



## School Board Operating Procedures

The Alexandria City School Board will 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, we will make policy, budget and leadership decisions that are aligned with our Vision and Strategic Plan; and we will communicate with and involve stakeholders actively and transparently.

The School Board is a nine-member elected body whose primary responsibility is to formulate and adopt policy, select a Superintendent to implement policy, and to evaluate the results. The City is divided into three voting districts, and three School Board members are elected from each district. School Board members represent all educators and students. Each member serves a three-year term. The School Board is committed to process-driven governance. Staff shall 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 School Board members in the conduct of its business. The procedures are not intended to take precedence over School Board or School Division policy.

The School Board will observe parliamentary procedures in Robert's Rules of Order.

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

- School Board members have authority to act on behalf of the school division at a duly called School Board meeting. School Board members do not have authority to act on behalf of the School Board or school division outside of a School Board meeting without action by the School Board.
- A School Board member may not direct employees in regard to performance of duties.

## **TYPES OF SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS**

- Regular - Meetings typically held to conduct regular order of business. The School Board meets twice a month on Thursdays at a time and location announced prior to the meeting as required by law and can be viewed at <http://www.acps.k12.va.us/board/meetings/>.
- Workshop or 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 and Superintendent or on request by the majority of the School Board members who have notified the School Board Chair.
- Special - Meetings for special purposes such as School Board retreats or in-depth topics. They are held at the discretion of the School Board Leadership and Superintendent or on request by the majority of School Board members who have notified the School Board Chair.
- Emergency - Meetings held at the discretion of the Superintendent in consultation with the School Board Chair or the Vice Chair in the absence of the Chair when it is determined an emergency or urgent public necessity exists (2-hour notice required) to meet.
- As defined in the Virginia Open Meetings Law, a meeting is comprised of three or more School Board members gathering for the purpose or receiving or discussion information regarding school business. In the absence of a quorum, any meeting in which three or more School Board members are invited will be posted on the School Board meeting section of the ACPS website. Should a quorum of School Board members plan or will be in attendance at a meeting, it will be posted in compliance with Open Meetings regulations.

## **DEVELOPING THE SCHOOL BOARD MEETING AGENDA (BDDC)**

- Placing an item on the agenda:

1. School Board members must submit requests for an agenda item in advance to the School Board Chair or Superintendent to be considered for placement on the agenda.
2. Only the Superintendent or School Board Chair may place an item on the agenda.
3. If the majority of School Board members request to the School Board Chair or Superintendent an item for the agenda, it must be placed on the agenda.

In accordance with the Open Meetings Law, agendas must be posted in advance for public viewing.

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
4. Financial information
5. Minutes of School Board meetings
6. Updates of School Board policy
7. Other items deemed appropriate by School Board Chair and Superintendent

## **SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER CONDUCT DURING SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS**

Open Forum (Public Participation):

- School Board meetings are held in public to facilitate public understanding, not for the purpose of public participation. Persons wanting to address the School Board have the opportunity to do so during the public comments segment of the meeting by signing a request form. Although not required by law, the School Board welcomes comments from the public as appropriate.
- School Board members will listen to Open Forum (Public Participation) presentations but can take no action or deliberate.

- The School Board Chair may not allow duplicate testimony/presentations.
- The School Board Chair can direct administration to investigate item(s) and report back to School Board members at a subsequent meeting.

Discussion of employee performance (School Board/audience):

- The School Board will not entertain complaints against individual personnel in open session.
- The School Board will not entertain complaints against individual students in open session.

Discussion of motions:

- 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.
- 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.
- In the event of a tie vote, the motion is defeated.
- Abstention from voting is appropriate when a conflict of interest has been identified.

## **ROLE OF SCHOOL BOARD IN CLOSED SESSION**

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

## **THE PROCESS FOR SELECTING SCHOOL BOARD OFFICERS (BCB & BCA)**

- The School Board will elect a Chair, Vice Chair, Clerk and Deputy Clerk. The terms shall be for one year. Elections shall be held in January. School Board officer positions of Chair and Vice Chair may be made by nominations on behalf of another School Board member who is willing to serve.
- The Superintendent will preside until the Chair is elected.
- The Clerk and Deputy Clerk will not be members of the School Board.
- If a vacancy occurs, the School Board will fill such vacancy by election at the next regular or special meeting.
- Role of the School Board Chair:

1. Shall preside at all School Board meetings.
2. Shall appoint committees.
3. Shall call special meetings.
4. Shall sign all legal documents required by law or School Board policy.
5. Shall perform other duties as may be prescribed by law or action of the

School Board.

