



Board of Education Handbook



LAFAYETTE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

LaFayette Central School District Board of Education

Mission

At LaFayette, we put students first. Our mission is to educate, honor, and develop students to have self-respect, a commitment to the community, and a passion for excellence.

Core Beliefs

- We believe in a safe and secure learning environment.
- We believe in a supportive and rigorous learning environment.
- We are an institution of learning for all.
- All students are known and are treated with dignity, respect, and compassion.
- We embrace creativity and innovation.

Vision

Inspire, empower, and prepare all students to achieve excellence.

Tagline : *Four Schools, Three Buildings, Two Nations, One Goal: Excellence!*

LaFayette CSD Board of Education & Superintendent Principles & Operational Guidelines

Board of Education President's Responsibilities

1. Conduct Board of Education meetings in accordance with the law and district policy.
2. Sign necessary contracts and other official paperwork.
Participate in BOE Meeting Agenda Development & Review meetings with the Superintendent.
3. Ensure that meetings follow the agenda and ensure focus in discussion by restricting discussion to the agenda items.
4. Work cooperatively with the Superintendent to answer questions and uncertainties that come up in advance of Board of Education meetings.
5. Execution of Board of Education meetings by virtue of following Robert's Rules of Order and board policy.
6. Put motions to a vote, state the vote, and result of the vote.
7. Participate in Board of Education actions as a regular voting member.
8. Be the Board of Education's primary spokesperson except when this responsibility is delegated to others.
9. Coordinate the Superintendent's evaluation process.
 - o Commissioner's Regulations require the BOE to evaluate the Superintendent.
 - o Review and understanding of the Superintendent's contract.
 - o Informal mid-year and formal year-end reviews and timelines.
 - o Distribution of performance criteria and evaluation instrument to members.
 - o Board of Education preliminary review to reach consensus on contents.
 - o Final evaluation meeting between the Board of Education and Superintendent.
 - o Facilitate evaluation review discussion.
10. Facilitate compliance of Open Meetings Law.
11. Understand function of the Board of Education as a corporate body.
12. Understand the rights and responsibilities of individual board members as compared with the board's collective authority.
13. Be familiar with district policies and regulations.
14. Understand district operations and collective bargaining agreements.
15. Keep abreast of current educational trends, district performance, and pending litigation.
16. Participate in New BOE Member Orientation.
17. Assign committee members.
18. Serves as ad hoc member for BOE committees.

LaFayette CSD Board of Education Vice President's Responsibilities

1. Assumes duties of the President in the cases of absence to continue conducting business without interruption.
2. Participates in BOE Meeting Agenda Development & Review meetings with Superintendent & BOE President.
3. Understand function of the Board of Education as a corporate body.
4. Understand the rights and responsibilities of individual board members as compared with the board's collective authority.
5. Be familiar with district policies and regulations.
6. Understand district operations and collective bargaining agreements.
7. Keep abreast of current educational trends, district performance, and pending litigation.
8. Serves as ad hoc member of BOE committees in the absence of the BOE President.

Superintendent's Responsibilities

1. Carry out responsibilities related to the Chief School Officer.
2. Follow, promote, and explain District policies/regulations.
3. Present new policies/regulations as necessary and required.
4. Work with BOE members to establish a BOE vision, mission, and goals.
5. Employ, promote, discipline, and deploy staff.
6. Informs the BOE members of District items of interest, including background information related to agenda items and other pertinent information.
7. Works with the BOE to develop a trusting and respectful relationship that allows for District business to be carried out.
8. Serve as agent of the Board of Education
9. Organize and delegate administrative responsibility; assign and use resources.

Board of Education Member's Responsibilities

1. Understand function of the Board of Education as a corporate and governing body; legal authority is assumed at properly convened meeting.
2. Understands that the BOE operates as a Board of Directors. (10,000 foot view).
3. Understand that the BOE members are developers, overseers, and approvers of policy, finance, and district operations.
4. Respect the administrative authority and professional knowledge of the Superintendent.
5. Promote "chain of command" with staff and community regarding communication.
6. Avoid micromanaging in daily operations.
7. Work with Board of Education members and Superintendent to develop a BOE Vision and Mission.
8. Keep the Superintendent and BOE President aware of pertinent and timely information.
9. Powers and duties of the Board are as stated in the Education Law and other applicable New York State law.
10. Approve contracts and agreements in conformity with state law.

