

Wharton Independent School District

School Board Operating Procedures

Wharton ISD
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Wharton ISD
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School Board Operating Procedures

Administration

Dr. Kay Shoppa.....Superintendent
Dr. Elaine Sharp.....Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum
Randy Hill.....Business Manager
Marjorie Sklar.....Director of Personnel & Public Relations
Sheri Ganske.....Director of Technology
Kim Somer.....Director of Special Education
Danette Thornton.....Director of State and Federal Programs
Ronnie Arnold.....Coordinator of Auxiliary Services

Board of Trustees

Gary Ward.....President
Billy Bahnsen..... Vice President
Hazel Hurd.....Secretary
Rachel Rust..... Member
Sherrell Speer..... Member
Christine Stransky..... Member
Dr. Wayne Taylor..... Member

It is the policy of Wharton ISD not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or age.

Board Operating Procedures Wharton ISD

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 Wharton ISD Board of Trustees and Superintendent function as a “Team of Eight” to provide open communication to the staff and patrons of the District.

The Wharton ISD Board of Trustees adopts these guidelines as Standard Operating Procedures to effectively communicate with staff and patrons of the District.

I. Developing Board Meeting Agenda

A. Placing Items on Agenda

- 1) The tentative agenda is created by the administration and presented to the Board President six (6) days before the regular Board meeting.
- 2) Board members must request through the Board President or the Superintendent in advance any item they wish to have considered for placement on the agenda.
- 3) The Board President or Superintendent shall place an item on the agenda if the item is requested by a Board member.
- 4) In accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Law, no member can place an item on the agenda less than 72 hours in advance of a meeting, except in an emergency as per Texas Code.

B. Items for Closed Session

- 1) All personnel issues must be conducted in a closed session unless specifically required by the Texas Open Meetings Law.
- 2) Anything that violates the right to privacy, i.e. Texas Open Records Act, cannot be placed on the agenda and/or discussed in open session.
- 3) Other matters excepted by Sub-Chapter D of the Open Meetings Act that will have a detrimental effect on the position of the District, i.e. attorney-client privilege.

D. The Vice President shall act in the capacity of the President in the absence of the President.

E. The Secretary shall:

- 1) Keep accurate records of closed session Board meetings.
- 2) Call meetings and act in the capacity of the President in the absence of the President and Vice President.
- 3) Countersign all warrants

XII. Role of Board in Closed Session

- A. The Board may only discuss those items allowed by law in closed session.
- B. The Board must vote in public session.
- C. Discussion during closed session must remain confidential.

XIII. Media Inquiries to the Board

- A. The Board President or the Superintendent shall be the official spokesperson for the Board to the media/press on issues of media attention.
- B. All Board members who receive calls from the media should direct them to the Board President or the Superintendent.

XIV. Anonymous Phone Calls and/or Letters

The Wharton ISD Board of Trustees encourages input; however, anonymous calls or letters will not receive Board attention, discussion or response and will not result in directives to the administration. Confidentiality is strictly maintained when possible.

XV. Reviewing Board Operating Procedures

Standard Board Operating Procedures will be reviewed and updated annually and will be part of Board training. These procedures may be modified at any time by a majority vote of the Board. Interpretation of Board Operating Procedures will be at the sole discretion of the Board.

- D. The Board will keep the Superintendent informed via telephone calls, faxes, email or personal visits.
- E. The Board will communicate with the community through public hearings, regular Board meetings and regular publications.
- F. Individual Board members cannot speak in an official capacity outside the Boardroom.

IX. Evaluation of Superintendent

- A. The Board President obtains input from all members of the Board on the approved indicators on the Superintendent's evaluation.
- B. An evaluation is conducted in closed session.
- C. A summative evaluation of the Superintendent will be conducted in January of each year.

X. Evaluation of the Board

- A. The evaluation of the Board is an assessment of the completion of goals established by the Board.
- B. The Board will complete the Board self assessment and meet to discuss it.

