



SCHOOL BOARD OPERATING PROCEDURES OVERVIEW

ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS AND/OR SCHOOL BOARD OFFICERS

- School Board Members have **authority at a posted meeting**. School Board Members have no authority outside of a meeting.
- A School Board Member **may not direct employees** regarding the performance of duties.

TYPES OF SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

- Regular, Work Sessions, Special Called, Emergency
- **Three or more gathered** is considered a meeting and falls under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

DEVELOPING THE SCHOOL BOARD MEETING AGENDA

- Placing an item on the **agenda**:
 1. Leadership and Superintendent develop agenda.
 2. School Board Members may submit requests to the Chair in advance.
 3. Any Member may move, prior to the agenda adoption vote being taken, that an item be added to that Meeting's agenda. A vote will then be held on the motion. *It is appropriate to notify the Chair and other Board Members prior to start of the Meeting of any agenda additions being proposed.*
 4. A majority of Members can request an item be placed on the agenda if the Chair does not grant agenda request of an individual member.
 5. A Member may request an item be considered in a Closed Meeting and is brought to the Chair prior to the convening of the public meeting.
 6. The Chair has the latitude to reorder the agenda.
- Routine Items may be placed on the **consent agenda**.
- Notice of meetings must comply with Virginia **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)**.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER CONDUCT DURING REGULAR AND SPECIAL CALLED SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

Open Forum (Public Participation):

- School Board Meetings are **held in public** to provide transparency of dilation and actions. It is **not a public meeting** for the purpose of public participation. It has been customary for the board to allow public comments at the appropriate time on the agenda.
- School Board Members listen during **public comment but do not deliberate or take action unless on the agenda** and will be discussed at the appropriate time on the agenda.
- The School Board **Chair may limit public comment** or stop the comments of anyone whose comments are inappropriate, such as student information disciplinary matters, employee grievance or litigation matters.
- The School Board **Chair may direct the Superintendent to investigate** item(s) and report back to School Board Members at a subsequent meeting.

Discussion of motions:

All discussions shall be directed solely to the business currently under deliberation. The **Chair presides** over all meetings and recognizes any Member to speak. The Vice Chair presides in the absence of the Chair.

VOTING

- School Board Members are **expected to vote** on matters when action is requested or required at a duly called School Board meeting. The motion is defeated in a tie vote. The Chair is a voting Member.
- **Abstention** from voting is appropriate when a **conflict of interest** has been identified.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER CONDUCT DURING WORK SESSIONS

All discussions are per agenda and Chair has responsibility to keep discussion on business at hand. Chair shall acknowledge board members to speak on a topic or non-board members as recognized.

ROLE OF SCHOOL BOARD IN CLOSED SESSION

The School Board can discuss items allowed by law behind closed doors, but cannot vote or take a straw poll. All information discussed is confidential.

ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS AND WORK SESSIONS

A board member may fully participate electronically in a meeting no more than two times in a calendar year. Notice must be given in advance and the board must approve the request.

SCHOOL BOARD OFFICER SELECTION

The School Board elects a Chair and Vice Chair annually in January. The Superintendent recommends the Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

TRANSITIONING NEW SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

New School Board members will transition to the position through training provided by the School Board Leadership and/or administration through an orientation session and will include discussion of the Board Operating Procedures. *Robert's Rules of Order* will be discussed and a link given to access.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION OR REPORTS

- The School Board as an entity may request information at a School Board Meeting, which will be made available for all School Board members to review upon receipt.
- A single School Board Member may request certain information and/or reports that are in existence and available. The information and/or report will be made available for all School Board members to review.
- A single School Board Member may request certain information and/or reports to be generated if he/she can demonstrate that the request has the support of the majority of the School Board. The generated information and/or report will be made available for all School Board Members to review.
- An online portal of ACPS information and reports is available to School Board Members and should be the first point of contact to find desired data.
- Advisory Committee guidance is found in Policies BCE, BCF, BCFB and BCFC, and Regulation BCF-R. Advisory Committee membership and procedural information, as well as annual reports, scopes of work and bylaws are located on the "School Board Advisory Committees" section of the ACPS website

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER VISITS WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT

School Board Members and the Superintendent are encouraged to maintain a professional relationship and conduct one-on-one meetings at least quarterly. Phone calls or additional visits are appropriate concerning upcoming meeting agendas.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER MEETING PREPARATION

School Board Members will review information provided in advance of a meeting and contact the Superintendent as **far in advance as possible regarding questions or staff requests.**

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER VISITS TO SCHOOL CAMPUS

- School Board Members are encouraged to attend school activities when possible.
- As a courtesy, School Board Members shall attempt to **notify the principal** or main office of visits to campuses in advance, even if attending a scheduled activity or attending to a parental duty. Upon arrival at the campus, School Board members must check in at the main office during the school day.
- After checking in, School Board Members shall **not go unannounced into a classroom** unless attending a scheduled activity or attending to a parental duty.

COMMUNICATIONS

- The Superintendent (or designee) and School Board Members **will timely communicate** with all School Board Members via telephone, e-mail, or personal visits.
- The Superintendent will meet with Leadership on a routine basis to set the agenda.
- Individual School Board Members **shall not speak in an official capacity** outside the Boardroom without specific authority from the School Board.

School Board Communication with Administration and Staff

- Individual School Board members shall avoid communicating directly with subordinate administrators without first discussing with the Superintendent.
- Subordinate administrators wishing to communicate with individual School Board Members about Division business should go through the Superintendent or involve the Superintendent.
- In addition, the School Board desires to develop and maintain the best possible working relationship with the employees of the school division. The School Board welcomes the viewpoints of employees, and it shall allow time at its meetings for employees to be heard.

