

Blackford County Schools
Board Policy
Series 1000
Internal Board Policies and Bylaws

FIRST READING: January 17, 2017
SECOND READING: February 21, 2017

(Series 1000)

ARTICLE 1 INTERNAL BOARD POLICIES and BYLAWS

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1100 CODE OF ETHICS

Because of the vital and important role which the public schools of our state and country play in providing the basic foundation for democratic living and for sustaining the American way of life, and because, therefore, school board membership represents such a challenging responsibility, this Code of Ethics is applicable as a guide to board members as they strive to render effective and efficient service to their respective communities.

A school board member should honor the high responsibility which his membership demands:

By thinking always in terms of “children first.”

By understanding that the basic function of the school board members is “policy-making,” and not “administration,” and by accepting the responsibility of learning to discriminate intelligently between those two functions.

By accepting the responsibility, along with his/her fellow board members, of seeing that the maximum facilities and resources are provided for the proper functioning of schools.

By refusing to “play politics” in either the traditional partisan or in any petty sense.

By representing at all times the entire school community.

By accepting the responsibility of becoming well informed concerning the duties of board members and the proper functions of public schools.

By recognizing responsibility to seek the improvement of education throughout the state.

A school board member should respect his relationships with other members of the board.

By recognizing that authority rests only with the board in official meetings, and that the individual member has no legal status to bind the board outside of such meetings.

By recognizing the integrity of his predecessors and associates, and the merit of their work.

By refusing to make statements or promises as to how he/she will vote on any matter which should properly come before the board as a whole.

By making decisions only after all facts bearing on a question have been presented and discussed.

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By respecting the opinion of others and by graciously conforming to this principal of “majority rule”.

By refusing to participate in irregular meetings such as “secret” or “star chamber” meetings which are not official and which all members do not have the opportunity to attend.

The school board member should maintain desirable relations with the superintendent of schools and his staff:

By striving to procure, when the vacancy exists, the best professional leader available for the head administrative post.

By giving the superintendent full administrative authority for properly discharging his/her professional duties and also by holding him/her responsible for acceptable results.

By acting only upon the recommendation of the superintendent in matters of employment or dismissal of school personnel.

By having the superintendent present at all meetings of the board except when his/her contract and salary are under consideration or unless excused by the president of the board.

By referring all complaints to the proper administrative office and by discussing them only at a regular or special meeting after failure of administrative solution.

By striving to provide adequate safeguards around the superintendent and other staff members to the end that they can discharge their educational functions on a thoroughly professional basis.

By presenting personal criticisms of any employee directly to the superintendent.

A school board member should meet his responsibilities to his community:

By attempting to appraise fairly both the present and future educational needs of the community.

By regarding it as a major responsibility of the board to interpret the aims and the methods of the schools to the community.

By insisting that all school business transactions be on an open, ethical, and above-board basis.

By vigorously seeking adequate financial support for the schools.

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By refusing to use his position on a school board in any way whatsoever for personal gain or personal prestige.

By refusing to discuss personnel matters or any other confidential business of the board with the general public.

By winning the community confidence that all is being done in the best interests of school children.

By allowing the superintendent and/or the director of transportation to decide all bus routes with appropriate input from bus drivers.

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1110 MISSION STATEMENT

Educating students, changing the world.

1130 PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The primary purpose of the Blackford County Schools is to provide learners of all ages and abilities with the opportunity to develop the fundamental skills and processes essential to being productive members of a changing society. The responsibility for the development of these skills must be shared by parents, students, educators, and the community at large.

The Board must recognize the diversity of individual interests, needs, and abilities. Each learner must be given an equal opportunity to attain the skills necessary for lifelong learning, productivity, and personal fulfillment. Every learner should have the opportunity to:

1. Master the basic skills essential for lifelong learning.
2. Acquire the knowledge and skills essential for full participation in a democratic society.
3. Acquire the reasoning skills necessary for using information to solve problems.
4. Acquire the creative and critical thinking skills essential for making informed decisions.
5. Acquire the communication skills essential for receiving and transmitting information.
6. Acquire the ethical principles necessary to assume individual responsibility for learning and personal actions.
7. Develop the appreciations needed for living an enriched life.
8. Develop a positive self-concept and respect for other persons needed to cope with and adjust to present and future life conditions.
9. Gain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to continue learning and/or become gainfully employed as a productive citizen.

