies by the superintendent of schools, its attorney or other consultants, the adoption of new policies, or the revision or repeal of existing policies is the sole responsibility of the Board.

The adoption of Board policies is governed by Board Policy 9030. Board policies require an initial public reading at a Board meeting, followed by a subsequent second reading and vote at a subsequent meeting before they can be adopted by the Board.

Board policies and bylaws may be suspended for a specific purpose and limited time by a majority vote of Board members in attendance when there is prior written notice; absent such written notice, suspension of Board policies requires a majority vote of the entire Board. The suspension of Board bylaws requires a two-thirds vote of the entire Board absent prior written notice.

Reference: BOE Policy 9030

Board Hearings

One of the responsibilities of the Board of Education is to conduct hearings. For many of these hearings, such as student expulsion hearings, school accommodation hearings, and teacher termination hearings, the Board serves as an impartial hearing board. In these instances, Board members who serve on the panel must make their decision based only on the evidence and information presented at the hearing. Regardless of whether the Board is serving as an impartial panel, or in grievance hearing, Board members have an obligation to treat those before them respectfully and fairly, adhering to the highest standards of professional conduct.

Search, Selection and Appointment of Superintendent

The Board of Education is responsible for the appointment of the superintendent of schools. When conducting a search for a superintendent, the Board may vote itself as the personnel search committee. If so, it may meet as the personnel search committee without public notice of its meetings or a requirement to allow the public to attend.

The search for, and selection of, a superintendent of schools is one of the most important decisions that a board of education can make. Accordingly, this process should be thoughtful and informed, made with a clear understanding of the needs of the school district and the corresponding characteristics of an ideal superintendent, as well as an awareness of the availability of potential candidates. Although each search process is unique, generally the Board would be well advised to consult with the public and other informed individuals, both in and outside the district, when conducting a superintendent search.

Board Role in Hiring Process

Generally speaking, the Board does not have the primary role in the hiring process, except for the superintendent of schools. It is Board policy to authorize the superintendent of schools to hire teachers and other personnel without direct involvement on the part of Board members.

When hiring school administrators, the Board has a more direct role. A Board member(s) selected by the Board president can participate in the interview process. The Board interviews the superintendent's recommended finalist for administrative positions and votes to approve. The Board's role is one of approval of the superintendent's selected candidate; it cannot hire certified personnel without the prior recommendation of the superintendent of schools.

Budget Process

The Board is responsible for the adoption of a budget for the school district. The superintendent of schools presents a proposed budget to the Board in January. During the month of January, the Board will hold a series of meetings in which it will consider presentations from school district administrators, prior to adoption of its budget in February.

Upon adoption, the Board forwards its budget to the town manager for consideration by the Town Council. The Board presents its budget to the Town Council Budget Committee, as well as to the community at the Town Budget Hearing. Upon final adoption of the Town Budget, if the final allocation to the Board of Education is less than the budget originally adopted by the Board, the Board will vote on budget adjustments to ensure that the Board of Education budgeted expenditures do not exceed its allocation from the Town Council.

The Board is statutorily prohibited from expending more on its operating expenses than the amount allocated by the Town Council. When making its budget decisions, the Board should be guided by its stated goals and educational priorities.

Superintendent Evaluation

As the superintendent of schools is the only school district employee directly supervised by the Board of Education, the Board is responsible for evaluating the superintendent's performance, as well as making decisions concerning his/her contract of employment, such as compensation and extending the term of the contract. Following the conclusion of the school year, the Board shall conduct an evaluation of the superintendent's performance, utilizing a process and standards of performance that has been agreed upon in advance with the superintendent of schools.

Board Self-Evaluation

Following the conclusion of the school year, the Board shall meet to conduct a self-evaluation of its own performance. The self-evaluation shall be based, in large part, on the Board's success in making progress towards meeting its stated goals. As part of the

self-evaluation process, the Board will solicit input from the district administrators as to the Board's performance over the past year.

An essential part of the self-evaluation process is a focus on board governance. It is expected that the Board will look carefully at its conduct at board meetings, its adherence to policy, its treatment of the public, staff and one another, the Board's focus on student achievement, and the Board's ability to distinguish between governance and management.

Board Retreat

The Board recognizes that in order to properly develop a long range and in-depth plan for school improvement, it will be necessary to regularly meet in a retreat setting to allow for a more focused discussion of school district performance and initiatives. Although they are considered special meetings of the Board of Education, retreats are generally held at times and/or locations that are different from regularly scheduled meetings. In addition to the attendance of all Board members, the Board may invite the superintendent of schools, school administrators or other individuals to participate in its retreat.

