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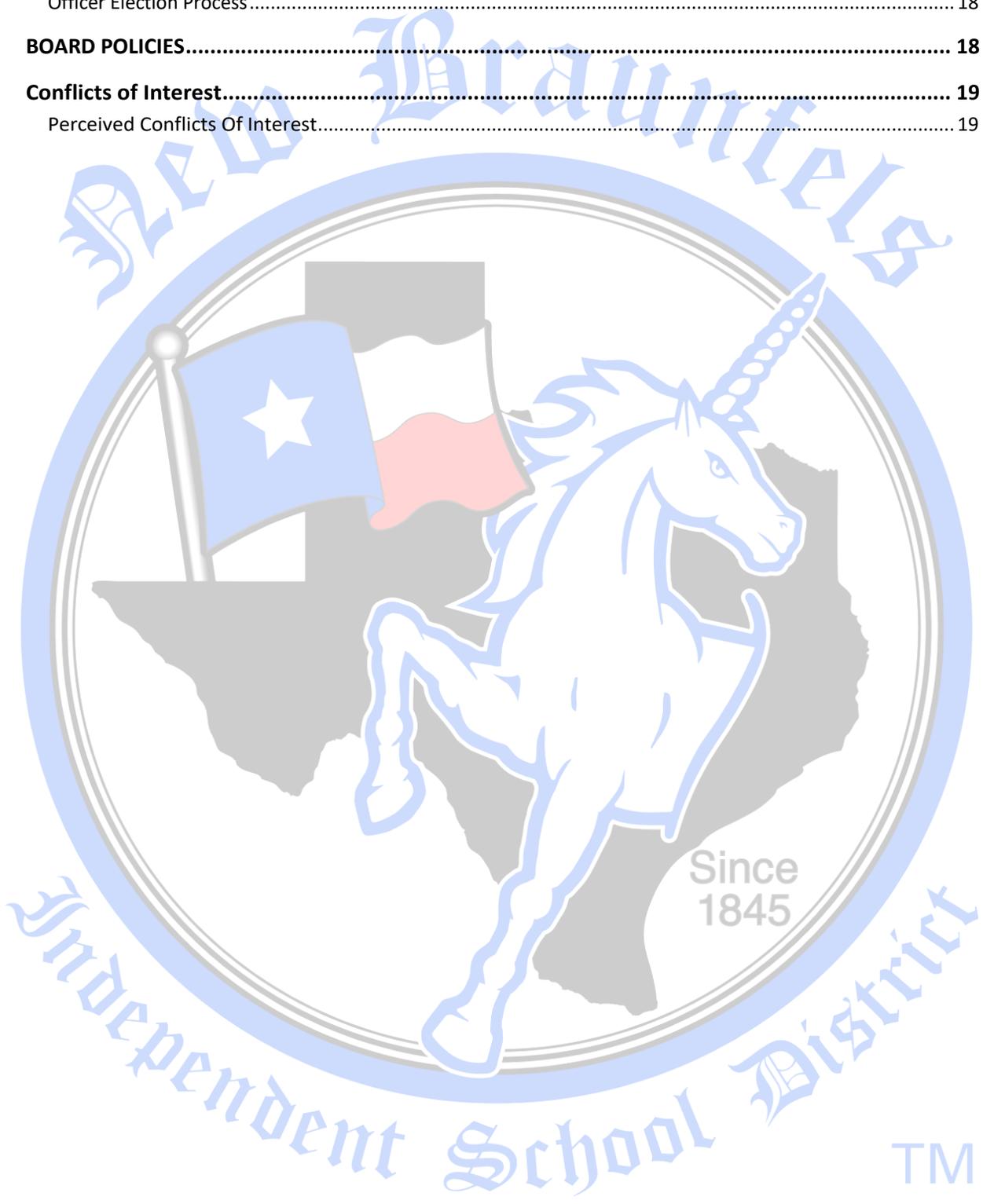
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## OVERVIEW

In effective school systems, the Superintendent and the Board function as a “Team of Eight.” A structured approach to developing a vision for the District and setting goals is enhanced by first developing a system of standard operating procedures. The School Board is the corporate policy making body for the district and the Superintendent and staff provide the leadership to cause Board policies to be implemented. Therefore, the New Braunfels ISD Board of Trustees and Superintendent function as a “TEAM OF EIGHT” to provide open communication to the staff and patrons of the district, within a structure of “Good Governance.”

## REVIEW OF BOARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

The Board Operating Procedures will be reviewed and updated as necessary on an annual basis in conjunction with the Board Good Governance Self Check and will be part of Board member training.

