



Responsible Office: Office of the Board of Trustees & Superintendent

BOARD POLICY 9051

BOARD CONDUCT, ETHICS, AND OPERATIONAL PROTOCOLS

PURPOSE

The Board of Trustees ("Board") commits itself and its members to ethical, professional, and lawful conduct, including speaking with one voice, proper use of authority, and appropriate decorum when acting as Board members. In such conduct, Board members shall fulfill the responsibilities as set forth in the Oath of Office and in the Conduct and Ethics Protocols.

POLICY

1. Board members shall honor the high responsibility the governance position demands, and practice Board beliefs and actions that support increased stability on the Board, improve satisfaction from community, and a climate for improved student learning. This includes Board members following the 10 Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristics by:
 - a. Understanding and accepting that the basic function of a Board member is initiation and/or approval of policy not administration. This includes:
 - i. Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #1 - Role Boundaries: Board members practice balanced governance through the role of informed oversight. They avoid operating through either micromanagement (over-reach into operations) or disengagement (rubberstamping of administration proposals).
 - b. Ensuring Board members are properly prepared to participate in deliberation. This includes:
 - i. Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #2a - Role Orientation: Board members engage in open dialogue focused on general interests and welcome various viewpoints, but make decisions based on the best course of action for the entire school community. Board members avoid open debate focused on activism or special interests and value collective consensus over individual viewpoints in decision-making and governance protocols.

- ii. **Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #2b - Role Orientation:** While open dialogue is encouraged, Board members are expected to support the final decision made by the whole Board. Board members may confirm to the public that they voted against a Board decision, but shall not engage in undermining the decision or publicly criticizing the Board or individual Board members regarding the decision.
- c. Refusing to let politics guide policy decisions. This includes:
 - i. **Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #3 - Advocacy Focus:** Board members focus on common interests by seeking to understand the multiple and varied positions of all District constituencies but supporting shared, mutually beneficial solutions that can be applied to many students and achieved through various means. Board members avoid taking political or ideological positions that often polarize constituent views.
- d. Thinking and acting always in terms of improving student learning first. This includes:
 - i. **Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #4 - Student Concern Focus:** Board members shall support a broad focus regarding student concerns. Board members ensure that all students are afforded opportunities to succeed. Board members avoid a targeted focus on providing opportunity for single groups of students to the exclusion of others.
- e. Becoming well-informed concerning the responsibilities of Board members and proper functions of public schools and the divisions that support schools. This includes:
 - i. **Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #5 - Solution Focused:** Board members will ensure that their deliberations, requests, and reports are focused on solutions to improve student learning. Board members make decisions based on an understanding that the District and each school have unique and shifting needs; often requiring locally developed, innovative solutions. Board members avoid promotion of standardized, one-size-fits-all programs and focus on designed solutions and programs that fit the unique need of each school as supported by diverse evidences of student learning.
- f. Exercising oversight on behalf of all students and constituents regarding District policies, goals, and programs. This includes:

- i. Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #6 - Exercise of Influence: Board members understand and commit to practices supporting Nevada state law that no individual authority is granted. Power and authority rests in the Board as a group only.
 - g. Engaging in effective board practice in public board meetings including support of bonding principles among fellow Board members that reduces conflict and models a Board culture that supports improved community satisfaction, stable District faculty, and improved student learning. This includes:
 - i. Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #7 - Use of Voice: Board members use their voice to seek to hear and understand each other's interests and support mutually beneficial resolution and reconciliation. Board members avoid actions to tell and sell their position.
 - ii. Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #8 - Use of Power: Board members use power with practices to ensure that all voices are heard, collaborative processes are followed, and mutually-beneficial solutions are employed. Board members avoid using power over practices designed to promote only their own solutions or further their own special interests.
 - iii. Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #9 - Decision-making Style: Board members seek to collaboratively evaluate data and, through consensus, confirm issues and needs and adopt proposed policy and solutions that fit stated needs and District goals.
 - h. Board members shall have loyalty to the people of Washoe County which is paramount to any loyalties to staff, other organizations, ethnicities, cultures, or personal interests. This includes:
 - i. Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #10: Board members serve and act on the Board in a manner reflecting altruistic service; to serve the community at large and meet the needs of all students. Board members should avoid fulfilling personal agendas regarding policy, programs, or personnel.
- 2. The Board shall follow principles that enable it and its members to operate lawfully, efficiently, respectfully, and strategically focused on District progress toward the District Values, Mission, Vision, Strategic Goals, and Balanced Governance Model Standards to improve learning for all students.
 - a. The Board shall engage in balanced governance with an emphasis on beliefs

and actions emulating the 10 Balanced Governance Model Individual Board Member Characteristics.

