



FAYETTE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Board Governance Manual

Revised December 2021

Purpose of this Manual

Highly effective Boards operate as a cohesive team. The Board recognizes its important role and function as well as its broad responsibility on behalf of our children, staff, and families. To that end the Board has determined to formalize its framework for effectively operating as a governing unit.

The framework establishes the basis for operational norms agreed upon by the full team (Board of Education members and the Superintendent). In adopting this manual as part of formal board action in an open meeting, team members in their respective roles agree to adhere to the framework as they fulfill their covenant to reasonably do all in their power to achieve the district mission and advocate for our public schools and the children they serve.

With this understanding, the Fayette County Board of Education hereby adopts this Governance Manual to provide cogent guidance and consistent support for the internal operations of the Board. It outlines the manner and spirit it will utilize to fulfill its statutory role. The manual's foundation is one of building and sustaining a mutually respectful, positive culture of excellence, equity and educational effectiveness.

01.

02.

District Mission, Core Values, Vision, & Commitment to Equity

In fulfilling its important responsibilities, the Board affirms the mission of Fayette County Public Schools and begins each regular meeting of the Board of Education with a reading of this mission statement to help ground and guide the Board's work:

The mission of Fayette County Public Schools is to create a collaborative community that ensures all students achieve at high levels and graduate prepared to excel in a global society.

Combined, this mission and these core values help focus the District's vision to ensure, "All Fayette County Public Schools graduates are prepared for college and careers, engaged fully in their communities and ready to excel in a global society."

In fulfilling this mission, Fayette County Public Schools has established five core values which guide both administrative and governance decisions:

1. **Students first.**
2. **Victory is in the classroom.**
3. **Leadership, capacity building, shared accountability, and collaboration for results are keys to success.**
4. **Families are our partners.**
5. **It takes an entire community to ensure the success of our public schools.**

Recognizing that the students and staff of Fayette County Public Schools reflect the rich and varied diversity of our community, our Board remains committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. We recognize that the work of equity is not limited simply to statements but must be intentional, ongoing, and meaningful—engaging community partners and ensuring educational opportunities for every child in every Zip code. **In recognizing this important work, we affirm our District’s equity statement in this manual and commit to this effort in both word and deed:**

Fayette County Public Schools shall commit to providing educational excellence for every student. Achieving equity requires strategic decision-making to remedy opportunity gaps and create a barrier-free learning environment. District leaders will reflect this commitment in policy and in governance. As a district, we believe educational equity focuses on:

Inclusion: All learners are welcomed, accepted, and protected against harassment or discrimination in our schools as we celebrate the diversity of our students, staff, families, and community and teach our students to understand and effectively engage with people of different backgrounds.

Access: All learners shall have an equal opportunity to actively engage in all academic and extracurricular opportunities.

Process: All learners shall receive fair and just but not identical treatment and supports, including high-quality coursework that reflects the diversity of our students and highly qualified teachers who are prepared and supported to meet student needs.

Outcome: All learners shall have educational experiences that ensure achievement of high academic and social expectations.

To ensure that all students demonstrate growth and achievement, we must take timely, deliberate, and unified action to eliminate exclusionary practices and address historical and social barriers that prevent our students from reaching their highest potential.

The Board of Education will work collaboratively with the Superintendent, Equity Council, and Office of Equity, School Support, & Community Engagement in this shared commitment.

Revisions to this section shall be made as needed to reflect updates and changes emerging from the District's strategic planning process or other evaluation of the District's mission, core values, and vision.

Roles & Responsibilities

The Board of Education recognizes the key and fundamental role it plays in governing, guiding, and directing the work of the District toward the mission, vision, and values articulated in the previous section. Likewise, we respect the critical and important role the Superintendent and their staff play in administering the day-to-day operations of the District, ensuring that the priorities established by the Board are carried out.

03.

