

9000 Board Polices R 2014-15



9000 Series – BOARD POLICIES

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Bylaws of the Board

Role of the Board and Member (Powers, Purposes, Duties)

Organization

In accordance with the General Statutes and City Charter, the Stamford Board of Education is the agent of the state and the duly constituted authority of the City of Stamford in all matters relating to the organization and administration of the schools. As such, the Board of Education shall perform such duties and have such powers as are imposed or vested by the General Statutes upon Boards of Education in the several towns.

In carrying out this mandate, the Board of Education shall act as a legislative and appraisal body, delegating executive functions to the Superintendent of Schools and his/her staff. The Board shall concern itself with broad questions of educational policy, and not with administrative details. The Board shall act as a committee of the whole, and individual members shall make no commitments for the Board, except when executing an assignment requested by the Board.

Powers and Duties

The Board of Education shall be responsible for the maintenance and operation of the public schools as required by law and by the Charter of the City of Stamford. The Board shall be responsible for carrying out the following duties:

1. Establish and periodically review appropriate policies for the school system.
2. Interpret the needs of the community and the desired educational requirements to its professional organization.
3. Appoint and evaluate the Superintendent of Schools.
4. Approve the appointment of personnel except as that responsibility has been delegated to the Superintendent.
5. Prepare, with the aid of the Superintendent, and adopt an annual budget for submission to the City's fiscal boards.
6. Provide the applicable City boards with statements of the need for additional school facilities, including proposed additions to or extensions of existing school department buildings, and such statements shall set forth as to each such building or facility or extension or addition complete information concerning the area to be served thereby, the time when, in the opinion of the Board the same shall be needed, and the number of students to be accommodated, together with such other information as the Board may deem appropriate.
7. Approve preliminary and final plans and specifications for all new buildings and additions.

8. Evaluate the total program of the schools in Stamford.
9. Evaluate the performance of the Superintendent.
10. Inform the people of Stamford of the goals, values, conditions and needs of public education in Stamford.
11. Meet periodically during each year with student representatives of all Stamford high schools.
12. Consider any other specific actions recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.
13. Exercise any other powers authorized and take any other actions required by law.
14. The Board of Education members will use the Code of Ethics as recommended by CABE as the guide in the performance of their duties (See policy 9271).

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

1-200 Definitions

10-186 Duties of local and regional boards of education

10-220 Duties of boards of education.

10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules

10-240 Control of schools

10-241 Powers of school districts

Bylaw adopted by the Board:
January 25, 2000

STAMFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Stamford, Connecticut

Amended:
August 22, 2006
December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Role of the Board and Its Members

Statement of Integrity

The long term health of a representative democracy requires that citizenship and leadership act upon what is right, rather than what is popular. As Board of Education members, our goal is to improve the education of our children and to advocate for them and their best interests. Board members must be working effectively together and with others in the community to successfully reach this goal. A Board of Education that operates with integrity will be a more effective Board. Integrity is first, discerning what is right and what is wrong, second, acting upon what you have discerned even at personal cost; and third, saying openly that you are acting on your understanding of right from wrong. It requires that students, colleagues, constituents, and others in the community be considered in every decision. A Board of Education with a sense of integrity will consider what is right, and what is wrong. This takes discipline and an awareness of one's environment.

To this end, as a Board of Education with integrity, we will:

- Understand that our first and greatest concern is the educational welfare of the students, and that all decisions must be based on this understanding;
- Render all decisions based solely on our judgment of the available facts and not surrender that judgment to individuals, special interests, or our own personal agendas;
- Attend all Board meetings insofar as possible, and be responsible for becoming informed on any and all issues coming before the Board, as well as being prepared to discuss and/or act upon all agenda items;
- Be responsible for becoming informed on any and all issues coming before the Board;
- Seeks to facilitate ongoing communication between the Board and students, staff, parents and all elements of the community;
- Conduct our meetings and foster an environment where all elements of the community can express their ideas;
- Declare a conflict of interest when it arises and excuse ourselves from related discussion and action on that issue;
- Refrain from using our position on the Board for personal or partisan gain;

- Insist on regular and impartial evaluation of all staff, and conduct a yearly self-evaluation and set annual goals;
- Fairly assess all non-instructional aspects of the school operation;
- Support all decisions by the Board to the community once a decision has been reached; **AND**
- Understand that we have no authority beyond that which is exercised at the Board meeting, and that we shall not lend the impression that we are speaking on the Board's behalf unless that authority has been so delegated.

The Board of Education is committed to the highest legal and ethical standards essential in governing its school system. It endeavors to encourage growth and support established and innovative educational objectives.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Limits of Authority

The Board of Education is the unit of authority. Apart from their function as part of the unit, the Board member has no individual authority. Individually the Board member may not commit the district to any policy, act or expenditure. The Board member cannot do business with the district served, nor should the Board member have an interest in any contract with the school district in general. The Board member does not represent a factional segment of the community, but is rather a part of the body which represents and acts for the community as whole.

No individual member of the Board, by virtue of holding office, shall exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the schools, nor as an individual command the services of any school employee.

No members of the Board of Education shall be asked to perform any routine or clerical duties which may be assigned to an employee.

No individual members of the Board of Education may give orders, reprimand, threaten or intimidate any school employee. All instructions to employees shall be given by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 10-220 Duties of boards of education.
- 10-232 Restrictions on employment of members of the board of education.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

January 25, 2000

Amended:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Accountability

The public is accountable for:

- Maintaining a vigorous interest in, concern for, and constructive criticism of the schools;
- Electing the most able men and women available to represent them on the Board of Education;
- Providing the resources necessary for the Board and staff to accomplish publicly endorsed goals and objectives of the school district.

The Board is accountable for:

- Being responsive to the community's desires and concerns regarding the quality and performance of the school system;
- Carrying out its mandate to plan, to make policy, and to lead in the identification of goals and objectives;
- Requesting the resources necessary for the achievement of the goals and objectives through the budget process;
- Evaluating the degree to which the goals and objectives are accomplished;
- Selecting and evaluating the Superintendent of Schools.

The Superintendent is accountable for:

- Providing creative professional leadership, counsel and management in all aspects of the school district programs;
- Being responsive to the Board of Education's desires and concerns regarding the quality and performance of the school district;
- Effecting the policies, goals and objectives established by the Board of Education;
- Providing fiscal leadership in the implementation of the budget process;
- Selecting and evaluating all professional staff.

The administration, the teachers and other employees are accountable for:

- Achieving the goals and objectives related to their stated job responsibilities;
- Being responsive to the Superintendent of School's desires and concerns regarding the quality and performance of their job responsibilities;
- Maintaining communications with students, parents and the community regarding their stated job responsibilities;
- Conforming to the policies established by the Board of Education.

The parents are accountable for:

- Providing an atmosphere that supports the education of their child;
- Maintaining close communication with the school.