Board Members Visiting Schools

Board members are encouraged to be informed about Berlin schools, and visits to our schools can be part of that process. If a Board member wishes to visit one or more of our schools, he/she should first inform the superintendent of schools of his/her desire to visit a school(s) and the superintendent of schools will then work with the school principal to schedule a school visit for the Board member. When visiting any of our schools, Board members must be mindful that they do not serve in an administrative function and should not attempt to direct, criticize or discipline staff members.

Board Member Request for Information

It is important for Board members to be informed about the school district and the performance of our students. The superintendent of schools and school administrators regularly provide Board members with data and information via the weekly Board packet and presentations at Board meetings. Board members who seek additional information are encouraged to work through the standing Board committees to obtain this information. If the information sought by individual Board members is not readily available through the work of the committees, Board members are to coordinate their information requests with the Board president to ensure that the information requests submitted to the superintendent of schools and schools do not overwhelm them so as to distract them from their primary responsibilities.

Student Information

Except for statutorily mandated exceptions, such as expulsion and residency hearings, Board members do not get involved with individual student matters. Individual student information is confidential and Board members only have access to this information when that information is necessary for Board members to perform a function in their official capacity.

Indemnification of Board Members

Connecticut law provides that the school district must indemnify and hold school employees, volunteers and board members harmless from any claim, demand or judgment from negligence in the performance of their duties and responsibilities. This protection includes legal fees, expenses and other costs.

Reference: CGS 10-235

Board Meetings

Meeting Schedule

The Board of Education establishes its annual meeting schedule at its annual meeting in November. The Board meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month, except in the months of July, August, November and December, when it meets once.

Reference: BOE Policy 9046

Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Board of Education are those meetings listed on its annual schedule of meetings voted on at the annual meeting. Board meetings start at 7:00 p.m. and are generally held at the Board of Education Meeting Room. At regular meetings, the Board can add items to the meeting agenda.

Special Meetings

Meetings of the entire Board that are not on the annual schedule of meetings are special meetings. At a special meeting, the Board cannot add items to the meeting agenda for discussion or action.

Meeting Agendas

The superintendent of schools, in conjunction with the Board president, develops an agenda for each Board meeting. Meeting agendas, along with necessary documents and materials, are distributed to Board members prior to the meeting. Board agendas are designed to minimize votes and discussion on matters that are unnecessary, trivial, or are best addressed at the non-board level. Ideally, Board agendas are designed so that meeting time is dedicated to a focused, informed discussion on student achievement and educational priorities.

Reference: BOE Policy 9010

Robert's Rules of Order

The Board conducts its meetings utilizing the *Robert's Rules of Order*, 10th Edition, for the conduct of its meetings, except when these rules are in conflict with Board policy or Connecticut law. The Board president serves as the Board parliamentarian, unless another board member is chosen as parliamentarian by a majority of the Board.

Reference: BOE Policy 9035

Board Quorum

Five members of the Board shall constitute a quorum. Unless otherwise specified by Board policy, a majority of board members voting on a particular item is sufficient for approval.

Reference: BOE Policy 9065

Consent Agenda

Agenda items that require a vote by the Board, but may not require discussion are to be placed on the consent agenda. The consent agenda is an item on the meeting agenda in which all voting items that do not require Board discussion or debate are listed. A vote to approve the consent agenda by the Board shall approve all items listed on the consent agenda. If a Board member wishes to discuss an item, he/she shall request that the item be taken off the consent agenda, and it will be discussed and voted on separately following a vote on the consent agenda.

Board Votes

The Board of Education is a collective body and, as such, can only act via a vote by its members. Board votes must be in public at a properly noticed meeting of the Board and recorded in writing. Pursuant to Robert's Rules, all motions must be made by one board member and seconded by another. Members may vote in favor, against or abstain from voting. Members may explain their vote, but are not required to explain it.

Reference: BOE Policy 9065

Board Member Attendance

Board members are expected to attend meetings of the Board, including meetings of their assigned committee. While it is almost inevitable that, on occasion, an individual member will have a personal or professional conflict that prevents him/her from attending a meeting, ideally this is a rare and unavoidable circumstance. Service on the Board of Education is a public trust on behalf of the community and children of Berlin, and it is expected that Board members will make this service a priority. The Board of Education functions best when all nine members devote the time, energy, preparation and seriousness of purpose necessary to accomplish exceptional work and that is called for by public service.

Meeting Minutes

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), minutes must be taken at all meetings of the Board of Education. These minutes must be available within seven days of the meeting, but all votes of the Board must be reduced to writing and available within forty-eight hours. The FOIA requires that minutes must contain the recording of votes and the names of those members in attendance. These requirements apply to meetings of Board committees as well.

