



## **SCHOOL BOARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

The Alexandria City School Board strives to ensure that ALL students reach their highest academic potential, and that they are prepared for citizenship, higher education and the workforce. To accomplish this goal, the Board will make policy, budget and leadership decisions that are aligned with its Vision and Strategic Plan; and will actively and transparently communicate with and involve stakeholders.

The School Board is a nine-member elected body whose primary responsibilities are to adopt and oversee capital and operating budgets annually, to formulate and adopt policy, to select a Superintendent to implement policy, and to evaluate the results. (Policy BBA) The City is divided into three voting districts, and three School Board Members are elected from each district. Six School Board Members represent all staff and students. Each member is elected concurrently for a three-year term of office. The School Board is committed to process-driven governance. Staff members facilitate the process and make recommendations, with oversight and decision-making authority retained by the School Board.

The School Board Operating Procedures are intended to guide and assist the Board in the conduct of its business. These procedures are not intended to take precedence over School Board or school division policy.

The School Board will observe parliamentary procedures in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*.

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

- School Board Members are authorized to act on behalf of the school division at duly called School Board Meetings. School Board Members are not authorized to act on behalf of the Board or school division outside of a School Board Meeting without action by the School Board. (Policy BCE)
- A School Board Member may not direct employees regarding the performance of duties. (Policy CBA)

## TYPES OF SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

- **Regular** – Meetings held to conduct the regular order of business. The School Board meets twice per month on Thursdays at a time and location announced at least three business days prior to the meeting, as required by law and Policy BDA. All School Board Meetings are open to the public, except as otherwise provided by law. They can be viewed live on television (channel 71), or online at <http://www.acps.k12.va.us/board/meetings/>.
- **Work Sessions** – Meetings typically called to review and discuss upcoming agenda items in-depth. Action is not taken. They are held at the discretion of the School Board leadership in collaboration with the Superintendent, or on request by the majority of the School Board Members, who have notified the Chair.
- **Special Called** – Meetings for special purposes such as School Board retreats, in-depth topics, to address short-notice action items, or when necessary. They are held at the discretion of the Board leadership, or when a majority of Board Members submit individual requests to the Chair to call a meeting. Special Called Board Meetings may be called provided each member is duly notified, or a reasonable attempt has been made to notify each member. (Policy BDB)
- **Emergency** – Meetings called in consultation with the Superintendent and School Board Chair (or Vice Chair in the Chair’s absence) when it is determined that an emergency or urgent public necessity for the meeting exists. Notice, reasonable under the circumstance, of emergency meetings shall be given contemporaneously with the notice provided to the Board. (Va. Code §22.1-72 and Policy BDB)
- As defined in the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, a meeting is comprised of three or more School Board Members gathering (in person or by electronic means) for the purpose of receiving or discussion of information regarding school business. Notice of all School Board Meetings is posted on the “School Board Meetings” section of the ACPS website. In addition, any gathering whose purpose is not to discuss School Board business, but to which three or more School Board Members are invited, will be posted on the “Events to Which Three or More Board Members May Have Been Invited” section of the ACPS website.

## DEVELOPING THE SCHOOL BOARD MEETING AGENDA

- Placing an Item on the Agenda:
  1. The School Board Chair (or Vice Chair in the Chair’s absence), in consultation with the Superintendent, develops the agenda. (Policy BDDC)
  2. School Board Members submit requests to the Chair in advance for items to be placed on an agenda. (Policy BDDC)
  3. In accordance with *Roberts’ Rules of Order, Revised*, any member may move prior to the agenda being adopted 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 the start of the meeting of any agenda additions being proposed. (Policy BDDE)

4. If a majority of School Board Members request that an item be placed on an agenda, either in advance to the Chair or through a majority vote of those present at a meeting, it must be placed on the agenda.
5. A Board Member, other than the Chair, may request an item be considered in a **Closed Meeting** provided that the request is brought to the Chair prior to convening the public meeting preceding the Closed Meeting. (Policy BDDE)
6. The Chair shall, with the consent of the Board, have the latitude to reorder the agenda at any specific meeting to accommodate specific circumstances. (Policy BDE)
  - a. When possible, the timeframe and process will be included for agenda items.