The students are accountable for:

- Diligently pursuing their own learning;
- Following the rules of the school district.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 10-220 Duties of boards of education.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Legal Responsibilities of Board of Education

The Board of Education shall have authority to take all action necessary or advisable to meet its responsibilities under state statute and CITY Charter including but not limited to the following:

1. To annually establish, with the Superintendent of Schools, educational priorities for the school district.
2. Create, abolish, modify and maintain such positions, schools, divisions and classifications as may be necessary for the efficient administration of the educational enterprise.
3. To elect a Superintendent of Schools in accordance with state statutes.
4. To consider and adopt an annual budget, prepared by the Superintendent of Schools.
5. To determine the number, classification, duties and remuneration of employees.
6. To establish policy for employment, promotion and dismissal of personnel in accordance with state statutes.
7. To provide for the evaluation of the performance of personnel.
8. To initiate and approve the acquisition and disposition of school sites and to initiate and approve plans for school buildings.
9. To consider any specific recommendations made by the Superintendent of Schools.
10. To keep the citizenry informed of purposes, values, conditions and needs of public education in the City.
11. To consider, revise and adopt any changes in the curriculum.
12. To take any other actions required or permitted by law.
13. To make reasonable provision to implement the educational interests of the State, as defined by law, so that
 - (a) each child shall have for the period prescribed in the General Statutes equal opportunity to receive a suitable program of educational experiences;
 - (b) the school district shall finance at a reasonable level an educational program

designed to achieve this end;

- (c) the school district shall provide educational opportunities for its students to interact with students and teachers from other racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds;
- (d) the mandates in the General Statutes pertaining to education within the jurisdiction of the State Board of Education shall be implemented.

14. To maintain a safe school setting and shall, in accordance with the statutes, maintain records of allegations, investigations, and reports that a child has been abused or neglected by a school employee, as defined in C.G.S. 53a-65.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 53a-65 Definitions
- 10-220 Duties of boards of education. (as amended by PA 11-93)

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Public Statements

The Stamford Board of Education recognizes that communication is a continuous two-way process. The Board believes that it is important to keep the public informed about educational programs, and, in turn, that the community should have the opportunity to provide input.

Communication will be a concurrent responsibility of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent of Schools will work with the members of the Board of Education to conduct an active and comprehensive program throughout the school district and community for the prompt dissemination of information about decisions made at all Board meetings. Press releases, action reports posted with the City Clerk, the SPS website, Parent Link, and meeting videos are regarded as appropriate media of information for meeting the requirements of this bylaw. Press releases relative to Board of Education action shall be released only by the Board President or the delegated agent of the Board.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

January 25, 2000

Amended:

August 22, 2006

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Public Statements

Advocacy

The Board of Education believes that advocacy is a critical part of its activity and an important responsibility of school Board members. Advocacy is engagement in the political process at local, state and national levels to influence the public policies that affect Boards of Education and school children.

Education advocacy requires the Board of Education to publicly state what is needed to achieve effective public education. It is a recognition that the Board of Education has an important message to deliver to all governmental levels, the media and community that affect educational policy and power to influence outcomes.

Education must be a priority in local, state and national policy and actions. Advocacy is necessitated by the many laws mandated on the school district by the state and federal government as well as regulations promulgated by State and Federal Departments of Education.

School Board members, are charged with the responsibility to advocate to legislators and explain the local impact of state and federal policy decisions.

The Board of Education will cooperate with parent groups, other educators, special interest groups, business and service organizations other school boards, CAFE, and community members to achieve favorable legislation on education issues. Coalition building is critical to effective advocacy.

The Board of Education will develop a plan to fulfill its advocacy responsibilities.

Bylaws of the Board

Public Statements

Advocacy (continued)

Regulations

To fulfill its advocacy role, the Board of Education will:

1. join a broad advocacy network, including CAFE membership, at the state and national levels;
2. recognize the Board of Education President , or his/her designee, to be the conduit for information and action; with the power to write and contact legislators on behalf of the entire Board; and serve as the press spokesperson for the Board of Education on state and national educational issues;
3. schedule time at Board meetings for a report on state and national advocacy issues;
4. use varied available means of communication, such as newsletter, general media, public forums to publicize federal and state legislative policy issues being addressed by the Board;
5. agree, as a Board, in its lobbying effort on the particular issues and tactics, to be given priority;
6. cooperate, in a coalition with other Boards of Education, teachers, parents, administrators, local elected officials, business and community leaders on agreed upon educational lobbyist issues;
7. use media as an advocacy tool.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

January 25, 2000

Amended:

August 22, 2006

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Commitment to Democratic Principles in Relation to Community, Staff, Students

Board-Staff Communications

The Stamford Board of Education recognizes the need to maintain open communication between itself and the staff. Essentially, communications with staff deal with three general areas -- administration, policy and philosophy. While the Board recognizes the necessity for Board-staff communications, it also recognizes that administrative matters must be dealt with through its chief administrator. Hence, the basic line of communication for administrative matters shall be through the Superintendent.

1. Staff Communications to the Board

All formal reports to the Board or any Board committee from administrators, supervisors, teachers or other staff members shall be submitted through the Superintendent. This necessary procedure shall not be construed as denying the right of any employee to appeal to the Board from administrative decisions on important matters, provided that the Superintendent shall have been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the Board's policy on complaints and grievances.

Staff members are also reminded that Board meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to observe and participate first hand in the Board's deliberations on problems of staff concern.

2. Board Communication to Staff

All official communications, policies and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the Superintendent, and the Superintendent will employ all such media as are appropriate to keep staff fully informed of the Board's, concerns and actions.

3. Visits to Schools

Individual Board members interested in visiting schools or classrooms will make arrangements for visitations through the administrators of the various schools. Such visits shall be regarded as informal expressions of interest in school affairs and not as "inspections" or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes. Official visits by Board members will be conducted only under Board authorization and with the full knowledge of staff, including the Superintendent, building administrators and other supervisors.

4. Social Interaction

Staff and Board members share an interest in the schools and in education generally, and it is to be expected that when they meet at social affairs and other functions, they will informally discuss such matters as educational trends, issues, and innovations and general school district problems. Individual Board members have no special authority except when they are convened at a legal meeting of the Board or vested with special authority by Board action. Board of Education members are expected to avoid discussion of:

- A. Matters that are, or have the potential of becoming, the subject of an executive session;
- B. Information and data contained in personnel records protected by the privacy act;
- C. Contested issues that may require final resolution by the Board.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 10-220 Duties of boards of education.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Duties of the Board

State statute charges the Board of Education to “maintain good elementary and secondary schools” and to “give all the children of the town as nearly equal advantages as practical.” In carrying out this duty, the Board is directed to serve the interests of the State as well as those of the City.