- b. Board members shall strive to make policy decisions based on information received from the Superintendent, which clearly reflect the progress or the need for improvement toward the District Values, Mission, Vision, Strategic Goals, and Balanced Governance Model Standards. Superintendent or staff reports to Board members and during Board meetings shall, at a minimum, follow these Balanced Governance Model Tracking and Reporting Protocols:
 - i. Ensure that the policy incorporates or supports the District Values, Vision, and Mission.
 - ii. Ensure that the policy incorporates or supports one or more District Strategic Goals.
 - iii. Ensure that the policy incorporates or supports concepts within the Balanced Governance Model Board Standards.
 - iv. Ensure that measurable outcome criteria are included in the policy.
 - v. Ensure that specific data are identified for purposes of Board reporting and monitoring through informed oversight.
 - vi. Ensure that specific timelines are indicated for Board review of goal progress.
 - vii. Ensure that problems or challenges are specific, targeted and clearly communicated in the Board meeting presentation as part of the Board review and oversight.
 - viii. Ensure that new, revised, or existing program components and procedures or elimination of programs or program components address specific identified problems or challenges.
 - ix. Ensure that any and all community involvement or input procured in the development of the policy or program is outlined. Delineate how that public input or involvement influenced the policy or program.

- b. Board Report Process: Any report to be presented to the Trustees, shall follow these procedures prior to being presented at a Board meeting:
 - i. All staff who may be asked to develop and/or present a report at a Board Meeting shall be provided with the Balanced Governance Model Tracking and Reporting Protocols indicated above.
 - ii. Staff shall submit their report to the Superintendent or Chief of Staff

- for review prior to the Board meeting.
- iii. Staff shall submit the report for review giving ample time for the review and revision of the report.
 - iv. The report shall at a minimum address the Balanced Governance Model Tracking and Reporting Protocols indicated above.
 - v. Any report not submitted in a timely manner to allow review, or not meeting the Balanced Governance Model Tracking and Reporting Protocols, may not be included in the Board Meeting.
- c. Ensure and specify a timeline for regular goal progress checking during the Board meeting.
3. Board members shall ensure all policies support the Balanced Governance Model Standards. Board member discussion should focus on the extent to which policy, programs, and processes of both the District educational system and Board governance actions support Balanced Governance Model Standards. Balanced Governance Model Standards include:
- a. Vision-Directed Planning (Balanced Governance Model Standards-1). The Board engages communities and staff in the development of a shared vision focused on student learning. The vision is the foundation of the mission and goals that direct Board policy-making, planning, resource allocation and activities. Indicators for this Standard are:
 - i. The Board collaborates with the community to articulate core values and beliefs for the District.
 - ii. Board members can clearly articulate the vision and goals of the District.
 - iii. The Board, in collaboration with the Superintendent, has developed a long-range plan for improving student achievement.
 - iv. The Board regularly monitors the progress of goals to improve student learning.
 - v. The Board adopts a budget and appropriates resources aligned to the vision and goals.
 - vi. The Board establishes and models a culture of high expectations for all students.
 - vii. Board members have a vision and expectations for excellence beyond the present.

