



SCHOOL BOARD PROTOCOL AND OPERATIONS

BOARD DUTIES:

The School Board shall:

1. Adopt policy to provide for the day-to-day supervision of schools.
2. See that the school laws are properly explained, enforced and observed.
3. Secure, by visitation or otherwise, as full information as possible about the conduct of the public schools in the school division and take care that they are conducted according to law and with the utmost efficiency.
4. Care for, manage and control the property of the school division and provide for the erecting, furnishing, equipping, and noninstructional operating of necessary school buildings and appurtenances and the maintenance thereof by purchase, lease, or other contracts.
5. Provide for the consolidation of schools or redistricting of school boundaries or adopt pupil assignment plans whenever such procedure will contribute to the efficiency of the school division.
6. Insofar as not inconsistent with State statutes and regulations of the State Board of Education, operate and maintain the public schools in the school division and determine the length of the school term, the studies to be pursued, the methods of teaching and the government to be employed in the schools.
7. Perform such other duties as shall be prescribed by the State Board of Education or as are imposed by law.
8. Obtain public comment through a public hearing not less than ten days after reasonable notice to the public in a newspaper of general circulation in the school division prior to providing (1) for the consolidation of schools; (2) the transfer from the public school system of the administration of all instructional services for any public school classroom or all noninstructional services in the school division pursuant to a contract with any private entity or organization; or (3) in school divisions having 15,000 pupils or more in average daily membership, for redistricting of school boundaries or adopting any pupil assignment plan affecting the assignment of fifteen percent or more of the pupils in average daily membership in the affected school. Such a public hearing may be held at the same time and place as the meeting of the School Board at which the proposed action is taken if the public hearing is held before the action is taken. If a public hearing has been held prior to the effective date of this provision on a proposed consolidation, redistricting or pupil assignment plan which is to be implemented after the effective date of this provision, an additional public hearing shall not be required.
9. Survey, at least annually, the school division to identify critical shortages of teachers and

administrative personnel by subject matter, and report such critical shortages to the Superintendent of Public Instruction and to the Virginia Retirement System or request the Division Superintendent to conduct such survey and submit such report to the School Board, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Virginia Retirement System.

10. Ensure that the public schools within the school division are registered with the Department of State Police to receive electronic notice of the registration or re-registration of any sex offender within the school division pursuant to § 9.1-914.
11. Prescribe qualifications of all employees of the Charlottesville City Schools and fix salary schedules for such employees.
12. Employ and evaluate a superintendent.
13. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, employ teachers and other personnel as may be needed for the efficient operation of the schools.
14. Adopt broad goals and objectives for each aspect of the school Division's operation based upon the identified needs of the community. Said goals shall be documented, reviewed and revised periodically in light of changing community needs.
15. Evaluate the performance and progress of the Charlottesville City School Division against the stated goals and objectives.
16. Review and approve the annual operating budget of the school division prepared by the Superintendent and his/her staff to provide prudent utilization of public resources.
17. Provide leadership in presenting needs of the school division to local, regional, state and federal government or agencies, the general public or the media.
18. Communicate with various constituencies to receive input and gather support for public education.

BOARD PROTOCOLS:

Meetings of the Board and Engaging the Community:

We understand that Board meetings are meetings of the Board held in public. We will keep this in mind as we conduct our meetings, allowing the public to provide input at the time allotted on the agenda to ensure the multiple voices of the community to inform Board deliberations. However, when the Board deliberates, it will be a time for the Board to listen and learn from each other, taking the public input into consideration, not a time to re-engage with the public.

We will consistently abide by our formal processes relating to this issue so that all persons are treated fairly and equally. We will periodically review our policies relating to Board meeting management (e.g., time limits on input from members of the public), revising or re-affirming them as appropriate.

We will engage with the community at four (4) events in a different location than our regularly scheduled Board meetings.

New Board Member Orientation:

The Board desires to be a team where all members contribute to effective Board leadership. The Board takes initiative in helping new members learn, understand and practice effective governance. The Board chair shall arrange a meeting of the whole Board to review Board processes and procedures. The Superintendent shall meet with new Board members to answer questions and acquaint the member with the Division. If desired by the new Board member, a veteran member will be identified as a mentor in addition to outside training opportunities.

New Board members shall receive a presentation from the Superintendent and Central Office Administration to receive appropriate orientation and pertinent information.