To assist in determining the interests of the City, the Board will be receptive to community opinion on local educational matters. However, the Board cannot delegate to local individuals or groups its authority for establishing educational policy and its control of the schools.

The Board of Education will base its actions on the welfare of the students. In so doing, it will endeavor to secure maximum educational benefit for every dollar spent.

The following guidelines will govern the activities of the Board:

1. Board members will never use their position on the Board for personal gain.
2. Board members must understand that their primary responsibility is to establish policy.
3. The local school district has been created as a unit of the state government. This means that a local Board is responsible both to the local community and to state government. The Board of Education member is a state official functioning at a local level.
4. All Board members will abide by the principle of majority rule.
5. Board members should make no promise of commitments on school questions unless they are fully discussed and acted upon in the Board meeting.
6. The individual Board member has no authority when the Board is not in session unless authorized by the Board.
7. The local Board of Education should function independently of other local government bodies, except as provided by state law and city charter.
8. Board members will recognize that authority rests only with the whole board assembled in meeting, and will make no personal promises nor take any private action which may compromise Board.
9. Board members will acknowledge that the Board represents the entire school

community, and a member will refuse to surrender his or her independent judgment to special interest or partisan political groups.

10. Board members will respect the confidentiality of executive session.

11. Board members will arrive at conclusions only after discussing all aspects of the issue at hand with other board members in meeting. Opinions of Board members with differing points of view will be respected.

12. No individual member of the Board, by virtue of holding office, shall exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the schools, nor as an individual command the services of any school employee.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 10-220 Duties of Boards of Education
- 10-232 Restrictions on employment of members of the Board of Education.
- Charter
- C7-2, Powers and Duties

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Officers and Auxiliary Personnel

The first meeting of the Board of Education held on or after December 1st shall be the annual organizational meeting of the Board. At the annual meeting of the Board of Education a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Assistant Secretary shall be elected by the voting members for one year. A majority vote of all nine members eligible to vote shall be necessary for election.

When a Board of Education officer vacates his/her position as a member of the Board, the Board of Education will conduct new elections to fill that office after the Board of Representatives has appointed a new member of the Board.

When a Board of Education member steps down from his/her office, but remains a member of the Board, the Board of Education shall elect an officer to replace him/her at their next regular meeting.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 10-218 Officers. Meetings.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Office of the President

It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all meetings of the Board, to maintain order, enforce the rules of the Board, to sign all legal instruments ordered to be executed by the Board, to appoint all standing Board committees and all special Board committees unless otherwise ordered by the Board.

The President of the Board of Education shall be ex-officio member of all Board committees with voice and vote.

Absence of President

In the absence of the President or of the Secretary, the Vice-President and the Assistant Secretary shall perform respectively all the duties of the President and the Secretary. In the absence of both the President and the Vice-President, the Secretary shall perform the duties of the President until another provision is made by the Board.

Between Meetings

The Superintendent of Schools and the President of the Board of Education shall officially represent the Board of Education between meetings.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 10-218 Officers. Meetings.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Office of the Vice-President

In case of the resignation or removal of the President of the Board of Education, the Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President until a new President has been elected.

In case of a long absence or disability, the Vice-President will perform the duties of the President until the President either returns or resigns.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

January 25, 2000

Bylaws of the Board

Secretary of the Board

Duties of the Secretary

The Secretary shall sign necessary papers, and perform other such duties as are required by General Statutes.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 10-218 Officer. Meetings.
- 10-224 Duties of secretary.
- 10-225 Salaries of secretary and attendance officers.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Recording Clerk

The Superintendent shall designate a Clerk to assist the Board of Education. Under the supervision of the Board President, such Clerk shall keep a complete record of the resolutions and other proceedings of the Board and shall have custody of all its correspondence, files, and other records. Such Clerk shall comply with the provisions of the law concerning filing of records and public access to public records.

The Clerk shall file notice of all Board meetings with the Town Clerk in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 10-218 Officer. Meetings.
- 10-224 Duties of secretary.
- 10-225 Salaries of secretary and attendance officers.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Board Attorney

The Board of Education, by a majority vote, shall appoint an attorney or attorneys to provide professional legal counsel and representation to it and the Superintendent. The President of the Board shall be the liaison between the Board and the Board Attorney. No Board member shall request the services of the Board Attorney without express authorization by the Board President.

If the Board President refuses to convey an inquiry to the Board Attorney or to allow a Board member access to the services of the Board Attorney as to a legal inquiry, a Board member may gain such access by a majority vote by the Board at a meeting of the Board.

All legal opinions written to the President shall be copied and forwarded to all members of the Board.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Committees

The Board of Education shall operate as a committee of the whole, except that there shall be such committees as shall be authorized by vote of the Board. Committee members shall be appointed by the President subject to the authority of the Board to create or abolish standing committees. The functions of all committees shall be fact finding, deliberative, and advisory.

A majority of any committees shall constitute a quorum.

Board President Ex-Officio Member

The President of the Board of Education shall be ex-officio member of all committees with voice and vote.

Committee Meetings

Committee meetings shall be conducted in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act. Meetings shall be open except when executive sessions are authorized in accordance with the Act.

Notice

The Clerk of the Board, after notification by a committee chairman, shall file notice of committee meetings with the Town Clerk in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

Responsibility

No committee may speak or act for the Board of Education unless specifically designated or instructed to do so by the Board of Education.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 1-200 through 1-241 of the Freedom of Information Act.
- 1-200 Definitions.
- 1-225 Meetings of government agencies to be public.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

January 25, 2000

Amended:

August 22, 2006

September 28, 2010

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Committees

Committee Functions

In order for committees to function effectively, the following policies and procedures should be followed:

1. The Board may function with a Steering Committee comprised of the President and the Committee Chairs. The Steering Committee will approve the monthly agenda for each committee on the established schedule of meetings. The Chair of each committee will have communicated in writing with the Board President and the Superintendent, in advance, regarding the agenda established with the Committee's liaison staff member.

The Steering Committee meeting for the following month will be held at the end of the monthly regular Board meeting.

2. Each committee will be assigned a high level administrator to work with in establishing agendas. In most situations that administrator will attend committee meetings and present information. The Chair of a committee works with the designated staff member to set the agenda and chairs the meetings for the committee. The function is to bring forward agenda items to the full Board at a regular or special meeting of the Board. Chairs of committees have no power to take formal actions on any item unless specifically authorized by the Board. When the Committee Chair communicates with the designated staff member by e-mail the Board President and Superintendent should be copied on the e-mail.
3. A Committee Chair may request information from that administrator without going through the Superintendent or Board President. A committee member may request information through the Committee Chair from that administrator. It is critical to the process that each Committee Chair meet with the assigned administrator at least a week in advance prior to the month's committee meeting to review the committee agenda, including what will be presented and how long it will take. All information provided to any Committee Chairman must be provided by the Committee Chairman to the full Board at the time the information is received.
4. It is important for the Chair of each committee to maintain communication with the members of the committee to assure they will attend committee meetings. It is the responsibility of committee members to attend committee meetings regularly to notify the chair of a committee in advance of potential absence or tardiness, and to become familiar with any items of discussion that take place when the member is absent from a committee meeting.