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In accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Regular School Board Meeting agendas and any supporting meeting materials must be posted at least three working days in advance for public viewing. For Special Called and Emergency Meetings, notice, reasonable under the circumstances, is required. For all meetings, notice to the public is given contemporaneously with the notice provided to School Board Members. (Policies BDB, BDDA and BDDC)

- Use of Consent Calendar:

For items listed under the Consent agenda, the School Board has been furnished with background material on each item and/or it has been discussed at a previous meeting. All items on the consent agenda shall be acted on by one vote without being discussed separately unless requested by a School Board Member, in which case the item shall immediately be withdrawn from the Consent agenda for individual consideration.

Items that can be included on the consent agenda are:

1. Routine items;
2. Budget amendments;
3. Gifts, donations and bequests (in accordance with Policy KH);
4. Financial information and monthly reports;
5. Minutes of School Board Meetings;
6. Updates of School Board policy;
7. Monthly personnel actions;
8. Advisory Committee documents and applications; and
9. Other items deemed appropriate by the School Board Chair and Superintendent.

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

### **Open Forum (Public Participation)**

- School Board Meetings are held in public to facilitate public understanding and transparency, not for the purpose of public participation. Persons wanting to address the School Board regarding the operation of the school division have the opportunity to do so during the Public Comment portion of Regular Board Meetings, or at Public Hearings by signing up with the Clerk of the Board prior to the start of the meeting. Although not required by law, the School Board welcomes comments from the public as appropriate. (Policy BDDH)

School Board Members listen to Public Comment and Public Hearing presentations, but do not comment deliberate or take action on them. Speakers may follow up with individual Board Members on the topic of their comments at a later date. (Regulation BDDH-R)

- The School Board Chair may limit duplicate or cumulative testimony/presentations. (Regulation BDDH-R)
- 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 Employee Performance at School Board Meetings**

The School Board shall not hear public comments or complaints regarding individual students, student disciplinary matters that are the subject of due process proceedings, matters involving pending employee grievance proceedings or administrative hearings, or matters involving pending litigation. (Regulation BDDH-R)

### **Discussion of Motions (Policy BDDE)**

- All discussions shall be directed solely to the business currently under deliberation.
- The School Board Chair has the responsibility to maintain discussion to the motion at hand and shall halt discussion that does not apply to the business before the School Board.
- Remarks should be kept to a reasonable length (3-5 minutes). As outlined in *Robert's Rules of Order*, when a topic is opened for debate, no member shall speak more than twice in the same day on the same topic. In addition, no member may speak a second time on a topic as long as any member who desires to speak has not spoken to the topic.
- The School Board Chair shall recognize a non-School Board Member prior to that person entering the discussion.

## **VOTING**

- School Board Members are expected to vote on matters when action is requested at a duly called School Board Meeting.
- The School Board Chair will vote on all agenda items for which action is required. (Policy BCB)
- In the event of a tie vote, the motion is defeated. However, if there is a tie vote when all members are not present, the question shall be passed by until the next meeting, when it shall again be voted upon even though all members are not present. (Policy BDDF)
- Abstention from voting is appropriate when a conflict of interest has been identified. (Policy BBFA)

## **SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER CONDUCT DURING WORK SESSIONS**

### **Discussion Items**

- All discussions shall be directed solely to the business currently under deliberation.
- The School Board Chair has the responsibility to keep the discussion on the item at hand and shall halt discussion that does not apply to the business before the School Board.
- Remarks should be kept to a reasonable length (3-5 minutes). As outlined in *Robert's Rules of Order*, when a topic is opened for discussion, no member shall speak more than twice in the same day on the same topic unless permitted by the Chair. In addition, no member may speak a second time on a topic as long as any member who desires to speak has not spoken to the topic.
- The School Board Chair shall recognize a non-School Board Member prior to that person entering the discussion.