In order to appropriately apprise the public of the Board's work, Board minutes should contain the time of the meeting; members in attendance; a brief description of any business transacted by the Board, along with any Board action; the recording of Board member votes; and a description of any executive session held, along with the names of all individuals present for the executive session.

Reference: BOE Policy 9040

Executive Session

Although, as a public agency, the Board must meet and conduct its business in public, under certain narrowly-defined exceptions, the Board may exclude the public from a

portion of its meeting by calling an executive session. The Freedom of Information Act provides that a board of education may hold an executive session by a two-thirds vote of those members in attendance and voting. Although the law allows for discussion in executive session, any action by the Board must be taken in open session.

The permissible reasons for holding an executive session are limited and, when in doubt, the Board should consult with its counsel. Some reasons are to discuss documents with respect to collective bargaining, personnel matters (with the permission of the individual who is the subject of the discussion), pending claims and litigation, confidential documents and student matters.

Reference: BOE Policy 9060

Notice of Meetings

The regular schedule of Board meetings, established at the Board's annual meeting, is forwarded to the town clerk. All Board meetings must be posted at least twenty-four hours prior to a meeting, except in emergency circumstances. Board members are to receive meeting agendas and relevant documents and materials prior to meetings.

Open Meeting Requirements

As a public agency, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requires that all meetings of the Board be posted at least twenty-four hours in advance and that members of the public are allowed to be present. Additionally, the FOIA requires that all Board documents be made available to the public promptly upon request, with limited provisions for the redaction of confidential information.

Reference: BOE Policy 9060

Public Comment at Meetings

The Board may designate a meeting agenda item to allow for public comment, permitting any individual or group to address the Board concerning any subject that lies within its jurisdiction. Three minutes may be allotted to each speaker and a maximum of nine (9) minutes per topic, although the Board president may extend this time, as appropriate. The Board may modify these limitations at the beginning of a meeting if the number of persons wishing to speak makes it advisable to do so. No inappropriate or disrespectful conduct shall be permitted at any Board of Education meeting. Persistence in such conduct shall be grounds for summary termination, by the president, of that individual's privilege of address and, if disruptive behavior continues, removal from the meeting. All speakers must identify themselves by name and address.

The public comment, or Audience of Citizens, portion of a meeting is an opportunity for Board members to hear from the public. It is not an opportunity for Board members to engage in discussion or debate with members of the public. Accordingly, Board members will not comment on or respond to public comments during Audience of Citizens.

Reference: BOE Policy 9035

Meeting Norms

It is the expectation that the Board of Education is a professional organization whose meetings model appropriate behavior for the school district. Members will be prepared for meetings and arrive on time, with those individuals who cannot timely attend giving prior notice to the Board president. Board members will be dressed professionally for all public meetings. Board meetings will be conducted via understood and established procedures as set forth in Board policy and bylaws.

In order to ensure that meetings of the Board are as effective and useful as possible, members will avoid surprises by articulating specific concerns in advance. The Board believes that informed, respectful discussion and debate is the best means of arriving at good decisions for the school district. Accordingly, during discussion Board members will listen attentively, consider all points of view, support their positions with facts when possible, be prepared to answer questions from other Board members, focus on the issue at hand, avoid negative and personal comments, and be prepared to compromise, understanding that the goal of debate among Board members is not to prevail but to arrive at the best possible decision for the school district.

Board meetings, following the Pledge of Allegiance and a brief moment of silence, begin with the introductions of Board members and school administrators present at the meeting, followed by a restatement of the Board's mission statement. Copies of materials and handouts will be made available to the public so that they can better follow the proceedings.

Annual Meeting

The November Board meeting following the election is the Board's Annual Meeting. At this meeting, the newly-elected Board members will sit with the Board for the first time and the Board will elect officers and select legal counsel. The Board will also recognize teachers of the year, student award winners, staff members and school volunteers.

Reference: BOE Policy 9046

Electronic Participation at Meetings

Board members may participate in meetings telephonically, with any Board member participating telephonically counted for the purpose of constituting a quorum. In order for a Board member to participate telephonically, the following conditions must be met: (a) the facility that is made available to the public that wishes to attend the meeting must be located where the greatest number of Board of Education members are located; (b) any physical or demonstrable material that is used in the course of the proceedings must be present in the place where the public is located; and (c) all those in attendance at the meeting, at whatever location, must be able to hear and identify all participants in the proceeding, including their individual remarks and votes.

When a Board member is participating in a meeting telephonically, the meeting chair shall take the necessary steps to ensure that the three conditions enumerated above are met. In addition, the chair shall take the necessary steps to ensure that a Board member participating telephonically has adequate opportunity to express himself/herself in Board discussion, including the opportunity to take the floor and make motions.