5. Only genuine emergency situations may bypass committee approval, and go directly to the full Board.
6. Committee Chairs should bear in mind the schedule for completion of the committee meeting and review the time allocated for every item on the agenda at the beginning of the meeting. Committee Chairs are urged to avoid unnecessary repetition and topic drift.
7. Items to be discussed in Committee meetings will have materials presented in the Board Friday packet prior to the Committee meeting. Board members are expected to review those materials prior to the meeting, and be prepared for discussion. Significant questions or concerns should be communicated to the Committee Chair and the appropriate administrator in advance of the meeting so a response will be available at the meeting. The Superintendent and Board President shall be copied on e-mail correspondence.

Adopted:

September 25, 2007

Amended:

September 28, 2010

April 22, 2011

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Special Committees/Temporary Committees/Ad Hoc Committees

The President of the Board of Education shall appoint temporary and special committees as deemed necessary or advisable by the Board of Education, and the President shall be an ex-officio member of each committee.

The duties of the committee shall be outlined at the time of appointment, and the committee shall be considered dissolved when its final report has been made to the Board of Education.

All committees of the Board of Education shall follow the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act as required by statute.

Ad Hoc Committees

Ad Hoc committee members shall be designated in the first instance by the President. Any Board member interested in serving on an Ad Hoc committee shall notify the President promptly concerning his/her interest. Any member who is interested in attending Ad Hoc committee meetings may do so.

In the event of vacancies on Ad Hoc committees, the President shall have the power to appoint new committee members. All appointments expire when the committee as a whole expires.

Upon completion of the assigned task, the committee will cease to function.

Record Keeping

All committees shall keep minutes of business conducted at meetings. The minutes will be kept on file in the Superintendent's office and available at all times to the Board of Education members.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 1-200 through 1-241 of the Freedom of Information Act.
- 1-200 Definitions.
- 1-226 Meetings of government agencies to be public.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Resignation/Removal from Office

Board officers may be removed from being an officer of the Board by a two-thirds vote of the voting membership of the whole Board.

The Board may vote to censure or reprimand a member by a two-thirds vote of the voting membership of the whole Board.

In each case then, if the voting membership of the Board is nine, six votes shall be the two-thirds vote required, which may include the vote of the President.

Adopted:

January 25, 2000

Amended:

August 22, 2006

Bylaws of the Board

Orientation of Board Members

The Board of Education and the administrative staff shall assist each new Board member-elect to understand the Board of Education's functions, policies and procedures and operation of the school system immediately upon election. The following methods shall be employed:

1. The incoming member shall be given selected material on the function of the Board of Education and the school system.
2. The incoming member shall be invited to attend Board meetings and to participate in its discussions.
3. The incoming member shall be invited to meet with the Superintendent and other administrative personnel to discuss services they perform for the Board.
4. The incoming member shall be provided with a copy of the Board's policies and bylaws, administrative regulations and copies of pertinent materials developed by the State School Board Association.
5. The incoming member may attend, at District expense, workshops for newly elected members as approved by the Board of Education.

Adopted:
January 25, 2000

Amended:
August 22, 2006

Bylaws of the Board

Board Member Professional Development

The Board of Education desires that its individual members learn, understand and practice effective governance principles. The Board is responsible for member orientation and development. Board members have an equal opportunity to attend state and national meetings designed to familiarize members with public school issues, governance and legislation.

In order to develop leadership capabilities, become informed about current issues in education, and improve their skills as members of a policy-making body, Board members will participate in opportunities for development that may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- In-service activities planned by the Board and by the administration for staff members, as appropriate;
- Participation in conferences, workshops and conventions held by State and National School Boards Associations and other educational organizations;
- Participation in board retreats;
- Subscriptions to publications addressing Board member concerns.

Recognizing the need for continuing training and development of its members, the Board of Education encourages the participation of all members in appropriate conferences, conventions and workshops. To control both the investment of time and funds necessary to implement this policy, the Board establishes these principles and procedures for its guidance:

- The Superintendent of Schools will inform Board members, in a timely manner, of upcoming conferences, conventions and workshops. The Board will decide which meetings appear to be most likely to produce the greatest benefit to the Board and the district;
- Funds for participation at such meetings will be budgeted. When funds are limited, the Board will designate which members would be most appropriate to participate at a given meeting;
- If authorized to attend, and reimbursement is approved by the entire Board, Board members will be reimbursed, upon request, for reasonable and necessary expenses actually incurred;
- When a conference, convention or workshop is not attended by the full Board, those who do participate will be requested to share, by means of written or oral reports, information, recommendations and materials acquired at the meeting.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:
December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Remuneration and Reimbursement

Remuneration

A member of the Board of Education shall receive no compensation for his/her services.

Reimbursement

1. Approval

All expenses must be approved by the Board President before reimbursements are made. The President's expenses must be approved by the Vice-President.

2. Expense Reimbursement

Board members shall be granted reimbursement for reasonable expenditures incurred in connection with the discharge of their official Board duties.

3. Educational Conference

Board members who attend educational conferences shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenditures in addition to transportation to and from the destination and registration fees. The Board President shall make every effort to rotate the opportunity to attend such conferences.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 10-225 Salaries of secretary and attendance officers.
- 10-232 Restrictions on employment of members of board of education.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

January 25, 2000

Amended:

August 22, 2006

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Board Member Protection

The Stamford Public Schools shall maintain adequate insurance to protect the district and its Board of Education against loss because of fire, damage to school property, loss to other property, or general liability resulting as a responsibility of the school district, and save harmless its Board and staff while acting in behalf of the school district.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 10-235 Indemnification of teachers, board members and employees in damage suits; expenses of litigation.
- 10-236 Liability insurance.
- 10-236a Indemnification of educational personnel assaulted in the line of duty.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Code of Ethics

The members of the Stamford Board of Education shall comply with any Code of Ethics enacted by the City of Stamford as such code may be amended from time to time.