## **ROLE OF SCHOOL BOARD IN CLOSED SESSION (POLICY BDC)**

- The School Board can discuss only those items listed on the agenda as limited by law.
- School Board action/voting must occur in public.
- Information discussed during a Closed Meeting shall remain confidential.

## **ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS AND WORK SESSIONS**

For a Board Member to participate electronically in a Board Meeting:

- A quorum must be physically assembled (unless a state of emergency has been declared).
- The member must notify the Chair on or before the day of the meeting and identify the specific matter preventing attendance.
- The Board must approve the request by a majority vote of those physically present at the meeting.
- Electronic participation may not exceed two Board Meetings per calendar year unless due to a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition.
- Once a Board Member's electronic participation has been approved, the member may fully participate, including voting on any remaining action items during the meeting. (Policy BDD)

## **SCHOOL BOARD OFFICER SELECTION**

The School Board elects a Chair and Vice Chair annually. Elections are held at the Organizational Board Meeting each January. (Policy BCB) The first order of business at the Organizational Board Meeting is the election of the School Board Chair. After the current Chair calls the meeting to order, the Superintendent presides until the new Chair is elected. The new Chair then assumes office and presides over the remainder of the meeting. (Policy BCA)

- On the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, and Superintendent's Designees are appointed annually by the Board at its Organizational Board Meeting. (Policy BCC)
- If a School Board Officer vacancy occurs, the School Board will fill the vacancy by election at the next Regular or Special Called Board Meeting.
- Role of the School Board Chair: (Policy BCB)
  1. Shall preside at all School Board Meetings;
  2. Shall call Special Meetings;
  3. Shall sign all legal documents required by law or School Board policy; and
  4. Shall perform other duties as may be prescribed by law or action of the School Board.
- Role of the School Board Vice-Chair: (Policy BCB)

1. Shall act in the capacity of Chair in the absence of the Chair.

#### **TRANSITIONING NEW SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS (POLICY BHB)**

New School Board Members will transition to the position through training provided by the School Board leadership and/or administration to include:

- An orientation that provides an overview of the school division and introduces the School Board Member to key staff;
- A copy of the School Board Operating Procedures;
- An online link to *Robert's Rules of Order* and other documentation that may assist in the parliamentary procedures of the School Board; and
- An email account and other assigned supplies (computer, iPad, etc.).

#### **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 Budget Questions and Submissions**

- During the development and add/delete process for both the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and Combined Funds budgets, any School Board Member budget questions, add/delete submissions and/or co-sponsorships are submitted on forms provided by the Department of Financial Services according to all budget calendar

deadlines. Submissions are sent electronically to the Board Chair, Superintendent, Chief Financial Officer and the Board Clerk. In lieu of this, any Board Member who does not intend to submit the above documents will provide that notification instead.

#### **SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER VISITS WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT**

- School Board Members and the Superintendent are encouraged to maintain a professional relationship.
- The Superintendent will schedule a one-on-one meeting with each School Board Member on a monthly basis.
- School Board Members may schedule a telephone call or additional visit to discuss an item on an upcoming School Board Meeting agenda.

#### **SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER MEETING PREPARATION**

- The Superintendent and staff will supply appropriate supporting information required for informed decision-making to each School Board Member in the School Board Meeting agenda packet.
- School Board Members will make a conscientious effort to be well prepared for each meeting. (Standards of Conduct for Members of the Alexandria City School Board)
- School Board Members will contact the Superintendent as far in advance as possible of a School Board Meeting with any questions regarding the agenda, documentation or action items so staff will have adequate time to respond.

