



CLOSTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Board of Education

Governance and Operations Manual

Adopted: January 2023

The Closter Board of Education has a unique and important role to play in assuring that the school system achieves the results expected by the community and deserved by the students it serves. The Board also recognizes that as an elected Board that represents and serves the people of the county, it must design for itself a governing process that allows it to exercise its responsibilities in a manner that assures that the staff, under the authority of the Superintendent, has the freedom and authority to do its work without interference but also has full accountability for the results of its decisions. And, the Board accepts the challenge to perform its own duties with the same degree of excellence expected of the Superintendent and staff members.

When operating effectively in accordance with this structure, the Superintendent and staff members are empowered to develop strategies and action plans to achieve both the specified Board of Education Goals and the Closter Public Schools District Goals.

DISTRICT BELIEFS AND MISSION

DEFINITIONS

Mission

The Mission is the overarching, ultimate goal for student achievement. It is the sum of more specific Board and District Goals, and will be the result of their attainment.

Operational Expectations

While the Mission and Student Achievement Goals are the major drivers of what happens in the school system, Operational Expectations speak to expectations of the Superintendent and staff.

Board Roles and Responsibilities

The School Board views its role to be different from any other entity associated with the school system. That role is defined in this statement.

BELIEFS

In Closter Public Schools, we believe:

- all students can learn and thrive academically, socially, and emotionally with support from staff, parents, and peers;
- skilled, caring teachers are the most important variable in the classroom and we should consistently provide resources to assist them in life-long learning;
- instruction should be differentiated and culturally responsive to address students' learning styles;
- in a strong home-school-community connection and respect Closter's diversity;
- open and honest communication is vital to creating a positive environment for all;
- in the value of diversity and pledge to create a positive culture that safeguards equity, inclusion, dignity, and respect for all.

MISSION

The Closter Public School District is dedicated to educational excellence. In partnership with the family, staff, and community, we are committed to meeting the educational needs of each child by providing the programs and environment necessary to:

- Enable every child to reach full potential
- Promote self-esteem, respect, responsibility, and appreciation of diversity
- Develop knowledge, skills, and academic achievement as per the [New Jersey Student Learning Standards](#). (NJSLs)
- Prepare each child for continued education and responsible citizenship
- Instill a lifelong passion for learning

OPERATIONAL EXPECTATIONS

GLOBAL OPERATIONAL EXPECTATIONS

The Superintendent shall not cause, allow, or fail to take reasonable measures to prevent any practice, activity, decision or organizational condition that is unlawful, unethical, unsafe, disrespectful, imprudent, in violation of School Board policy or endangers the district's public image or credibility.

The Superintendent shall maintain a system of continuous enhancement that ensures that improving the student experience is at the core of every decision.

The Superintendent shall track, measure, and evaluate effectiveness in realizing student achievement and improving business processes, according to both the Board and District Goals.

EMERGENCY SUPERINTENDENT SUCCESSION

In the event the Superintendent suddenly is unable to serve, the Business Administrator will become the Acting Superintendent, as the Business Administrator is the most familiar with the Board's governance process and issues of current concern and is capable of assuming Superintendent responsibilities in his or her absence.

TREATMENT OF COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

The Superintendent shall maintain an organizational culture that treats community stakeholders with respect, dignity and courtesy, and shall assure that the public is adequately informed about the condition and direction of the district.

The Superintendent shall:

1. Maintain an organizational culture that:
 - Values individual differences of opinion.
 - Reasonably includes people in decisions that affect them.
 - Provides open and honest communication in all written and interpersonal interaction.
 - Focuses on the successful achievement of the Board's and District's Goals.
 - Maintains an open, responsive, and welcoming environment.
 - Effectively handles complaints.
2. Assure the timely flow of accurate and meaningful information.
3. Establish and maintain collaborative partnerships to advance the goals of Closter Public Schools assuring appropriate input and ongoing, two-way, strategic, and meaningful dialog between the district and its diverse stakeholders.

4. Present and publish, on behalf of the Board, a clear, easily accessible report on:
 - Progress toward the successful attainment of Board and District Goals.
 - Information about Board policies, district initiatives and operations.
 - Revenues, expenditures, and costs of major programs and a review of the district's financial condition.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Superintendent shall recruit, select, and retain a high quality and diverse workforce that enables Closter Public Schools to deliver a world-class education to every student in an environment characterized by high staff morale and loyalty to the Closter Board of Education's mission and goals.

STAFF EVALUATION

Consistent with the Superintendent's own evaluation, the Superintendent shall evaluate all employee performance according to their contribution toward achieving Board and District Goals, Student Achievement Goals, and Achieve NJ regulations.

Before March 1st, the Superintendent shall host a meeting of the district administrative team to discuss the performance of each non-tenured staff member.

The Superintendent will provide the Board with a non-tenured staff overview each year. In accordance with the timelines adopted as a component of Achieve NJ, all non-tenured staff members will be evaluated according to the following timelines:

- The direct supervisor of the non-tenured employee will inform the non-tenured staff member of the need for a mid-year evaluation and to complete his or her self-evaluation by January 15th.
- All mid-year evaluations will be completed on or before January 31st.
- Non-tenured evaluations will be completed by May 1st of each year.
- All tenured summative evaluations will be completed by June 15th.
- On or before May 15th, all non-tenured staff will receive a contract or a non-renewal letter indicating the status of his or her employment for the following school year.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

The Superintendent, School Business Administrator and the district's Finance & Physical Plant Committee shall develop and maintain a multi-year financial plan that is fiscally responsible, while providing for the staff and resources necessary to run a high performing district.

ASSET PROTECTION

The Superintendent shall assure that all district assets are adequately protected, properly maintained, appropriately used, accounted for, and not placed at undue risk.

SUPERINTENDENT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BOARD

The Board values a harmonious and positive relationship with the Superintendent characterized by excellent communication, mutual respect, personal ethics, and professional integrity and guidance. The Board values collaboration to promote a strong team. To assure this result, the Superintendent shall assure that the Board is fully and adequately informed about matters relating to Board work and significant district concern.