For example, the respective “lanes” of the Board in its governance capacity and the Superintendent in their management capacity includes, but is not limited to, the following:

School Board Governs (Guides/Directs)

- » Decides What
- » Requests Information
- » Asks Relevant Questions
- » Considers the varying/different/
many angles of Issues
- » Considers/Suggests, Amends,
Reviews, Adopts Policy
- » Reviews Administrative Procedures
- » Monitors Student Progress and
Tracks Data
- » Contracts with Personnel
- » Identifies Budget Goals and
Priorities.
- » Reviews Current Financials and
Approves an annual Budget
- » Listens to stakeholder input and
Cultivates Community Support

Superintendent Manages (Administers/Operates)

- » Decides How
- » Provides Information
- » Answers Questions Meaningfully
- » Provides Recommendations on
Issues
- » Develops, Recommends and
Implements Policy
- » Develops and Implements
Administrative Procedures
- » Shares Student Data and Reports
Progress
- » Assigns, Supervises, and Evaluates
Personnel
- » Develops Budget Based on Board
Goals, Priorities, and Input
- » Shares current and Projected
Financials and Implements
Approved Budget
- » Engages and cultivates
Stakeholder and Community
Support

While our roles are unique and distinct, both the Board and the Superintendent recognize the need for and importance of working collaboratively and with clear, open, and honest communication and dialogue.

04.

Board Meetings

It is in open board meetings where the public business of the Board and the District is conducted. The Board commits to transparent governance and following all applicable laws relating to the conduct of open meetings on the public's right to know and be informed of Board business.

A. Planning & Study Sessions

To facilitate informed decision-making and dialogue among the Superintendent and their administrative team, the Board will conduct one meeting per month devoted to planning, studying, and discussing issues on which the Board will be asked to act during the month's regular meeting.

The planning session is designed to be an opportunity for in-depth discussion and analysis, question-and-answers, fact-finding, and ensuring that Board members are well informed on the issues at hand.

These sessions are not designed for final Board action and those instances should be limited only to time-sensitive or emergency situations with prior approval from the Board Chair or Vice Chair, where appropriate.

B. Agenda

Agenda Review

The Board Chair and Superintendent shall meet prior to the Board's monthly planning and study session to review the agenda and relevant items prior to its dissemination to the Board and public.

Receipt of the Agenda

To ensure Board members are prepared to engage in discussion and dialogue, the Board shall be provided a copy of the agenda and related items and attachments no later than a week preceding the Board meeting during which the item will be discussed.

No item shall appear on the agenda for a regular monthly meeting of the Board without having been subject to discussion at a Board planning & study session except in time-sensitive or extraordinary situations, subject to approval by the Board Chair or Vice Chair, where appropriate.

Adding Items to the Agenda and Board Requests

Items can be added to the agenda at the discretion of the Board Chair. Any member of the Board may submit items for the agenda through the Chairperson or the Superintendent. The agenda shall be closed to Board members ten (10) calendar days preceding the scheduled regular, meeting unless the addition of a late item is approved by the Chairperson or by a request of three (3) Board members.

Items may be placed on a proposed special called meeting agenda at the direction of the Chairperson and shall be placed on the proposed agenda if requested by three (3) or more Board members.

The agenda of a regular meeting may be amended at the meeting upon affirmative vote of at least three (3) members. However, once the agenda for a special called meeting is posted or delivered to Board members and requesting media, it may only be amended when a new notice and reposting of the agenda, as amended, is completed prior to the twenty-four (24) hour period before the meeting as required by statute.

Consent Agenda

The consent agenda--a block of items acted upon by a single vote of the Board of Education during its regular action meeting--shall be used only for matters of a routine/recurring nature. For each item included on the consent agenda, the Board shall be provided appropriate background material and opportunities for discussion and questions at the planning and study session preceding

the regular meeting during which the consent agenda will be acted upon.

The consent agenda will be acted upon by a single vote.

More substantive items will be considered separately under "Action Items" and will not be placed on the consent agenda.

If a Board member wishes to pull an item from the consent agenda for individual consideration, they should notify the Board chair prior to the meeting.

C. Special Called Meetings

From time to time, the Board Chair may call meetings outside of the Board's regular meeting schedule for specific, time-sensitive issues when circumstances require. The timeline for receipt of materials can be adjusted based on circumstances. Pursuant to the Kentucky Open Meetings Act, these meetings shall be restricted to the topic for which they were called.

D. Closed Session

The Board will, at times, need to enter closed session pursuant to KRS 61.810(1). Board members should be informed before a meeting of the need for the closed session and the nature of the closed session so that they may properly prepare. The specific purpose of the closed session shall be stated while the Board is still in open session and no action shall be taken in closed session.