- b. Community Engagement (Balanced Governance Model Standards-2).
 - i. The Board recognizes that all members of the community are stakeholders in the success of their schools. The Board practices community engagement as a reciprocal advocacy process that creates and sustains meaningful conversations, systems connections, and feedback loops with multiple groups in the community. The Board measures successful community engagement, in part, through the creation of collaborative partnerships and new types and levels of community participation in schools.
 - ii. Indicators for this Standard are:
 - 1) The Board promotes practices that solicit input and involvement from all segments of the community.
 - 2) The Board collaboratively develops vision and goals with staff, parents/guardians, students and the broader community.
 - 3) The Board recognizes and celebrates the contributions of school and community members in school improvement efforts.
 - 4) The Board is responsive and respectful to community inquiry and feedback.
 - 5) The Board advocates for public policy that supports education through relationships with community leaders, city and county government officials and state legislators.
- c. Effective Leadership (Balanced Governance Model Standards-3).
 - i. Board leadership is proactive, integrated, and shared. The Board establishes focus, direction, and expectations that fosters student learning. Across education systems, the Board supports policy to develop and implement collaborative leadership models and practices that are guided by shared student learning goals. Within the District, the Board shall work to ensure the alignment of authority and responsibility so that decisions can be made at levels closest to implementation as possible.
 - ii. Indicators for this Standard are:
 - 1) Board members develop relationships to improve student learning and opportunities for students.

- 2) Board activities, analysis and decision-making are aligned to vision and goals.
 - 3) The Board solicits input from multiple sources to assist in making informed decisions.
 - 4) The Board establishes and sustains relationships with community leaders, city and county government officials, and state legislators.
 - 5) Board members model an empowering leadership style.
 - 6) Board members promote change through dialogue and collaboration.
 - 7) Board members understand and are knowledgeable about school improvement initiatives and their role in supporting those initiatives.
- d. Using Data for Continuous Improvement and Accountability (Balanced Governance Model Standards-4).
- i. The Board communicates high expectations for all students and holds themselves and the District accountable for reaching those goals. The Board uses data and information, from multiple sources and in various formats, to identify areas for improvement, set priorities, and monitor improvement efforts. At the same time, the Board continually seeks new and innovative ways to increase student success and achievement in programs already established.
 - ii. Indicators for this Standard are:
 - 1) Board members use, and expect the Superintendent to use, a variety of types of relevant quantitative and qualitative data in decision-making (e.g. survey results, interviews, staff evaluations, staff and student feedback, test results).
 - 2) The Superintendent provides data to the Board on the measureable outcomes of all programs that they have approved.
 - 3) The Board uses data to identify discrepancies between current and desired outcomes.
 - 4) The Board identifies and addresses priority needs based on data analysis.
 - 5) The Board communicates to the public how policy decisions

are linked to student learning data.

- 6) The Board creates a culture that encourages the use of data to identify needs throughout the system.
- 7) The Board regularly conducts a self-evaluation to monitor its performance

e. Cultural Responsiveness (Balanced Governance Model Standards-5).

i. The Board creates a climate of expectations that all students can learn at high levels and fosters a positive and safe learning climate that supports this vision. The Board recognizes that cultural diversity of a community has many facets, including but not limited to: social, economic, political, religious, geographical, generational, linguistic, ethnic, racial, physical, gender, and sexual orientation. The Board develops an understanding of this diversity and hold perspectives that reflect the cultures in their community. Effective community engagement and expectancy strategies build on the strengths of a community's cultural diversity.

ii. Indicators for this element are:

- 1) Board outreach and community engagement activities accommodate cultural differences in values and communication.
- 2) The Board actively encourages and expects the Superintendent to facilitate the participation of culturally diverse groups.
- 3) The Board has a process to review policies that involve cultural, racial and ethnic bias.
- 4) Board members approach decision-making with culturally diverse perspectives.
- 5) A climate of caring, respect, and the valuing of all cultures is established through Board policy and goals.
- 6) The Board ensures that the Superintendent regularly assesses the District climate.

f. Learning Organizations (Balanced Governance Model Standards-6).

i. The Board recognizes that a learning organization is a self-renewing professional community that supports reflection, discovery, learning, improvement, and success at all levels. The Board encourages

professional development that empowers and nurtures leadership capabilities across the organization,

ii. Indicators for this element are:

- 1) Board policies nurture leadership capabilities across the organization.
- 2) The Board creates and pursues opportunities to learn about research-based strategies that ensure continuous improvement for the next generation of learners.
- 3) Board members promote positive change through dialogue and collaboration.
- 4) The Board encourages professional development that increases learning and empowerment.
- 5) The Board fosters an environment of mutual cooperation, emotional support and personal growth throughout the organization.