As such the Superintendent agrees to:

- treating all members impartially and assuring that all members have equal access to information;
- refraining from criticism of individual members;
- responding to Board and individual member concerns in a timely and courteous manner;
- communicating immediately and directly with the President of the Board or individual Board members when an honest difference of opinion exists;
- promoting a positive relationship in Board meetings;
- encouraging an open and supportive exchange of information between Board and staff members;
- discussing with the Board or individual members any perceived violation of policies, or any encroachment by an individual member or the Board into areas of responsibility assigned to the Superintendent.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

The Superintendent shall maintain a program of instruction that offers challenging and relevant opportunities for all students to achieve to his or her highest appropriate level.

The Superintendent shall:

- Ensure that instructional programs are based on a comprehensive and objective review of best practices research.
- Set instructional expectations that meet or exceed the NJSL academic standards.
- Align curriculum with the NJSL.
- Effectively monitor each student's progress toward achieving or exceeding the NJSL.
- Ensure that the instructional program includes opportunities for students to develop talents and interests in more specialized areas.
- Ensure that the instructional program accommodates the different learning styles of students and differentiates instruction to meet the needs of students of various backgrounds and abilities.
- Encourage new and innovative programs, carefully monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of all such programs at least annually.
- Ensure that all instructional programs are regularly evaluated and modified as necessary to assure their continuing effectiveness.
- Maintain a procedure for reviewing all instructional materials.
- Adequately monitor the appropriate use of our 1:1 learning environment to ensure that our electronic devices are being used effectively to enhance the learning experience.
- Review academic program placement periodically to assure reasonable access and available capacity.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT/TREATMENT OF STUDENTS

The Superintendent shall establish and maintain a learning environment that is safe, healthful, non-discriminatory, respectful and conducive to effective learning. The Superintendent will maintain a school climate that is characterized by support and encouragement for high student achievement that is appropriately balanced with the district's commitment to each student's social emotional health.

FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION

The Superintendent shall assure that physical facilities support the Board's policies while guaranteeing full preparation for emergency situations.

A. Facilities

The Superintendent shall:

1. Maintain a Long Range Facilities Plan (LRFP) that assures that classroom capacity and infrastructure meet instructional program and community needs.
2. Maintain an objectively prioritized Capital Improvement Plan that establishes priorities for construction, renovation and maintenance projects.

The plan will:

- Assign highest priority to the correction of unsafe conditions;
 - Include maintenance costs as necessary to enable facilities to reach their intended life cycles;
 - Plan for and schedules preventive maintenance;
 - Plan for and schedules system replacement when renovations are needed or systems are replaced.
3. Assure that facilities are safe, clean and properly maintained.
 4. Provide for public use of facilities, as long as safety, student functions, and the instructional program are not compromised and use guidelines are administered consistently.

B. Transportation

The Superintendent shall ensure that students eligible for transportation are transported in a safe, timely, efficient, and effective manner.

C. Safety, Security and Emergency Preparedness

The Superintendent shall ensure the protection of students, staff members, visitors and property:

1. Maintain updated emergency management plans;
2. Assure that key personnel receive training, as appropriate;
3. Maintain a collaborative and effective working relationship with local, state and federal emergency management representatives.

TECHNOLOGY

The Superintendent shall ensure that our technology is utilized to enhance the student learning experience to the greatest extent possible.

To accomplish this in the most efficient, and fiscally responsible manner, the Superintendent shall:

1. Provide a comprehensive and functional technology infrastructure.
2. Provide technology capabilities that are useful for staff members and students.
3. Intentionally use technology to support diverse learning techniques and styles that are well researched, and based on best practice.
4. Provide a means for interactive communication between the school system and parents, students, and the community.
5. Provide information electronically about school and division programs and academic progress.
6. Provide a system to access relevant and current data by appropriate users.

BOARD PURPOSE, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLE OF THE BOARD

The general mandatory powers and duties of the Board are defined in Title 18A of New Jersey statutes. Other sections of the statutes state or imply that a local board of education has full power to operate the local public schools as it deems fit in compliance with state and federal mandates and pertinent laws of the municipality. The board functions only when in session.

The Board of Education sees these as its required functions:

A. Policy Oversight

The Board is responsible for the development of policy and for the employment of a Chief School Administrator who shall carry out its policies through the development and implementation of regulations. The Board is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of its policies and their implementation. This includes setting and evaluating goals in educational and financial areas.

B. Educational Planning

The Board is responsible for requiring and acquiring reliable information from responsible sources that will enable it and the staff to work toward the continuing improvement of the educational program.

C. Provision of Financial Resources

The Board has major responsibilities for the adoption of a budget that will provide the resources in terms of buildings, staff, materials, and equipment to enable the school system to carry out its functions.

D. Interpretation

The Board is responsible for providing adequate and direct means for keeping the local community informed about the school and for keeping itself and the school staff informed about the wishes of the public. All planning, both that which is and that which is not related to the budget, needs to be interpreted to the public if citizens are to support the school program.

The Board believes that, by diligently exercising these functions, it will be able to provide the best educational opportunities possible for our children within the financial limitations set by the community.

The Board shall exercise its powers through the legislation of bylaws and policies for the organization and operation of the school district.

The Board shall be responsible for the operation of the school but shall delegate the administration to the Chief School Administrator, who shall be appointed by a recorded roll call majority vote of the full board.

The Board may hear appeals in complaints and in grievance and disciplinary actions as defined in these policies and in the law.

Concepts and Roles

The Board of Education believes that the effectiveness of the educational program of the school district depends fundamentally upon an acceptable philosophic base, a set of agreed-upon goals and detailed objectives consistent with those goals.

Wide participation in the development of statements of philosophy, goals, and objectives is not desirable. To guide the efforts of those participating under the leadership of the Chief School Administrator, the Board of Education adopts the following three definitions:

A. Educational Philosophy

Philosophy means a composite statement of the relationship between the individual, the school and society based upon beliefs, concepts, and attitudes from which the goals and objectives of the district are derived.

B. Educational Goals

Goal means a statement of broad direction or intent which is general and timeless and is not concerned with a particular achievement within a specified time period.

C. Objectives

Objective means a specific accomplishment to be reached that can be verified within a given time and under specifiable conditions which, if attained, advances the system toward a corresponding goal. This will sometimes be called goal indicator.