Discussion among Board members in closed session shall, pursuant to relevant state law, be confined to the topic

necessitating the closed session. Board members shall keep in confidence the discussions held in closed session.

E. Conduct During Meetings

Attendance

Board members are encouraged to attend meetings of the Board of Education having prepared for the meeting and reviewed the relevant materials. Members should make their best effort to arrive at meetings on time and ready to conduct the business of the District. Any Board member failing to attend three (3) consecutive regular meetings, unless excused by the Board for reason satisfactory to it, could be subject to removal pursuant to KRS 415.050 and KRS 415.060.

Robert's Rules of Order

Pursuant to Board policy 01.4, "The Board shall observe Robert's Rules of Order, with the exception that the chairperson may make a motion, second, discuss, and vote on all matters before the Board, or where otherwise provided by law." Information and guidelines on particular and common motions and parliamentary procedure can be found in the Appendix.

Discussion and Debate

To ensure efficient meetings and that all Board members have the opportunity to share, Board members shall first seek recognition from the Board Chair, or Vice Chair if acting in the capacity of Chair to conduct the meeting.

Prior to any motion, Board members may ask questions of staff on the recommendation or topic under discussion. Once a motion is made,

Board members may speak on the issue at hand. Remarks shall be confined to the motion or matter under discussion.

Board members recognize that it is "the measure, not the person" under discussion and shall refrain from personal attacks or invectives targeted toward staff, members of the community, or fellow Board members.

The Board meeting is not intended as a platform for airing grievances against fellow Board members or members of the staff. Such concerns should be handled if needed through complaint processes outlined in Board policies and related administrative procedures.

Voting

No action can be taken in the absence of a quorum of the Board. A majority of the Board constitutes a quorum. A concurring vote of a majority of the full Board is necessary to take any particular action, unless otherwise specified by statute. Voting shall be done by voice vote, with members clearly stating their support or opposition when the vote is called by the Board Chair. Members of the Board who are present but abstain from voting are considered as acquiescing with the majority vote.

Outside Communication

Members of the Board should not engage in other forms of communication (text, emails, etc.) during meetings about topics on the agenda.

F. Yearly Calendar of Topics

To facilitate the Board and Superintendent's planning, discussion, and fulfillment of roles, the Superintendent and their staff shall establish a yearly calendar identifying key recurring and important items that will be subject to Board review and action throughout the year. This calendar will help guide the work of both the Board and the Administration, ensure deadlines are met, and provide ample time for review and consideration of matters brought before the Board.

G. Outside Representatives

The Superintendent and their staff shall endeavor to include diverse and representative voices within the presentations they make to the Board during Board meetings, including the voices of students, staff, and community partners whose insight and perspective are relevant to the topic the Board is considering or discussing.

H. Public Participation

Members of the public may be provided an opportunity to speak during the Board's regularly monthly action meeting. The Superintendent or their designee shall establish a process for members of the public to sign-up to speak before the meeting is called to order.

Agenda-Specific Items

The total time for public comment on matters appearing on the agenda will be limited to thirty (30) minutes. The time allotted to individual speakers is at the discretion of the chair, depending on the total number of speakers and the lateness of the hour.

Non-Agenda Items

The total time for public comment on matters not appearing on the agenda will be limited to fifteen (15) minutes. The time allotted to individual speakers is at the discretion of the chair, depending on the total number of speakers and the lateness of the hour.

Conduct

The Board encourages public participation and engagement. This time, however, is not intended to be a time of debate or direct engagement with the Board. Furthermore, members of the public are encouraged to model civil and respectful discourse and conduct.

05.

Communications and Public Engagement

A. Communication

Good communication is a core leadership function and a key characteristic of a highly effective Board Team. Effective communication and effective leadership are closely intertwined and thus Board members need to be skilled communicators to strengthen relationships and their governance work: this includes communication among the Board team, with the superintendent, at the district level, in communities and groups, and sometimes on a global scale. Clear, transparent, and direct lines of consistent communication between all parties are important to ensure the mission, vision, and values of Fayette County Public Schools are the focus of the work of the Board of Education.

Board Team

The Board Chair is the spokesperson for the board when addressing actions taken by, priorities of, or matters pertaining to the Board of Education. Unless otherwise approved or authorized by the Board, individual members cannot speak for the Board in an official capacity or otherwise represent the views of the Board.

