

# **Board Operating Protocol Talbot County School District**

## **MISSION**

“Meeting the Standards and Reaching Beyond”

## **VISION**

The Talbot County School System will provide quality learning experiences by striving to create an environment in which every student has the opportunity to reach his or her maximum potential.

## **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

- Student learning is the chief priority of the school.
- Teachers are committed to the belief that the higher the standards, the higher the performance.
- The commitment to continuous improvement is imperative if our school is going to enable students to become confident, self-directed learners.
- Students learn in different ways and should be provided with a variety of instructional approaches to support their learning.
- Each student is a valued individual with unique physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs.
- A students' self-esteem is enhanced by positive relationships and mutual respect among and between students and staff.
- Teachers, administrators, parents, and the community share the responsibility for advancing the school's mission.
- Schools need to function as a learning organization to promote opportunities for all those who have a stake in the success of the school to work together as a community of learners.
- Good classroom management is a must for quality learning experiences to occur.

## **Introduction**

The following Governance Team Protocol, along with our Code of Ethics, have been developed to enhance the overall performance of the Board of Education in collaboration with the Superintendent for the benefit of students, faculty, staff as well as other stakeholders of the Talbot County School District.

## **Board Operating Protocols**

### **I. DEVELOPING BOARD MEETING AGENDA**

#### **A. Placing items on agenda**

1. A tentative agenda is created by the Friday before the scheduled meeting except for time-sensitive items presented to the Board by the Administration.
2. In consultation with the Board Chair, the Superintendent shall prepare the agenda for all Board meetings.

#### **B. Items for executive session**

Only the following may be deliberated in executive session:

1. Advice from legal counsel about pending or contemplated litigation, a settlement offer, or other matters which the attorney has a duty to keep confidential.
2. Discussion about gifts or donations to the District, or real estate transactions and values and needs to keep those discussions confidential to protect the District's negotiating position.
3. Deliberation on the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of an employee, or receipt of a complaint or charge against an employee. This does not apply if the employee requests a public hearing.
4. Deliberation on the discipline of a student or a charge brought against a District employee. This does not apply if an open hearing is requested in writing by a parent or guardian of the student or by the employee.
5. Items as designated in the law.

The Board must vote in public session.

### C. Use of consent agenda

The consent agenda generally consists of routine matters that do not require explanation or discussion such as fundraising requests, financial information, or minutes of regular and special board meetings. These items have typically been reviewed by the board prior to a regular meeting, through written materials provided by the administration, or at a board meeting. Any Board member may request that an item be removed from the consent agenda in advance of the meeting if the member feels that further information, or discussion is necessary.

## II. MEMBER CONDUCT DURING MEETINGS -Three Board members constitute a quorum

### A. Persons addressing the Board

Meetings of the Board of Education are held to conduct the business of the school system. These meetings are not meetings of the public however, the public is invited to attend all meetings and members of the public are invited to address the Board at appropriate times in accordance with procedures established by the governance team.

The Superintendent shall make available at all Board meetings copies of the procedures allowing members of the public to address the Board. These procedures shall also be available at offices of the school district and shall be given to anyone requesting a copy.

All presentations to the Board are to be brief and are intended for the Board to hear comments or concerns without taking action. (Board Policy BCBI)

### B. Procedures for addressing the Board:

In accordance with Policy BCBI in accordance with O.C.G.A 20-2-58. The request for non-agenda items must be submitted 24 hrs in advance of the meeting and sign-up for agenda related items be at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the meeting. Each citizen whose name is placed on the agenda will be given three (3) minutes to make their comments. The Board will not respond to comments or questions posed by citizens in their presentation, but will take those comments and questions under advisement. The following guidelines are given to ensure that public participation in Board of Education meetings is orderly and meaningful, both for the public and the Board.

- 1. Any person concerned with an administrative question should exhaust all administrative channels before presenting it to the Superintendent and/or Board.**
- 2. Any individual desiring to speak is requested to give his/her name, address, and the group, if any, that he/she is representing. The individual should speak to the board, not to the audience.**

3. **The presentation should be as brief as possible, yet include all information considered important by the speaker. Unless an extension of time is granted, each speaker shall not exceed (3) three minutes.**
4. **If one spokesperson has presented a matter it is not necessary for others to repeat the same ideas. Others speaking on the same subject shall usually be limited to (3) three minute each.**
5. **The Board will not answer questions during the public participation. They will listen to the comments or concerns of an individual or a group.**
6. **Questions, suggestions, proposals, or criticisms presented verbally should also be submitted, when practical, in writing and should be signed by the individual or the spokesman of the group appearing before the Board.**
7. **Persons appearing before the Board are reminded that members of the Board are without authority to act independently as individuals in official matters.**
8. **Complaints of District employees will be received in executive session only and must be in writing.**
9. **No profanity, vulgar language, or personal abuse against any person will be permitted.**

The Board Chair, or other presiding officer, is authorized to terminate the remarks of any individual failing to comply with the procedures.