Board Responsibility

The Board of Education urges the Chief School Administrator to utilize the following process, with any desired adaptations, in establishing and evaluating the educational program:

- A. Assist the Board of Education in consultation with teaching staff, pupils, parents, and other district residents in establishing district educational philosophy, goals and objectives responsible to the needs of the students and community.
- B. Work with the Board of Education in formulating policies and determining regulations and procedures consistent with board policy which will best support instructional programs most appropriate to meet student and community needs.
- C. Recommend to the Board comprehensive plans and schedules for school program improvement including the allocation of necessary resources, commensurate with financial ability, toward achieving the Board adopted goals and objectives.
- D. Maintain a process of continuing assessment of the effectiveness of the instructional programs and school system operations. This process should enable the Board of Education to identify strengths and weaknesses and assess student progress, and to provide direction for correcting identified deficiencies both in the extent of student achievement and school district operations.

ROLE OF THE BOARD

It is understood that the members of the Board have authority only when acting as a board legally in session. The Board shall not be bound in any way by any action or statement on the part of any individual board member except when such statement or action is in pursuance of specific instructions from the board.

The Board shall make its members, the district staff, and the public aware that only the Board, acting as a duly constituted quorum at a legal meeting, has authority to take official actions. All other actions, whether individual or collective, have no legal or organizational basis.

Members of the Board shall adhere to the code of ethics for board members in bylaw 0142. No board member, by virtue of his/her office, shall exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the schools or as an individual command the services of any school employee. Board members visiting the schools for any reason shall observe district regulations for all visitors.

EFFECTIVELY CARRYING OUT THE ROLE OF THE BOARD MEMBER

The Closter Board of Education has been elected to represent, lead and serve the community and hold itself accountable to them by committing to act in their best interests and by ensuring that all Board and district actions are consistent with laws and the Board's policies.

The Board is tasked with the important role of establishing and adopting district policies and supporting the Superintendent in his or her quest to effectively implement the adopted Board policies.

The School Board is responsible for policy review, amendment, and adoption. Any policy may be reviewed, amended, adopted, or rescinded by the Board at any time.

To effectively carry out that role, the School Board will support the district's ability to maintain a culture of high student achievement that is appropriately balanced with the district's commitment to each student social emotional health.

This will be accomplished by way of:

- Ensuring adequate access to those resources that are supported by research and vetting by way of best practice.
- Rigorously monitor performance against approved benchmarks and toward identified goals.
- Hire and regularly evaluate the performance of the Superintendent.
- Adopt budgets that support the Board's identified goals.
- Support the Superintendent's recommendations for hiring and maintaining a high performing, professional staff.
- Maintain a commitment to financially support professional development to ensure that all staff members have access to maintaining a culture of best practice, and are well equipped to implement the latest in thoroughly researched educational trends, particularly those associated with curriculum development, student centered instruction, data analysis and viable assessment development.
- Respect the value and importance of employees and employee organizations and reasonably involve them in decisions that affect them.

GOVERNANCE COMMITMENT

The Board will govern lawfully and strategically with long-term vision and primary emphasis on high student achievement that is appropriately balanced with the district's commitment to each student social emotional health.

- A. The primary purposes of the Board are to assure student achievement goals are met, and that the system operates effectively and efficiently as specified in the Operational Expectations.
- B. The Board will encourage full exploration of diverse viewpoints.
- C. The Board will hold itself accountable for its performance.
- D. The Board will monitor its performance periodically and engage in Board development to assure continuous improvement in its capacity to govern effectively. School Board members shall participate annually in high-quality professional development activities at the state, local, or national levels on governance, including, but not limited to, personnel policies and practices; curriculum and instruction; use of data in planning and decision making; and current issues in education as part of their service on the local board. Board members shall be reimbursed for expenses related to professional development activities and travel in accordance with NJDOE regulations. The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary shall make arrangements for members to attend conferences and meetings. All necessary expenses of attending, including transportation, meals, room, and registration fees, shall be charged against School Board-appropriated funds in accordance with NJDOE regulations. All reimbursements for these approved events shall be authorized by the School Board President and the Superintendent according to the timelines and policy established by the Board.
- E. The Board will focus on strategic leadership rather than administrative details, observe clear distinction between Board and Superintendent responsibilities, and give direction through majority decisions of the full Board rather than through individual decisions.

- F. The Board will communicate frequently and regularly with the residents, maintaining public trust through full and open communication.
- G. The Board will permit no officer, individual, or committee to hinder its performance or prevent the Board from fulfilling its commitments.
- H. The Board will govern legally, assuring that all actions are consistent with State and Federal laws and with the Board's own policies and commitments.

CODE OF ETHICS

The members of the Board of Education recognize that they hold authority not as individuals but as members of the board. In order to make a clear public statement of its philosophy of service to the pupils of the district, the Board adopts this code of ethics.

I will uphold and enforce all laws, state board rules and regulations, and court orders pertaining to schools. Desired changes should be brought about only through legal and ethical procedures.

1. I will make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of children and will seek to develop and maintain public schools which meet the individual needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex or social standing.
2. I will confine my board action to policy making, planning and appraisal and I will help to frame policies and plans only after the board has consulted those who will be affected by them.
3. I will behave toward my fellow board members with the respect due their office demonstrating courtesy, decorum and fair play at all public meetings and in all public statements.
4. I will refrain from inappropriate conduct in public meetings and in making public statements, refraining from any disparagement of my fellow board members or others on a personal, social, racial or religious basis.
5. I will carry out my responsibility, not to administer the schools, but, together with my fellow board members, to see that they are well run.
6. I will recognize that authority rests with the board of education and will make no personal promises nor take any private action which may compromise the board.
7. I will refuse to surrender my independent judgment to special interest or partisan political groups or to use the schools for personal gain or for the gain of friends.
8. I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to the schools which, if disclosed, would needlessly injure individuals or the schools. But in all other matters, I will provide accurate information and, in concert with my fellow board members, interpret to the staff the aspirations of the community for its schools.
9. I will vote to appoint the best qualified personnel available after consideration of the recommendation of the chief school administrator.
10. I will support and protect school personnel in proper performance of their duties.
11. I will refer all complaints to the chief school administrator and will act on such complaints at public meetings only after failure of an administrative solution.