Comments of individuals speaking on behalf of the Board, including the Board Chair, should be based on Board action that has been taken, existing policies and procedures, action plans adopted pursuant to the Superintendent's authority as the Executive Agent of the Board, or Board discussions occurring in public, open meetings.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to preclude an individual Board member from sharing individual opinions in their capacity as elected officials on issues of public concern, while being mindful that governing and decision-making authority rests with the Board as a corporate body and that comments reflecting an individual Board Member's opinion should be clearly identified as such. The Board Team communicates with the community and media through public meetings, presentations, regular publications, surveys, and district website.

When a message is sent to the Board as a whole (e.g., the feedback email and other), individual board members should refrain from responding in such a way that their statements could be construed as speaking on behalf of the Board. If action is required at a campus or other department within the district, the message will be forwarded to the appropriate FCPS team member to ensure the question is answered or issue

is addressed. Should a message require attention from the Board of Education, the superintendent will work with the Board on a response. Reply chains involving all Board members should be avoided if they would run afoul of requirements under the Kentucky Open Meetings Act.

Requests for information from the public shall be referred to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee and will be addressed pursuant to the Open Records Act, KRS 61.870 to KRS 61.884, and other applicable law.

Board Members

Board members shall be mindful of the Open Meeting requirements as outlined in KRS 61.800 to KRS 61.850.

Board members may share and request information but may not engage in discussion or deliberation of matters that could come before the board for consideration and action with three or more members outside of the meeting.

Board members will invariably find themselves in shared social affairs and other functions. Informal discussions on general matters like education trends and issues are acceptable. Board members should, however, avoid discussion of specific board business or pending positions in such settings.

Board and Superintendent

The Superintendent will frequently communicate directly with the Board of Education in a weekly memo and will also make reasonable efforts to be accessible to individual board members as needed/ or requested. The Superintendent will communicate with the Board of Education as soon as practical on

emergencies via telephone calls, text messages, and/or email.

Individual board members will keep the Superintendent informed about matters of importance through telephone calls, text messages, email, or personal visits. To streamline communication, individual board members may direct inquiries to the superintendent or staff through the Chair. In such circumstances, Board members may submit questions/requests for the superintendent to the Chair by Noon on Friday for inclusion in the Chair's weekly memo to the superintendent. In turn, the Board Chair will communicate information in a timely manner to all Board members.

Board and Staff

If communication with individual board members is initiated by staff members, the individual board members will refer the staff to the appropriate person/chain of command. If the communication is to involve communication from an individual board member, the superintendent will be initially notified of staff communications, but may be excluded in further correspondence after direct communication from the staff member has been established (e.g., when a staff communication concerns a complaint against the Superintendent, or when the Superintendent has directed or requested a staff member communicate directly with an individual board member on a matter). In conducting communications with staff members, Board members should endeavor to avoid intervention or interference with personnel matters that would otherwise fall under the purview of the Superintendent.

Board members will be mindful that all district staff work directly for the superintendent, and thus should direct requests for information, records, data, etc. to the Superintendent who will then work with their staff to best gather the requested information in a timely manner. When appropriate, the requested information will be shared with all board members, so as to keep the entire Board team dutifully informed.

No individual Board member shall direct or require district staff to prepare reports derived from an analysis of information in existing district records or to create a new record compiled from information in existing district records. Directives to the Superintendent regarding the preparation of reports shall be by Board action.

An individual Board member, acting in their official capacity, shall have the right to seek information pertaining to District fiscal affairs, business transactions, governance matters, including information that properly may be withheld from members of the general public. If a Board member is not acting in their official capacity, they have no greater right to District records than a member of the public.

Board and Board Attorney

Engagement with the Board Attorney by individual Board members should first be facilitated by the Board Chair or, where appropriate, Board Vice Chair. The Superintendent and General Counsel may also engage the Board Attorney on matters reasonably determined to be of importance to the Board.

Board and Public

When communicating with the public and constituents in their individual capacity, Board members should endeavor to underscore that their communication reflects their own personal views and opinions and not that of the Board of Education.

In communications to the public-- including, but not limited to, emails, social media posts, and phone conversations--Board members shall not divulge information that would otherwise violate the confidentiality of closed Board sessions or the provisions of federal and state privacy laws.