The Board expects that the City, acting through the Corporation Counsel, will provide written notification to the members of the Board of any such changes.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

January 25, 2000

Amended:

August 22, 2006

Bylaws of the Board

Conduct for Board Members

Conduct expected of Board members is based upon “Standards of Leadership for Members of Boards of Education” recommended by the CAFE Board of Directors. As a guide to performing their duties Board members should:

1. Be staunch advocates of high quality free public education for all Connecticut children. In fulfilling responsibilities, think of “children first.”
2. As agents of the state, uphold and enforce all laws rules, regulations and court orders pertaining to public schools. Strive to bring any needed change only through legal and ethical procedures.
3. Strive to help create public schools which meet the individual educational needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex, or social standing.
4. Work unremittingly to help the community understand the importance of proper support for public education whether it be in providing adequate finance, optimum facilities, staffing and resources, or better educational programs for children.
5. Join with the Board, staff, community and students in becoming fully informed about the nature, value and direction of contemporary education in our society. Support needed change in our schools.
6. Strive to ensure that the community is fully and accurately informed about our schools.
7. Communicate community concerns to the District staff.
8. Recognize that their responsibility is not to “run the day-to-day operation of schools and the District” through administration, but together with their fellow Board members, to ensure that the schools and the District are well-run through monitoring of effective policies.
9. The Board President communicates for the Board as a whole. Individual Board members speak for themselves. The Board clerk must be copied on all e-mail responses.
10. Attempt to confine Board action to policy-making planning and appraisal, and help to frame policies and plans only after the Board has taken into account those who will be affected by its actions.
11. Arrive at conclusions only after discussing all aspects of the issue at hand with fellow

Board members in meeting. Respect the opinions of others, and abide by the principle of majority- rule.

12. Recognize that authority rests only with the whole Board assembled in meeting, and make no personal promises nor take any private action which may compromise the Board.
13. Acknowledge that the Board represents the entire school community, and refuse to surrender independent judgment to special interests or partisan political groups. Never use their position on the Board for gain for self or friends.
14. Hold confidential all matters pertaining to schools which, if disclosed might needlessly injure individuals or the schools.
15. Insist that all school business transactions be open and ethical.
16. Strive to appoint the best professional leader available when a vacancy exists in the Superintendency.
17. Strive to appoint the best trained technical and professional personnel available, upon the recommendation by the Superintendent.
18. Refer all complaints through the proper chain of command within the system.
19. Constituent inquiries about a child must not be answered ~~directly~~ by individual Board members. Inquiries about a policy or practice must be referred to the “chain of command.”
20. Personal disagreements or disputes between Board members (as opposed to policy disagreements) should be addressed immediately by both members. If they cannot be resolved directly by the parties, the Board President should be called in to help.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 7-479 Conflicts of Interest.
- 10-156e Employees of boards of education permitted to serve as elected officials; exception.
- 10-232 Restrictions on employment of members of the board of education.
- P.A. 05-10 An Act Concerning Civil Unions

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

January 25, 2000

Amended:

August 22, 2006

September 28, 2010

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Formulation, Adoption, Amendment of Policies/Bylaws

The policies and bylaws of the Board of Education may be added to, amended or repealed at any two regular meetings by a majority vote of members of the Board present and voting, provided that notice shall have been given of such proposed action at a previous meeting and that each member shall be notified in writing by the secretary of the proposed change.

New or amended policies and bylaws shall take effect upon the date of their adoption or date specified by policy or bylaw.

The Board of Education shall have a continuing review of the policies and administrative practices governing the school system. Staff shall be consulted before recommendations are brought to the full Board.

Reference: Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

January 25, 2000

Amended:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Board Policies

Within the context of current law, the District shall be guided by Board-adopted written policies that are given appropriate distribution and are accessible to staff members, parents, students, and community residents.

Legally referenced policies contain provisions from federal and state statutes and regulations, case law, and other legal authority that together form the framework for local decision making and implementation. These policies are binding on the District until the cited provisions are repealed, revised, or superseded by legislative, regulatory, or judicial action.

No policy or regulation, or any portion thereof, shall be operative if it is found to be in conflict with applicable law.

If any portion of a policy or its application to any person or circumstance is found to be invalid, that invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of policy that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application; and to this end the provisions of this policy manual are declared to be severable.

Policies and policy amendments may be initiated by the Superintendent, Board members, school personnel, or community citizens, and generally shall be recommended for the Board's consideration by the Superintendent.

The Board shall designate one copy of the policy manual as the official policy manual of the District. The official copy shall be kept in the Superintendent's office, and the Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for its accuracy and integrity and shall maintain a historical record of the District's policy manual.

Local policies may be adopted or amended by a majority of the Board at any regular or special meeting, provided that Board members have advance written notice of the proposed change and that it has been placed on the agenda for such meeting.

Local policies become effective upon Board adoption or at a future date designated by the Board at the time of adoption.

After Board review of legally referenced policies and adoption of local policies, the new material shall be incorporated into the official policy manual and into other localized policy manuals maintained by the District. If discrepancies occur between different copies of the manual distributed throughout the District, the version contained in the official policy manual shall be regarded as authoritative.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules, policies and procedures

Bylaw adopted by the Board: December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Board Review of Regulations

The Board of Education does not adopt administrative regulations unless specifically required to do so by law, or unless requested to do so by the Superintendent. Adoption and amendment of such Board of Education adopted regulations shall be by the same procedure as that specified for policies.

The Board of Education reserves the right to review and direct revisions/additions of administrative regulations should they, in the Board of Education's judgment, be inconsistent with the policies adopted by the Board. Any Board action directing such revisions shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire Board.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

January 25, 2000

Amended:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Formulation, Adoption, Amendment of Administrative Regulations

The Board shall only adopt administrative regulations unless specifically required to do so by law, or is requested to do so by the Superintendent or two-thirds of voting Board members. Adoption and amendment of such Board-adopted regulations shall be by the same procedure as that specified for policies in Bylaw 9311.

The Board of Education reserves the right to review and direct revisions of administrative regulations should they, in the Board of Education's judgment, be inconsistent with the policies adopted by the Board of Education.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

January 25, 2000

Amended:

August 22, 2006

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Time, Place and Notification of Meetings

Regular Meetings

The Board of Education shall file with the office of the Town Clerk, not later than January 31st of each year, the schedule of the regular meetings of the Board of Education.

Special Meetings

Notice of each special meeting of the Board of Education shall be filed not less than twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting with the Town Clerk, giving the time and place of the special meeting and business to be transacted. No other business shall be considered by the Board at the special meeting. Each member of the Board of Education shall be notified by the Superintendent or the Clerk not less than 24 hours prior to the time of the special meeting and shall be advised of the time, place and business to be transacted, although any Board member may waive the twenty-four hour notification by a written waiver of notice to the purpose.

Special meetings may be called by the President or shall be called by the Secretary on the written request of at least three members of the Board.

Notice

Notice of meetings will be mailed to persons filing a written request renewable in January of each year. The Board of Education may charge a fee based upon cost of the service, as provided by law.