The board shall see that all members of the board receive training in understanding and adhering to this code of ethics and shall discuss it annually at a regularly scheduled public meeting. Each member shall sign documentation that he/she has received a copy of it and has read and understood it.

NEW JERSEY SCHOOL BOARDS BOARD MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

The Board commits itself and its members to ethical, businesslike and lawful conduct, including proper use of authority and appropriate decorum when acting as Board members.

1. Each member has the obligation to bring constituent issues or new initiatives to the Board President or the Superintendent, depending on whether the issue involves the Board's role or the Superintendent's role. However, each Board member is obligated to act in the best interest of the school system as a whole.

This obligation supersedes:

- any conflicting loyalty a member may have to other advocacy or interest groups;
 - loyalty based upon membership on other boards or staffs;
 - conflicts based upon the personal interest of any Board member or any member of their family; or
 - any obligation to represent a particular constituency or subset of the county.
2. Board members may not attempt to exercise individual authority over the organization:
 - members will refer complaints back into the system, with notification to the Superintendent through the Board President. Members may facilitate constituents' navigation of the system without guaranteeing any particular resolution;
 - members will not give personal direction to any part of the operational organization;
 - when speaking on behalf of the Board, members will communicate only explicitly-stated Board decisions;
 - observe the chain of command established within the school and ensure that before a complaint is brought to the Board President or Superintendent, that the staff members most closely connected to the complaint are aware of the concern and have been given the opportunity to resolve it before moving it to the highest levels within the district.
 3. To build trust among members and to ensure an environment conducive to effective governance, members will:
 - focus on issues rather than personalities;
 - respect decisions of the full Board;
 - exercise honesty in all written and interpersonal interaction, never intentionally misleading or misinforming each other;
 - recognize the positive and negative aspects of dissent and refrain from public criticism of the motives, thinking, and philosophy of other members, but may make their own views clear when in disagreement with a publicly stated decision of the Board;
 - not publicly disparage the Superintendent, staff, or members of the public;
 - make every reasonable effort to protect the integrity and promote the positive image of the system and one another;
 - never intentionally embarrass each other or the school system.
 4. Members shall maintain confidentiality appropriate to sensitive issues and information that otherwise may tend to compromise the integrity or legal standing of the Board or the school system, especially those matters discussed in closed meetings.

BOARD MEMBER CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Board members are expected to avoid conflicts of interest involving all matters considered by the Board. A conflict of interest exists when a member is confronted with an issue in which the member has a personal or financial interest or an issue or circumstance that could render the member unable to devote complete loyalty and singleness of purpose to the public interest.

MEETING PROTOCOL

The following excerpt is taken from a brochure found on the NJSBA website. To view the full brochure, please use the link included below.

“Parliamentary law provides the best method yet devised to enable assemblies of any size to arrive at the general will on a maximum number of questions of varying complexity in a minimum amount of time. The process works under all kinds of internal climate, ranging from total harmony to major divisions of opinion, and gives due regard to every member’s viewpoint.”

https://www.njsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/publications_parliamentary-procedure-2014-2.pdf

1. To ensure that the Board’s meetings are conducted with maximum effectiveness and efficiency, members will:
 - come to meetings adequately prepared;
 - identify issues of concern before the meeting, whenever possible;
 - circulate proposed motions and amendments, whenever possible, at least 48 hours before the meeting;
 - speak only when recognized;
 - not interrupt each other during debate;
 - not engage in disruptive and disrespectful side conversations;
 - minimize unnecessary repetition;
 - not monopolize the discussion;
 - address the merits of the issue being discussed without appealing to the biases, prejudices and emotions of the audience;
 - support the Board President’s efforts to facilitate an orderly meeting;
 - communicate openly and actively in discussion and dialog to avoid surprises;
 - value equal participation of all members;
 - stay focused on the objectives;
 - assure that all perspectives are understood as issues are considered;
 - refrain from electronically communicating with members of the public or other board members during the public meetings.
2. The Board will attend to consent agenda items as expeditiously as possible. An item may be removed from the consent agenda upon request of one member before the meeting is convened.
3. The Board will monitor the effectiveness of its meetings through a debriefing process at the end of every meeting as needed.

ELECTION OF SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

All School Board members will conduct campaigns for leadership positions, or support for a candidate, with integrity and respect for all School Board members. The board president and vice president are elected during the reorganization meeting in January of each year.

ROLE OF THE BOARD PRESIDENT

The Board empowers the Board President to provide leadership to the Board by ensuring the integrity of the Board's processes, exercising interpretive responsibilities with integrity, fairness and impartiality—reflecting the spirit and intent of the Board in its deliberations—and normally serving as the Board's official spokesperson.

The President has the following authority and duties:

1. Support and monitor Board behavior to ensure that it is consistent with its own rules and policies and those legitimately imposed upon it from outside the organization:
 - conduct and monitor Board meeting deliberations to ensure that Board discussion and attention are focused on Board issues;
 - ensure that Board meeting deliberations are fair, open, and thorough, but also efficient, timely, orderly, and to the point;
 - lead Board meetings with all the commonly accepted power of that position as described in Robert's Rules of Order;
 - lead timely periodic self-assessments to ensure process improvement;
 - ensure that Board members are aware of and follow the established chain of command.
2. Facilitate sound Board decision making by anticipating and addressing Board and member needs.
3. Compile and facilitate the Board's summative evaluation of the Superintendent.
4. Except as otherwise provided in the section authorizing committee chairs to speak for the Board on specific matters, represent the Board as appropriate and serve as spokesperson for the Board in announcing Board-stated positions and in stating decisions and interpretations within the areas assigned to the President. The President may delegate this authority to other Board members when appropriate, but the President remains accountable for such delegation.
5. Execute all documents authorized by the Board, except as otherwise provided by law.
6. With the advice and consent of the Board, appoint the Committee Chairs, and/or liaison of all Board committees.
7. In collaboration with the Superintendent, establish the number and scope of Board committees on an annual basis.
8. On behalf of the Board, and in concert with the Superintendent and Business Administrator, develop proposed Board meeting agendas consistent with the Board's annual work plan.

The Board President has no authority to supervise or direct the Superintendent except as authorized by the Board.