## BOARD GOVERNANCE

The NBISD Board of Trustees is committed to a participative, process-driven governance style. Board level decision-making processes shall therefore include the following elements to whatever extent is practical and appropriate for the matter at hand:

- Clearly stated objectives
- Reconciliation with policy and established practice Board approved parameters
- Timelines
- Data gathering
- Stakeholder input
- Communication plan

In each instance, staff shall facilitate the process and make recommendations with oversight and decision-making authority retained by the Board. Examples of decisions that fall under this umbrella include, but are not limited to, curriculum, budget, school year calendar, attendance zone realignment and facilities needs assessments.

It is the expectation of the Board that participative, process-driven decision-making should flow through the organization at each level as appropriate.

## GOOD GOVERNANCE SELF CHECK

On an annual basis, the Board of Trustees will conduct a Good Governance Self Check of the Board’s operation during the past year. Based upon data collected during the past year, the Board will review Board effectiveness. This data will include comparative practices of other Boards, as well as a review of the current operating procedures. A report of this evaluation will be presented within the next month to the public at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.

Good Governance Self Check ([link](#))

Good Governance Model ([link](#))

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## BOARD DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES

The purpose of placing governance in the hands of the Board and management in the hands of the Superintendent is to ensure the community retains authority over the basic direction, priorities, and values embodied in the operation of the District while also making sure implementation is carried out by a trained professional with a wide range of experience. It also ensures that the Board has the advice of someone well-versed in the immense complexity of school district operations.

### ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

#### **Each Board Member is:**

- One of seven
- A Trustee for the entire NBISD
- A Leader for the entire NBISD
- An elected official
- Responsible for governance
- Equal to all the other Board Members
- Responsible for personal preparation for all meetings
- Encouraged to attend district-wide functions
- Expected to be familiar with current laws
- Expected to attend further training
- Expected to support Board decisions
- Expected to attend meetings
- Expected to remain informed

#### **Each Board Member is not:**

- Empowered to fix situations
- Empowered to speak for the Board or Team of Eight
- Effective as a divisive, negative influence
- Allowed to misuse confidential information
- Authorized to micro-manage with personal agenda
- More important than any other Board Member
- A vehicle for special interest groups

### DUTIES OF THE BOARD: GOVERN THE DISTRICT

In order to govern effectively; the Board should never take action on an item without first hearing the recommendation from the Superintendent (with exception of action affecting his/her own employment or one or more individual Trustees). The Board is never obligated to accept the Superintendent's recommendation, but frequent denial of recommendations signals the Board and Superintendent need to review priorities and procedures to make sure no misunderstandings or failures in communications have occurred. Individual Board members must refrain from confusing their role with the role of the Superintendent and becoming involved in the day-to-day operations of the schools.

## DUTIES OUTLINED IN BOARD POLICY

As per Board Policy [BAA \(Legal\)](#), [BBE \(Legal\)](#) and [BBE \(Local\)](#), essential duties of the Board as per the Education Code include but are not limited to:

1. Adopting goals and priorities for the District and monitoring success in achieving them.
2. Adopting policies that govern the District and reviewing these policies for effectiveness.
3. Hiring a Superintendent to manage the District; evaluating the Superintendent's effectiveness.
4. Adopting an annual budget for the District and setting a tax rate appropriate to fund it.
5. Monitoring student performance in achieving curriculum goals and assessing the recommendation of the Superintendent.
6. Appraise the Superintendent annually using either the Commissioner's recommended appraisal process or a process and criteria developed by the District.

Trustees are committed to pre-reading Board meeting materials and requesting additional information from the Superintendent, prior to the Board meetings, on agenda items they have questions about. This process also applies to information provided in weekly Board Transmittals.

## BOARD OFFICERS

After the canvass of election returns, the Board will reorganize and elect officers. In addition to that post-election selection of officers, the Board may also opt to reorganize at any other time. Elections are conducted in open session and by simple majority vote. Officer positions are President, Vice President, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary.

**President:** In addition to the duties required by law, the President of the Board shall:

- Preside at all meetings of the Board unless unable to attend.
- Have the right to discuss, make motions and resolutions and vote on all matters coming before the Board.
- Call special meetings of the Board.
- Sign all legal documents, warrants, vouchers and reports, as required by statute, state or federal regulations or Board policy.
- Decide all questions of order in accordance with [Robert's Rules of Order](#), Newly Revised, as modified by Board policy.
- Receive official correspondence addressed to the Board.
- Assist in the development of the agenda for each meeting.
- Represent the Board and the District at certain ceremonial occasions and events.
- Perform all other duties which may be prescribed by law, authorized by the Board or mandated by a court of competent jurisdiction for the chief officer of the Board.

**Vice President:** The Vice President of the Board shall:

- Act in the capacity and perform the duties of the President of the Board in the event of the absence or incapacity of the President.

**Secretary:** The Secretary of the Board shall:

- Ensure that an accurate record is kept of the proceedings of each Board meeting.
- Ensure that notices of Board meetings are posted and sent as required by law.
- In the absence of the President and Vice President, call the meeting to order and act as presiding officer.
- Sign or countersign documents as directed by action of the Board.

