

Portland Public Schools Board and Superintendent/Staff Expectations and Operating Protocols

I. Roles and Responsibilities

As elected Board members of Portland Public Schools, our roles and responsibilities are outlined in Board policy; these expectations and protocols do not replace or override Board Policy or Oregon laws and administrative directives.

Highlights of board responsibilities are to:

- A. Strive to provide the highest quality education for each PPS student.
- B. Set explicit goals and priorities for the District, and provide financial oversight for the District. Working with the Superintendent, ensure that staff carry out and that students and the community are aware of the goals and priorities.
- C. Focus on policy making, monitoring, and evaluation to further these goals and priorities.
- D. Review and adopt a student-focused budget.
- E. Hire, set goals for, and evaluate the Superintendent.
- F. Respect the role of the Superintendent to manage the District and to direct employees in District and school matters.
- G. Make decisions as a whole Board only at public meetings. Recognize that individual members have no authority to take individual action in policy or in district and school administrative matters.
- H. Encourage and model constructive public discourse in Board decision making. Respect the right of individual Board members to express opposing viewpoints and vote their convictions. Once a decision is made, support the full Board and Superintendent in carrying out decisions.
- I. Honor the student voice. Ensure strong, effective staff support to encourage student voice.
- J. Utilize the Racial Equity Lens tool in decision-making with the goal of closing the achievement gap for our students of color and historically underserved students.
- K. Respect those who express their views on issues related to the District. Solicit input and listen to all perspectives.
- L. Actively participate in community events, acting as ambassadors on behalf of the District, as well as in state and/or national events when possible.
- M. Strive to cultivate and maintain productive relationships, and work as a team with one another and the Superintendent.

II. Priority Setting and Board and Superintendent Evaluation

A. Priority Setting

1. The Board will co-create with the Superintendent a strategic plan and establish, at a public meeting, annual and long-term priorities in alignment with the District's strategic plan and Superintendent's goals.
2. The Board will align their work with District goals and the budget process, and will convene regular work sessions to discuss and evaluate the District's progress in meeting these priorities.
3. Board Leadership will meet regularly with the Superintendent and key staff to evaluate past Board meetings and determine the agenda for upcoming Board meetings. The Board Leadership will solicit input from Board members and will use the following criteria to consider items for placement on the Board meeting agendas:
 - a. Strategic relevance and consistency with the priorities of the Board and the District;
 - b. Comparative importance;
 - c. Immediacy;
 - d. Community interest;
 - e. Readiness for Board consideration (staff research, preparation, analysis, etc.)
 - f. Issues directly related to the Board's priorities will receive priority placement on Board agendas.
4. The Board leadership will regularly check in with the full Board regarding the Board meeting structure, and progress on the Board priorities and work plan.

B. Board Professional Development and Evaluation

1. The Board will self-assess its performance at least annually. The Board leadership will regularly evaluate Board meetings and work sessions. All Board members are encouraged to provide feedback to the Board leadership at any time to improve the Board's performance. The Board may also set expectations and priorities as a Board for Board professional development. The Board leadership will annually review the Board Office budget to ensure there are sufficient funds to support the Board's professional development.

C. Superintendent's Evaluation

The Board will establish regular annual goals and metrics for the Superintendent's performance and engage in a process that provides for thoughtful and deliberative assessment of the Superintendent's work.

III. Meetings

- A. Board members will be prepared for each meeting by reviewing materials in advance and agree to attend regularly scheduled Board meetings unless a situation occurs that makes attendance impossible. Board members will cooperate in scheduling special meetings and/or work sessions for planning and training purposes.
- B. Staff should recognize that board service is a volunteer position and board members likely have work or professional responsibilities that may need to be accommodated when scheduling meetings that require board member attendance.
- C. The times allotted at board meetings for each agenda item are estimates and are to be used as a guideline by the Chair in managing the meeting; however, there are not specific end times.
- D. Board members agree to strive to start and end meetings on time.
- E. Board members agree to uphold the legal requirement for confidentiality on all matters arising from Board executive sessions and any other confidential communications or information.
- F. Board members agree to communicate with a focus on problem solving. Members will seek to clarify issues by soliciting each other's points of view.
- G. Board members agree to listen carefully and with courtesy when other people are speaking during Board meetings. Discussions between Board members will serve as a model for acceptable public dialogue.
- H. If present, Board members are expected to cast a vote on all matters except when a conflict of interest arises.
- I. If they miss a meeting, Board members and Leadership Team staff agree to review the video of that meeting to remain current on the Board and district's work.
- J. Board members agree that if they must be absent from a meeting, that they will request to phone into the meeting only to cast a vote. Boardroom equipment limits the quality of the transmission for participation in a discussion. All Board meetings will be videotaped, rebroadcast and archived on the PPS website.

- K. Staff members will be prepared to answer questions and address issues related to agenda items, especially those that require a board vote.