When the Board President is not available, the Vice President shall perform the role and duties of the President. The Board President and Vice President shall work together to assure that the duties of the Board President are accomplished effectively.

BOARD LIAISONS

The Board may designate one or more of its members to serve as a liaison in connection with a specified activity or area of interest to the Board. Within the scope of the Board's designation, each such liaison shall function individually and may perform his or her designated responsibilities independently. Unless otherwise specified, an individual liaison may prepare alternatives, implications, or recommendations for consideration by the full Board.

BOARD COMMITTEES

The Board President, during his/her term of office, may appoint permanent and/or special committees at his/her discretion for determined periods of time. These appointments shall not exceed the President's term of office.

The functions of committees shall ordinarily be fact-finding, deliberative, and advisory, and their reports shall be made to the board for discussion and action. The function of such committees may be legislative or administrative when so authorized by special action of the Board. The Board President and the Chief School Administrator may be ex-officio members of all committees.

Meetings of such committees shall not be subject to the provision of the Open Public Meeting Act, provided that no more than four members comprise the committee.

The chief school administrator or any other member of the school staff may be consulted in the work of committees where their advice is needed.

Standing Committees

Since the details of operations are voluminous in nature, it is the board's policy to have members assigned to particular standing committees so that they may concentrate their efforts on a particular segment of board work.

This practice enables the whole board to benefit through the work and experience of each of its members who can better go into detail on committee problems and report back information and recommendations to the committee of the whole.

It also expedites liaison between the Superintendent and the Board between meetings. Minor problems which may arise can be solved through the Superintendent's working with a committee rather than having to contact the whole board.

Committee progress reports and recommendations for board action are presented at the regular, or the special meetings.

Special Committees/Advisory Committees

Special temporary committees of the Board may be appointed by the President or chosen by vote of the Board as need for such service may arise; the function of all such committees shall be fact-finding, deliberative, and advisory, but never legislative or administrative. The President of the Board and the Superintendent may be ex-officio members of all such committees, except when the Superintendent's tenure or salary is involved.

Special Committees of the Board

A. Personnel Committee

- Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, move the appointment of teachers and administrative personnel.
- Move the appointment of individuals for appointment as secretaries, school nurse, and medical inspector.
- Recommend salaries and salary changes for all personnel after consultation with the Finance and Physical Plant Committee.
- Study trends in teachers' salaries and recommend revision when such seems advisable.
- Review and recommend changes when necessary in board policies pertaining to teachers and their employment.
- In connection with the compilation of the school budget prepare a statement of anticipated expenses for the following year.

B. Finance and Physical Plant Committee

- Review with the auditor the methods of maintaining the books of the board and make such recommendations within the rules and regulations set by the state board, as appear desirable.
- Present to the board such financial statements as from time to time seem desirable.
- Prepare or have prepared information relative to the tax effect of any school bond issue and recommend particulars regarding the set-up of a bond issue.
- Be responsible for the presentation of motions, at each regular meeting or as required, to authorize the payment of all bills and to approve the board secretary's cash report, if found correct.
- Prepare for budget consideration a statement of anticipated expenses for the following year.
- Recommend to the Board of Education major items of repair, alterations or additions.
- Prepare lists and amounts for annual budgetary consideration.

C. Curriculum Committee

- Obtain statistical information from the school administration on subject offerings, scheduling, class sizes and teacher utilization.
- Review significant curriculum changes.
- Receive the recommendation of the Superintendent for the adoption of texts, instructional materials and equipment, review same and report to the board their approval or rejection.

D. Policy Committee

- Work with the Superintendent and/or Business Administrator to modify, catalog and annotate policy.

- Review various sources of information to stay abreast of state and federal legislation and regulations, resolution of grievances or negotiations, and board actions which may affect policy. Bring these matters to the attention of the board and/or standing committee responsible for policy formation in the specific area.
- Review board bylaws annually. Recommend updates to bylaws and/or remind board of necessary legal compliance.

E. Negotiations Committee (Special/Ad Hoc Committee)

- Negotiates, within the parameters approved by the board, all employee contracts within the district, both with recognized bargaining units and with individual, non-represented employees; provides regular updates to the board concerning the progress of such negotiations.
- Monitors compliance with and enforcement of the terms and conditions of any negotiated labor contract within the district.

The Board may create one or more committees of the Board to perform delegated functions or to advise the Board. Among other tasks which may be assigned, Board committees may assist the Board by preparing alternatives, implications, or recommendations for consideration by the full Board.

PROCESS FOR ADDRESSING VIOLATIONS

The Board and each of its members are committed to faithful compliance with the provisions of the Board's policies. The Board recognizes that its failure to deal with deliberate or continuing violations of its policies risks the loss of confidence in the Board's ability to govern effectively. In the event of such a violation, the Board will seek remedy by applying any of the following measures:

1. Conversation in a private setting between the member in question and the Board President or other individual member:

If a Board member perceives that a fellow member has violated the policies or commitments of the Board, that member may address his concerns with the member who is perceived to be in violation. Alternatively, the member may refer the concern to the Board President. If the Board President is suspected of the violation, the concern would be referred to the Vice President. The purpose of this step is to attempt to resolve any perceived violations at the lowest possible level, involving the fewest number of individuals.

2. Discussion between the member in question and the full Board:

In the event of a serious or continuing violation by the same member, any member of the Board may request the President schedule a full School Board discussion with the charged member. The charged member will receive advance written notice of the discussion, including a statement of the alleged violation.

3. Possible removal from any leadership or committee positions to which the member in question has been appointed or elected:

To remove the charged Board member from a committee leadership or committee membership position, any member may request the President notify the charged member in writing of the scheduled School Board discussion of removal; the charged member shall be removed only after discussion and only on majority vote of the Board.

4. Statement regarding compliance with Operational Policies:

The School Board reserves the right to issue statements regarding the Board's interpretation of these policies and any instances of individual Board member's noncompliance, after notice to the individual and discussion and vote by the Board.

NEW BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION

The Superintendent of Schools and Business Administrator will provide an on-boarding orientation to newly elected board member prior to taking the oath of office. In the interim between being elected and actually assuming office, new Board members shall be invited to attend all public meetings.

