

CUSD 200 BOARD OPERATING PRINCIPLES

Purpose of a School Board

As the entity charged by law with governing a school district, each school board (comprised of volunteers) sits in trust for its entire community. The obligation to govern effectively imposes six fundamental responsibilities:

1. The board clarifies the purpose of the district.
2. The board connects with the community.
3. The board employs a superintendent.
4. The board delegates authority.
5. The board monitors performance.
6. The board takes responsibility for itself.

Operating Principles

1. Board member expectations

- a. Board members will assume positive intent.
- b. Board members will treat each other respectfully and be open and honest with each other and the superintendent.
- c. Board members will speak professionally and keep discussions at board meetings relevant and focused.

2. Concerns from the community and staff

- a. Board members will listen carefully, remembering they are only hearing one side of the story.
- b. Board members will then direct that person to the district's most appropriate staff member (Chain of Command), who can help them resolve their concern. The superintendent will be copied on forwarded emails.
- c. Board members handling concerns in this manner will clarify that no one member has the individual authority to fix a problem.
- d. Board members will call the superintendent if they think there is an issue of concern.

3. Speaking with one voice

- a. No individual board member other than the board president, per board policy, has the authority to act or speak on the board's behalf without the board's consent.
- b. All outgoing communication from the Board will be shared with all Board members prior to being sent for their awareness.

- c. Board members have an obligation to express their opinions and respect others' opinions at the board table.
- d. Board members understand the importance of speaking with one clear voice to the superintendent.
- e. While a board member may disagree with the majority decision, they should refrain from publicly undermining the decision.

4. Communicating with the media

- a. The board president (or designee) is the spokesperson for the board to the media.
- b. The superintendent (or designee) is the spokesperson for the district to the media.

5. Closed session meetings

- a. Board members respect the confidentiality of privileged information and will not divulge conversations, discussions, or deliberations that occur during closed-session meetings.
- b. Board members recognize that revealing information from closed sessions harms the team's relationships and can lead to significant consequences that may affect future district operations and community relations.

6. Use of electronic communication

- a. Board members will be judicious in their use of electronic communication concerning district business and understand that most electronic communication is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and, as such, can be made public.

In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, board members will refrain from using "reply to all" on any district email.

- b. A board member may discuss district business with only one other member at a time, whether in person, by phone, or through email.

7. Social Media

- a. Board members recognize that while we may offer our individual opinions on social media, such views do not represent the Board. We understand they may be construed as Board commentary and agree that such views could undermine the collective Board.
- b. When promoting official district business and activities, personal use of social media should be limited to directly sharing links from the district media platforms without personal editorial or opinion.
- c. Board members will refrain from posting rebuttals/responses/corrections to district-related social media posts.

- d. Board members who dually serve as board members and active candidates are not precluded from engaging in social media while in active candidacy, but such actions must be clear that they are in their capacity as a candidate.

8. Request for or sharing of information

- a. When an individual board member requests information, it will be provided to all board members. ("One gets, all get.")
- b. Individual board members' requests for information should be directed to the Superintendent; board members will self-monitor such to ensure they are manageable in both the scope and time required to complete them.
- c. Individual board members will share important information with the superintendent before it is forwarded to other board members.

9. Board meetings

- a. Public Comment—We understand that board meetings are public meetings of the board, not open-forum town hall meetings. We will keep this in mind as we conduct our meetings, allowing the public to provide input at the time allotted on the agenda to ensure that multiple voices of the community are heard.

According to board policy, the Board typically does not engage directly in discussions or ask questions of those addressing it during public comments. This practice is not intended to signal disinterest, but rather to provide an opportunity for context to be gathered and for information to be understood through the appropriate chain of command.

- b. Agenda Items - The Superintendent prepares a preliminary draft of the agenda for each meeting with input from the Board President and Vice-President. Each board member will have an opportunity to suggest topics for future agenda items. These items will be recorded by the Board President who will work to incorporate these items into future board meetings, taking into account a variety of factors, such as: the consensus on board interest in the topic as an agenda item, whether the topic is more appropriate for a board committee, community interest, and the topic's alignment to future, scheduled board agenda items. The board will review any topics not otherwise addressed during annual goal-setting discussions, and the list of future agenda items will be reset as annual workplan goals are approved.
- c. Board Discussion - We will clearly identify issues and discuss them openly, honestly, and respectfully. We will solve problems through a collaborative process where all viewpoints are given a fair and open voice. We will support the final board decision. When casting their "no" vote, individual members are encouraged to explain their vote.

10. Relationship to Superintendent and Staff

- a. The board has one employee - the superintendent. The board and superintendent work together to fulfill their mutually complementary roles. We

intend to use trust combined with open and honest communication. The superintendent is accountable only to the entire board. The relationship between the superintendent and any individual board member is collegial, not hierarchical.

- b. The board and the superintendent have the right to expect performance, candor, and honesty from one another. The superintendent shall regularly update the board on events, issues, and other significant topics across the district or, in an emergency, as soon as reasonably possible. Likewise, board members should communicate any concerns they observe or are otherwise aware of to the superintendent.
- c. The board will receive board packets and supporting documentation five (5) days before regularly scheduled board meetings with larger supporting documents (i.e., student handbook, audit report) earlier, if possible, to allow extra time for review. Board members will make every effort to submit questions on agenda items by email to the superintendent by the Tuesday morning before the board meeting. Whenever possible, to avoid surprises at Board Meetings, Board Members should indicate whether a response is needed before the meeting, or if the question is simply advance notice of a question that will be asked at the meeting. Advance questions shall not eliminate or avoid the need for discussion at a regularly scheduled open meeting.
- d. When visiting with their children's teachers, board members will clarify that they act as parents rather than board members.
- e. Board inquiries regarding staff and operational issues will always occur through the superintendent.

11. No Surprises

The intention is that, to the best of each person's ability, no one, whether the superintendent or board member, should be surprised, be it during a meeting or in between meetings.