Media Inquiries

The Board Chair shall be the official spokesperson for the Board to the media/press on issues of media attention. Board members should forward media inquiries to the Chair, superintendent, and/or the superintendent's designee. As indicated in Section V of this manual, this does not preclude Board members from responding to media inquiries they receive in their individual capacity as elected officials. In such situations, they should refrain from responding in such a way that their statements could be construed as speaking on behalf of the Board.

B. School/Site Visits

Board members are encouraged to visit schools and school-sponsored activities and should make arrangements to visit schools during instructional hours through the superintendent's executive assistant.

Board members should inform the Superintendent and Chair of their intention to visit schools if such visits occur during the school day.

The Superintendent and/or the superintendent's designee will regularly communicate with Board members about special events on campuses and within the community in order to offer the opportunity for the Board to demonstrate support of the District's endeavors.

C. Open Records and Open Meetings

Board members should be mindful of the requirements under the Kentucky Open Meetings Act in their conversations with Board members outside of an open meeting. In addition, Board members are reminded that communications related to public business may be subject to the Kentucky Open Records Act as well as state and federal privacy laws.

Board members should refrain from communicating with individuals via electronic device about Board business during a Board meeting.

Standards of Conduct & Conflicts of Interest

Development

The Board shall work collaboratively to develop standards of conduct and practice, which will be used to ensure a shared commitment to the service they were elected to do and engage in conduct conducive to a collaborative environment and advocacy for public education. The Board shall review and update these standards as appropriate when new Board members are elected or otherwise join the Board or when a new Superintendent is hired.

06.

Adoption

The standards shall be adopted by vote of the Board of Education during a publicly held meeting of the Board of Education upon initial adoption or revision.

Self-Evaluation

The Board shall develop a process for bi-annual self-evaluation in alignment with Board-identified goals and priorities. The evaluation process shall include both self-evaluation for individual board members and group evaluation of the board as a whole.

Complaints & Conflicts of Interest

Reporting of Associations

Each Board member shall report annually to the Board attorney, on a form developed by the Board attorney, any employment, financial interests, claims, appointments, offices, familial relationships, and activities that reasonably may create a conflict of interest under Board policy or applicable law.

These forms and the Board attorney's certification that no conflicts exist shall be posted on the District website.

Complaints and Grievances

Complaints from Board members about a fellow Board member shall be referred in writing to the Board Chair (or the Vice Chair, where appropriate). The matter will then be forwarded to the Board attorney for review and evaluation. The Board Chair (or, if applicable, Vice Chair) will notify the superintendent and the parties involved.

07.

Superintendent Evaluation

The Board Chair shall work collaboratively with the superintendent to develop evaluation framework, timelines, and criteria in keeping with Board policy and applicable law for consideration and approval by the Board of Education. The evaluation framework shall include goals and priorities as well as measures of success and meet requirements otherwise established by regulations of the Kentucky Department of Education and Board policy.

The Board shall engage with the Superintendent at least quarterly in a series of formative evaluations and discussions centered around the framework and guidelines established as outlined above. A summative evaluation shall be completed annually, incorporating the feedback from all Board members preliminarily discussed during a closed session of the Board of Education held for that purpose. The results of the Superintendent's summative evaluation shall be adopted as part of an open session of the Board of Education.

Board Committees

To facilitate the work of the Board of Education, the Board may establish committees consisting of at least one Board member and a staff liaison designated by the superintendent.

Committees shall receive and respond to charges and requests from the Board of Education and report back to the Board as directed. Committees established by the Board may be subject to the Open Meetings Act and therefore should endeavor to conduct themselves accordingly unless the Board Attorney or General Counsel determines the Act does not apply.

08.



09.

Recognitions

The Board is committed to recognizing the success of our students and staff. The Board, in coordination with the Superintendent or their designee, will establish a process such that individual students, school-sponsored teams, or staff members will be publicly recognized by the Board.

The Board will establish a regular schedule of these recognition events, endeavoring to hold these events at least once per quarter at various locations throughout the District.

New Board Member Orientation

10.

The Board Chair, or their designee, will be responsible for facilitating orientation and on-boarding for newly elected or appointed members of the Board of Education.

11.

Protocol Evaluation and Review

The Board shall annually review this governance document and, as needed, make revisions and updates subject to Board approval. Additionally, these protocols shall be reviewed and approved upon a change in composition of the Board or a change in the position of Superintendent.