

# BOARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

---

Venus Independent School District

## PROCEDURE #1

### How to: Request Information About Meeting Agenda Items

- 1) Members are encouraged to ask for information related to meeting agenda items prior to the scheduled meeting.
- 2) Any questions about agenda items or requests for additional information about them will be directed to the superintendent or his designee.
- 3) Requests for information or questions about any agenda item will be made by 1 p.m. on the business day before the scheduled meeting<sup>1</sup>.
- 4) If a written report is provided in response to the request, all board members will receive a copy of both the request and report prior to the opening of the meeting.
- 5) Board members may discuss the provided information or ask additional questions about the agenda item in the meeting.

#### Related Policies:

Adopted or Revised: November 15, 2010

## PROCEDURE #2

### How To: Communicate With Team Members Between Meetings

- 1) The superintendent will communicate with each board member, weekly or as needed, with board information packets that may include information such as:
  - a) District events
  - b) Progress reports on board goals and directives
  - c) Follow-up reports in answer to board member questions
  - d) Updates on administrative matters or district operations
- 2) The superintendent will meet with the board president as needed, or communicate by telephone, fax, and/or e-mail to inform him or her of district issues that may need to come before the board for information or action.
- 3) The board president may direct the superintendent to distribute copies of documents to each member of the board for information. The board information packe<sup>1</sup> is the preferred method of distribution unless unusual circumstances dictate a faster delivery.
- 4) The superintendent will communicate requested information to all board members in as timely a manner as possible without interfering with the regular conduct of district business.
- 5) 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.
- 6) 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.
- 7) Board members who wish to share information relevant to district business or issues scheduled to come before the board will relay the information to the board president for placement on a future agenda or to the superintendent for distribution to all members in the board information packets<sup>2</sup>.

Related Policies: BE (LEGAL) and BJA (LOCAL)

Adopted or Revised: November 15, 2010

## PROCEDURE #3

### How to: Request Information Not Related to Agenda Items

- 1) Members should request information not related to a meeting agenda item directly from the superintendent or other designated custodian of records.
- 2) The superintendent will determine if the information requested is available from existing sources or records or if it requires that a special, one-time-only report be developed.
- 3) If the requested information can be provided from readily available data with no diversion of staff time, then it will be provided as soon as reasonable.
- 4) In the event the request requires a special report that will divert staff time from established priorities, the superintendent will notify the requestor and the board president of this fact.
- 5) The board president will place the request for information on the next meeting agenda to determine if a majority of the board agrees the requested information is important for its future decision-making.
- 6) If the board does agree that the information is important for future decision-making, then the superintendent will direct that a report be developed and provided as requested by the board. If the board does not agree, information may be obtained in accordance with GBA (LEGAL).
- 7) All team members will be notified of any report generated by a board member's request in accordance with this procedure. Additional copies will be provided by request.

Related Policies: GBA (LEGAL) and BBE (LOCAL)

Adopted or Revised: November 15, 2010

## PROCEDURE #4

### How to: Visit Campuses as a Board Member

- 1) Board members are encouraged to attend as many school events as their time permits.
- 2) Board members are required to check in with the principal's office and to follow campus guidelines for visitors.
- 3) Board members may interact with any staff member or student during lunch or recess as long as they do not disrupt the learning process.
- 4) Following campus guidelines, board members may go into teachers' classrooms or individual buildings to observe with prior approval from the campus principal.
- 5) Board members may not give any direction to any staff or students.
- 6) If the principal perceives that the board member is disrupting the campus environment, the principal will ask the superintendent to refer the matter to the Board President.
- 7) When visiting with teachers of their own children, board members will make it clear that they are acting as parents rather than as board members.
- 8) Board members or their families will not request or accept extraordinary consideration or "favours" from any district employee.