Emergency Meetings

An emergency meeting may be held. The Board must file minutes of any such meeting and state the nature of the emergency within seventy-two hours of the meeting. (Sec. 1-21)

Electronic Participation

The Board of Education authorizes that the Board President or presiding officer may allow Board members to participate electronically in a Board meeting if there is good cause why the Board members cannot attend in person and the request is received sufficiently in advance to allow a good quality electronic connection to be set up. Members who participate in a Board meeting through electronic means may be counted in the quorum. The location of the meeting must be in the normal location at the Stamford Government Center to allow the public to adequately monitor the meeting. Due to security concerns, electronic participation in closed executive sessions will not be permitted.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 1-200 (2) Definitions. "Meeting"
- 1-206 Denial of access to public records or meetings.
- 1-225 Meetings of government agencies to be public, as amended by June 11 Special Session, PA 08-3
- 1-227 Mailing of notice of meetings to persons filing written request.
- 1-228 Adjournment of meetings. Notice.
- 1-229 Continued hearings. Notice.
- 1-230 Regular meetings to be held pursuant to regulation, ordinance or resolution.
- 10-218 Officers. Meetings

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

January 25, 2000

Amended:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Public and Executive Sessions

Public Meetings

All meetings of the Board of Education, regular, special and emergency shall be open to the public with the exception of executive sessions. A chance or social meeting, a caucus, a meeting of a personnel search committee for executive level employment candidates, or a discussion of strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining are not defined as “meetings” under the Freedom of Information Act. A meeting is defined as a hearing or other proceeding of the Board, any convening or assembly of a quorum of the Board and any communication by or to a quorum of the Board, whether in person or by means of electronic equipment to discuss or act upon a matter over which the public agency has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or advocacy power. Communications between and among a quorum of members convening on electronically linked personal computers or by telephone conference call are subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

Executive Sessions

The public may be excluded from meetings of the Board of Education which are declared to be executive sessions. Executive sessions may be held upon a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting taken at a public meeting for only one or more of the following reasons, and may not be held for any other reason:

1. Discussion concerning the appointment, employment, performance, evaluation, health or dismissal of a public officer or employee, provided that such individual may require that discussion be held at an open (public) meeting.
2. Strategy and negotiations with respect to pending claims and litigation that the Board or a member of the Board, is party.
3. Matters concerning security strategy or the deployment of security personnel, or devices affecting public security.
4. Discussion of the selection of a site or the lease, sale or purchase of real estate by a political subdivision of the state when publicity regarding such site, lease, sale, purchase or construction would cause a likelihood of increased price until such time as all of the property has been acquired or all proceedings or transactions concerning same have been terminated or abandoned.
5. Discussion of any matter which would result in the disclosure of public records or the information contained therein described in Subsection (b) of Section 1-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

The motion to go into executive session shall identify the persons, in addition to the Board, who shall be invited to be in attendance in the executive session. The persons invited into executive session shall be limited to persons needed to present testimony or opinion pertinent to matters before the Board and such persons' attendance shall be limited to the time period for which their

presence is necessary.

Non-Meetings

Not every meeting of the Board of Education constitutes a “meeting” under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). A meeting does not include:

- Any meeting of a personnel search committee to executive level employment candidates;
- Any chance meeting, or a social meeting neither planned nor intended for the purpose of discussing matters related to official business;
- Any meeting discussing strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining;
- A caucus of members of a single political party notwithstanding that such members also constitute a quorum of a public agency;
- A quorum of the members of the Board who are present at any event which has been noticed and conducted as a meeting of another public agency, in that case, the event shall not be deemed to be a meeting of the Board as a result of their presence at such event. (For example, if the Board of Education is invited to attend a meeting of the Board of Finance, such a meeting does not have to be noticed and posted by the Board of Education.)

There is no specific executive session privilege for the discussion of collective bargaining issues. However, discussion of “records, reports of strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining” is permitted in executive session, provided that such documents exist.

Absent such documents, such strategy discussions and/or negotiations themselves must be held as a “non-meeting.” Collective bargaining is excluded from the definition of a meeting under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Collective bargaining sessions shall be held outside the scope of the FOIA as a “non-meeting.” Such sessions may be held at any time without posting, and related strategy sessions or updates to the Board of Education may be held either before or after the end of a regular or special meeting, without the need to post such meetings.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 1-200 Definitions. (as amended by PA 02-130)
- 1-206 Denial of access to public records or meetings.
- 1-210 Access to public records.
- 1-225 Meetings of government agencies to be public.
- 1-226 Recording, broadcasting or photographing meetings.
- 1-231 Executive sessions.
- 19a-342 Smoking prohibited in certain places.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

January 25, 2000

Amended:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Construction of the Agenda

The Superintendent in cooperation with the President of the Board of Education shall prepare an agenda for each regular and special meeting. Any member of the Board of Education may call the Superintendent or President and request that an item to be placed on the agenda. Upon the written request of three Board members, an item shall promptly be placed on the agenda of a regular or special meeting.

Posting of the Agenda

At least 24 hours prior to the time of the regular meeting, the agenda shall be available to the public.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 1-225 Meetings of government agencies to be public.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

January 25, 2000

Amended:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Board Calendar

The Board will develop and maintain, with the assistance of the Superintendent of Schools, an annual calendar of Board topics and events to assure that such topics are discussed on a regular and timely basis.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:
December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Board Calendar

This is intended to be a reminder of processes that should take place at specific times of the year. The dates should be flexible, but following them will prevent important decisions and discussions from being postponed or forgotten. Additional key dates may be added as appropriate.

December 1	New Board members take office. Swearing in (usually by Mayor) can take place any day between December 1 and the first Board meeting.
December 1-7	Board Organization Meeting – First Tuesday in December. Presided over by highest remaining outgoing Board officer. Election of new officers is the only item on the agenda. December Board Meeting – First Tuesday in December. Presided over by new President elected at the Organizational Meeting.
December	-Board President appoints committee chairs and assigns members. -District Goal Plan status report by Superintendent. -Budget is reviewed and finalized by Superintendent. -State issues enrollment projections.
January	-New Board meets for quarterly retreat. Should be at least a full day. Facilitated in-depth discussions; Review status of Board Goals; Opportunity to review Board protocols for new members. -Superintendent's budget is submitted to the Board; Fiscal Committee begins review process.
February	Fiscal Committee finalizes recommended adjustments to Superintendent's budget and refers budget to full Board. Full Board first holds public hearing on budget. Full Board votes on budget (middle of February) and refers to Board of Finance and Board of Reps.
March	District Goal Plan status report by Superintendent.
March-April	Quarterly Board Development meeting to follow up on January retreat, other Board issues. Review status of Board goals. Can be evening meeting.
May	-Annual evaluation of Superintendent; consideration of contract extension and changes. -Review and reallocate budget to accommodate reductions made by BOF & BOR.