XI. Role and Authority of Board Members and/or Board Officers (set down by state statute)

- A. No Board member or officer has authority outside of a Board meeting.
- B. No Board member may direct employees in regard to performance of duties.
- C. The Board President shall:
 - 1) Preside at all Board meetings
 - 2) Appoint committees
 - 3) Call special meetings
 - 4) Sign all legal documents required by law

II. Member Conduct during Board Meetings (Four members present constitutes a quorum for a meeting).

A. Citizen Addressing the Board

- 1) An opportunity is provided on regular meeting agendas (and on some special meeting agendas) for citizens to address the Board. A citizen may address the Board on an agenda or non-agenda item by completing the form located inside the Boardroom and giving the form to the Superintendent or the Board President before the meeting begins. Each speaker is limited to three minutes.
- 2) If five (5) or more citizens sign up to address the Board on a single item, a spokesperson will be selected to speak for the group, and that person may speak for five minutes.
- 3) The Board President may request the Superintendent to respond to concerns of citizens present at the meeting at a later date.

B. Board Response to Citizens Addressing the Board

- 1) The Board President, when necessary, may direct the Superintendent to investigate item(s) and report back to the Board through transmittal or at a designated meeting.
- 2) The board shall not respond to or comment on citizen comments, but will take all comments under advisement.

C. Discussion of Individual Employees/Students by Board or Audience

- 1) The Board shall not allow negative comments in public session about individual employees.
- 2) The Board shall not allow negative comments in public session about individual students.

D. Hearings and Public Hearings (including Level 3 appeals)

- 1) During public hearings, the Board is assembled only to gather information.
- 2) The Board will not answer questions or enter into dialogue except with their attorney in the case of an employee hearing.
- 3) Rules for the public hearing will be strictly adhered to:
 - a) The Board will limit response to five minutes per testifier.
 - b) The Board will accept written (signed) or oral testimony.
 - c) The Board will not allow duplicate testimony.
 - d) The Board will not allow any derogatory comments.

E. Board Shall Observe the Parliamentary Procedures in *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*

- 1) All discussion shall be directed solely to the business currently under deliberation.
- 2) 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.
- 3) The Board President has the right to recognize a Board member prior to giving their comments.

III. Voting

- A. The Board President may vote on all action items or as a tie-breaker. The President should be consistent in this matter.
- B. In case of a tie vote, the item is tabled. The President may bring the item back to the Board on a subsequent agenda.

IV. Individual Board Member Request for Information or Reports

- A. Board members shall request information and/or reports through the Board President or the Superintendent.
- B. The Superintendent will gather the information and/or report and disseminate it in a timely manner to the Board
- C. Board members are encouraged to advise the Superintendent of questions or concerns on agenda items before the Board meeting.

V. Citizen Request/Complaint to Individual Board Member

- A. The Board member should hear the full complaint for understanding of persons involved, date, time and place.
 - 1) Repeat problem back to citizen.
 - 2) Issue chain-of-command to citizen.
 - 3) Remind the citizen of due process and that the Board member must remain impartial in case the situation goes before the Board.
- B. Refer citizen to appropriate person in the chain-of-command
- C. The Board member shall promptly refer all information regarding the citizen complaint to the superintendent for study and appropriate action or recommendations. After timely investigation of the matter, the superintendent shall inform the Board of the results or status of such matters.

VI. Employee Request/Complaint to Individual Board Member

- A. The Board members will hear employee's problem for full understanding.
 - 1) Repeat problem back to employee.
 - 2) Issue chain-of-command to employee.
 - 3) Remind employee of the due process procedure and remain impartial.
- B. Refer employee to appropriate person in the chain-of-command.
- C. The Board Member shall promptly refer all information regarding the employee request or complaint to the superintendent for study and appropriate action or recommendation. After timely investigation of the matter, the superintendent shall inform the Board of the results or status of such matters.
- D. The employee will hear from the Superintendent within a timely fashion unless the employee requests no contact from the Superintendent.

VII. Board Member Visit to School Campus

- A. Board members are encouraged/expected to attend PTA and other special events on campuses to represent the Board in support of activities.
- B. Board members are not to go into teachers' classrooms or to campuses for the purpose of evaluation or investigation.
- C. Board members must notify the principal of visits to campuses when they are not attending a scheduled activity.

VIII. Communications (All communications are subject to compliance with the Open Meetings Act)

- A. The Superintendent will meet or visit by phone with the Board President on a routine basis.
- B. The Superintendent will communicate information in a timely fashion to all Board members.
- C. Requests to the Superintendent from any Board member will be distributed to all Board members.