The board further recognizes that the maximum achievement of the above skills requires the student to accept the responsibility to:

1. Participate fully in the learning process through regular classroom attendance.
2. Display self-discipline.
3. Exhibit a positive attitude toward learning.
4. Demonstrate a respect for rules and regulations and the rights of others.
5. Take the initiative in establishing personal educational and vocational goals.

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1162 ORGANIZATION

The organization, management, and control of the Blackford County Schools are the responsibilities of the board, which exercises the powers and discharges the duties imposed by Indiana law. It shall be the purpose of the board to provide education of the best obtainable quality for residents of Blackford County, within the limitations compatible with the taxpayers' ability to pay and willingness to support the educational program. The board shall be the legal representative, not only of the citizens of Blackford County, but also of the State Board of Education.

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1200 ELECTION OF MEMBERS AND TERMS OF OFFICE

In the election in 2000 and every four (4) years thereafter (2004-2008 etc.), two Board members shall be elected by the voters of Blackford County at-large (all voters in the County being eligible and entitled to vote for the two Board members being elected). However, one Board member to be elected shall reside (and shall continue to reside during his/her term[JS1]) in the [sc2]Blackford Junior High School and elementary school geographic district [that portion of Blackford County that lies south of a line from Road 400 West and 400 North on the western edge of Blackford County , running thence east along Road 400 North to Road 400 East, thence south along Road 400 East to Road 200 South thence east to the Jay County line (Road 900 East)] and one shall reside (and shall continue to reside during his/her term[JS3]) in the Montpelier School and elementary geographic district [that portion of Blackford County north of a line from Road 400 West and 400 North on the western edge of Blackford County, running thence east along Road 400 North to Road 400 East, thence south along Road 400 East to Road 200 South thence east to the Jay County line (Road 900 East)]. Each Board member shall be elected for a four (4) year term beginning on January 1 of the year following the election (a term begins on January 1, 2001, for example).

In the election in 2002 and every four (4) years thereafter (2006, 2010 etc.), three Board members shall be elected, one each from the three geographic areas of Blackford County currently utilized for Board elections. The three geographic areas are: District 1 lies from the Grant County line (County Road 400 West) to the middle of State Road 3, encompassing the western portion of Blackford County between those lines; District 2 lies from State Road 3 to Road 200 East; and District 3 lies from County Road 200 East to the Jay County line (Road 900 East), encompassing the eastern one-half of Blackford County. The three Board members shall be elected by the voters of Blackford County at-large (all voters in the County being eligible and entitled to vote for the three Board members being elected). A Board member elected from such a geographical district must reside and must continue to reside in that District during his/her term.

The Board shall consist of five members. In the event of vacancies on the Board, the provisions of Indiana law shall determine the procedure for filling such vacancies, and the residence requirements set forth in this Plan as amended shall continue in effect. If there are any areas in Blackford County which are not part of Blackford County Schools District, that area or areas shall be excluded from voting in these elections.

This plan shall take effect on July 1, 1999, and shall govern all following elections until this plan is properly amended.

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1205 OATH OF OFFICE

Each newly-elected Board member shall take an oath of office as required by Indiana Code.
A copy of the Oath shall be deposited in the office of the Clerk of Blackford County.

LEGAL REFERENCE: IC 20-26-4-2

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1210 FILLING A BOARD VACANCY

- A. The Board shall seek qualified and interested candidates to fill a Board vacancy.
- B. All applicants shall submit a written notice of their interest to the Board president.
- C. The Board shall review all applications and interview selected candidates.
- D. Appointments to fill a vacancy shall be by majority vote of the full Board.

1220 ANNUAL ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

The Board shall elect from its members a President, Vice-President, and a Secretary all of whom are separate members.