June	Board resolutions on Superintendent's performance evaluation and contract extension.
June	Strategic Plan status report by Superintendent.
June	-Facilitated Board self-evaluation; determine Board goals for coming school year; determine Superintendent's goals for coming school year. Superintendent recommends salary adjustments for non-union staff.
September	-Review status of Strategic Plan with Superintendent and cabinet/staff. Review standardized assessments. -Staff begins to work to develop next year's proposed school calendar. Consults Board for guidelines. -Operations Committee begins review of Capital Budget requirements. -Superintendent and Board review next year's operating budget guidelines.
October	-Board is given Superintendent's proposed school calendar(s) for coming year(s); reviews in Policy Committee. School calendar is put on Board agenda. -Board reviews annual City Audit of school system's financial records.
November	-Quarterly Board Development meeting. Can be evening meeting. Review status of Board goals. -Board meeting to review status of Strategic Plan with Superintendent. -Board votes on Capital Budget request for following year. -Elections result in new Board members. New Board members are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invited to sit at Board meetings and participate, except for voting. 2. Given Board guidebook including By-Laws, Protocols, and Calendar. 3. Assigned a mentor from current Board by President. 4. Encouraged to attend annual CABA conference. 5. Given CABA and NSBA books on Board membership

Regulation approved:

September 25, 2007

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Meeting Conduct

Meetings of the Board of Education shall be conducted by the President of the Board of Education in a manner consistent with the adopted bylaws of the Board.

All Board meetings shall commence at the stated time and shall be guided by an agenda which will have been prepared and delivered in advance to all Board members and other designated persons.

The conduct of meetings shall, to the fullest possible extent, enable members of the Board (1) to consider problems to be solved, weigh evidence related thereto, and make wise decisions intended to solve the problems, and (2) to receive, consider and take any needed action with respect to reports of accomplishment both as to students and as to school system operations.

Provisions for permitting any individual or group to address the Board concerning any subject that lies within its jurisdiction shall be as follows:

1. At the beginning of each meeting, the Board may establish a time limit allowed to each speaker with a maximum of 30 minutes per meeting being allocated for this portion of the agenda. The agenda for workshop sessions of the Board of Education may, but need not include a public participation session.
2. The Board of Education shall not permit at any Board meeting conduct which disrupts or interrupts the orderly conduct of such meeting. A willful participant in such conduct may be removed from the meeting by the Board. The meeting room may be cleared, except for non-participating representatives of the press, in case of a disturbance.
3. The Board may, by a majority vote, decide to cancel or extend the public participation session.
4. Questions which can be answered during the hearing period may be answered at the option of the Board. Other inquiries which may require analysis/investigation will be answered as soon as possible.

The Board may adjourn any regular or special meeting to a specified time and place. If there is less than a quorum, the meeting may also be adjourned. A copy of the notice of adjournment shall be conspicuously displayed near the meeting room door within twenty-four hours of adjournment.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 1-200 Definitions

- 1-206 Denial of access of public records or meetings. Notice.
Appeal
- 1-210 Access to public records
- 1-225 Meetings of government agencies to be public
- 1-226 Recording, broadcasting or photographing meetings
- 19a-342 Smoking prohibited in certain places. Sign required.
Penalty
- 1-231 Executive sessions
- 1-232 Conduct of meetings (re disturbances)
- 10-224 Duties of the Secretary

Bylaw adopted by the Board:
August 22, 2006

Policy Review Recommendation: Consider as possible regulations

Meeting Norms

All meetings, whether of the full Board, or of Board Committees, shall be run in accordance with the prescribed Board norm for meetings, including:

- a. Participate actively
- b. Don't step on others' talk; build on what others say; watch your own air time
- c. Stay focused; avoid side conversations
- d. Respect the opinions of others
- e. Non-verbal communications (facial and body language) among and between board members and/or staff must be respectful
- f. Emphasize clarification, amplification, and implications of ideas
- g. Accept the consensus/vote of the meeting and move on without taking personal affront
- h. No cell phone use or texting allowed; if an emergency arises, leave the Board Room

Meeting chairs are responsible for maintaining an orderly meeting, and making sure each Board member present has an opportunity to be heard. Meetings are run generally in accordance with Board By-Laws and Roberts Rules of Order. In small informal meetings it is possible to function without formal recognition of speakers, but Board or Committee Chairs should observe carefully to make sure discussion is not dominated by a few, and that there is only one discussion taking place at a time, and step in if necessary to restore order. Once a member has spoken and given up the floor, others should be recognized before that member speaks again. Cross conversations would be avoided in meetings wherever possible.

The monthly Board meeting is a formal meeting and should be run strictly by Board Bylaws and Robert's Rules. Members must be recognized before speaking.

The length and productivity of meetings should be monitored by the Chair, and expected adjournment times should be honored when possible. That may mean reminding the members, as a group, of the passage of time, or asking members to stay on topic. It is the responsibility of the Chair to summarize discussion and move to end discussion, either by a vote, by identifying next steps, or by moving to the next item on the agenda.

A Chair should begin each meeting with an idea of what the goal is for that meeting, and make sure it is achieved. Decisions should not be postponed until another meeting without some resolution unless there is a specific reason.

Chairing a meeting is an administrative task. The Chair should not be hesitant to use his/her authority, and Board members should respect that authority.

Board members have a responsibility to attend meetings prepared for discussion by reading materials presented in the weekly packet and bringing appropriate materials.

Board members have a responsibility to other Board members and to invited guests to arrive at meetings on time. On time means arriving and seated at the time the meeting is scheduled to

begin. Any tardiness, whatever the reason, warrants a voiced apology. A meeting scheduled at 6:30 should begin promptly at 6:30.

RESPONDING TO BOARD MEMBER REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

(Background Information for Policy Sub-Committee)

-Page 1-

Superintendents of Schools believe board members should have a deep knowledge of their school districts. Such knowledge helps the board to support the superintendent's agenda. The foundation for effective policymaking is an informed board. Therefore, superintendent reports are an important part of every board meeting. It is also necessary for superintendents to keep board members informed of the important issues facing the school district. In addition, superintendents should respond in good faith to responsible and reasonable requests for information.

However, some individual board members have an seemingly insatiable appetite for information, seeing themselves as watchdogs for the public or to satisfy their curiosity. Unfortunately, board members may make many requests for information which can hamper the activities of the central office. Some board members may request documents pertaining to the status of contract negotiations, personnel performance or pending management decisions. In short, the superintendent is faced with the dilemma of how to respond to those board members who may disrupt the flow of district activities with difficult or even inappropriate requests for information. The superintendent should be able to screen such requests through the board chairperson.

A failure to respond or simply rejecting such requests may create the appearance that the administration has something to hide. Moreover, it is not wise to question the motives of a board member, as some requests are legitimate and helpful. The superintendent is faced with the problem of determining how to respond to some board members and not to others.

The superintendent needs to place the responsibility for managing board member requests on the full board. As with other issues, the instrument of choice for regulating board behavior is board policy and bylaws. A bylaw pertaining to information requests makes it clear that board members, subject to the policies that apply to all citizens, have access to public documents. They are also welcome to request information, subject to some safeguards.