**Board Members Authority:** Board member authority comes from [BBA \(LEGAL\)](#), [BBE \(LEGAL\)](#), [BBE \(LOCAL\)](#), [BDAA \(LEGAL\)](#), [BDAA \(LOCAL\)](#),

## SUPERINTENDENT

### EVALUATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

The Board of Trustees will conduct a Summative Evaluation of the Superintendent's performance annually in January. This evaluation will be based upon a Superintendent Appraisal Instrument which is aligned to Board Policy and developed by the Board with input from the Superintendent. Data necessary to complete this review will be presented in December at the regularly scheduled board meeting. The result of this review will be presented to the Superintendent the night of the evaluation. Annually in July, the Board of Trustees will conduct a Formative Evaluation of the Superintendent's performance and progress toward attaining goals.

For additional information, see Board Policies [BJCD \(Legal\)](#) and [BJCD \(Local\)](#)

**DUTIES OF THE SUPERINTENDENT: MANAGE THE DISTRICT** (*Within the framework of Board policies and priorities*)

The Superintendent functions as the educational leader and chief executive officer of the District and is, throughout the exercise of responsibilities, accountable to the Board of Trustees. The education and administrative leadership responsibilities of the Superintendent are complementary and interdependent with the public leadership, governance, and policymaking responsibilities of the Board.

To avoid confusion and provide harmonious and progressive direction for the District, both Superintendent and Board must strive to keep the distinctions between their respective leadership roles clearly in mind ([reference Good Governance Model](#)).

The essential duties of the Superintendent include but are not limited to:

1. Provide leadership for the attainment of student performance as directed by the district's strategic plan and/or annual goals and objectives.
2. Accepting administrative responsibility and leadership for the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the education programs, services, and facilities of the district and for the annual performance appraisal of the district's staff.
3. Accepting authority and responsibility for the assignment and evaluation of personnel and making recommendations for employment and termination of employees.
4. Preparing and submitting to the Board a proposed budget.

5. Recommending policies to the Board for adoption and developing administrative regulations to implement those policies.
6. Providing leadership for the attainment of student performance.
7. Ensure that Trustees have received, in a timely manner, all appropriate and pertinent data and information to make a well-informed decision

## BOARD MEETINGS

### BOARD MEMBER PARTICIPATION AND CONDUCT DURING BOARD MEETINGS/PUBLIC FORUMS

#### BE (LEGAL), BE (LOCAL), BEC (LEGAL)

- All Board Members are expected to conduct themselves professionally and ethically during all meetings and public forums. Examples of behavior that will not be tolerated are rude remarks, interruptions, yelling, name calling and disrespectful verbal or body language.
- Differences of opinion, if respectfully submitted, are not to be construed as unacceptable behavior but rather as alternate views on a subject and should be encouraged.
- In case of a tie vote, on an action other than a grievance, the item is tabled and returned on the next agenda as an action item.
- Notes taken by an individual Board Member during Open and Executive Sessions may be considered information created as part of the District's official business and, therefore, potentially subject to public disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act.
- The Board President has the responsibility to keep the discussion to the motion at hand and shall halt discussion that does not apply to the business before the Board.
- The Board President has the right to recognize a Board Member or anyone wishing to speak to the business before the Board.
- No Member shall coerce another member to vote in a particular manner, and no Member may attempt to solicit votes in any manner inconsistent with the Texas Open Meetings Act.
- No member will criticize any other member with regard to his/her questions, discussion or vote.
- Although it is the duty of every Member, including the President, who has an opinion on a question to express it by his vote, he can abstain, since he cannot be compelled to vote. Members abstaining from voting are encouraged to briefly state their reason for abstention.

#### PLACING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA:

Board members may request through the Board President or Superintendent any item they wish to have placed on a future agenda. In accordance with Texas Open Meeting Act (TOMA), no agenda may be posted less than 72 hours in advance of a meeting, except in an emergency as per Texas Government Code. Each agenda item must be identified in sufficient detail that the general subject can be understood by the public, i.e. "Request for Board Discussion and Action – Appointment of a District Rezoning Committee".

## POSTING NOTICE OF AGENDA:

TOMA requires that the notice of a Board meeting be posted in a place “readily accessible” to the general public at all times. The NBISD notice of Board meetings is posted on an outside bulletin board at the administration building at least seventy-two hours prior to the scheduled time of the meeting (at least two hours prior to the time of an emergency meeting). The notice of the meeting and agenda are posted on the website.