g. Systems Thinking (Balanced Governance Model Standards-7).

i. Systems thinking requires Boards to assess policy and program decisions with a holistic and integrated view of education within and across systems and levels (e.g. K-12, Educational Co-Operatives, community college, and university). The Board practices systems thinking by collaborative partnerships with local, state, and national entities, coordinated programs, and shared resource models to improve student learning.

ii. Indicators for this Standard are:

- 1) The Board works to avoid shifting problems from one part of the system to another.
- 2) The Board engages in process thinking, seeing beyond the immediate situation and easy solutions.
- 3) The Board analyzes issues for their impact on other parts of the system.
- 4) The Board team is solution oriented.
- 5) The Board works collaboratively with other agencies to encourage dialogue that fosters continual growth.

- h. Innovation and Creativity (Balanced Governance Model Standards-8).
 - i. The Board recognizes, values, and supports the advancement of innovation and creativity across the District. Innovation and creativity are assets to the process of development and change, leading to new types of thinking and better ways of meeting student needs. The Board recognizes that innovation and creativity are not predictable, so will balance the need for aligned vision, mission, and strategic goals with encouraging engagement in unanticipated collaborative partnerships, and encourage dialogue, new ideas, and differing perspectives.
 - ii. Indicators for this Standard are:
 - 1) Board members create time and opportunities for their own creative thinking.
 - 2) Board members partner with community and educational organizations to remove real and perceived barriers to creativity and innovation.
 - 3) The Board sets meeting agendas that allow it to proactively identify and explore strategic issues.
 - 4) The Board incorporates flexibility into its future plans to enable the District to look and move in unforeseen directions in response to unexpected events.
 - 5) The Board recognizes the risk of creative and innovative practice and supports such practices at all levels of leadership
 - 6) The Board creates a culture of acceptance for innovation that increase student success and achievement.
- i. Board Member Conduct, Ethics and Relationship with Superintendent (Balanced Governance Model Standards-9).
 - i. The relationship between the Board and the Superintendent is a delicate one and it is essential that they have a clear, mutual understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities. Team building is an essential part of this relationship and a clear District goal shall help maintain a respectful relationship.
 - ii. Indicators for this Standard are:
 - 1) Each member of the Board understands and respects the distinction between the Board's responsibilities and the

Superintendent's duties.

- 2) The Board and Superintendent trust and respect one another.
 - 3) Board members represent the interests of the entire District.
 - 4) Board members preserve the confidentiality of items discussed in closed session.
 - 5) Board members do not use their office for personal gain or advancement.
 - 6) Board members do not attempt to individually speak on behalf of the entire Board or commit the Board.
 - 7) Board members direct complaints and requests to the Superintendent rather than attempting to solve them directly.
 - 8) The Board and Superintendent agree on the information needed by the Board, and when and how the Board receives that information.
 - 9) The Board and Superintendent participate in learning opportunities as a team.
 - 10) Board members come to the meeting familiar with the agenda and prepared to discuss, ask questions, and take action on agenda items.
- j. Budgeting and Financial Accountability (Balanced Governance Model Standards-10).
- i. One of the important activities in translating the educational goals of schools into reality is the adoption of a budget and making sure that the school district is fiscally sound. Boards utilize fiscal resources based on student needs and District policies and goals.
 - ii. Indicators for this Standard are:
 - 1) Board members are knowledgeable and provide oversight for the District budgeting process.
 - 2) Budgeting decisions are based on student needs, adopted District policy and goals, and the District's financial ability to meet those needs.
 - 3) Board members have a basic understanding of District revenues and expenses.