Related Policies: GKA (LEGAL), BBF (LOCAL) and BBFA (LEGAL)

## How to: Respond to Community or Employee Complaints

- 1) Listen briefly and respectfully. Remind the complainant of the board's responsibility to remain impartial and noncommittal because complaints may ultimately be brought to the board on appeal.
- 2) Determine if the complainant wishes to express dissatisfaction or desires some action be taken to resolve the issue.
- 3) Complainants who desire some action be taken should be directed or referred to the appropriate policy outlining grievance procedures and informed that the steps listed in policy are necessary to protect everyone's rights while following an orderly process.
- 4) Ask if the complainant has followed the "Chain of Command" outlined in district policy.
- 5) If the complainant does not know the district's "Chain of Command," provide the following information:
  - a. The complainant should first discuss the problem with the person in authority closest to the problem.
  - b. If not satisfied with the resolution of the problem, the complainant should go to the administrative supervisor of the person noted in "a."
  - c. The administrative supervisor will help the complainant initiate any correspondence or forms required in policy and attempt to resolve the complaint.
  - d. If still not satisfied, the complainant may appeal to the superintendent or designee for resolution.
  - e. If the superintendent is unable to resolve the issue or the complainant is still not satisfied, the formal complaint is brought to the board following local policy.
- 6) Board members will inform the superintendent of all complaints from staff and community but will not direct the superintendent to take specific actions.
- 7) The superintendent shall inform the board of the resolution of complaints referred by board members if the complaint requires superintendent intervention.

**Related Policies:** DGBA (LEGAL and LOCAL) pertains to employees; FNG (LEGAL and LOCAL) pertains to parents and students; GF (LOCAL) is for public complaints

**Adopted or Revised:** November 15, 2010

## How to: Communicate With The Community

- 1) Board members are encouraged to participate in community activities as liaisons between the public and the school district. When doing so, board members are expected to:
  - a) Relay information about district goals.
  - b) Clarify a trustee's limitations, obligations, and responsibilities as a member of the board.
  - c) Support board decisions.
  - d) Interact in a positive manner.
  - e) Listen politely and respectfully to comments.
  - f) Make no commitment on behalf of the board or district.
  - g) Will not criticize district personnel.
  - h) Refer questions about specific district activities to the appropriate staff person when they do not know the answers.
- 2) The Board of Trustees encourages community input; however, it may not respond to or act on the basis of anonymous calls or letters.
- 3) Signed letters addressed to the board or a board member will be forwarded to the president or the superintendent for inclusion in the weekly board information packet.
- 4) The board will communicate to the community collectively through district communication vehicles authorized by the board in policy or the district communication plan.

### Related Policies:

Adopted or Revised: November 15, 2010

## PROCEDURE #7

### How To: Communicate with the Media

- 1) The board president or, in his or her absence, the vice president or designated board member will serve as the board spokesperson to the media on issues regarding board actions.<sup>1</sup>
- 2) The superintendent shall be the official district spokesperson to the media on issues of district attention.
- 3) Any board member receiving a call from the media requesting information, comments, or an interview will direct the media representative to the superintendent for district business and to the board spokesperson for board-specific issues.
- 4) If speaking to a media representative, board members should clarify at the beginning of the interview that they are speaking as individuals rather than as authorized representatives of the board of trustees.
- 5) When speaking as an individual, the board member will remind media representatives of the official position or action already taken on the issue by the board of trustees and refer media to the spokesperson for further information.
- 6) It is inappropriate for a board member to state an opinion on an upcoming issue that is scheduled for discussion at a board meeting.
- 7) When contacted by the media, board members and/or the superintendent will inform the other team of eight members of potential media coverage.