## BOARD PACKET:

A packet is prepared each month for Board Members the week prior to the meeting. Along with the agenda, the packet includes documents that give a brief explanation of the items placed on the agenda. The packet may include financial statements, lists of bills payable, and other supporting data/explanatory documents so Board Members may have an opportunity to review the information before the meeting. If members have questions or concerns on any of these items, they are strongly encouraged to contact the Superintendent prior to the meeting in order to minimize confusion at the meetings. The agenda form is intended as a method to ensure organization and to conduct Board meetings in an efficient and timely manner.

## CONSENT AGENDA:

Consent agenda items are routine items that may be acted on as a single item with one vote. These items may include but are not limited to annual contract renewals with Regions 13 & 20, Texas Education Agency items, budget amendments, financial information, and minutes of recent Board meetings. A Trustee may request an item be pulled for separate discussion at the scheduled meeting.

## ITEMS FOR CLOSED SESSION:

Generally, personnel issues must be discussed in closed session, unless otherwise required by Texas Open Meeting Act. The primary purpose behind a closed session for personnel matters is to protect the employee or student from possible unjustified harm to his/her reputation and to comply with the law. The provision for closed meetings applies only to deliberations concerning individual employees or students. TOMA requires that the subject matter of the closed meeting be set forth with sufficient particularity to notify the public of the matters under consideration. Merely stating that “litigation”, or “routine business,” will be discussed is insufficient. The agenda topic should be expanded/explained to give the interested reader a better idea of the issues to be discussed and decided. If a matter involves a class of employees, such as the salary of a group of employees, it should be deliberated in an open meeting. The Board can discuss only those items listed on the closed session agenda. Closed session discussions must remain confidential. No action may be taken during closed session. All action must be taken in open session.

Records must be kept of closed meetings as well. The Board must keep a Certified Agenda during closed session unless the closed meeting was for the purpose of consulting with an attorney. Typically, this is the duty of the Board Secretary. Participation in a closed meeting knowing that a Certified Agenda or audio recording is not being kept constitutes a Class C Misdemeanor. Even though the certified agenda is confidential and can be inspected only by court order, sufficient detail should be included in the certified agenda so that a reasonable person reading the agenda would understand the scope and nature of the items discussed at the closed session. The certified agenda or audio recording must be maintained for two years following the meeting.

## CLOSED SESSION – CONFIDENTIALITY:

Trustees participating in closed sessions must consider the following provisions related to confidentiality.

**Confidentiality of Closed Session Record.** Certified agendas and tape recordings of the closed portion of the meeting are confidential, available for public inspection and copying only under a court order. *Texas*

*Gov't Code §§ 55.021 and 551.104(c); Tex. Att'y Gen. No. JM-995 (1988).*

**Confidentiality of Other Closed Session Written Information.** Because of the nature of the Board's work, Board members have a great deal of access to information that is confidential either temporarily or permanently. Until it is clear that a document reviewed or discussed in closed session is public, individual Board members have no authorization to release such documents. However, the fact that a document was shared and/or discussed in closed session does not protect it indefinitely. Rather, whether a document is confidential or public depends on the nature of the document itself. For example, an employee evaluation document is confidential by law permanently, while an application for a top-level job may be confidential only temporarily, until the position is filled or a certain period of time has expired.

**Confidentiality of Closed Session Oral Discussions.** Closed sessions have the purpose of allowing Board members to have frank discussions without concern about an off-hand comment or sensitive topic being revealed and possibly result in legal or other problems. Many sensitive closed session discussions, such as those related to individual employees regarding job performance, or the information being discussed may be preliminary and is likely to change. Any discussion authorized to be discussed in closed session about information not yet available to the public or staff should be limited to that closed session until and unless final action is considered and taken.

## CALLING MEETING TO ORDER:

A quorum of Trustees, which is four of the seven members, must be present to conduct a Board meeting.

## DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS:

In most cases, any action item brought before the board should be placed on the agenda the previous month for discussion. By doing so, the board will have multiple weeks to assess the information provided, ask clarifying questions, and vote confidently when action is called. Some instances will involve items being brought to the board with no discussion. In those cases, the superintendent should visit with the board president and inform he/she of the item(s) and place the information as soon as possible on the Friday board update (if applicable).

## VOTING:

While the Board meetings are based on Robert's Rules of Order, the Board does observe parliamentary procedures for the voting process. Only items listed on the agenda may be discussed at a Board meeting. All discussion shall be directed solely to the business currently under deliberation. The Board President has the responsibility to keep the discussion to the matter at hand and shall halt discussion that does not apply to the agenda item currently before the Board. The Board President will vote on all action items. The Board will clarify any specific criteria expected for staff reports.

Agenda items listed as “Reports” or “Discussion” are for discussion/briefing only and do not require a vote.

