

West Linn-Wilsonville School District Board Operating Agreement

(Updated/Readopted 5-6-19)

The principles below represent some of the best practices of how individual Board members conduct themselves in the discharge of their duties and how they interact with other members of the Board. Future Boards are encouraged to reflect upon and amend these principles from time to time as necessary to further promote and sustain a highly effective, respectful, and respected leadership team.

Decision Making

1. Deliberate and make decisions as an entire Board, in accordance with the public meeting laws. Work sessions are for background information on unfamiliar information; in-depth discussions that lead toward decision-making are for regular meetings.
2. Regularly study and review policies for effectiveness; provide the opportunity for public participation in the process.
3. The Board agenda is set by the Board Chair with the assistance of the Superintendent. Additional items will be placed on an upcoming Board agenda if it is requested by two or more Board members.
 - a. To place a matter on the meeting agenda, a Board member will email the Board chair his or her requested agenda item.
 - b. The Board chair will either:
 - i. Act as the second vote and place the requested item on the Board agenda; or
 - ii. Email the other four Board members the request and inform them that a second vote is needed for the topic to be placed onto the agenda.
 - c. Board conversations on setting an agenda will be limited to the placing of topics on the agenda, and will not go to the merits of a topic or in any way work towards a Board decision.
 - d. Board members will strive to provide timely responses to each other with respect to matters involving the agenda.
4. An individual Board member who desires a copy of an existing written report or survey prepared by the administrative staff will make such a request to the superintendent. A copy of the material may be made available to each member of the Board. Requests for the generation of reports or information which require additional expense to the district must be submitted to the Board for consideration.
5. Understand that as a Board member you receive information that is confidential and cannot be shared.

Group Functioning

A Board member shall review information, consider others' ideas with an open mind, and then present individual opinions during Board deliberations.

Receiving Public Comment

It is the Board's desire to collect public comment in a manner that fosters and encourages public input. To help effectuate this goal, the Board chair will announce the following just prior to the public comment period of Board meetings:

1. Thank each speaker for taking time from their day to share with the Board their voice and take part in District action. The public's involvement is valued and appreciated.
2. The public comment time is a time the Board uses to collect information rather than engage in a dialogue. The Board encourages speakers not to mistake the Board's silence for a lack of interest or care. The Board is listening carefully, and probably taking notes.
3. If a community member is asking the District or Board to take action or provide information, they should provide contact information with the District/Board secretary so that the appropriate person may follow-up with the requesting individual.
4. The Board requires each speaker provide his or her name and address. If the speaker has concerns with providing this information in a public forum, he or she should share these concerns with the Board Chair or someone in the District office before the public meeting or during a break.
5. The public comment time is not a forum for singling out individual district employees or students for complaints. If a community member has a complaint about a specific student or district employee, the speaker shall not identify the individual(s) or provide information that would allow others to identify the individual(s). Complaints need to comply with the District's complaint process.

If the Board Chair feels a speaker is violating this instruction, he or she will remind the speaker of the policy. If the Chair feels the speaker is continuing to violate this instruction, he or she will temporarily suspend the proceedings so the Chair and speaker may speak privately about this rule with the hope that the speaker will be able to complete his or her remarks. The Board takes seriously its duty to protect the privacy of the District's students and employees.

6. If a speaker wishes to provide more information than can be provided in 3 minutes, the speaker is invited to submit additional materials or contact Board members or District staff outside of the Board meeting setting.

Board's Receiving of Information from the Public

1. **Communication From Out of District** – If a communication is received from outside of the District and with no clear connection to the District, the Board is not required to take a specific action.
2. **Public Sharing of Information** – If a community member communicates with a Board member for the sole purpose of sharing information, the Board member will do his or her best to respond in writing within two business days to:
 - a. Notify the community member that the provided information has been received; and
 - b. If appropriate, forward the provided information to the Superintendent.

If a sharing of information is made to the entire Board, the Chair will be responsible for following up with the community member, and if appropriate, forwarding the communication to the Superintendent.

3. **Requests for District Action** – If a Board member receives a request for the Board to take an action that falls within the purview of the Superintendent’s responsibilities, the Board member receiving the inquiry will do his or best to do the following within two business days:
 - a. Forward the communication to the Superintendent so that appropriate staff within the District office may respond to the inquiry; and
 - b. Notify the sender of the communication that his or her communication has been forwarded to the superintendent, and that someone from the District office will be following up soon.