Related Policies: BBF (LOCAL), BDAB (LOCAL), BJA (LOCAL), and GBB (LOCAL)

Adopted or Revised: November 15, 2010

---



## How to: Prepare the Board Meeting Agenda

- 1) Any board member may request an item be placed on the agenda for board consideration by contacting the board president or superintendent five business days prior to the meeting.
- 2) Items submitted for inclusion after the deadline or those requiring significant preparation time might, at the discretion of the board president, be deferred to a later meeting. This decision is based on the time needed to prepare supporting information.
- 3) A draft agenda will be developed by the superintendent and presented to the board president for approval five working days prior to the meeting for which the agenda is being prepared<sup>1</sup>.
- 4) The draft agenda will include previously scheduled items from the board agenda calendar and any items required by law.
- 5) Use of a consent agenda to present items for a single vote without discussion will conform to the following guidelines:
  - a) Placement of items on the consent agenda will be at the discretion of the board president and superintendent.
  - b) Any individual board member may ask questions or discuss an item on the consent agenda by asking the president to remove it from the consent agenda for individual consideration.
  - c) Following action on the consent agenda, the president will allow discussion on any item requested for removal from the agenda by a board member.
  - d) Here are some examples of items that may be included on the consent agenda.
    - i) Routine items
    - ii) Minutes of regular and special board meetings
    - iii) Acceptance of financial reports
    - iv) Routine bid recommendations in alignment with district policy
    - v) Second reading of district policies
    - vi) Approval of personnel contracts that comply with district policies

Related Policies: BE (LEGAL and LOCAL), BJA (LOCAL)

Adopted or Revised: November 15, 2010

## PROCEDURE #9

### How to: Participate as a Trustee in "Public Comment"

- 1) Persons wishing to address the board during open public comment will comply with the provisions of policy BED (LOCAL) that outlines the specific times and procedures applicable to public comments during board meetings.
- 2) A copy of policy BED (LOCAL) will be available for public review at the posted meeting site.
- 3) During the "public comment" section of the meeting, board members will listen to comments but, as the designated spokesperson, only the president may respond if a response to the speaker is required. Those responses are limited to:
  - a) Correcting misstatements of fact presented by the speaker.
  - b) Referring the speaker to applicable board policy or district personnel.
  - c) Placing the item on a future board agenda for discussion if not listed on the current board agenda.
- 4) With the approval of the board, a board member may direct the superintendent to investigate matters brought forward during public comment and report findings to the board at a later meeting.
- 5) If a member of the public has been afforded an opportunity to speak and his or her comments begin reflecting a complaint about an individual district staff or board member, the president will refer the speaker to the appropriate formal grievance policy.
- 6) The board must bear in mind that residents who speak during public comments have First Amendment rights. The board should seek legal advice before disallowing a resident's contribution to public comment based solely on the content of the speaker's comments.

Related Policies: BED (LEGAL and LOCAL), FNG (LOCAL)

Adopted or Revised: November 15, 2010

## How to: Orient New Board Members

- 1) Local district orientation will be scheduled by the superintendent to take place within 30 days of the date a new board member takes the oath of office.
- 2) The superintendent and at least one incumbent board member will participate in the orientation. Additional administrative staff members may also be included to present specific information about the district.
- 3) Orientation will include but is not limited to:
  - a) General district information such as:
    - Geographic area included and number of square miles
    - Campus attendance boundaries
    - Number of students, teachers, and other employees
    - Number of campuses and their enrollments
    - Student demographics
    - Administrative structure and directory of key personnel
    - Ongoing issues of interest to patrons
  - b) Overview of district programs and operations such as:
    - District vision, mission, goals, and plans including
      - a. District planning and evaluation process and calendar
      - b. Most recent AEIS report, campus report cards, and district annual report
    - District budget overview including
      - a. Current adopted budget summary
      - b. Recent trends in revenue, appropriations, tax rates, property values
      - c. Annual financial audit
      - d. Development process and calendar
    - Overview of district curriculum objectives, standards, and instructional programs
    - Policy development and review process and location of manuals
    - Personnel hiring practices and salary schedule
    - Superintendent performance goals, current superintendent evaluation instrument, process, and calendar
  - c) Team operations, including:
    - Overview of roles and responsibilities of the board and superintendent
    - Required continuing education and calendar of training opportunities
    - Current team improvement goals and continuing education targets
    - Annual board agenda calendar
    - Calendar of district and board events
    - Current team operating procedures
    - Board meeting packet

Related Policies: BBD (LEGAL)

Adopted or Revised: November 15, 2010