## HEARINGS AND OPEN FORUMS/PUBLIC COMMENT

During hearings and/or open forums, the Board is assembled to gather input only. The Board will not answer questions or enter into two-way dialogue except with their attorney in the case of an employee hearing. Rules for the open forum will be strictly adhered to:

### **Public Comments – Regular Board Meetings:**

During regular Board Meetings, persons wishing to address the Board have the opportunity to do so during the “public comments” segment of the meeting by signing and making a request on the visitor registration sheet located inside the Board room. Public comments can be related to items on that meeting’s agenda or to non-agenda items. Each person speaking must be in-person to address the board (ie: no email).

**Agenda Items.** Every person who signed up in the appropriate time period may address the Board on an agenda item, prior to the Board’s discussion and/or consideration of the item. Each speaker is limited to five minutes and must be in-person.

**Non-Agenda Items.** Public comments on non-agenda items will be heard early in the Board meeting. Each speaker is limited to five minutes. A total of thirty minutes per meeting may be allowed for public comments for non-agenda items. If more than three persons (4+) wish to address the same non-agenda topic, each speaker will be limited to two minutes and in-person.

- If a member of the public asks a question about an item not listed on the published agenda, neither the Board nor the Superintendent may discuss the subject; however, the Superintendent or any member of the Board may respond by providing specific factual information, offering a recitation of existing policy, or by asking clarifying questions. Members may not discuss or deliberate the question.
- The Board will not entertain inappropriate comments on individual personnel or students in public session.
- Complaints or concerns will be considered by the Board only after the complainant has followed the guidelines prescribed by the applicable policies, such as [DGBA \(Local\)](#), [FNG \(Local\)](#), or [GF \(Local\)](#).

### **Public Comments – Called Board Meetings:**

**Agenda Items.** Similar to regular Board meetings, every person who signed up in the appropriate time period may address the Board on an agenda item, prior to the Board’s discussion and/or consideration of the item. Each speaker is limited to five minutes.

**Non-Agenda Items.** No public comments on non-agenda items will be during called Board meetings.

**Public Question/Answer Session – Public Hearing during Regular or Called Board Meeting:** The public will be given the opportunity to make comments or ask questions following the

presentation of information presented during a Public Hearing conducted during a regular or called Board meeting. The same procedures and time restraints apply as during a public comment session of a regular Board meeting, with the following exception: In the event Trustees and/or staff are requested to respond to a question pertaining to the information presented, an additional two minutes will be allotted, if necessary (for a total of 5 minutes), and the following guidelines will apply:

- The audience member will state a specific question.
- The Trustee and/or staff member will clarify the question, if necessary, and will answer as thoroughly as possible.
- The audience member will then be given an opportunity to ask for additional clarification.
- The Trustee and/or staff member will respond as thoroughly as possible.
- Following the second response, the Board President, or presiding officer, will call on the next audience member who has a comment/question, or will conclude

## COMMUNICATION

### BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT COMMUNICATION

The Superintendent will meet regularly with the Board President and additional Board officers as appropriate to develop Board meeting agendas and as needed to discuss other issues. The Superintendent will communicate in a timely fashion with all Trustees including sending a weekly Board Transmittal outlining major events and progress being made toward district initiatives.

### CLEAR COMMUNICATION PROCESS (CCP)

The board has adopted a Clear Communication Process (CCP) to accomplish four outcomes relating to Team of 8 and stakeholder communication:

1. Ensure that all governance team members are receiving the same information.
2. Ensure that the Superintendent is the person that assigns a follow-up action to the appropriate part of the system.
3. Hold senior leaders responsible to follow-up actions generated from community concern and/or Trustee questions.
4. Help Trustees maintain their strategic role while at the same time being empathetic to constituent concerns.

A communication matrix has been created to ensure the 4 goals of the CCP. The communication matrix is predicated on seven key concepts:

Key Concept 1: The communication matrix is available for all Trustees to view at anytime

Key Concept 2: Any Trustee may request that an item be placed on communication matrix. The request is made, in writing, to Board President and Superintendent or a trustee can add to the CCP. The Superintendent will place items to the communication matrix based on Trustees questions/concerns that need follow up.

Key Concept 3: The Superintendent is the only person that makes a request to other staff members in follow-up to Board request.

Key Concept 4: Responses must be timely. Generally, all responses should have some (even if incomplete) response by Friday Board Update. The exception may be items received on Thursday/Friday of same week. Those items may go on following week's communication matrix.

Key Concept 5: The Board President and Superintendent should review the communication matrix weekly in order to ensure that all previous items are closed and/or in the process of being addressed.

Key Concept 6: All Trustees must follow the process. It may be prudent to adopt as part of Board operations.

Key Concept 7: Any item being placed on matrix does not necessarily mean that the stakeholder is going to "get what they want" ... it simply means the matter is under review and being considered.

Updated chart is included in Friday Board Update. Individual Trustees are responsible for receiving weekly follow-up matrix.

## ADDRESSING PUBLIC CONCERNS OUTSIDE OF THE BOARD ROOM

Board Members are often confronted by individuals who wish to voice their concerns or complaints outside of the Board room. Trustees should listen to the individual's concerns but politely explain the chain of command for addressing complaints and direct the individual to communicate concerns to the Superintendent.