The organizational meeting of the board shall be within the first fifteen (15) days of January each year. One member shall be elected President, one Vice-President, and one Secretary. If any of the above offices is vacated, an election shall be held at the next regular meeting to fill said vacancy and any other vacancies that may occur as a result of said election.

The Board shall also appoint a Treasurer of the Board and of the Corporation who is not the Superintendent or a Board member.

The President of the Board shall:

Preside at meetings of the Board, and shall

Perform other duties appropriate to the office of the President in the management of school boards.

The Vice President of the Board shall:

Preside at meetings of the Board when the President is not able to attend, shall

Perform other duties appropriate to the office of Vice-President in the management of the Corporation as the Board determines, and shall in case of a vacancy in the office of the President, succeed to the office of President for the balance of the unexpired term.

The Secretary of the Board shall:

Record and sign the minutes of meetings, orders, resolutions, and other proceedings of the Board in proper record books, shall sign the annual report of the Corporation and other reports required by the State Board; and shall perform other duties required by law or by the Board of School Trustees.

The Treasurer shall be the official custodian of all funds of the Corporation and shall be responsible for the proper safeguarding and accounting for all such funds. The Treasurer shall issue a receipt for all funds coming into his/her hands as well as deposit money and issue all warrants in accordance with law. The Treasurer may also transact Corporation financial business through the use of electronic funds transfer. The Treasurer may, with the approval of the Board, delegate the regular duties associated with his/her responsibility to a deputy, but that person shall not be the Superintendent or a member of the Board.

Other qualifications for office shall be in conformance with Indiana law.

LEGAL REFERENCE: IC 20-26-4-1

1230 BOARD MEMBER COMPENSATION AND REIMBURSEMENT

The Board of Trustees by resolution shall annually determine the amount of salary and per diem each member will receive for services performed as board members, not to exceed the limitations established by Indiana law.

The board may reimburse its own members for expenses incurred while visiting schools outside the corporation and while attending regional, state, and national meetings or conferences with approved travel expenses being reimbursed. All trips are to be approved in advance by the board. In no case will the reimbursement be greater than the actual expenditures for each member.

LEGAL REFERENCE: 20-26-4-7

1241 DUTIES OF THE BOARD

The board of school trustees has duties and limitations prescribed by law. Briefly stated, the board has the following responsibilities.

- A. To interpret the educational needs of the school community.
- B. To develop policies in accordance with the law and in accordance with the educational needs of the people of the school community.
- C. To select the superintendent of schools and support him in the performance of his duties.
- D. To evaluate and act upon the nominations of personnel presented by the superintendent.
- E. To formulate, establish, and adopt the annual budget with the assistance of the superintendent and his staff.
- F. To evaluate and pass upon the recommendations of the superintendent for additional capital outlays of buildings, site improvements, and to determine the means of financing such outlays.
- G. To determine the salaries, salary schedules, and fringe benefits of all employees.
- H. To adopt regulations concerning the use of school property.
- I. To appraise the efficiency of the schools and of the service rendered in terms of value to the community.
- J. To keep the citizens intelligently informed of the purpose, value, conditions, and needs of public education within the community. All such information is to be released through the superintendent's office.
- K. To professionally develop as board members by attending ISBA and NSBA-sponsored workshops.

1244 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Board members shall perform their duties in a manner free from any possible criticism or prejudice or self interest, and

- A. Every effort shall be made to avoid the possibility of a claim being made that an individual participated in reaching a decision on a matter in which he or she had either a direct or indirect financial interest of a substantial nature;
- B. Each member of the Board shall resist every temptation and outside pressure to use his/her position as a Board member to benefit either himself/herself or any other individual or agency apart from the total interest of the School Corporation;
- C. When a member of the Board determines that the possibility of a personal interest conflict exists, he or she should, prior to the matter being considered, disclose his/her interest in accordance with statute and such disclosure shall become a matter of record in the minutes of the Board;
- D. No member of the Board may obtain, for at least one (1) year after termination of service on the Board, a pecuniary interest in any corporation contract or purchase which was approved during his/her tenure.