School Board Communication with Community Members, Parents and Constituencies

- Attendance and involvement with school division activities, community meetings and other constituency interaction is encouraged.
- School Board Members **shall notify the ACPS Clerk** when participating on behalf of the

School Board at a community event. This includes campus visits, speaking engagements, community forums and other public involvement. When at least three Board Members may be attending an event, it will be posted on the ACPS website.

School Board Communication with Alexandria City Council

- The Chair will **designate a City Council Member** contact for each School Board Member, accommodating the request of the Board Member whenever possible.
- School Board Members **should maintain consistent communication** with **City Council** Members. To this end, talking points will be developed by ACPS staff for Board Members to use in their conversations with Council.
- **Concerns of City Council Members** received by School Board Members will be submitted to the Superintendent, Chair and Vice Chair.
- **Written communication** from the City Council or City Council Members will be directed to the **Chair**, who will then disseminate it to the Superintendent and School Board Members.
- School Board Members will **positively and actively promote the financial needs** of the Division to City Council Members.
- **Regularly scheduled meetings** will be conducted between the School Board and City Council.

School Board Email and Social Media

- Email is a **communication tool** and to be used in a responsible, effective and lawful manner. This information is **subject to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act** and ACPS may be **held liable** for sending or forwarding email that is libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene or that violate copyright laws.
- **Email complaints** sent to the entire Board will be responded to by the Superintendent or Board Chair, as appropriate.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER CONCERNS REGARDING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE OTHER THAN THE SUPERINTENDENT

- When a School Board Member becomes **concerned about the performance** of Division employees, he/she shall bring his/her concerns directly to the Superintendent and School Board Chair. Such concerns may include:
 1. Actions which are illegal;
 2. Violations of School Board or ACPS policy;
 3. Actions which are harmful to the School Board of school division's reputation; and
 4. Issues of safety.

- School Board Members **are not responsible for overseeing personnel** other than the Superintendent.

COMMUNITY MEMBER OR PARENT REQUESTS/COMPLAINTS TO INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

- When receiving requests or **complaints from members of the public**, School Board Members should:
 1. Hear the problem for a full understanding of the persons involved, date and place;
 2. Repeat the problem back to the community member;
 3. Refer the community member to the Superintendent or appropriate staff member and review the complaint protocol as outlined by the school division;
 4. Remind the community member of due process and that the School Board Member must remain impartial in the event that the situation may come before the School Board; and
 5. Request permission to share the information and to use the name(s) of the complainant with the Superintendent.
- The Superintendent will notify the entire School Board, if appropriate, as to the issue, action and resolution.

EMPLOYEE REQUESTS/COMPLAINTS TO INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

- When receiving requests or **complaints from employees**, School Board Members should:
 1. Listen to the employee's problem for a full understanding of the persons involved, date and place;
 2. Repeat the problem back to the employee;
 3. Explain the school division protocol and chain of command; and
 4. Request permission to share the information and to use the name(s) of the complainant with the Superintendent.
- The Superintendent will notify the entire School Board, if appropriate, as to the issue, action and resolution.

MEDIA INQUIRIES TO THE SCHOOL BOARD

- The School Board Chair shall be the **official spokesperson** for the School Board on issues such as:
 1. Board agendas;
 2. Board action;
 3. Official Board positions; and
 4. Emergencies/Crises
- School Board Members who receive calls from the media/press regarding school division

operations and **not the Board Member's personal position on an issue**, should direct the caller to the Chair, and notify the Superintendent and Director of Communications of the call. Examples of school division operations include:

1. Personnel;
2. Student matters;
3. School Programs; and
4. Exceptional/emergency events, including school openings and closures.

· School Board Members may respond to questions related to their **personal position** on an issue but must clearly indicate they are speaking for themselves. Examples of personal position issues include:

1. The Board Member's vote on a particular motion;
2. The Board Member's campaign positions; and
3. Current events.

- In addition, Board Members should **notify the Board leadership** of the communication. As a courtesy, the Board leadership will notify the Superintendent and the Director of Communications.

SCHOOL BOARD LIAISON ASSIGNMENTS

- School Board Members are assigned by the Chair to serve as **Board Liaisons** to individual schools, advisory committees and City Council, as well as to various community groups, boards and commissions who shall **regularly communicate information disseminated by the Division**.
- Board Liaisons shall **report information** regarding campus issues to the Superintendent when appropriate.

EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

- The Superintendent and the School Board function as a **team**.
- The School Board will conduct a **self-evaluation annually**.
- The School Board shall be involved in the development of an **instrument by which it will evaluate its performance** and will be completed by individual School Board Members and Superintendent confidentially and results submitted to Chair.
- The School Board shall meet, with a quorum present, to **review and discuss the results**.
- Upon completion, the School Board shall consider **revisions or strategies** based on the results.

EVALUATION OF SUPERINTENDENT

- An **evaluation instrument** shall be developed in compliance with the Code of Virginia, §22.1-60.1.
- **Each School Board Member completes the evaluation instrument and submits it to the School Board Chair.**
- The Superintendent's evaluation is conducted annually by Board consensus in **closed session**.

REVIEWING SCHOOL BOARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

The following documents will be reviewed and updated annually by the School Board:

- Standards of Conduct;
- Code of Ethics;
- Rules of Order and Bylaws; and School Board Operating Procedures

BOARD MEMBER ACCOUNTABILITY REGARDING SCHOOL BOARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Whenever a Board Member believes that another has violated the School Board Operating Procedures, it is incumbent on him or her to bring the issue to the Member first, then to the Board Chair, who shall immediately investigate the allegation, and if substantiated and not resolved with the individual Member, bring the issue to the full Board in closed meeting.