If a request for District action is made to the entire Board, the Chair will be responsible for taking these two steps.

4. **Receipt of Complaints** – If a Board member receives a complaint regarding a concern, problem, or difficulty related to district educational process, services, personnel, and/or operational actions and/or decisions, the Board member will do his or her best to inform the community member within two business days that all complaints must follow the District’s complaint policy.

If a complaint is made to the entire Board, the Chair will be responsible for following up with the person raising the complaint.

5. **Requests for Board Action** – If a Board member receives a request to take an action that falls within the Board’s purview (e.g., place matter on Board meeting agenda; amend Board policy), the Board member will do his or her best to follow-up with the community member within 10 days to notify him or her that the request has been received, and provide the community member with an update of what action, if any, is being taken in response to the request.

If a request for Board action is made to the entire Board, the Chair will be responsible for following up

Board’s Expectations of the Superintendent

1. Work toward becoming a team with Board members.
2. Respect and acknowledge the Board’s role in setting policy and overseeing the performance of the Superintendent.
3. Work with the Board to establish a clear vision for the school district and prepare preliminary goals annually.
4. Timely inform the Board of all critical information and data including the latest in educational research and important happenings within the district.
5. Listen closely and provide follow up information to Board members on concerns and issues they have referred to the Superintendent to close the communication loop.

Superintendent's Expectations of the Board

1. Recognition of the Superintendent as the educational leader of the school district, including, careful consideration of each recommendation made by the Superintendent.
2. Assistance in gaining acceptance and support in the community by in part, sharing the successes and failures of the school system with the Superintendent.
3. Show district staff the respect and consideration due skilled, professional employees in public and at board meetings.
4. To increase transparency and set the Board and Superintendent up for success, timely inform the Superintendent of all critical information, data and issues.
5. Willingness to abide by its own rules, policy and code of ethical conduct, displaying integrity of the highest order.

Relationship Between Board and District Staff

Understand the Board sets the standards for the district through Board policy. The Superintendent has full administrative authority for properly discharging his/her professional duties within the established Board policy. Board members do not manage the district on a day-to-day basis and should refer problems or complaint to the proper administrative office.

Meetings & Minutes

For the purpose of making the School Board's actions more accessible to parents, students, and community members, and encouraging and fostering public participation in District action, the West Linn-Wilsonville School Board publicly commits to the following procedures with respect to the School Board's Meetings and Minutes.

1. The Board's meeting minutes will be written in such a way that they be readily understood by the general public, and avoid using jargon, abbreviations, or other terms without adequate explanation.
2. When Board meeting minutes refer to an individual speaker by name, the minutes will, when applicable, identify the organization on behalf of whom the speaker is presenting, and the position, if any, the speaker holds within said organization.
3. When a community member speaks at a Board meeting, the meeting minutes will reflect a brief summary of the speaker's purpose for speaking. The brief summary should, if applicable, include a statement as to what side of the spoken-on issue the speaker falls;
4. When a discussion takes place at a Board meeting, the minutes shall reflect not just the topics that were raised in the discussion, but also identify who spoke to which issues, and what position, if any, was taken by the speakers;

5. When a representative of the District provides a presentation to the Board, the minutes will include a brief summary of the representative's presentation, including any major conclusions and recommendations;
6. When information is provided to the Board for review by the Administration or the public, whether it be provided electronically or in hard copy, said document(s) shall be included online with the meeting minutes unless the document(s) contains privileged or confidential information. In the event a document contains both disclosable and nondisclosable content, to the extent possible, the Secretary shall redact the privileged/confidential information, and the remainder of the document will be included in the public minutes;
7. Videos will be made of each public Board meeting, and those videos will be made available for review online, and will remain online until such time as the Board instructs the District to remove said videos; Exceptions to the videotaping requirement may arise due to the availability of equipment for meetings held away from district office.
8. The Board will request that the Administration, whenever possible, strive to prepare Board meeting agendas and materials one week in advance of each Board meeting. Unless meeting materials are privileged or confidential, meeting materials provided to the Board will also be made available for public viewing on the District website; and
9. The Secretary shall strive to distribute unofficial minutes of Board meetings to the Board within three business days of the subject meeting and place the unofficial minutes onto the School District website within the same timeframe. All unofficial minutes will clearly state in large letters on each page that the minutes are unofficial.