The Superintendent will then redirect the individual to the appropriate district employee. Most often when the individual understands who to request information from, he or she is able to resolve the issue without entering into the formal process. A Trustee should not get overly involved in a matter that may come before the Board as a complaint in order to preserve the Trustee's unbiased judgment. An overly biased Trustee may need to recuse himself or herself from hearing the Level III grievance.

Process for hearing concerns outside the board room:

1. The Board member should hear the citizen's problem for full understanding of persons involved, date and place.
2. Repeat problem back verbatim to the citizen.
3. Remind the citizen or employee of due process as per policy [GF \(Local\)](#) or [DBGA \(Local\)](#) and that the Board member must remain impartial in case the situation goes before the Board.
4. Refer citizen to appropriate person/chain of command.
5. Board member should talk to the Superintendent within 2 business days
6. The Superintendent or designee will respond to citizen (if needed) within 2 business days.
7. If the trustee would like to add the item to the CCP after hearing stakeholder concern, the following steps should be taken:
  - a. Listen to stakeholder empathetically and then ask them to follow up (in writing). Assuming the response comes by email, the individual Trustee replies and copies Board President and Superintendent on reply.
  - b. Superintendent's office then replies to all that the matter has been received and places item on follow-up action matrix.

- c. Superintendent forwards request to appropriate staff member and sets appropriate deadline for response.
- d. Superintendent may place items on the follow-up matrix that he/she receives (by phone, email, social media), if he/she thinks it prudent to share with all Trustees.
- e. Mid-week – Superintendent’s office reviews progress of follow-up items and primes closure for items.

## OTHER TEAM OF 8 COMMUNICATION

- The Superintendent will communicate with each Board Member via weekly reports (emails) that will include information such as:
  - District events
  - Progress reports on Board goals and directives
  - Follow-up reports in answer to Board Member questions
  - Information or reports requested by a Board Member
  - General program updates
- The Superintendent will meet with the Board President as needed, or communicate by telephone or electronic means to inform him/her of district issues that may need to come before the Board for discussion or action.
- Board Members may communicate with other individual members for purposes of asking questions, clarifying information, or socializing under circumstances that do not conflict with or circumvent the Texas Open Meetings Act.
- Board Members may not communicate with other individual members for purposes of soliciting votes in support of or opposition to items of business that may come before the Board.
- Board Members who wish to share information relevant to district business or issues before the Board will relay the information to the Board President and the Board President will distribute to all members (or ask the Superintendent to distribute in his/her weekly reports).
- To prevent a walking quorum, immediate communication from the Superintendent to the Board may be in the form of group text. In the event that a group text is used to disperse immediate information, Board Members will not respond to the group text.

## BOARD MEMBER REQUEST FOR INFORMATION NOT RELATED TO MEETING AGENDAS

1. Board Members will contact the Superintendent to request information about the school district or Board of Trustees business. The Superintendent will add the requested information to the communication matrix to ensure clear communication within the Team of 8.
2. The Superintendent, at his/her discretion, may refer the Board Member to a staff person with direct knowledge about the information requested.
3. The Superintendent will determine if the information requested is readily available or additional time is needed to gather information or research the issue.
4. If the information is available, the Superintendent will provide it to the requesting Board Member and a copy of the information will be provided to each Board Member or placed on the CCP.
5. If a written response is provided, a copy of the information will be provided to each Board Member or placed on the CCP.

6. If the Superintendent determines that the request is unreasonable and will divert staff time or attention from Board priorities, the Superintendent or the requesting Board Member may ask the Board President to place the request on a meeting agenda.

## MEDIA INQUIRIES TO THE BOARD

The Board President or designee shall be the official spokesperson for the Board to the media/press on issues of media attention. All Board members who receive calls from the media should direct them to the Board's spokesperson and notify the Board President and Superintendent of the call.

## ANONYMOUS COMMUNICATION TO BOARD

The NBISD Board of Trustees encourages input; however, anonymous calls, letters, emails, or other forms of communication will not receive Board attention, discussion, or response; and will not result in directives to the administration.

## BOARD MEMBER COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

### BBI (LOCAL)

- Board members agree to abide by all NBISD policies and procedures while utilizing their technology.
- Board members shall use discretion when utilizing social media sites, blogs, and similar technology tools. Those are considered public statements.
- Board members should be wary of using personal electronic devices during a called public meeting.
- Information shared electronically will be subject to public disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act in the same manner it would be if the communication was in hard copy. This applies to personal e-mail, cellular text, social media sites, as well as school provided e-mail and forums.