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1250 MEETINGS OF THE BOARD

The schedule for dates and times of regular meetings of the board shall be determined during the Annual Organizational Meeting of the School Board. Special meetings shall be called by the president or by the superintendent. Three members of the board will constitute a quorum in all official meetings providing the other members have been properly notified of the meeting. No action may be taken without a quorum present. A simple majority of those present is sufficient for action on any motion except those specifically enumerated in the statutes such as approval of contracts or a vacancy on the board. Abstentions shall be counted as a majority votes, and shall be recorded. In the case of a tie vote in which an abstention is involved, the motion shall fail for lack of a majority. The board president can and should vote on all motions. In the event of a tie vote by the other members of the board, the president's vote shall be recorded last and shall be the deciding vote.

All regular and special meetings of the board are open to the public; official action on all school matters will be taken at an open meeting.

No action taken or agreement entered into by members of the board of school trustees will be binding unless such action is taken, or is authorized to be taken, or such agreement is entered into, at a regular or special meeting of the board at which a quorum of the board is present.

Executive sessions of the board and superintendent may be called by the president or superintendent. Executive session will be held in accordance with Indiana Code. A public notice of at least 48 hours will be given except when a meeting is called to deal with an emergency involving actual or threatened injury to a person or property or actual or threatened disruption of school activities by any event, whereby every board member and the media must be notified by the same method at approximately the same time.

Robert's Rules of Order is adopted as a procedural guide for all meetings of the board.

I.C. 20-26-4-3

I.C. 5-14-1.5-1

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1323 MEMBERSHIPS

The board may hold membership in the Indiana School Boards Association, National School Boards Association, Region 8, East Central Indiana School Trust, Delaware/Blackford Special Education Coop, and the East Central Indiana School Study Council. All school trustees shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred while traveling on school business and to ISBA, AASA, NSBA, ECISSC, and other meetings, and shall submit any request for reimbursement through the claim procedure.

1361 HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS THROUGH SPECIAL HEARINGS

Neither the board as a whole nor any individual member will entertain or consider communications or complaints from parents or patrons until they have first been referred to the superintendent of schools. Only in those cases where satisfactory adjustment cannot be made by the superintendent and his administrative staff shall the communications and complaints be referred to the board president. The board will, if it deems advisable, grant a hearing to the parties interested. Such hearing will be held during a regular session or executive session of the board depending on the nature of the complaint. When a delegation is granted a hearing, one person from the delegation shall be entitled to be heard as the official representative of the delegation and the presentation should be as brief as possible. The board president reserves the right to set a time limit on all presentations to the board. The presentation of any case shall, if requested by the board, be reduced to writing and a copy filed with the secretary. The board shall not hear appeals of student expulsion cases. The first level of appeal shall be the superintendent. All policies to the contrary shall be amended to conform to this policy.

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1400 ATTORNEY

The board will employ an attorney to perform legal services. The contract with an attorney shall be for one year at a fee mutually acceptable. The attorney shall be available for counseling relative to school matters. The attorney will determine the legality of bids and interpret Indiana Statutes as necessary.

1425 ORIENTING NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The board and the administrative staff shall assist each new member-elect by providing the following:

- A. Selected material regarding the function of the board and the school corporation.
- B. An invitation to attend board meetings and to participate in discussions prior to taking office.
- C. An invitation to meet with the superintendent and other administrative personnel to discuss services they perform for the board.
- D. A copy of the board's Policy Manual.
- E. Copies of materials developed by the Indiana School Boards Association. New members shall be encouraged to attend the ISBA orientation meeting for new members.

1556 METHODS OF OPERATION

The primary focus of board meetings must be threefold:

1. Assurance of adequate opportunities for discussion and deliberation among all stake holder parties.
2. Decision making based on board policies, with responsibility for administrative regulations and action delegated to the superintendent and staff.
3. Review of results by monitoring processes and reports to enable the board to exercise its leadership role effectively.