- Role of the School Board Vice-Chair:

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

## **TRANSITIONING NEW SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS**

New School Board members will transition to the position through training provided by the administration to include:

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

## **SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER REQUEST FOR INFORMATION OR REPORT**

- 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.
- A single School Board member may request certain information and/or reports which 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 in which he/she can demonstrate is necessary if that School Board member's 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 policy is located in Section BCF.

## **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 quarterly 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 administration will supply appropriate supporting information required for informed decision-making to each School Board member in the School Board meeting packet.
- School Board members will review the School Board agenda and supporting documentation prior to a School Board meeting.
- 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 the administration will have adequate time to respond.

### **SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER VISIT TO SCHOOL CAMPUS**

- School Board members are encouraged to attend school activities when available.
- School Board members shall notify the principal of visits to campuses when they are not attending a scheduled activity. Upon arrival at the campus, School Board members must check in at the main office.
- School Board members shall not go unannounced into a building or classroom.

### **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, personal visit and/or fax as appropriate.

- The Superintendent will meet with the School Board Chair on a routine basis to discuss issues of the Division.
- The Superintendent (or designee) will communicate information in a timely manner to School Board members.
- 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.

#### **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.
- School Board members shall have access to an online database or be given information regarding School Board member public participation.

#### **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 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 users 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 copyright infringement.
- When using ACPS email system, all email is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FIOA). Avoid sending an email that you would not want to see published.
- Email complaints sent to the entire board will be responded to by the Superintendent.

#### **SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER CONCERNS OF PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES 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

#### 4. Issues of safety

- School Board members are not responsible for personnel other than the Superintendent

#### **CITIZEN OR PARENT REQUEST/COMPLAINT TO INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER**

- The School Board member should hear the citizen problem for full understanding of persons involved, date and place.
- Repeat problem back to citizen.
- Refer citizen to the appropriate person/chain of command and the complaint protocol as outlined by the school division. (Exhibit A)
- Remind the citizen of due process and that the School Board member must remain impartial in the event the situation comes before the School Board.
- Request permission to share the information and to use the name(s) of the complainant with the Superintendent. Anonymous information shall not be acknowledged. If permission is granted, notify the Superintendent as soon as possible.
- The Superintendent will notify the entire School Board, if appropriate, as to the issue, action and resolution.

#### **EMPLOYEE REQUEST/COMPLAINT TO INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER**

- The School Board member will hear employee's problem for full understanding of persons involved, date and place.
- Repeat problem back to employee.
- Explain the school division protocol and chain of command. (Exhibit B)
- Request permission to share the information and to use the name(s) of the complainant with the Superintendent. Anonymous information shall not be acknowledged. If permission is granted, notify the Superintendent as soon as possible.
- 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 of media attention.
- All School Board members who receive calls from the media/press should direct them to the School Board's spokesperson and notify the Superintendent of the call.
- School Board members may respond to questions related to their personal position on an issue but must clearly indicate they are speaking for themselves.

## **SCHOOL BOARD LIAISON TO CAMPUSES**

- A School Board member will be selected for each campus to serve as School Liaison.
- The Liaison shall regularly communicate current information disseminated by the Division.
- The Liaison shall report to the Superintendent information regarding campus issues when appropriate.

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

- The Superintendent and the School Board function as a team.
- The School Board will conduct a self-evaluation in December.
- The School Board shall be involved in the development of an instrument by which they will evaluate themselves.
- The evaluation instrument will be completed by individual School Board members confidentially, and submitted to the School Board Chair or designee, for compilation of results.
- The School Board shall meet, with a quorum of the School Board members present, to review and discuss the results.

- Upon completion, the School Board shall consider revisions or strategies based on the results.

#### **EVALUATION OF SUPERINTENDENT (CBG)**

- An evaluation instrument shall be developed in compliance with Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-60.1.
- Each School Board member should complete the evaluation instrument and submit to the School Board Chair.
- Evaluation is conducted by consensus in closed session.
- Evaluation should be conducted annually.

#### **REVIEWING SCHOOL BOARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

- Standard School Board Operating Procedures will be reviewed and updated annually by the School Board.

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