## BOARD MEMBER E-MAIL PROTOCOL

### BBF (LOCAL), GBA (LEGAL), Tx Open Meetings Act

- Board Members may communicate by e-mail with other individual Board Members for the purposes of asking clarifying questions, providing clarifying information or socializing under circumstances that do not conflict with or circumvent the Texas Open Meetings Act.
- E-mail correspondence may be subject to Public Information Act request.
- E-mail correspondence from the Superintendent or designated administrator to all Board members is permissible. Individual Board members should not answer e-mail correspondence using "reply all". Communication by e-mail is subject to the Open Meetings Act.
- Board members are encouraged to respond to e-mails from constituents, but should bear in mind that any such responses may be subject to Public Information Act requests.
- A Board member retains the right to respond to e-mails as an individual but must understand that such communication may be interpreted by the reader as being an "official" statement of the Board. The Board member should:
  1. Clarify that he/she is responding as an individual and not for the Board.
  2. Remind the reader of any position or action the Board has officially taken on the

subject.

- Board Members are encouraged to share e-mails they receive with the Superintendent if the e-mail is not of a personal or confidential nature.
- Board Members should not respond to anonymous e-mails.
- Communication pertaining to criminal, health or safety issues will be forwarded to the Superintendent for action.
- All email communications between Board Members and the Superintendent shall be copied to the Board President to assist the President in the efficient execution of the duties of his/her office.

## BOARD MEMBER VISITS TO CAMPUSES AND DISTRICT FACILITIES

Board Members are encouraged to attend all school events as their time permits. Board Members are not, however, to go unannounced into teachers' classrooms or individual buildings for the purpose of evaluation or investigations. Board Members must adhere to all campus safety/registration requirements.

Policy [BBE \(Local\)](#), states: "... VISITS TO DISTRICT FACILITIES - A Board member shall adhere to any posted requirements for visitors to first report to the main office of a District facility, including a school campus. Visits during the school or business day shall not be permitted if their duration or frequency interferes with the delivery of instruction or District operations. [See also GKC]"

1. Board Members will check in with the principal's office when he/she arrives at a campus during the school day, as per guidelines for all visitors to campuses.
2. Board Members may not give direction to any staff or student except when immediate safety or liability is an issue.
3. While Board Members have no authority as individuals, it is sometimes difficult for staff members to see them as ordinary parents, therefore
  - a. When visiting with teachers of their own children, Board Members should make it clear that they are acting as parents rather than as a member of the Board.
  - b. Board Members will not request or accept extraordinary consideration for themselves or their students.
4. Board Members will not ask district employees for extraordinary consideration for anyone.

## BOARD DEVELOPMENT

### BOARD TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

The NEW BRAUNFELS ISD Board of Trustees recognizes the value of Board member training and supports involvement by Board members in local, state and national affairs on behalf of the District and public education in general.

New Board members shall, after they are sworn in, complete a District orientation within sixty days of the election or appointment with the Superintendent and a Board orientation with the Board President or appointee. Newly elected Trustees must receive 1 hour of training in the Texas Open Meetings Act and Public Information Act within 90 days of their election or appointment. First year Trustees must

have 10 hours training within the first year, which must include 3 hours of orientation in the Texas Education Code. Existing Trustees must receive 5 hours training per year prior to the December Board meeting. Any current Board member may attend or participate in the District orientation offered to new Board members.

If Board members intend to seek reimbursement for costs associated with out-of-state or out of the ordinary training, conferences, presentations, or other training involvement, the Board member must obtain pre-approval by the Board of Trustees. The request and motion should include the dates and location of the event, the purpose and benefit to NEW BRAUNFELS or public education in general, the estimated total dollar amount of costs, including registration, travel, lodging, etc. The Board member will provide a summary report to the Board of Trustees at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

Unless approved in advance by the Board, no individual Trustee who has been censured by the Board, who has been indicted for any felony charges, or who has been found to have engaged in unethical practices, as determined by the Texas Ethics Commission, may represent the district at any Board training. Likewise, unless that Trustee requires specific training under state law and/or unless approved by the Board in advance, no district funds will be expended for costs associated with that Trustee's Board training, conferences, presentations, or other similar involvement.

The most up to date training requirements for trustees are updated at [TASB's website](#)

#### ELECTION OF BOARD OFFICERS/REORGANIZATION BDAA (LEGAL), BDAA (LOCAL), BBD (LEGAL), Tx Open Meetings Act

The election of Board Officers is governed by Board Policies [BDAA \(LEGAL\)](#), [BDAA \(LOCAL\)](#), and must be held at a properly noticed and posted meeting in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act [Tx Open Meetings Act](#), Texas Government code Chapter 551.000 et seq. The Board Members shall comply with the requirements of the Boards' Policies, Operating Guidelines and the Texas Open Meetings Act in the selection of officers.