BOARD MEMBER TRAINING CYCLE

New Jersey state law requires school board members to attend training in the first, second and third years of a first term, and in the first year of a re-elected or re-appointed term. NJSBA is the state-designated provider of Mandated Training, which is available at no cost to members.

Board members can fulfill their Governance II, III, and IV [School District Accountability Act](#) training requirements through specially designated *Foundations for Success* regional programs, at Workshop, and online. New board member may fulfill their training requirements through the weekend orientation program, in-person one-day programs, and online.

The following mandated training programs are required:

- Governance I: New Board Members – New Board Member Orientation
- Governance II: 1st Term, 2nd full year of service – Finance
- Governance III: 1st Term, 3rd full year of service – Student Achievement
- Governance IV: Re-elected/Re-appointed Board Members in the first year of any succeeding term – Legal Update

CONSULTATION WITH OUTSIDE COUNSEL

School Board members wanting to seek legal advice on a District matter shall contact the School Board President and the Superintendent before referring the matter to outside counsel. The Board President and the Superintendent will make the determination if the matter of legal advice is necessary. School Board members acting outside of this protocol, may be personally responsible for any legal fees.

MEETINGS

All gatherings of School Board members when sitting as a body or entity, or as an informal assemblage of five members or more, wherever held, with or without minutes being taken, whether or not votes are cast, are "meetings" under the Code of NJDOE, except for a gathering or attendance of any members of the School Board at any place or function where no part of the purpose of such gathering or attendance is the discussion or transaction of School Board business, and such gathering or attendance was not called or rearranged with any purpose of discussing or transacting any business of the School Board. With the exception of Executive Session, all meetings shall be open to the public and held in a location accessible to the public. Minutes shall be kept for all open meetings. Notice shall be posted at least three working days prior to the meeting.

Types of Meeting

- Annual Organizational Meeting
The annual meeting of the School Board shall be the first regular meeting in January at which time officers shall be elected. Procedural actions may be taken to set agents of the School Board; to designate individuals to sign legal documents; to retain legal counsel; to organize School Board committees and liaisons; and to designate the regular business meeting schedule for the next year. (See annual calendar for other appointments made during the reorganization meeting)
- Regular Meetings
When possible regular meetings of the School Board shall be held twice a month throughout the 10 month school calendar. All meetings shall be open to the public except when the School Board is meeting in Executive Session. The Board typically meets once a month in July, November and December.
- Special Meetings
Special meetings of the School Board may be called by the Board President, or the Superintendent, provided that all members are notified of the time and purpose 48 hours prior to the meeting unless a majority of the School Board agrees to meet upon shorter notice. Notice, reasonable under the circumstance, of special or emergency meetings shall be given to the public and the media at the same time the notice is provided to the members of the School Board.
- Executive Session
The NJDOE Code permits closed, Executive Session meetings in order to discuss specific matters. Executive Session meetings may only be held when no less than a quorum or majority of the School Board members are in attendance. At the conclusion of each closed meeting, the School Board shall reconvene in open session immediately thereafter and shall take a recorded vote to be included in the minutes of that meeting certifying that, to the best of the members' knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the action by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed, or considered in that meeting by the School Board. Any member of the School Board who believes that there was a departure from those requirements shall so state prior to the vote, indicating the substance of the departure that, in his or her

judgment, has taken place. The statement shall be recorded in the minutes of the School Board.

- *Confirmation of Actions Taken in Executive Session*
No actions taken in this closed meeting shall become effective unless the School Board reconvenes in open meeting (regular, special, or work session) and confirms in public any action taken by School Board vote.
- *Attendance*
Closed meetings may be attended by School Board members, Board Attorney, the Superintendent, and Board Secretary. The School Board may permit non-members to attend a closed meeting if such persons are deemed necessary or if their presence will reasonably aid the School Board in its consideration of a topic that is the subject of the meeting. The School Board may vote to dispense with the attendance of the Superintendent or his or her designee at a special closed meeting of the School Board.
- *Public Hearings*
The School Board may convene a public hearing as needed.
- Recessed or Adjourned Meetings
Meetings may be recessed and resumed at a later time or date. Such a meeting shall serve as a continuation of an established meeting and not a new one. Any meeting of the School Board may be adjourned to a specified time and place.

Meeting Procedures

- Quorum
The Board President shall call the meeting to order at the appointed time and place, if a quorum is present, to transact business according to the agenda. At any meeting of the School Board, a majority of the members shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of convening a meeting.
- Parliamentary Procedure
The Board shall observe Robert's Rules of Order.
- Agenda
An agenda for each regular School Board meeting shall be prepared under the direction of the Superintendent and Business Administrator/Board Secretary in consultation with the Board President as needed. School Board members wanting to have an item included on the agenda shall contact either the School Board President or Superintendent with the request. The Superintendent, The Board President, or individual School Board members may bring up new business not listed as part of the agenda. The Superintendent in consultation with the Board President has the prerogative to limit or postpone discussion of new business until the next scheduled School Board meeting. The agenda and all supporting documents and information shall be made available to the Board Members in advance. Members of the public shall be given access to the agenda and all supporting documents that are not confidential, until such time that those confidential materials may be legally released.
- Voting
All voting on motions or resolutions shall be by voice vote or roll call vote and the Board Secretary shall announce the vote for the record.

- **Public Notification of Meetings**
The School Board Secretary, in consultation with the School Board President and the Superintendent, shall publish, in January, an annual calendar of meeting dates. Notice of all School Board meetings shall be given to the public to include electronic announcements through the media and posted in a prominent place in the School Board Office. Additions or deletions of meeting dates may be made to the calendar throughout the year, as necessary.

Citizen Participation

Members of the community are invited and encouraged to attend public meetings of the School Board to observe its deliberations.

At the beginning of every public Board meeting the Board President reads the following statement:

“The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to insure the right to the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interest is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this act, the Closter Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be publicized by having the date, time and place thereof posted at each school building within the district, district website, the Board of Education Office, the Office of the Borough Clerk, and transmitted to The Record and Northern Valley Suburbanite newspapers.

BOARD SELF EVALUATION

The members of the board of education shall conduct an annual self-evaluation each year to determine the degree to which they are meeting their responsibilities as board members and the needs of their educational community. This self-evaluation shall be positive, frank and honest, and shall be used to establish priorities for action and specific goals and objectives to strengthen the operation of the board. The board shall use a multifaceted self-evaluation instrument.