#### **C. Voting**

1. Each action item shall require a motion and second prior to the vote.
2. The Board Chair may vote on all action items and participate in discussion.
3. Voting shall be by voice and/or show of hands, as directed by the Chair.

### **III. INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER'S REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

- A. Board members shall request information and/or reports through the Superintendent.
- B. The Superintendent will gather information and disseminate it in a timely manner to all Board members.
- C. Board members are encouraged to advise the Superintendent of agenda questions or concerns before the Board meeting.

#### **IV. CITIZEN REQUEST/COMPLAINT TO INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER**

A. The Board has provided a complaint process that encourages the resolution of concerns at the level at which the concern arises. Citizens will be treated with respect throughout the complaint process.

B. When a Board member is contacted by a citizen, the board member is to encourage the individual to discuss the matter through conference with the appropriate administrator.

C. The Board member should explain the steps in the complaint process if the concern cannot be resolved informally.

D. The Board member should explain his/her need to remain impartial due to the potential for a hearing if the complaint remains unresolved through administrative channels.

E. The Board member should inform the Superintendent of the citizen's concern.

#### **V. BOARD MEMBER VISIT TO SCHOOL CAMPUS**

A. Board members are not to go to a campus or into teacher's classrooms for the purpose of evaluation or investigation of complaints or grievances.

B. Board members are encouraged to visit campuses for special events and for parental reasons. Board members, as well as parents and visitors to campuses, should sign in at the front office when visiting the campus.

#### **VI. COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Superintendent will meet with the Board Chair on a routine basis or as needed.

B. Board members will keep Superintendent informed via telephone calls, e-mail, or personal visits.

C. Board members will communicate with the community through public hearings and regular Board meetings.

D. The Board Chair or his/her designee shall be the official spokesperson for the media/press on high profile issues. Individual Board members should feel free to express their opinions in response to media inquiries with discretion. Board members should avoid the appearance of debating an issue and should avoid criticism of action taken by the Board.

#### **VII. EVALUATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

A. The evaluation of the Superintendent will be in accordance with state law and Board policy.

- B. The Board Chair obtains input from all Board members for the Superintendent's evaluation.
- C. The Superintendent's evaluation is conducted in executive session.

### **VIII. EVALUATION OF THE BOARD**

- A. Evaluation of the Board is an assessment of completion of goals established by the Board and its working relationship with the Superintendent.
- B. The evaluation of the Superintendent is an indication of the Board's success in meeting established goals.

### **IX. DUTIES AND REQUIREMENTS OF BOARD OFFICERS**

- A. The Board shall elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair.
- B. A vacancy among officers of the Board shall be filled by majority action of the Board.
- C. Each officer shall perform any legal duties of the office and other duties, as required by the Board. In addition to the duties required by law, the Chairman of the Board shall facilitate all Board meetings unless unable to attend. The Chair shall execute contracts on behalf of the District, subject to any restrictions imposed by law, as approved by the Board unless such authority has been delegated to the Superintendent or designee.
- D. The Vice-Chair of the Board shall act in the capacity and perform the duties of the Chair of in the event of absence or incapacity of the Chair. The Vice-Chair shall move into the chairmanship position only upon being elected to the position.
- E. The Secretary of the Board (superintendent or designee) shall ensure that an accurate record is kept of the proceedings of each Board meeting and that notices of all Board meetings are posted and distributed as required by law. In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair the Superintendent shall call the meetings to order and act as presiding officer. The Superintendent signs or countersigns documents as directed by action of the Board.

### **X. ROLE OF BOARD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- A. The Board may discuss only those items allowed by law.
- B. The Board must vote in public session.
- C. Discussions during executive session must remain **confidential**.

## **XI. PHONE CALLS AND LETTERS**

The Talbot County Board of Education encourages input. Anonymous calls or letters will not receive Board attention, discussion, or response and will not result in directives to the Administration. Confidentiality is strictly maintained when possible.

## **XII. CONFLICTS WITH POLICY**

These procedures are not part of the official policies of the Talbot County School District. In the event of conflict between these procedures and policy, the terms of the policy shall supersede the procedures.

## **XIII. COMPLIANCE WITH OPERATING PROTOCOL**

- A. If, after appropriate informal methods have been used to address the concern, a majority of the board believes that a board member has repeatedly failed to comply with the Protocol, the concern shall be placed on the next board meeting agenda.
  - The board members with the concern will state their concern and provide an opportunity for discussion, including a response from the board member(s) accused of non-compliance.
  - By vote of the board, options available to address the concern include, but are not limited to:
    - passing a motion expressing the concern and objection of the Board to the continued violation of its procedures.
    - providing the board member, the opportunity to participate in specific training related to the Board Protocol;
    - initiate the formal proceedings outlined in the Code of Ethics conflict of interest section, if determined to be appropriate.

**Date approved: December 14, 2021**

**Date of Corrections: August 5, 2025**