Policy & Administration

1. The Board of Education members and Superintendent carry out their respective responsibilities designated by Education Law and Board Policy.
2. The Board of Education is responsible for setting, reviewing, and revising policy. The Board works collaboratively with the Superintendent and receives recommendations regarding policy adoption and revision.
3. The Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to implement federal and state statutes, regulations and policy decisions.
4. All regulations and administrative decisions developed pursuant to Board of Education conform to the intent of developed policies. The BOE is kept aware of regulations/procedures/rules implemented as part of BOE policy. The BOE generally does not review administrative regulations/procedures except in those instances in which the BOE or Superintendent believe review is necessary because of importance (legal requirement, potential litigation, public/staff impact).
5. The BOE gives authority to the Superintendent to develop and implement all necessary rules/regulations/procedures related to BOE policy.
6. The BOE is kept aware of regulations/procedures/rules implemented as part of BOE policy.
7. The BOE gives authority to the Superintendent to develop the district's organizational structure, staffing patterns, and job descriptions. The BOE is kept aware of and reviews any recommended changes and makes policy

adoptions, as needed. Authorization for the establishment of new positions is the prerogative of the BOE, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent. The Superintendent recommends staffing levels as part of the budget process. The recruitment and selection of staff and evaluation of staff is the Superintendent's responsibility.

8. The recommendation of salary, benefits, and working conditions for non-union employees is the responsibility of the Superintendent. Approval of appointments, salary, benefits, and terms/conditions for non-union employees is the responsibility of the BOE.
9. Since policy is set by the entire BOE, (and not by individual members), BOE members cannot make policy commitments/promises to community members.
10. The BOE approves District plans (APPR, Smart Bond Investment Plan, Professional Development Plans, Strategic Plan, etc.) and are provided updates to progress regarding action items.
11. The BOE works collaboratively with the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Business, administrators, and supervisors to develop the annual budget. The BOE also receives input from Community Budget Committee. Adoption and presentation of the budget is the responsibility of the BOE.

Board of Education Meetings

1. BOE Meetings are business meetings held in public and not public meetings.
2. Procedures are established for Meeting Protocol and Public Comment.
3. The BOE annually approves the schedule of meetings for the school year.
4. The BOE President and Vice President work closely with the Superintendent to develop each meeting's agenda.
5. The agenda is sent to BOE members in advance of the meeting.
6. The agenda is also posted on the district website 72 hours in advance of the meeting.
7. BOE members receive necessary background information from the Superintendent in advance of the meeting.
8. All BOE information is uploaded to a Secure Web Page for BOE member use only. BOE members use District owned devices to access the information at meetings.
9. Special meetings are called as needed. Appropriate public notice is provided in compliance with Education Law.

Communication

1. Important to communicate (verbal, written, electronic) in a responsible manner as an elected official.
2. Important for communication to be focused on agenda items.
3. Other comments can be made during BOE Member Updates.
4. Important policy and personnel concerns and complaints are to be brought directly to the attention of the BOE President and Superintendent of Schools.
5. Encourage community members to communicate following a “chain of command”.
6. Personal opinions may not reflect the opinions of the entire BOE.
7. BOE Policy governs Public Comment. Generally speaking, the Superintendent should be directed by the Board President to follow-up on any concerns.
8. The BOE President is the spokesperson for the Board of Education.
9. The Superintendent is the spokesperson for the District.
10. E-Mail should be professional and responsible. E-Mail can be “FOILed”!
11. The BOE Secure Web Page is a confidential site for BOE Members, the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and District Clerk.
12. The BOE agrees to follow and promote the “chain of command”.
13. Communicate absences to BOE Clerk, Superintendent, and/or BOE President.

Committees

1. The BOE may make use of committees to attend to district business outside of BOE meetings.
2. Committee reports are provided to all members at scheduled BOE meetings.
3. Communicate absences to BOE Clerk, Superintendent, and/or Committee Chairperson.
4. The President determines committee membership. The BOE President serves as an ad hoc member on all committees. The BOE President can request that the BOE Vice President attends a committee meeting in BOE President's absence.
5. BOE members trust committee representatives to act on behalf of the entire BOE.
6. The following committees are in existence:
 - o Audit Committee – The entire board will serve as the audit committee.
 - o Community Budget Committee – review major budget areas, make recommendations for budget development, and recommend proposed budget to entire BOE.

Board of Education Agreements/Ground Rules

1. Interactions:

- a. BOE members will treat each other with the utmost respect at all times.
- b. Disagreements are part of intellectual discussions; therefore, we agree to disagree.
- c. We disagree with ideas, not with people.