SUPERINTENDENT/BOARD RELATIONSHIP

Understanding the role of, and interaction between a Board of Education and its Chief School Administrator is fundamental in effectively addressing the issues and concerns of a school district. Please use the link below to access the NJSBA brochure which explains the inter-related responsibilities of the board of education and the superintendent, and the role of each in community relations.

https://www.njsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/publications_whodoeswhat2014.pdf

SUPERINTENDENT DELEGATED AUTHORITY

In cases where immediate action must be taken within the school system when the board has provided no guidelines for administrative action, the Chief School Administrator shall have the power to act, but his/her decisions shall be subject to review by the Board at its next regular meeting.

It shall be the duty of the Chief School Administrator to inform the board promptly of such action and of the need for possible additional policies or revisions of existing policies.

This notification will take place as soon as possible, but no later than the next scheduled Board meeting.

The Board will provide direction to the Superintendent through written policies that define the results to be achieved by students and define operational conditions and actions to be accomplished or avoided.

As long as the Superintendent uses a reasonable interpretation of the Board's goals and policies, the Superintendent is authorized to establish procedures, make operational decisions, establish instructional practices and initiate activities the Superintendent deems necessary and appropriate to achieve the Board's goals. The Superintendent is not expected to seek Board approval or authority for such decisions. The Board will respect and support decisions made by the Superintendent as long as they represent a reasonable interpretation of the Board's policies, even though such decisions may not have been the decisions the Board or its members may have made. By this policy, the Board delegates to the Superintendent the authority necessary to implement the goals and mission of the Governance Manual, subject to any approvals or actions specifically reserved to the Board in this Manual, other published policies, or the NJDOE code.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND EVALUATION

Superintendent Accountability

The Superintendent is accountable for the results of all decisions made within the Superintendent's area of delegated authority. The Superintendent has two major responsibilities upon which he will be evaluated. Those responsibilities are to assure that the school system makes reasonable progress toward achieving the Board and District Goals in regard to both Student Performance Goals and the agreed upon Operational Expectations. The Board will evaluate the school division's performance and credit the Superintendent with the results of that evaluation. Should any area of school division performance be determined unacceptable, due solely to conditions and factors beyond the control of the Superintendent, the Board agrees that the Superintendent's evaluation will reflect such determination.

Superintendent Evaluation

Formative Evaluation: The Board will establish an annual calendar and plan for its work, which will include scheduled monitoring throughout the year on progress and achievement of the Board and District Goals aligned with the Student Achievement Goals and the Operational Expectations. The Superintendent will provide thorough and detailed monitoring reports as agreed upon between the Superintendent and the Board.

Summative Evaluation: In June, the Board will review the prior year's monitoring documents submitted by the Superintendent. The Board will use these reports as a basis to develop an overall summative evaluation document of the Superintendent's performance. The summative evaluation document will include areas for commendation as well as areas that require additional attention.

Merit Goals (if applicable)

In addition to the annual evaluation based on Board and District goals, the board will evaluate the levels of achievement made toward the successful completion of the Superintendent Merit Goals. Merit goals are an additional contractual component of the Superintendent's employment and are not included in the annual performance review.

Board Evaluation Timeline

Timeline for Superintendent's evaluation:

- April: blank evaluation form sent to Board members for future reference
- Late May/ Early June: closed meeting for evaluation discussion with the Superintendent prior to Board members completing the evaluation form
- By June 30: Board President presents final evaluation to the Superintendent

SCHOOL BOARD SECRETARY

The Superintendent shall hire and evaluate the School Board Secretary. In addition to other responsibilities, the Board Secretary shall be responsible for efficiently and effectively managing the Business Office and for:

1. Keeping full and accurate records/minutes of the proceedings of the Board and arranging for the safekeeping of such records, other documents, and correspondence pertaining to the actions and proceedings of the Board;
2. Ensuring the Board Committee work and the Board agendas are effectively aligned in ways that provide a structure which adheres to the goals and deadlines agreed upon Board calendar;
3. Signing and certifying for the Board official documents which may be required in the conduct of the business of the school district;
4. Discharging such other duties in connection with the business of the school division as may be required of him or her by this School Board or the New Jersey School Board.

Meeting Minutes

The School Board Secretary or designee is responsible for keeping a full and accurate record of all Board proceedings. These minutes of open meetings of the School Board shall include:

- The date, time, and location of meeting;
- The Board members recorded as absent or present (including specifics regarding late arrival or early departure);
- A notation of the presence or absence of the Superintendent
- A record of any corrections to the minutes of the previous meeting; and
- A summary of discussions on matters proposed, deliberated, or decided and a record of any votes taken. The minutes shall be permanently retained and indexed for reference purposes. The exhibit files (agendas, minutes, and all supporting documentation) for all open meetings shall be permanently retained.

Record of Closed Meetings

The School Board Secretary or designee shall attend closed meetings (unless expressly excused) for the purpose of taking brief notes that may include: date, time, and location of the meeting; a record of all persons in attendance; itemization of issues discussed; materials distributed; and any action taken (including motion and vote). These notes shall not be transcribed or distributed but shall be maintained separately in the School Board Office in accordance with the records retention guidelines and shall be made available, upon request, to Board members and other individuals permitted to be present at the closed meeting in accordance with statutes governing closed meetings. Closed meetings shall not be tape-recorded.

SCHOOL BOARD/STAFF COMMUNICATION PROCESS

1. Constituent Inquiries Routine Requests from a Board member

School Board Secretary or designee will handle routine requests from constituents received by a Board member.

2. Constituent Inquiry – Received initially by a Board member

If a Board member receives an inquiry from a constituent, the request for a response will be sent to the Superintendent's office, copying the School Board Secretary.

The Superintendent's office will assign the inquiry to the School Board Secretary for a response, which will be provided within 5 days to the constituent. If the Board member prefers to respond directly to the constituent, then the response will be provided to the School Board Secretary and the Superintendent.

The School Board Secretary will ensure that all inquiries will be logged, with the exception of routine requests.