Reference: BOE Policy 9035

Glossary

Connecticut Achievement Performance Test

The Connecticut Academic Performance Test is the standard assessment administered to students in Grade 10. Students are assessed in the content areas of reading, mathematics, writing and science.

Connecticut Association of Boards of Education

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education serves local and regional boards of education. It is a membership organization made up of Connecticut boards of education, including 151 school districts representing 90% of the state's public school population.

Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents

The Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents is a statewide, nonprofit, educational administration organization whose membership includes Connecticut public school superintendents, assistant superintendents, central office administrative personnel, state department of education officials, and college and university professors.

Connecticut Mastery Test

The Connecticut Mastery Test is the standard assessment administered to students in grades 3 through 8. Students are assessed in the content areas of reading, mathematics, writing, and science (grades 5 and 8).

Data Driven Decision Making

Data-driven decision making uses student assessment data and relevant background information to make informed decisions related to planning and implementing instructional strategies at the district, school, classroom, and individual student levels.

District Reference Groups

To assist in reporting and analyzing school district data, the State Department of Education developed District Reference Groups, which are designed to compare groups of districts that have similar characteristics. The state's 166 school districts and three academies have been divided into nine groups, based on socioeconomic status, indicators of need and enrollment.

Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Commission was created by the General Assembly in l975 with the passage of the Freedom of Information Act. The Act provides the public with rights of access to records and meetings of public agencies.

Net Current Expenditure Per Pupil

Net current expenditures are calculated as defined in Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-261(a)(3). Net Current Expenditure includes all current public elementary and secondary expenditures from all sources, excluding reimbursable regular education transportation, tuition revenue, capital expenditures for land, buildings and equipment, and debt service. The information for determining Net Current Expenditure is provided from the End of Year School Report (ED001).

Regional Educational Service Centers

Connecticut is divided into six independent Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs). These centers are composed of towns from within the service center's region. A town's choice to join the Regional Educational Service Center is voluntary. Each service center tries to provide a variety of special services that address the educational needs of their cooperating towns. Each Regional Educational Service Center is maintained by state and federal funds and through membership dues.

Robert's Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order is designed as a parliamentary guide and it is the most commonly adopted parliamentary authority among societies in the United States. It is a codification of the present-day, general parliamentary law.

Strategic School Profile

The Connecticut General Assembly passed Section 10-220(c) of the Connecticut General Statutes, an act concerning the reporting of school and district strategic profile reports, in May 1990. The law provides that: "...each local and regional board of education shall submit to the commissioner of education a strategic school profile report for each school under its jurisdiction and for the school district as a whole. Each profile report will contain information on measures of student needs, school resources, and student and school performance." Reports will be available annually on November 1st.

Acronyms

AYP – Adequate Yearly Progress

CABE – Connecticut Association of Boards of Education

CAPSS – Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents

CAPT – Connecticut Academic Performance Test

CAS – Connecticut Association of Schools

CEA – Connecticut Education Association

CHRO – Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities

CIAC – Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference

CMT – Connecticut Mastery Test

DRG – District Reference Group

DSAP – Durational Shortage Area Permit

ECS – Educational Cost Sharing

ELL – English Language Learners

ESL – English as a Second Language

ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages

FERPA – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

FOIA – Freedom of Information Act

FOIC – Freedom of Information Commission

GED – General Educational Development

IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IDT – Interdisciplinary Team

IEP – Individualized Education Program

MER – Minimum Expenditure Requirement

MERA – Municipal Employee Relations Act

NCEP – Net Current Expenditures per Pupil

NCLB – No Child Left Behind Act

NEASC – New England Association of Schools and Colleges

NESDEC – New England School Development Council

NSBA – National School Board Association

OCR – Office of Civil Rights

PPT – Planning and Placement Team

RESC – Regional Educational Service Center

RTI – Response to Intervention

SRBI – Scientific Research-Based Intervention

TEAM – Teacher Education and Mentoring Program

TNA – Teacher Negotiations Act

TRB – Teacher Retirement Board

Resources

Robert's Rules of Order, 10th Edition

A Practical Guide to Connecticut School Law, Thomas B. Mooney, 6th Edition

See You in Court – the Annals of the Nutmeg Board of Education, Thomas B. Mooney

"CABE/CAPSS Governance Statement," February 2004

"School Boards and Student Achievement," Iowa Association of School Boards

"The Lighthouse Inquiry," Iowa Association of School Boards

Becoming a Better Board Member, National Association of School Boards

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www.sde.ct.gov