- 4) The Board reviews quarterly financial statements provided by the Superintendent and understand their role in the oversight of the budget.
3. Only the Board as a whole has authority. Only the Board as a whole has authority and the Trustees agree that a Board member shall not take action or give direction individually to the Superintendent. The Board does not expect staff or the Superintendent to act on individual statements, suggestions, direction or advice from individual Board members. The Board agrees that once the Board has acted, only the Board can change that action.
4. Board members shall respect the authority of the Superintendent and the staff by:
 - a. Giving the Superintendent full administrative authority for properly discharging the professional duties of the position and by holding the Superintendent accountable for progress toward the District Values, Mission, Vision, Strategic Goals, and Balanced Governance Model Standards.
 - b. Recognizing individual interactions with employees of the Superintendent lack authority except when explicitly authorized by the Board.
 - c. Refraining from expressing individual judgments of performance of the Superintendent or employees of the Superintendent except as described in the Balanced Governance Model Progressive Response process.
 - d. Acting only upon the recommendations of the Superintendent in matters of employment or dismissal of District personnel.
 - e. Excluding the Superintendent at regular and special meetings of the Board only when the contract and salary of the Superintendent or his/her confidential employees are under consideration.
 - f. Referring all complaints to the Superintendent or his/her designee and discussing such complaints at a regular meeting only after exhausting all other steps described in the Balanced Governance Model Progressive Response process.
 - g. Providing an environment in which the Superintendent and staff may function effectively within the community and discharge their educational functions on a thoroughly professional basis.
 - h. Presenting any criticisms of any employee directly to the Superintendent or his/her designee.

5. Board meetings are for decision-making, action, and votes. Board discussion should be concise and pertinent to the issue. If a Board member needs more information or has questions, the Superintendent or his/her designee should be contacted before the meeting, when possible, so that (a) Trustee questions can be resolved prior to the Board meeting and/or (b) staff can be prepared to respond to the inquiry during the Board meeting.
6. In order to enable the Board to make the best possible decisions, there should be an intention of presenting no surprises at Board meetings, when possible.
7. The last stop, not the first, will be the Board. Trustees agree to contact the appropriate person to resolve concerns, seek information, or provide input; and insist that constituents do so as well. While the Board is eager to listen to its constituents and staff, each inquiry is to be referred to the person who can properly and expeditiously address the issue.
8. Recognizing the responsibility to act in a manner that is professionally ethical, governed by common decency and not to expose the District to litigation, Trustees shall consult personally with the Superintendent regarding concerns about the performance of the same. Alternatively, Trustees shall consult with the Board President and the Superintendent, or request an executive or closed, when allowable, session in concert with one other Trustee and take up their concerns before the Board as a whole. Trustees shall not speak negatively about the Superintendent with anyone outside the Board or the District's legal counsel, and take no action to undermine his/her authority or reputation. Conduct of a Board member is very important, so Trustees agree to avoid words and actions that create a negative impression of an individual, the Board, the Superintendent, any member of the staff, or the school district. While Trustees encourage dialogue over differing points of view, they shall engage with care and respect.
9. Concerns regarding school Board member/Superintendent communication or implementation of policy and procedures shall be addressed with the Superintendent through a Balanced Governance Model Progressive Response process. This process requires the Board member to:
 - a. First meet individually with the Superintendent to address and resolve any concern.
 - b. If this is not successful, the Board member shall meet to discuss the issue with the Board President and Superintendent together.
 - c. If still not resolved, the Board member can request the item be added to a future Board agenda. When the matter is eventually discussed in a Board meeting, the Trustee should simply reiterate their request for information, staff assistance, policy/procedural change, or an explanation of the District's

response to a community or staff concern. The Board would then vote on whether or not to direct the Superintendent to fulfill the Trustee's request.

