

ICCSA School Board Policies

BOARD GOVERNANCE

The following policies describe standards of group and individual behavior for Board members. These policies define how the Board will operate internally, how it will conduct business, and how members will conduct themselves and interact with each other.

BOARD GOVERNANCE (LEVEL 1):

The purpose of the Board, on behalf of the stakeholders within the Iowa City Community School District, is to see that the Iowa City Community School District fulfills the mission of the district.

GOVERNING STYLE (LEVEL 2a):

The Board will govern with an emphasis on (1) organizational vision, (2) encouragement of diversity in viewpoints, (3) strategic leadership more than administrative detail, (4) clear distinction of Board and Superintendent roles, (5) collective rather than individuals' decisions, (6) future orientation, and (7) pro-active leadership.

GOVERNING STYLE (LEVEL 3a):

1. The Board will cultivate a sense of group responsibility. The Board will work in partnership with the Superintendent. The Board will use the expertise of individual Board members to enhance the ability of the Board as a body, but will not substitute individual judgments for the Board's collective values.
2. The Board will hold itself accountable to govern with excellence. This self-discipline will apply to matters such as attendance, preparation for meetings, policy making principles, respect of roles, and ensuring the continuity of governance capability.
3. The Board will guide and inspire the district by being a policy driven Board. The Board's major policy focus will be on the intended long-term benefits for the district, not on the administrative or programmatic means of attaining those benefits. (See Appendix 1)
4. In addition to decisions requiring vote by law, the Board shall determine by majority vote decisions including, but not limited to, the following: school attendance boundaries (see Appendix 5), school naming (see Appendix 7), school closings, long-range planning documents, formal Board position statements, adoption of ends policies, changes in governance guidelines, formation or dissolution of Board committees.

5. Board development will include ongoing education of members in the Board's governance process and periodic Board discussion and evaluation of process to assure continued improvement.
6. The Board will monitor the Board's process and performance. Self-monitoring will include comparison of Board activity and discipline to policies in the Governance Process and Board-Superintendent relationship categories.

BOARD JOB DESCRIPTION (LEVEL 2b):

The job of the Board is to represent the Iowa City Community School District in determining and demanding appropriate organizational performance and to provide the link between the Iowa City Community School District and the stakeholders of the district.

BOARD JOB DESCRIPTION (LEVEL 3b):

1. The Board will produce written governing policies which at the broadest levels address:
 - a. Ends Policies
 - b. Superintendent Limitations
 - c. Board Governance
 - d. Board-Superintendent Linkage
2. The Board will assure Superintendent performance in achieving Ends and complying with Superintendent Limitations and goals set for the Superintendent by the Board. (See Appendix 2)
3. The Board or its designated representatives will address legislative issues that impact the Global Ends Policy of the Iowa City Community School District and will advocate in the interest of the district at both the state and federal level.
4. The Board will provide a complaint process for stakeholders to follow when addressing concerns pertaining to the ICCSD. (See Appendix 6)

ELECTION OF OFFICERS (LEVEL 2c):

The Secretary of the Board shall request the names of directors interested in the offices of President and Vice-president at the board meeting immediately prior to the annual September board organizational meeting. (See Board Planning Cycle) Any board members newly elected shall be asked of their interest in these offices by the Secretary prior to the swearing in ceremony. Formal nominations and election for one year terms will then be held as part of the organizational meeting.

OFFICER'S ROLES (LEVEL 2d):

The officers of the Board are responsible for assuring the integrity of the Board's process and, secondarily, occasionally representing the Board to outside parties.