#### **SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER VISITS TO SCHOOL CAMPUSES**

- School Board Members are encouraged to attend school activities when possible, and to visit schools periodically to maintain contact with building employees and increase understanding of actual educational practices. (Policy KK)
- As a courtesy, School Board Members shall attempt to notify the principal (or main office) and Superintendent 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. (Policy KK)
- 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) will communicate with all School Board Members via telephone, e-mail, or personal visits.
- School Board Members will keep the Superintendent informed via mail, e-mail, telephone and/or personal visits as appropriate.
- The Superintendent will meet with the School Board Chair on a routine basis to set the agenda. (Policy CBA)
- The Superintendent (or designee) will communicate information in a timely manner to School Board Members. (Policy CBA)
- Individual School Board Members shall not speak in an official capacity outside the Boardroom without specific authority from the School Board. (Policy BCE)

### **School Board Communication with Administration and Staff**

- Individual School Board Members shall avoid communicating directly with subordinate administrators about Division business without first communicating with the Superintendent. (Policies BG and CBA)
- 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. (Policy BG)

### **School Board Communication with Community Members, Parents and Constituencies**

- Attendance and involvement with school division activities, community meetings and other constituency interaction is encouraged. (Standards of Conduct for Members of the Alexandria City School Board, Policies KA and KC)
- School Board Members will notify the School Board Chair and the Superintendent of any speaking engagements and the topic being discussed.
- 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. (Standards of Conduct for Members of the Alexandria City School Board)
- 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 (Policies EGAA, GAB and GAC)**

- Email is a communication tool and School Board Members are obligated to use this tool in a responsible, effective and lawful manner.
- ACPS may be held liable for sending or forwarding email that is libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene.
- ACPS may be held liable for sending or forwarding confidential information, information in which you are not the author, or for copyright infringement.
- When using the ACPS email system, all email is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) unless covered by an exemption determined by law.
- 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. (Policy CBA and Code of Ethics for Members of the Alexandria City School Board) Such concerns may include:

1. Actions which are illegal;
  2. Violations of School Board or ACPS policy;
  3. Actions that 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. (Policy CBB)

#### **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; (Exhibit A)
  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: (Policy KBC)
  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: (Policy KBC)
  1. Personnel;
  2. Student matters;
  3. School Programs; and
  4. Exceptional/emergency events, including school openings and closures.
- Written responses to the media will also be distributed to all School Board members.
- School Board Members retain the right to speak to the media as individuals, but must understand that any comment will likely be interpreted by the public as an official statement of the Board. In speaking as individuals, School Board Members may respond to questions related to their individual position on an issue, but must clearly indicate that they are speaking for themselves and not on behalf of the Division or the Board. Examples of individual position issues include:
  1. The Board Member's vote on a particular motion; and
  2. The Board Member's campaign positions.

In addition, School Board Members speaking to the media as individuals should remind the media representative(s) that official statements of the School Board are only made by the Board Chair. Board Members will then notify the Board Chair and Superintendent of their media statement. (Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct for Members of the Alexandria City School Board)

## SCHOOL BOARD LIAISON ASSIGNMENTS (POLICY BCFC)

- 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.
- For each designated school, the liaison shall:
  1. Serve until the next Organizational Board Meeting or until reassigned by the  
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Board Chair;

2. Be responsible (via phone calls, small group meetings, school visits, or other school meetings, etc.) for familiarizing him/herself with the school's programs, principal, and parents to provide information on School Board protocol and school division procedures so that the school community can successfully bring its needs and concerns to the attention of the Superintendent or School Board;
3. Periodically provide information to individuals/groups on how best to communicate to the Superintendent or full School Board specific needs/concerns, acknowledging that all operational matters should be routinely referred to appropriate staff or the Superintendent; and
4. Provide communication to the campus through talking points developed by the Division, including upcoming issues that may impact the school/community.

While the school liaison role is not designed to be a direct advocate for the school/program, the school liaison may report information regarding relevant issues to the Superintendent and School Board when appropriate.

#### **EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL BOARD (POLICY AFA)**

- 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.
- The evaluation instrument will be completed by individual School Board Members and the Superintendent confidentially, and be submitted to the School Board Chair or designee, for compilation of the results.
- 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 THE SUPERINTENDENT (POLICY CBG)**

- 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 by Board consensus in a Closed Meeting.
- The Superintendent's evaluation should be conducted annually.

## **REVIEWING SCHOOL BOARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

The following documents will be revised as needed and adopted annually by the School Board at its Organizational Board Meeting: (Policy BCA)

- 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 a Closed Meeting.

Adopted: March 22, 2018

Amended: June 06, 2019

Amended: