

## Board Meeting Norms

- The Board is a governing body. The Board understands and respects the distinct role of the Board and staff.
- Board and Superintendent presume positive intent of Board members, staff and community. Be cognizant of how questions are phrased.
- The Board agenda is developed to ensure the meeting is run efficiently.
- The Board adheres to the topics of the agenda. Board discussion is for the business purpose of seeking clarity, furthering understanding and being prepared to take action.
- There are no side conversations or interrupting of other Board members during open and closed session meetings.
- Board members come prepared to each meeting.
- Board members are given an adequate opportunity to participate in discussion and decision making.
- Board members will contact the Superintendent with agenda questions prior to the meeting (Friday at 10:00 a.m. at the latest). This will allow staff the time necessary to research the information. Additional questions may still be presented during the Board meeting as necessary.
- Board members will state their position concisely and summarize. If another Board member has already captured the position on a subject, he/she will state that without repeating.
- The Board's treatment of all persons is courteous, dignified and fair. There is a respectful atmosphere throughout the entire meeting.
- The Board President's role is to facilitate the meeting by monitoring the discussion. Based on the norms, the Board President will check in with Board members to invite any new comments or to move forward to the next item. The Board President will enforce the agreed upon norms.



## Wenatchee School District

235 Sunset Ave. Wenatchee, WA 98801  
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### Board Operating Principles

- Establish priorities and keep district resources focused on student learning.
- Set Policies.
- Approve the budget.
- Listen to and represent the community.
- Be an advocate of public education.
- Be supportive of students, staff, and administration.
- Support participation and involvement in decision-making.
- Any questions, comments or concerns for staff are to be sent to the Superintendent and cc: the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will direct the information to the appropriate individual(s) for a response. Board members will not communicate directly with cabinet, principals or any staff members through email, phone calls, or text messages.
- Support actions taken by the Board and clearly differentiate between personal from board decisions when speaking in the minority.

#### The Role of the Board is not to:

- Carry out policies or micromanage.
- Create surprises.
- Abdicate Board responsibilities.
- Press narrow personal agendas.
- Make promises as an individual board member.

# BOARD MEETING EVALUATION

Your email address ([white.k@wenatcheeschools.org](mailto:white.k@wenatcheeschools.org)) will be recorded when you submit this form. Not white.k? [Sign out](#)

\* Required

**1. Date of Meeting: \***

Example: December 15, 2012

**2. Instructions: S = Satisfactory NI = Needs Improvement U = Unsatisfactory \***

Mark only one oval per row.

	S	NI	U
Board Members were prepared for the meeting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The agenda was well designed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Board adhered to the agenda	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Directors were given an opportunity to participate in the discussion and decision making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Board was respectful of the other Directors, staff, and community; there was a respectful atmosphere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There were no side conversations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**3. Additional details for any "NI" or "U" responses above (Optional)**

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**4. The Board adhered to its adopted Operating Principles \***

Mark only one oval per row.

	Yes	No
Emphasized the future and the whole community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encouraged diversity in viewpoints	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Exercised governance rather than micromanaging administrative details	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maintained clear distinction between the roles of the Board and staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**5. Additional details for any "No" responses above (Optional)**

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Send me a copy of my responses.

# Board & Administrator

FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

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## Developing board-superintendent operating principles

Operating principles for the board and superintendent define the beliefs, values, and methods of working together. Once implemented, the manner in which the board and superintendent conduct their relationship and the district's business becomes a model throughout the district and serves for staff and the district's "customers" as an example of how problems are solved.

In order to develop a positive, proactive, unified team approach, both the school board and superintendent must know, understand and respect their respective roles. This role clarification can become clear through board work sessions, individual one-on-one sessions with each board member, and the development of board-superintendent operating principles. The time spent together developing such principles and the ensuing discussion create an open, honest dialogue that builds trust and confidence between the superintendent and the school board, and lays the foundation for working together.

The following role definition and example of a "communications" operating principle convey the philosophy of the type of cooperative behavior that has been developed and mutually agreed upon by the board and the superintendent in Freeman, Wash., School District.

As members of the leadership team, we are committed to upholding these principles.

