

GRANITE FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS POLICY 1200: CODE OF ETHICS

Granite Falls School Board Operating Protocol

For the purpose of enhancing teamwork among members of the board and between the board and the administration, we, the members of the Granite Falls School Board, do hereby publicly commit ourselves collectively and individually to the following operating protocol:

- 1. Children's interests come first.** The board will represent the needs and interests of all the children in our district. The education and welfare of students is the board's primary concern. The board will act as advocates for students in their district and give each child the right to due process.
- 2. Don't spring surprises on other board members or the superintendent.** Surprises to the board or the superintendent will be the exception, not the rule. There should be no surprises at a board meeting. We agree to ask the board president or the superintendent to place an item on the agenda instead of bringing it up unexpectedly at the meeting.
- 3. Come to board meetings prepared.** Board members should come to meetings familiar with the agenda, have read the reports and other materials, and reviewed the expenditures beforehand.
- 4. Communication between staff and the board is encouraged.** However, board requests that will likely require considerable time or have political implications are to be directed to the superintendent.
- 5. Follow the chain of command.** The last stop, not the first, will be the board. We agree to follow the chain of command and insist that others do so. While the board is eager to listen to its constituents and staff, each inquiry is to be referred to the person who can properly and expeditiously address the issue. All personnel complaints and criticisms received by the board or its individual members will be directed to the superintendent.
- 6. Listen to the staff or superintendent's recommendations on personnel issues.** Before the employment, leave or sabbatical, discipline, or dismissal of a staff member, the board should consider the recommendations of the appropriate staff member.
- 7. Own your own issues.** The board will not be the ball carrier for others – but rather, will encourage others to present their own issues, problems, or proposals when discussing issues. The board will consider the pros and cons of items brought to their attention.
- 8. Practice the governance role.** The board will emphasize planning, policymaking, and communication rather than becoming involved in the management of schools.
- 9. Annually conduct a self-evaluation.** The board will address its behavior by yearly self-evaluation and by addressing itself to any individual problems, such as poor meeting attendance or leaks of confidential information.
- 10. Clearly stated goals.** The board will set clear goals for themselves and the superintendent. The board and superintendent will set clear goals for Granite Falls School District.
- 11. Utilize CEO input.** The superintendent is the chief executive officer and should make recommendations, proposals or suggestions on most matters that come before the board.

12. **Board acts only as a body.** Individual board members do not have authority. Only the board as a whole has authority. We agree that an individual board member will not take unilateral action. The board president will communicate the position(s) of the board on controversial issues. When board members serve on various school committees, their role shall be defined as silent observer or active participant.

13. **Debate the issues, not one another.** Conduct at a board meeting is very important. We agree to avoid words and actions that create a negative impression on an individual, the board, or the district. While we encourage debate and differing points of view, we will do it with care and respect to avoid an escalation of negative impressions or incidents.

14. **Avoid marathon board meetings.** To be efficient and effective, long board meetings must be avoided. Points are to be made in as few words as possible; speeches at board meetings will be minimal. If a board member believes he/she doesn't have enough information or has questions, either the superintendent or board chair is to be called before the meeting.

15. **Practice efficient decision-making.** Board meetings are for decision-making, action, and votes, not endless discussion. We agree to move the question when discussion is repetitive.

16. **Speak to agenda issues.** The board will not play to the audience. We agree to speak to the issues on the agenda and attend to our fellow board members. Facts and information needed from administration will be referred to the superintendent.

17. **Visitors and staff at board meetings follow established procedures to give the board input.** Members of the public are encouraged to speak to the board. They are informed ahead of time about time limits for input. Individuals and groups are encouraged to make presentations on issues of concern.

18. **Executive/closed sessions will be held for appropriate subjects.** Executive sessions will be held only when specific needs arise. Board members will be extremely sensitive to the legal ramifications of their meetings and comments. All personnel issues are confidential unless official action is taken during a public meeting. Only the specific information voted on during the regular meeting becomes public information.

Individual School Director Standards

Standard 1: Values and Ethical Behavior

To be effective, an individual school director:

- a. Places students' needs first.
- b. Demonstrates commitment to equity and high standards of achievement for each student.
- c. Commits to treating each individual with dignity and respect.
- d. Models high ethical standards.
- e. Advocates for public education.

Standard 2: Leadership

To be effective, an individual school director:

- a. Contributes to thoughtful governance discussions and decisions by being well informed, open minded and deliberative.
- b. Understands that authority rests with the board as a whole and not with individual directors.
- c. Is able to articulate and model appropriate school director roles and responsibilities.
- d. Actively participates in school director duties and responsibilities.
- e. Demonstrates group membership and leadership skills, working within the board structure.
- f. Respects the board's role in policy making and supports all adopted board policies.

Standard 3: Communication

To be effective, an individual school director:

- a. Builds and maintains positive connections with the community and staff.
- b. Communicates accurately and honestly, with awareness of the impact of his/her words and actions.
- c. Listens carefully and with an open mind.
- d. Maintains civility and treats all people with respect.
- e. Maintains confidentiality of appropriate matters.
- f. Refers and guides people with concerns to appropriate staff.
- g. Welcomes parent, student and community input.

Standard 4: Professional Development

To be effective, an individual school director:

- a. Commits the time and energy necessary to be informed and competent.
- b. Keeps abreast of current issues, research, applicable laws, regulations, and policies that affect public education.
- c. Participates in professional development, individually and with the board/superintendent team.

Standard 5: Accountability

To be effective, an individual school director:

- a. Is accountable to the community.
- b. Takes personal responsibility for his/her own words and actions.
- c. Respects and abides by board decisions.
- d. Meets expectations for transparency, including disclosing potential conflicts of interest and refraining from discussing or voting on those issues.
- e. Complies with board policies/procedures and the law.

ADOPTED: MARCH 8, 1990

AMENDED: APRIL 27, 2000

AMENDED: JANUARY 20, 2010

AMENDED: APRIL 21, 2010