2. Interfacing with School Administration, Faculty and Staff:

- a. Board members, when acting as Board members, will discuss the issues, questions, topics, etc. with the Superintendent before meeting with School personnel.
- b. As parents, Board members will work through the normal chain of command and will insure that it is understood that they are acting as a parent and not as a Board member.
- c. When faced with issues from constituents, Board members will respond "Thank you for bringing the situation to my attention. The situation will be looked into and you will be contacted if necessary" and then share the concern with the Superintendent and the rest of the Board.

3. Communications outside of the Board meetings with the District:

- a. The primary tool will be via school email or phone communication.
- b. BOE members are to utilize school e-mail address. Private e-mail will be used as last resort.
- c. If there is a question regarding materials in the Board packet, a Board member is encouraged to call the Superintendent prior to the Board meeting to discuss questions and items of interest.

4. Expectations and Responsibilities:

- a. Be prepared for meetings.
- b. Speak up.
- c. Ask for what you need.
- d. Keep commitments.
- e. Concerns regarding process not being followed need to be aired early via the Board President or Superintendent prior to the meeting.
- f. Speak up without reservation when you have an opinion other than the one being expressed.
- g. Demonstrate "active participation in a caring and respectful way".
- h. Board members should dress in accordance with the district code of conduct for board meetings. Board members are encouraged to wear professional attire if available or able.

5. **Listening Effectively:**

- a. Check for understanding with others.
- b. Use Reflective Listening and summarizing techniques.
- c. Seek first to understand, then to be understood.
- d. Listen generously.

6. **Confidentiality:**

Confidential information will be kept **confidential**.

7. **External Disruptions (Not Board Members):**

- a. Board President deals with disruption.
- b. Board President informs disrupting person/s of consequences.
- c. Board recesses and calls Police.

8. **Internal Disruptions (Board Member):**

The Board is committed to follow Parliamentary Procedures and to supporting members in following these procedures. We will hold each other accountable.

9. **Decision Making:**

- a. State laws are the first order of consideration.
- b. Parliamentary Procedure is the second order of consideration.
- c. The Board will work towards consensus on major decisions (e.g. budget, capital projects, Superintendent hiring, policy, et cetera). This means you can support the decision **both publicly and privately** because it was arrived at in a fair and open manner. **You must hear from each individual, "Yes, I can support this."**
- d. Other types of decision-making will be used when consensus is not. These include majority decisions and autocratic decisions.
- e. Committees make recommendations to the Board unless the Board specifically delegates the decision authority on a specific issue.

10. **Presentations:**

a. Presentations by district administrators or staff are expected to be 10 minutes or less.

Advanced planning and approval will occur for reports requiring more than 10 minutes.

11. **Agenda Items:**

If a Board member wants an item to be placed on an agenda the Board member can:

- a. Call the Superintendent.
- b. Call the Board of Education President.

- c. Ask, if during a Board meeting, for it to be placed on a future agenda by giving the policy number or topic for discussion.

12. Level of Participation:

- a. Each Board member is expected to participate fully and be respectful of all.
- b. We will disagree with “things” and remember to support each other versus attacking the person.
- c. If a meeting goes until 9:30 PM, the Board will stop and decide whether to continue discussion or recess until an alternative time.

New BOE Member Orientation

1. Per BOE Policy, all newly elected members receive an informational orientation. The Superintendent, BOE President, Assistant Superintendent for Business, and District Clerk will participate and provide information to newly elected members.
2. New member orientation topics to include:
 - o Board of Education Roles & Responsibilities
 - Policy Manual
 - School Law
 - Communication Protocol
 - Confidentiality
 - o Board of Education Meetings
 - Schedule – Dates/Times/Locations
 - Round Table Meetings
 - Agendas & Packets
 - Electronic BOE Meetings
 - Secure BOE Page – Password Protected
 - Weekly Reports
 - o District Organizational Structure
 - Policy – Organizational Structure
 - CBO & Shared Services Personnel
 - o Strategic Plan
 - o Committees
 - Budget
 - Audit
 - o Budget Development Process, District Budget, Reserve Fund Plan
 - o Contractual Agreements
 - LTA
 - Clerical
 - Non-Instructional
 - Non-Instructional Supervisors
 - Administrators
 - Confidential Employees
 - o NYS School Report Card, Accountability Report, NYS Assessment & Regents Exam Results

- o Superintendent Evaluation Process
- o Memberships & Committees
 - NYSSBA
 - Central New York School Boards Association
 - Rural Schools' Association
- o Acronyms - The New York State Education Department publishes a list of acronyms commonly used in New York State Public Schools. You can review the updated list of acronyms by visiting:
<http://www.nysed.gov/about/acronyms>