New Board members will be offered a tour of Charlottesville City Schools' facilities.

Concerns from the Community and Staff:

When someone voices concerns to us, we will listen carefully. We will then direct that person to make contact with the person in the Division most appropriate and able to help them resolve their concern. We will make sure they understand the appropriate order of whom to contact (teacher, then principal, then Division staff). We will also pass these concerns along to the Superintendent and the School Board Chair. This will ensure everyone is treated fairly, equally, and expeditiously and that the processes and procedures of the Division are upheld. It will also clarify that one Board member has no individual authority to fix a problem. As a representative of the public, it is important that the Board member invites the person with the complaint to ultimately get back to him/her if the issue is not resolved.

Voting Method:

When a vote is taken upon any measure before the Board with a quorum being present, a majority of the votes cast determines the outcome. Each Board member respects the right of the other members to vote his/her conscience on an issue.

Board Member Request for Information:

Oversight of the Division is an important job function of the Board. It is also important for Board members to be well informed on the state of the Division's programs and level of performance. Consequently, it is proper and expected that Board members will make requests of the administration for information concerning the Division. However, Board members also recognize that they have no power, as individuals, to direct staff actions and that compiling information in response to requests from Board members takes staff away from their other important duties of running the school system and working directly to improve and sustain our Division. This protocol is an effort to balance these potentially competing interests.

All requests for information by one or more Board members shall also be provided to all other Board members at the same time. All such requests for information should be directed to the Superintendent with notice/a copy to the entire Board, so that all the Board members understand the context of information that will later be provided to them by the administration in response to the request.

When a Board member desires information relating to an upcoming agenda item, the Board member should notify the Superintendent as far in advance of the meeting as practicable, so that staff can try to gather the requested information in time for the meeting. Requests for information related to upcoming agenda items will take priority over requests for information related to non-agenda items.

A Board member has a right to request information available under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (e.g., existing documents and records). Individual Board members will seek to self-monitor their requests in order to avoid diverting an inappropriate amount of staff time away from other important staff duties and to ensure that the information sought will indeed be useful in performing Board duties.

Where less than a majority of Board members seek information from the administration that is beyond what is available under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (e.g., a request requiring new research and/or new data analysis by staff), then the Superintendent and staff will promptly make a good faith estimate of how long it will take to compile the requested information. If the estimate is that it will take less than two hours of staff time to compile the requested information, then the information requested will be gathered and sent out to the Board in a timely manner. If it is estimated that such a request will take more than two hours of staff time to collect, then the Superintendent will promptly notify the Board of the estimated amount of staff time required, and staff will not respond to the request unless there is a majority consensus of the Board that indicates a desire for the response.

Board Members Request for Action:

The only authority to direct action rests with the full Board sitting at the Board table during a duly called open meeting. A majority vote sets such direction. The Board chair is responsible for focusing the Board agenda on appropriate content (Board work). Board members and Division residents may suggest items for inclusion on the agenda. Such items may be added to the agenda upon approval of the Board. Since action items must be posted in the meeting notice, such items will typically be scheduled for a subsequent meeting.

When a majority of the Board, sitting in a formal meeting, requests action, it should be made relative to the intended results, not the methods used to achieve those results.

Board Member Professional Development:

Board members are expected to attend at least 8 hours (e.g. Virginia School Boards Association Hot Topic and State Conferences, per calendar year of high-quality professional development activities at the state, local or national level 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.

Board Member School Visitation:

Board members commit to visiting schools during the day. In addition to such visits arranged by individual Board members, the Board will designate two weeks (one during the fall and one during the spring), where each Board member will visit two (2) schools. Board members will provide the School Board Clerk with advance notice of school visits.

Board Member Use of E-Mail

Use of electronic mail (e-mail) by members of the Board shall conform to the same standards of judgment, propriety, and ethics as other forms of school board-related communication. Board members shall comply with the following guidelines when using e-mail in the conduct of Board responsibilities:

1. The Board shall not use email as a substitute for deliberations at Board meetings or for other communications or business properly confined to Board meetings.
2. Board members shall be aware that e-mail and e-mail attachments received or prepared for use in Board business or containing information relating to Board business may be regarded as public records which may be inspected by any person upon request, unless otherwise made confidential by law.
3. E-mail and attachments that are received or prepared regarding Board business shall be properly preserved. To ensure proper preservation, it is recommended that the Board clerk receive a copy of all such e-mail and shall preserve such history as dictated by the Code of Virginia.
4. Board members shall avoid reference to confidential information about employees, students or other matters in e-mail communications because of the risk of improper disclosure. Board members shall comply with the same standards as school employees with regard to confidential information.
5. All emails from Board members to the Superintendent or staff should be copied to the Chairperson and the entire Board (schoolboard@charlottesvilleschools.org).