OFFICER'S ROLES (LEVEL 3d):

1. The President shall ensure the Board behaves consistently with the Board policies for governance and Board-Superintendent Linkage, and those rules legitimately imposed upon it from outside the Iowa City Community School District. Specifically, the President will:
 - a. Ensure meeting discussion will only concern issues within the Board's area of responsibility;
 - b. Ensure deliberation is fair, open, and thorough, but also efficient, timely, orderly and kept to the point;
 - c. Ensure there is an opportunity for input from individuals and organizations, including staff and affiliated organizations, that have expertise and interests specifically related to Board decisions and Board policies;
 - d. Chair Board meetings with the commonly accepted power of that position;
 - e. Represent the Board to outside parties in announcing Board-stated positions and in stating chair decisions and interpretations within the areas delegated to him or her;
 - f. Have no authority to make decisions about policies created by the Board within Ends and Superintendent Limitations policy areas and, therefore, no authority to supervise or direct the Superintendent.
2. The Vice-President shall serve in the absence of the President and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the President or Board of Directors.
3. The Secretary and/or Recording Secretary shall perform duties from time-to-time as may be required by the Board of Directors.
4. The Treasurer shall perform duties from time-to-time as may be required by the Board of Directors.

CODE OF CONDUCT (LEVEL 2e):

The Board commits itself and its members to ethical, businesslike and lawful conduct, including proper use of authority and appropriate decorum when acting as Board members. The Board shall have the authority and responsibility to interpret and apply these standards of conduct.

ACCORDINGLY (LEVEL 3e):

1. Board members should represent the interests of the citizens of the entire school district. This accountability to the whole district supersedes any conflicting loyalty to other advocacy or interest groups, and membership on other boards or staffs. It also supersedes the personal interest of any Board member who is also a stakeholder of the District.

2. Board members shall not attempt to exercise individual authority over the organization except as explicitly set forth in Board policies.
 - a. Members' interaction with the Superintendent or with staff must recognize the lack of authority vested in individuals except when explicitly authorized by the Board.
 - b. Members' interaction with the public, press or other entities must recognize the same limitation and the inability of any Board member to speak for the Board except to repeat explicitly stated Board decisions.
 - c. Members shall not publicly make or express individual negative judgments about Superintendent or staff performance. Any such judgments of Superintendent performance will be made only by the Board, meeting in executive session as appropriate.
3. Board members shall maintain the confidentiality appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature, especially those discussed in executive session.

COST OF GOVERNANCE (LEVEL 2f):

The Board will regularly plan and monitor the participation of the Board members in self-education, outreach, legislative representation and other activities associated with governance, including the costs of such activities.

BOARD PLANNING CYCLE (LEVEL 2g):

The Board will schedule its agenda items in a manner that leads to timely resolution and appropriate linkage to other Iowa City Community School District activities. Annually, during the organization meeting in late September the Board will develop a master agenda intended to guide the Board throughout the Year.

BOARD COMMITTEE PRINCIPLES (LEVEL 2h):

Board committees, when used, will be assigned so as to reinforce the wholeness of the Board's job, not to interfere with delegation from Board to Superintendent. (See Appendix 8)

ACCORDINGLY (LEVEL 3h):

1. Board committees are to help the board do its job, never to help or advise the staff. Committees ordinarily will assist the board by preparing policy alternatives and implications for board deliberation. In keeping with the board's broader focus, board committees will normally not be involved with staff operations.
2. Board committees may not speak or act for the board except when formally given such authority for specific and time limited purposes. Expectations and authority will be carefully stated in order not to conflict with authority delegated to the Superintendent.

3. Board committees cannot exercise authority over staff. Because the Superintendent works for the full board, he or she will not be required to obtain approval of a board committee before an executive action.
4. Board committees will not be used to monitor organizational performance.
5. This policy applies to any group that is formed by board action, whether or not it is called a committee and regardless whether the group includes board members. It does not apply to committees formed under the authority of the Superintendent.

COMMUNITY COMMITTEES OR BOARDS (LEVEL 2i)

Directors are asked to provide one or more representatives to several community committee and boards. Representatives are appointed by the Board on an annual basis. When Directors have a voting interest in the committee or board the appointed director(s) will seek a substitute if unable to attend a meeting.

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