### Leadership Team Roles

Freeman School District Board	Freeman School District Superintendent
<b>GOVERNS</b>	<b>LEADS</b>
Reviews and Suggests	Decides How
Requests Information	Seeks and Provides information, recommendations
Considers Issues	Recommends and Carries Out Policy
Creates, Reviews, and Adopts Policy	Reports Progress
Monitors Progress	Evaluates Personnel
Contracts with Personnel	Formulates and Implements Budget
Approves Evaluation Criteria, procedures, budget	Acts in Public Interest
Represents Public Interest	

### Principle: Communication, Cooperation and Support

Open communication requires trust, respect, and a fundamental belief in goodwill among board members and the superintendent. We will work to minimize misunderstandings and reduce conflict by: supporting each other constructively and courteously; maintaining confidentiality; focusing our discussions on issues, not personalities; constructively dealing with disagreement; upholding the integrity of every individual; pursuing knowledge thorough understanding; and avoiding promotion of individual agendas.

Michael Dunn, Ed.D., is the NorthEast Washington Educational Service District 101 Superintendent in Eastern Washington and has served as an educator for 37 years. Randy Russell, Ph.D., is the Superintendent of the Freeman School District in Rockford, Wash. Reprinted with permission. ■

## Effective school board members have commitment

To accomplish great things as a school board, trustees must have a strong commitment to the mission. Most districts convey their mission through mission statements. If you distill it into its simplest form, a board member's mission is to ensure that all children receive a high-quality public education.

To accomplish this, board members must always:

**1. Demonstrate engagement.** Prepare for meetings, stay informed on the issues, and always attend board meetings.

Participate in meetings by stating your views and actively listening to those who sit at the meeting table.

**2. Represent the community.** You will work with school staff and spend more time with them as a board member than you will with the general public. Always remember, however, that you represent the community when you make decisions for the school.

**3. Understand the collective nature of board work.** As a board member, you not only represent yourself and your views, but work as a member of a

team. If the team fails to do its job, you bear responsibility as much as any other member of the team.

It is also important to remember that the board's power comes from its collective action — a vote — during the board meeting. As an individual board member, a trustee has no power to take action.

**4. Remember the "two hats" principle.** Let's say you have special skills in the area of accounting. Use these skills to help the board make better decisions (your board member hat).

On the other hand, you should never tell the business operations staff how to do their job. If you want to offer your skills in this area, you should state clearly that you are doing so as a volunteer, wearing your volunteer hat, and not as a board member. Also, remember that it is the superintendent's prerogative as to whether your offer of volunteer assistance is accepted.

**5. Behave responsibly.** Always consider how district patrons will view board behaviors that are dishonest or self-serving, and then act accordingly. ■

## Strategy for contentious public meeting

If the board is facing an issue that generates high emotions in the community, the board needs to be prepared for a different kind of public meeting.

The board might expect to hear from several groups on both sides of the issue looking to make their case with the board. Here are some issues for the board to consider when emotions run high in the district leading up to a meeting:

**1. Plan for a venue change to accommodate a larger-than-normal attendance.** Consider whether a local or district auditorium may be a more appropriate location.

**2. Limit groups' speaking time.** Work this

out with your superintendent. Is five minutes enough? Do you need to stretch presentation time to 10 minutes on hot-button issues?

**3. Understand that board members should not debate or make motions based on a group's presentation.** Board members should ask questions for clarification, as needed. They do not need to respond to individual presenters.

**4. Limit a group's number of presentations in a school year.** A group will return regularly if the limitation is not stated in board policy. One presentation on a given topic per year is a good rule of thumb. ■

## Communication is best when board members know their colleagues

Good communication occurs when teammates on the board work together effectively. One key to this is respect and understanding, as well as practicing skills such as:

- Listening to each other.
- Taking time to consider viewpoints with which you are not in agreement.
- Allowing the minority voice to have its say.

There is another ingredient that goes into the recipe for effective intra-board communication, however, and that's solid understanding of who the people are that are sitting on the board with you. Having board members share information such as their educational backgrounds, hobbies, and "pet peeves" can help board members familiarize themselves with one another.