The Board Takes Responsibility for Itself:

The Board will schedule an annual advance/workshop/retreat to complete a Board Self-Evaluation and review governance, team agreements, and processes.

The Board Chair:

The Board is a group of seven equals; each member takes full responsibility for Board activity and behavior. The task of the Board chair is the facilitation of the work of the Board and its ability to comply with its working agreements and mutual expectations. The Board chair will respond to all emails addressed to the entirety of the board. The Board chair and vice-chair will also facilitate communication between the Superintendent and the Board when appropriate. The Board chair and vice-chair will develop proposed Board Meeting agendas in collaboration with the Superintendent and with input from Board Members.

Working Agreements:

1. The creation of a vision and direction for the Division is a primary responsibility of the Board.
2. The Board will support new programs and services that are aligned with and contribute to our mission and vision and are fiscally prudent.
3. The relationship between the Superintendent and any individual Board member is collegial, based on mutual respect, and conducted with transparency.
4. The Superintendent is accountable to the full School Board.
5. Board members' act in the best interest of all students in the division.
6. Board members respect the confidentiality of the executive/closed session.
7. The Board as a whole, and each member independently, accepts responsibility for Board processes and effectiveness.
8. The authority of the Board rests with the entire Board and not with individuals.
9. Board members will refrain from advising staff.
10. Board members will support the outcome of motions passed during meetings.
11. The Superintendent and School Board will transparently collaborate to set the direction of the Division and implement policy.

Code of Conduct for Members of the School Board:

The members of the School Board 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 students of the division, the Board adopts this code of ethics.

1. I shall always remember that my first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the public schools.
2. I shall attend all scheduled Board meetings insofar as possible and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings.
3. I shall represent all school division constituents honestly and equally and refuse to surrender any responsibilities to special interest or partisan political groups.
4. I shall help constituents understand the importance of broad community support and involvement in the public schools, especially by encouraging citizen participation in Board meetings and, in turn, serve constituents by ensuring accountability of the schools to the community.
5. I shall avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of impropriety which could result from my position, and shall not use my Board membership for personal gain or publicity.
6. I shall recognize that a Board member has no legal authority as an individual and that decisions can be made only by a majority vote at a Board meeting.

7. I shall not exercise individual authority over the organization except as explicitly set forth in Board policies.
8. I shall recognize through interaction with public press, or other entities, the same limitation and inability of any Board Member to speak for the Board except to repeat explicitly stated Board decisions.
9. I shall take no private action that might compromise the Board or administration and shall respect the confidentiality of privileged information.
10. I shall abide by and respect majority decisions of the Board, while retaining the right to seek changes in such decisions through ethical and constructive channels.
11. I shall encourage and respect the free expression of opinion by my fellow Board members and others who seek a hearing before the Board.
12. I shall be involved and knowledgeable about not only local educational concerns, but also about state and national issues.

In addition, I shall encourage the Board to pursue the following goals:

1. The development of educational programs which meet the individual needs of every student.
2. The development of procedures for the regular and systematic evaluation of programs, staff performance and Board operations to ensure progress toward educational and fiscal goals.
3. The development of effective School Board policy which provides direction for the operation of the schools and delegates authority to the Superintendent for their administration.
4. The development of systematic communications which ensure that the School Board, administration, staff, students and community are fully informed and understand the community's aspiration for its schools.
5. The development of sound business practices.

Commitment:

How to make your agreements work for the board:

1. Each member of the Board agrees to make the Board practice expressed in the agreements their personal goal.
2. Each member of the Board, both individually and collectively, takes responsibility for making the agreements the goal for the Board's governance practice.
3. Each member of the Board will support the effort to translate the agreements into written Board policy to ensure clarity and continuity as well as a vital board culture.
4. Each member will commit to a Board conversation regarding these Board understandings/agreements as new Board teams are constituted.