- d. Finally, the Board should only address negative critique of the Superintendent's response or action toward Trustees, staff, or community through the formal Superintendent evaluation.
10. The Board will consider research, best practices and public input in its decision-making process.
 11. Board members shall refrain from individually and privately monitoring the implementation of policy, programs, or operations processes. To provide a systemic mechanism to monitor implementation fidelity and District culture, the Board shall encourage the Superintendent to implement an Organizational Capacity Monitoring System that incorporates the following elements of the Balanced Governance Model Strategic Teaming Model. These elements include:
 - a. A permanent District Strategic Team, established as a Superintendent's committee, and tasked with monitoring organizational health and implementation fidelity of programs.
 - b. The District Strategic Team should be comprised of District faculty and staff from every level of the District organization with a range of members from the school level.
 - c. The District Strategic Team should identify barriers in the organization that prevent implementation fidelity of programs.
 - d. The District Strategic Team should craft an Implementation Support Plan including specific recommendations on how to remove or lessen barriers and improve implementation fidelity.
 - e. Data from an Organizational Monitoring survey and progress or lack of progress on components of the Support Plan shall be presented to the Superintendent at least twice per year. The District Strategic Team should include in their report, operations and procedural barriers and the solutions recommended and/or enacted.
 - f. The District Strategic Team should be given the opportunity to recommend policy changes and procedural changes to the Superintendent for their consideration and approval.
 12. Trustees agree to speak to the issues on the agenda and attend to fellow Board members. Facts and/or the information needed from the administration or staff for Board meeting deliberation shall be requested through the Superintendent.

13. Board members who fail to follow governance process policies, either during or outside of a Board meeting shall be addressed using the Balanced Governance Progressive Response process listed below. The governance process includes:
- a. A Board member(s) with a concern about another Board member shall report the concern to the Board President privately.
 - b. The Board President shall meet with the offending Board member and remind them of their pledge to follow governing policies and protocols.
 - c. If this is ineffective, the Board President and one other Board Member shall meet with the offending Board member, remind him/her of the pledge to follow governing policies and protocols, and ask him/her to honor the commitment through appropriate action.
 - d. If this is ineffective, discussion in a Board self-evaluation between the offending member and the full Board with a member of the Nevada Association of School Boards, or agreed upon facilitator.
 - e. If this is ineffective, the Board President, during a public Board meeting, shall remind the Board member(s) of their pledge to follow governing policies and protocols, and ask them to honor their commitment through appropriate action.
 - f. If this is ineffective, the Board President shall engage in informal censure of the offending board member through interrupting ensuing infractions in Board meetings and making formal public statements both during the Board meeting and outside the Board meeting as needed, to distance the Board's position from the infracting Board member's position or statements.
 - g. In the event that the Board President fails to follow governance policies and processes, the Board Vice President shall engage the Balanced Governance Model Progressive Response process listed above in items a-d. If these steps are ineffective, the Board Vice President may entertain a recall vote of the seated Board President. By a two-thirds super-majority, the seated President can be removed. The Board Vice President shall assume the role of Board President and employ the Balanced Governance Model Progressive Response process item e, if necessary.
 - h. As a last resort, and only after thoughtful deliberation, the Board may vote to censure the offending member of the Board.
14. Unless there is an imminent threat to District staff or students or to District

property, Trustees will refrain from calling or texting the Superintendent or staff after the close of the workday or on weekends. Although a Trustee may send the Superintendent email communication, a response will not be expected any earlier than the next normal workday unless it is a matter of compelling urgency. The Trustees believe that their employee deserves personal and family time and is not expected to be available 24/7.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. Through its governing policies, Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Core Beliefs, the Board of Trustees strives to eliminate the achievement gap by ensuring every student is challenged academically.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES & ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

1. This policy reflects the goals of the District's Strategic Plan and aligns and complies with the governing documents of the District, to include:
 - a. Board Policy 9051, Board Conduct, Ethics and Operational Protocols
 - b. Board Policy 9055, Officers and Duties of the Board of Trustees
 - c. Board Policy 9060, Annual Goals, Objectives and Evaluation of the Board of Trustees
 - d. Board Policy 9062, Orientation and Continuous Education of the Board of Trustees
 - e. Board Policy 9080, Hiring and Monitoring Superintendent Performance
 - f. Board Policy 9090, Student Performance Growth
 - g. Board Policy 9110, Meeting Protocols

REVIEW AND REPORTING

1. This policy shall be reviewed bi-annually as part of the orientation and continuous improvement process for the Board of Trustees.

REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision	Modification
1/1/2001	1.0	Resolution Adopted

11/13/2001	2.0	Revised
10/8/2002	3.0	Revised
8/5/2004	4.0	Revised
10/25/2016	5.0	Revised: Formerly Board Policy 9002.1, documents the standards under the Balanced Governance Model