1610 EXERCISE OF HOME RULE POWERS

The Board of Trustees in exercising any power granted to it by the Indiana Home Rule statute, and the exercise of such power is not provided for by any constitutional or statutory provision, shall execute such power in the following manner:

1. Prior to the board's exercise of its power, all aspects, consequences and results of its action will be reviewed and considered by the Board in an open meeting. Consideration and review by the Board may include opportunity for members in the community and school personnel to provide input to the Board's action.
2. The board will take action by adoption of a policy at the next regularly scheduled open Board meeting. In the case of an emergency, or in an urgent situation, the Board may act upon the matter in the same open meeting, or call a special meeting to consider its action.

With respect to contracts and the exercise of Home Rule power, contracts entered into by the Board with an individual school employee and/or the exclusive representative of any employee group through a collective bargaining process shall be reviewed by the board prior to the vote to accept or ratify such contracts. Provisions of such contracts which have been accepted or ratified shall be deemed the policy of the Board of Trustees.

LEGAL REFERENCE: IC 20-26-3

1641 FORMULATION OF POLICIES

Provision shall be made every year beginning in the year 2011 for review of the Policy Manual to update all applicable policies and to eliminate obsolete sections.

Policy proposals and suggested amendments to or revisions of existing policies shall be submitted to the superintendent in writing prior to a regularly scheduled board meeting. The superintendent shall be required to submit each proposal to the board president who shall discuss the proposals with the superintendent and other members of the board.

In an effort to keep written policy up-to-date so that it may be used consistently as a basis for the board action and administrative decision, it shall be the policy of the board to review policies on a continuing basis. The board shall evaluate how the policies have been executed by the school staff. It shall rely on the school staff, students, and the community to provide evidence of the effect of the policy. The superintendent is given the continuing commission of calling to the board's attention all policies that are out-of-date or for other reasons appear to need revision.

Board policies will become effective upon approval of second reading; the first and second readings must occur at separate, regular meetings.

Proposals regarding school district policy may originate from a parent, a taxpayer, an employee or an employee organization, a student or student organization, a member of the board, the superintendent, building administrator, a consultant, a civic group, or others.

The superintendent is authorized and directed to establish and maintain such administrative regulations as will be needed to ensure the implementation of policies.

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1650 FORMULATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

The board shall delegate to the superintendent the function of developing administrative guidelines by which the schools will be operated and those regulations shall be binding on all school personnel.

The administrative guidelines must be in every respect consistent with the policies adopted by the board. The board, itself, will formulate and adopt administrative guidelines only when specific state laws require board adoption and may do so when the superintendent recommends board adoption in light of strong community attitudes or probable staff reaction.

It is recognized that guidelines for a specific school must be in agreement with the Board's Policy Manual. In this connection, it will be the duty of the administrator concerned to distribute these guidelines in writing to appropriate personnel.

In the absence of applicable policy, the superintendent is authorized to establish needed guidelines subject to later confirmation by establishment of policy by the board if necessary.

The board reserves the right to review and revise administrative guidelines should they, in the board's judgment, be inconsistent with the policies adopted by the board.

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1673 AVAILABILITY OF POLICIES

Complete and up-to-date copies of the Policy Manual of the Blackford County Schools shall be provided for board members, the school attorney, the administrative office, teacher federation leadership, in each principal's office, and on the school corporation's website. Within thirty days after the adoption of any new or revised policy, a copy of such new or revised policy shall be distributed for immediate insertion in the various copies of the Policy Manual.

An individual in the administration building appointed by the superintendent shall be given the responsibility of keeping the Policy Manual current.

1700 AGENDA

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent and board president to prepare the agenda of board meetings.

Agenda Format (Regular Meetings)

The agenda shall include the following:

- Call to Order (Pledge of Allegiance)
- Audience Input on Agenda Items
- Amendments to the Agenda
- Consent Agenda
 - Consideration of Minutes
 - Consideration of Claims
 - Personnel Items
 - Consideration of Professional Leave Requests
 - Consideration of Grants and Donations
- Action Items
- Discussion/Information Items
- Public Comments
- Superintendent Comments
- Board Comments
- Adjournment

Amending the Agenda

New agenda items should be submitted to the superintendent in writing, however, the agenda can be amended by majority approval.