The board, through its bylaw, accepts responsibility for checking unreasonable requests for information. In addition, the board goes on record respecting executive privilege. Such a bylaw is based upon the principle that the board must accept responsibility for policing itself. It is difficult, on many issues, for a superintendent to challenge the inappropriate behavior of individual board members. Unless appropriate behavior is agreed upon in advance and defined in policy and bylaws, boards will find it difficult to hold in check inappropriate behaviors of many kinds.

Board members who abuse the requests for information is not at the top of major governance challenges. However, such behaviors can present an unneeded problem for the superintendent. A bylaw pertaining to this issue reflects the responsible actions of the board.

Policy Implications

A new bylaw, #9325.5, "Requests for Information by Board Members," has been prepared and follows for consideration. This is considered an optional bylaw for inclusion in the district's policy manual.

Bylaws of the Board

Parliamentary Procedure

The deliberations of the Board shall be regulated by the rules of parliamentary practice in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, unless otherwise provided by these bylaws.

Writing Out Motions

At any meeting, Board members may write out motions which they have made and present them to the secretary.

Presentation of Resolutions, Motions and Amendments

Resolutions, amendments or motions must be reduced to writing at the request of the President of the Board of Education, the Presiding Officer of any Board committee or at the request of a majority of the members present at any Board meeting or committee meeting.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 1-200 Definitions
- 1-206 Denial of access of public records or meetings. Notice. Appeal
- 1-210 Access to public records
- 1-226 Recording, broadcasting or photographing meetings
- 19a-342 Smoking prohibited in certain places. Sign required. Penalty
- 1-231 Executive sessions
- 1-232 Conduct of meetings (re disturbances)
- 10-224 Duties of the Secretary

Policy Adopted:

January 25, 2000

Amended:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Vote Method

Except as otherwise required by statute or bylaw, the Board shall take action by majority vote of those present and voting. The President has the right to vote upon all questions.

Recording of Votes

All votes shall be recorded at all Board of Education committee meetings, as well as at all regular and special meetings of the Board of Education.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 1-225 (formerly 1-21) Meetings of government agencies to be public. Recording of votes. Schedule and agenda of meetings to be filed. Notice of special meetings. Executive sessions. (as amended by P.A. 99-71: An Act Clarifying Certain Time Periods in the Freedom of Information Act Eliminating Outdated and Unnecessary Freedom of Information Provisions.)

Policy Adopted:

January 25, 2000

Amended:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Requests for Information by Board Members

Board of Education (Board) members represent the public and are entitled to information regarding District performance that will assist them in governance. All Board member requests for documents or information should be made directly to the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Documents subject to Connecticut's Freedom of Information law will be provided, as they are provided to all citizens under Board policy.

Should requests be for information that already exists or data that can be easily gathered and analyzed (provided the request is not for privileged management information, as outlined below), the Superintendent will, in a timely manner provide the information in its most accessible format, to the requesting Board member, with copies to all Board members.

Should the information not exist and/or be difficult to obtain, and should the Superintendent determine that the value of the information to the District be insufficient to justify the time or cost of obtaining it, he/she shall bring the request to the Board, with an estimate of the time/cost of responding to the Board member's request. By Board action, the Board will direct the Superintendent to provide, or not provide, the requested information.

The Board, by this policy, wishes to distinguish between District performance information and privileged management information. Performance information is normally data based on numerical measures of results, District operations or practice patterns. Documents or other management information relating to individuals, contracts, meetings, or events of any ongoing management process, unless under the purview of the Freedom of Information Act, are considered privileged management information and not within the purview of the Board.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 1-200 Definitions
- 1-206 Denial of access of public records or meetings. Notice. Appeal
- 1-210 to 1-213 Access to public records (as amended by PA 02-113)
- 1-211 Access to computer stored records.
- 1-214 Public contracts as part of public records.
- 1-225 to 1-240 Meetings of government agencies to be public

Bylaw adopted by the Board:
December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Order of Business

Minutes and Reports

1. In compliance with legal requirements, a complete and accurate set of minutes of each meeting shall be kept.
2. Minutes shall be maintained at the Administrative Offices of the school district in an official record book designated for said purpose.
3. The minutes shall constitute the official records of proceedings of the Board of Education and shall be open to public inspection at all reasonable times.
4. The minutes shall include the following:
 - a. The time, place and date of each meeting.
 - b. The names of those members in attendance.
 - c. The disposition of all matters on which action was recommended.
 - d. All motions and resolutions and their disposition, listing all votes, abstentions and absentees.
 - e. All decisions concerning future meetings and agendas.
 - f. By request, a brief statement of a Board member may be included.
5. A record of votes taken at each meeting shall be reduced to writing and made available for public inspection within forty-eight hours of the conclusion of the meeting at which the votes were taken. Votes taken shall also be reflected in the minutes of each meeting, and the minutes shall be made available for public inspection within seven days of the date of the meeting to which they refer.

A Board member who desires information or a report from a member of the administration on a particular subject shall make such a request on the record at a Board meeting. The Secretary shall convey all requests to the Superintendent and shall add the responses to the agenda of a future meeting. All such requests shall be so scheduled within a reasonable period of time.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 1-225 Meetings of government agencies.
- 10-218 Election of officers.
- 10-224 Duties of the secretary.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Board/School System Records

The Board of Education shall comply with the applicable state and federal laws concerning preservation of and public access to records in the custody of the Board of Education.

The Board may charge for the reproduction of documents or other information as authorized by the Freedom of Information Act.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 1-15 Application for copies of public records.
- 1-200 Definitions.
- 1-210 to 1-213 Access to public records. (as amended by PA 02-113)
- 1-211 Access to computer stored records.
- 1-214 Public contracts as part of public records.
- 1-225 to 1-240 Meetings of public agencies.
- Federal Rules of Civil Procedure – 2006 Amendments

Policy Adopted:

January 25, 2000

Amended:

December 2, 2014

Bylaws of the Board

Monitoring Products and Processes

Self-Evaluation

The Stamford Board of Education is made up of duly elected individuals to oversee the Public Schools of the community. This very responsible and complex job requires that the Board blend its diverse opinion into a common purpose which will give direction to the school system. The local community looks to its Board of Education to provide leadership for the school system. The success of the system depends on how well that role is carried out.

Therefore, it shall be the policy of the Stamford Board of Education that there shall be an annual program of self evaluation in which each member shall participate.

Annually at its organizational meeting in December, the Board will schedule dates to conduct its self-evaluation. The evaluation will include, but not be limited to, the following leadership areas: community leadership of education, influencing educational policy, community involvement, communicating with the public, the decision making process, planning and setting goals, allocating resources, developing Board policy, policy oversight, selecting and evaluating the Superintendent, working with the Superintendent, promoting good employee relations, setting expectations for Board member conduct, conducting the work of the Board, Board member development.

The Board may, at times, request consultant assistance in carrying out the evaluation of the Board.

Bylaw adopted by the Board:

December 2, 2014