3. Constituent Inquiry – Received initially through the general Board email address

The School Board Office staff will forward the general inquiries to the Board member, the Board President and the Superintendent.

Appendix

Annual School Board Calendar Including Suggestions from NJSBA

JANUARY

- Board reorganization (after November elections)*
- “Swearing In” of Newly Elected Board Members
- Election of President and Vice President
- Appointment of Board Secretary
- Professional Appointments
- Appointment of School Auditors
- Appointment of School Architect of Record
- Appointment of School Engineer
- Appointment of Board Bond Attorney
- Appointment of Board Attorney
- Appointment of Insurance Agency
- Appointment of School Physicians
- Environmental Consultants
- Establishment of Time, Place and Purpose of Regular Meetings
- Naming of Depositories of Board of Education Funds

- Naming of Official Local Newspapers
- Payroll Authorization
- Authorization to Disburse Funds for Social Security, Health and Dental Benefits
- Re-Adoption of Policy Manual
- Re-Adoption of Curriculum and Textbooks
- Adoption of Code of Ethics
- Membership in the NJ School Boards Association/Bergen County School Boards Association
- Appointment of Representative Requesting Federal and State Funds
- Approval of Officer for Bidding and Purchasing
- Designation of Claims Auditor: Pre-Payment Authority Amended 18a:19-1,2&4
- Petty Cash Funds Authorization
- Reconciliation of Bank Accounts
- State Contract Vendors
- Approval of Healthcare Facility
- Designation of School Safety Specialist
- Review of surveys completed
- Board Code of Ethics discussion with NJSBA representative *(for districts with November elections)
- Review mandatory training requirements for board members (for newly sworn in as well as existing members)
- Review requirements of the superintendent contract renewal for contracts expiring July 1. * (Superintendents must be given 30 days notice for each year of a contract duration.)
- For new board members, financial disclosure forms are due to the School Ethics Commission within 30 days of joining the board*
- Review preliminary budget numbers with the superintendent and board administrator

FEBRUARY

- Superintendent provides an update on progress toward achievement of district goals and objectives.
- Board provides a public update on progress toward achievement of board goals and professional development improvement plan.
- Superintendent/BA provide an update on capital projects.
- Meet with NJSBA representative to review Superintendent and board evaluation process and set timelines for completion.
- Board & district goals update

MARCH

- Suggested: Public hearing of the Violence, Vandalism and Bullying Report. (By law a board must have a public hearing twice yearly; once between Sept.1 - Jan. 1 and again between Jan. 1- June 30.)
- Approval of Preliminary Budget

APRIL

- Deadline to complete School Ethics Commission Disclosure Statements
- Hold public budget hearing / adopt budget (November elections)*
- Approve the school health nursing services plan.
- Approve the comprehensive equity plan.
- Start discussion of next year's district goals and objectives

MAY

- Complete online Superintendent evaluation forms* (all non-conflicted board members) once the Superintendent has completed his/her goals portion.
- Complete online board self-evaluation form.
- Approve written curriculum that clearly and specifically aligns with the most recent State Board adopted version.
- End-of-year staff review report to board by Superintendent (All staff: non-tenured, tenured, and administration).
- Report on compliance of submitting financial disclosure statements to the School Ethics Commission
- Act on personnel recommendations of Superintendent
- Superintendent self-assessment due
- Superintendent merit goals to be reviewed
- Board evaluation of Superintendent

JUNE

- Schedule closed-session meeting (all non-conflicted board members) to review board members' evaluations and organize the overall superintendent evaluation narrative (Provide "Rice" notice to superintendent. "Rice" refers to the case that led to the legally-required process of notifying school employees when matters affecting their employment will be discussed privately by the school board.)
- Superintendent provides end-of-the-year report on district goals
- Board provides end-of-the-year report on Board of Education goals
- Review and revise as necessary the Superintendent evaluation instrument for upcoming year based on goals and objectives
- Finalize the Superintendent's evaluation and conduct closed session summary conference (all non-conflicted board members); provide Rice notice to Superintendent.*
- Review results of compiled board self-evaluation
- Board should request contract analysis from NJSBA labor relations staff, for employee contracts ending in June of the upcoming year.
- Board approved Superintendent evaluation due June 30
- Next school year Superintendent merit goals selected by June 1
- Board & District goals update – final for school year

JULY

- Board of Education approves district and Board of Education goals.
- Superintendent develops action plans to achieve district goals.
- Board develops action plans to achieve board goals.
- Review and approve staff development plans for next year and the connection to student achievement.
- Review the district mentoring plan.
- Approve board professional development plan.
- Review curriculum writing process and the connection to increased student achievement.

AUGUST

- Review progress of all students at key grade levels in mastering the current education standards and on the performance of student subgroups on state tests.

- Approve any additional personnel recommendations for coming school year.
- Annual review of the student code of conduct.
- Annual review of memorandum of agreement (MOA) and law enforcement operations for alcohol, other drugs, weapons and safety.
- Superintendent merit goals due to County Superintendent for the next school year by 8/1

SEPTEMBER

- Superintendent presents action plans for achievement of district goals
- Approve the comprehensive maintenance plan.
- Approve the long-range facility plan
- Approve the safety and security plan.
- Board plans for negotiations for employee contracts ending in June of the upcoming year.

OCTOBER

- Public hearing of the Violence, Vandalism and Bullying Report (suggested for this month; by law a board must have a public hearing twice yearly; once between Sept. 1- Jan.1 and again between Jan 1- June 30).
- Public presentation of Student achievement data
- Develop budget parameters focusing on student achievement based on strategic planning goals and/or district annual goals.
- Update on curriculum writing/pilots/cycle.
- Superintendent provides update on progress toward achievement of district goals and objectives.
- Board provides update on progress toward achievement of board goals and Professional Development Plan.
- Attend NJSBA Workshop.

NOVEMBER

- Board election (November elections)
- Approve submission of the NJQSAC Statement of Assurance*
- Review audit report / approve and oversee the corrective action plan if needed* (Audit report must be approved by board no later than five months after the end of the previous school year.)
- Review and/or approve Technology Plan.
- Board & district goals update

DECEMBER

- Review budget priorities, ensure planned purchase of materials and curriculum development support student achievement.
- Annual audit presentation