IV. Communication

- A. Board members agree to communicate directly with the Superintendent and/or members of the Superintendent's Leadership Team when a question arises, or when a concern is voiced by a staff member, student, parent, or other community member with the understanding that the matter will be addressed in a timely manner. To ensure optimal communication on substantive issues, Board members should copy the Superintendent and Board Office Manager on their emails to the Superintendent's Leadership Team, and staff will do the same in its replies. By adhering to this communication loop, it verifies that Board members are receiving timely responses to their communication and that there are not multiple staff members working on the same issue. For minor, administrative, or scheduling issues, it is acceptable to email without copying other parties.
- B. When receiving communications from Board members, the Superintendent and staff will confirm receipt of the email or other form or communication and indicate how and when a response will be made if that is requested or appropriate.
- C. Apply the racial equity lens tool to Board communications with constituents: Board members often field complaints or concerns from individuals and will actively listen and empathize with constituents. Board members may hear more from communities and individuals who already have a lot of social capital in our system. Board members should proactively engage with historically underrepresented communities/constituents to broaden their understanding of the entire system.
- D. The Board and staff should operate on a "no surprises" basis. A high level of communication between board members and between board members and staff is appropriate, desired, and beneficial.
- E. Board members are requested to communicate directly with the Board Chair or Board Vice Chair(s) when concerns arise about other Board members. If there are concerns about District staff, board members should address that with the Superintendent and Board leadership. When disagreeing with other Board members, Board members and staff should maintain a respectful dialogue in their communications. Board members retain the right to express individual opinions, and when doing so, will clearly state that the opinion is his/hers and not that of the Board.

- F. Specific personnel complaints submitted to the Board or individual Board members should be referred to the Superintendent or designee.
- G. From time to time, the Board may be required to make findings of fact that can be appealed to another government agency (i.e., personnel matters or charter school application hearings). In these situations, no Board member will discuss the substance of the matter with any person(s) directly involved in the issue, other than PPS staff, outside the formal hearing and deliberation process.

V. Requests for Information or Decision making

- A. Information Requests of Staff
 - 1. When Board members have information requests of staff (but do not require any particular decision to be made), the Board member should feel free to communicate their request to any member of the Superintendent's Leadership team or through the Board Office Manager. The Superintendent or his/her designee should be copied on any written requests to keep him/her apprised of issues of concern to the Board.
 - 2. Staff will respond to Board members emails in a timely way and provide information to board members about how an issue has been resolved.
 - 3. If the request for information is of such a nature that it will take significant time to compile a response (i.e., more than two hours), the Board member should communicate his/her request to the Superintendent or designee for further direction. The Superintendent can then work with the Board member to determine the most efficient way to provide the information requested.
- B. Providing Documents to Board for Review in Advance of Meetings. The Board Chair and Vice-Chair(s) in consultation with the Superintendent will establish the agenda and major business agenda items for full Board meetings approximately 10 days prior to the Board meeting.
- C. Notes from agenda setting meetings are sent out to the entire Board by the Board office. Board agendas are made up of action and discussion items, with reports from the Student Representative and Superintendent.
- D. The majority of items that require Board action are first reviewed in a Board Committee meeting, an executive session, or a Board meeting.
- E. Staff and the Superintendent will have the Board book, and any supporting documentation, available at least four days prior to the Board meeting except under extenuating circumstances.

- F. In order for Board members to be adequately prepared for staff presentations and to take action on an agenda item, the Board office will provide, by messenger service, meeting materials to all Board members on the Thursday or Friday prior to a Board meeting. This information will also be sent electronically.
- G. If a PowerPoint presentation will be given by staff during a Board meeting, it will be included in the Board packet as well, with the understanding that there may be changes at the final Board presentation. Copies of final PowerPoint presentations will be available at Board member seats at the meetings and will be posted as part of the meeting materials.
- H. For contracts listed in the Business Consent Agenda, staff will provide copies of these contracts. These will be posted as part of the meeting materials.
- I. If staff is unable to answer a question that comes up during Board discussion, the Board office will note the question and provide follow up to the Board.

VI. Committee Protocols

- A. The annual agenda and meeting agendas for Committee and Task Force meetings are co-developed by the Committee Chair and staff lead[s]. Committee meeting materials should be provided at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. Committee meetings will be publicly noticed 48 hours ahead of time and agendas will be posted prior the meeting.
- B. Recommendations coming from a Committee are referenced in staff or committee chair reports for discussion items and resolutions for action items before the full Board.
- C. The Committee Chair will review all minutes before they are sent to the rest of the Committee and posted on the Committee web page.
- D. All Committee meetings will be audio recorded for record keeping purposes and are available upon request.

OSBA Draft Code of Conduct

A school board member:

- Understands that the board sets the standards for the district through board policy.
- Board members do not manage the district on a day-to-day basis.
- Understands that the board makes decisions as a team.
- Individual board members may not commit the board to any action.
- Respects the right of other board members to have opinions and ideas that differ.
- Recognizes that decisions are made by a majority vote and should be supported by all board members.
- Makes decisions only after the facts are presented and discussed.
- Understands the chain of command and refers problems or complaints to the proper administrative office.
- Recognizes that the board must comply with the Public Meetings Law and has authority to make decisions only at official board meetings.
- Insists that all board and district business is ethical and honest. Is open, fair and honest -- has no hidden agenda.
- Understands that he or she will receive confidential information that cannot be shared.
- Recognizes that the superintendent is the board's adviser and should be present at all public board meetings, except when the board is considering the superintendent's evaluation, contract or salary.
- Takes action only after hearing the superintendent's recommendations.
- Refuses to use board membership for personal or family gain or prestige. Announces conflicts of interest before board action is taken.
- Refuses to bring personal or family problems into board considerations.
- Gives the staff the respect and consideration due skilled professional employees.
- Presents personal criticism of district operations to the superintendent, not to district staff or to a board meeting.
- Respects the right of the public to attend and observe board meetings.
- Respects the right of the public to be informed about district decisions and school operations as allowed by law.