#### QUALIFICATIONS FOR OFFICERS

- A nominee for Board President must have served at least two years as a Board Member and must have received or must commit to receive formation training in the duties of a Board President.
- Any Board Member is eligible to be nominated and to serve as Board Vice President or Board Secretary

#### NOTIFICATION OF INTEREST IN OFFICER POSITION

Prior to the May Regular Board Meeting, any qualified Board Member who seeks to be nominated as an officer may inform the Superintendent in writing of their interest in such position. Upon receiving such notice, the Superintendent will notify the other Board Members of the Board Member's Intent. When in Open Session, a member will be able to nominate themselves or another Board member, regardless of notification to Superintendent, according to [Robert's Rules of Order](#).

## OFFICER ELECTION PROCESS

- The officer election process will take place as needed during the May Regular Board Meeting or whenever added to an Agenda.
- The meeting agenda shall include an Executive Session item for discussing and deliberating the duties and qualifications of each officer position. The Executive Session is generally the first working item on the Agenda.
- Upon return to Open Session, the Board will consider nominations for officer positions. A nomination does not require a second. Board Members will not circumvent the Texas Open Meetings Act by attempting to solicit support for Members seeking any office prior to meeting in Open Session.
- The Board will vote for each officer position in turn. The order of election shall be President, Vice President, and Secretary. If there is more than one nominee for a position, candidates will be voted on in the order of their nomination.
- Election of Board President – For the purposes of this section only, “Current Board President” refers to the person who was president at the time of the most recent election. “Current Board Secretary” refers to the person who was the secretary at the time of the most recent election.
  1. The election of the new Board President is conducted by the Current President.
  2. If the Current President is no longer a member of the Board, the election for the new Board President is conducted by another officer.
  3. If the Current Board Secretary is no longer a member of the Board, the election for the new Board President will be conducted by the Board Member with the most seniority.
  4. If no single Board Member fits the description in item 3, the election for the new Board President will be conducted by a Board Member chosen by lot.
- Once elected, the new Board President will conduct the elections of the Board Vice President and Board Secretary.
- Newly elected officers will assume responsibility for their office immediately following the vote in Open Session.

## BOARD POLICIES

Legal policies are based upon State law and litigated cases; the Board does not approve these policies, but are obligated to adhere to them. Local policies are adopted by the Board prior to incorporation into the district policy manual. Our policy manual is online and can be accessed via our Board of Trustees webpage, or here ([link](#)).

### **Important policies to know:**

- [DGBA \(Legal\)](#) and [DGBA \(Local\)](#) - PERSONNEL-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES
- [FNG \(Legal\)](#) and [FNG \(Local\)](#) - STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES
- [GF \(Legal\)](#) and [GF \(Local\)](#) - PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

All three policies rely on the “Principal or Supervisor (Level I) – Superintendent or designee (Level II) – Board (Level III)” chain of command and resolution. A formal grievance procedure is used in which written complaints are filed first with the Principal or Supervisor, then the Superintendent if necessary. A presentation to the Board is the final step in the process.

At times, individuals will bring complaints before the Board during the public comments portion of a meeting. The Board is under no obligation to hear such complaints before administrative remedies have been pursued. The Board President should direct the person to the appropriate complaint process. Level III complaints are heard in Board meetings as scheduled agenda items, which allow the Board to take action on the complaint during the same meeting.

## Conflicts of Interest

- Conflicts are controlled by state law and Board Policies [BBFA \(LEGAL\)](#) and [BBFA \(LOCAL\)](#)
- If a Trustee believes he or she may have a conflict of interest, they should review the policy and bring the issue to the attention of the Board President and/or Superintendent.
- If a Trustee believes that another Trustee may have a conflict of interest, he or she is to bring the issue to the attention of the Board President and/or Superintendent.
- Conflicts created due to family members who are employees of the District are controlled by Board Policy [DBE \(LEGAL\)](#).
- If a Trustee believes a situation exists that requires his/her abstention, he/she should make that fact known to the Board President as soon as possible and announce the abstention at the beginning of the Board Agenda item at issue.

## PERCEIVED CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- There are times when a true, legal conflict of interest does not exist but there is the perception of a conflict of interest.
- Examples of perceived conflicts of interest include:
  - A Trustee who files a complaint / lawsuit against the District that creates a conflict beyond those identified specifically in policy;
  - A Trustee who is actively involved in an organization or movement that directly undermines the mission of the District; and
  - A Board decision that directly and specifically impacts a program in which a Trustee’s family member is intimately involved.
- When there is a perceived conflict of interest, it may be prudent to voluntarily abstain from deliberating and voting on items to ensure there is not an appearance of bias and to protect the fidelity of the process.
- Each perceived conflict of interest should be analyzed and handled on a case-by-case basis. If a Trustee fears they or a fellow-Trustee is in a perceived conflict of interest, that information should be reported to a Board officer as soon as feasible.
- Conflicts disclosure statements will be completed annually by each Trustee.