



Savoy Independent School District  
Board Operating Procedures

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## **I. SAVOY ISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES CODE OF ETHICS**

**(BBF LOCAL)**

As a member of the Board, I shall promote the best interests of the District as a whole and, to that end, shall adhere to the following ethical standards:

### **EQUITY IN ATTITUDE**

- I will be fair, just, and impartial in all my decisions and actions.
- I will accord others the respect I wish for myself.
- I will encourage expressions of different opinions and listen with an open mind to others' ideas.

### **TRUSTWORTHINESS IN STEWARDSHIP**

- I will be accountable to the public by representing District policies, programs, priorities, and progress accurately.
- I will be responsive to the community by seeking its involvement in District affairs and by communicating its priorities and concerns.
- I will work to ensure prudent and accountable use of District resources.
- I will make no personal promise or take private action that may compromise my performance or my responsibilities.

### **HONOR IN CONDUCT**

- I will tell the truth.
- I will share my views while working for consensus.
- I will respect the majority decision as the decision of the Board.
- I will base my decisions on fact rather than supposition, opinion, or public favor.

### **INTEGRITY OF CHARACTER**

- I will refuse to surrender judgment to any individual or group at the expense of the District as a whole.
- I will consistently uphold all applicable laws, rules, policies, and governance procedures.
- I will not disclose information that is confidential by law or that will needlessly harm the District if disclosed.

### **COMMITMENT TO SERVICE**

- I will focus my attention on fulfilling the Board's responsibilities of goal setting, policymaking, and evaluation.
- I will diligently prepare for and attend Board meetings.
- I will avoid personal involvement in activities the Board has delegated to the Superintendent.
- I will seek continuing education that will enhance my ability to fulfill my duties effectively.

### **STUDENT-CENTERED FOCUS**

- I will be continuously guided by what is best for all students of the District.

**II. DEVELOPING MEETING AGENDA (BE LEGAL), (BE LOCAL), (BEC LEGAL)**

**A. Placement of Items on the Agenda**

1. In consultation with the board president, the superintendent shall prepare the agenda for all board meetings. Any trustee may request that a subject be included on the agenda for a meeting, and the Superintendent shall include on the preliminary agenda of the meeting all topics that have been timely submitted by a board member.
2. Board members may submit a request to the superintendent, in accordance with BE (LOCAL), stating any item they wish to have considered for placement on the agenda. The deadline for submitting items for inclusion on the agenda is the fifth calendar day before regular meetings and the third calendar day before special meetings.
3. Before the official agenda is finalized for any meeting, the superintendent shall consult with the board president to ensure that the agenda and the topics included meet with the president's approval. In reviewing the preliminary agenda, the president shall ensure that any topics the board or individual trustees have requested to be addressed are either on that agenda or scheduled for deliberation at an appropriate time in the near future. The board president shall not have authority to remove from the agenda a subject requested by a board member without that board member's specific authorization. (BE LOCAL)
4. Under normal conditions, the agenda for meetings of the board normally will be closed on the fifth calendar day preceding regular meetings and the third calendar day for all other meetings. The notice of any emergency addendum to the agenda must be posted at least two hours before the meeting.

**B. Open Session Agenda (BEC LEGAL)**

1. All personnel issues must be conducted in an Executive Session, unless specifically required to be conducted in Open Session by the Texas Open Meetings Act.
2. Issues that violate an individual's right to privacy under the Texas Open Meetings Act, the Texas Open Records Act, or other applicable statute or regulation cannot be placed on the agenda, unless specifically required to be conducted in Open Session by the Texas Open Meetings Act.

**C. Use of Consent Agenda (BE LOCAL)**

1. Any item may be removed from the consent agenda and considered as an individual action item by request of an individual board member.
2. The following are examples of items that may be considered for inclusion on the consent agenda.
  - a. Routine and/or Recurring Items
  - b. Annual Renewals of Region 10 and TEA items
  - c. Budget Amendments
  - d. Gifts, Donations, and Bequests
  - e. Financial Information
  - f. Minutes of Regular and Special Board Meetings
  - g. Minutes of Joint Meetings with the City of Savoy
  - h. Routine Bid Recommendations

3. The board shall maintain a planning calendar which is reviewed annually. The preferred review will occur in January of each calendar year.

### **III. CONDUCT DURING BOARD MEETINGS (BE LOCAL), (BED LOCAL), (BEC LEGAL)**

- A. Patrons Addressing the Board (BED LOCAL)
  - 1. Registering to Speak: Each member of the public wishing to speak to the board at a regular meeting shall sign up on a form provided by the board.
  - 2. At each regular meeting, the board will set aside up to 30 minutes (BED LOCAL) to afford the general public an opportunity to speak to the board on any matter concerning the education of students and the business of the board that is not listed on the board agenda.
  - 3. Individual patrons will be allowed no more than five minutes (BED LOCAL) to speak.
  
- B. Board Response to Patrons Addressing the Board
  - 1. In accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, board members may hear comments from patrons, but may not engage in discussion on any topic that is not on the legally posted agenda, except as authorized by law.
  - 2. The board shall not interact with patrons nor will the board deliberate or decide regarding any subject that is not included on the agenda posted with notice of the meeting. (BED LOCAL)
  - 3. The board president may ask the superintendent to request a follow-up conversation with any patron that participates in the public comment portion of the board meeting.
  
- C. Discussion of Individual Employees and/or Students (BEC LEGAL)
  - 1. The board will not permit comments on individual personnel in public session which would violate board policy.
  - 2. The board will not permit comments on individual students in public session which would violate board policy.
  
- D. Discussions and Limitations (BED LOCAL)
  - 1. Audience participation at a board meeting is limited to the public comment portion of the meeting designated for that purpose. At all other times during a board meeting, the audience shall not enter into discussion or debate on matters being considered by the board, unless requested by the presiding officer.
  - 2. The board president may also halt discussion if the board has agreed to a time limitation for discussion of an item and that time limit has expired.
  
- E. Parliamentary Procedures (BE LOCAL)
  - 1. The board shall observe the parliamentary procedures in *Robert's Rules of Order*, except as otherwise provided in board procedural rules or by law.
  - 2. Procedural rules may be suspended at any board meeting by majority vote of the members present.
  
- F. Discussion of Motions (BE LOCAL)
  - 1. All discussions shall be directed solely to the business currently under discussion as posted on the agenda.

2. The board president has the responsibility of keeping the discussion to the motion at hand and shall halt discussion that does not apply to the business before the board as posted on the agenda.
3. The board president may recognize a board member prior to the board member giving his/her comments.
4. The board president may also halt discussion if the board has agreed to a time limitation for discussion of an item, and that time limit has expired.

G. Voting (BE LOCAL)

1. The board president shall have the right to discuss, make motions, and resolutions, and vote on all matters coming before the board. (BDAA LOCAL)
2. No member shall vote on a motion in which he or she has a direct pecuniary interest not common to other members of the board. (BBFA LEGAL)
3. All votes, including dissenting and abstaining votes, shall be recorded in the minutes of the board meeting.
4. Board members are encouraged to vote based on their convictions but are expected to support the will of the board.

**IV. INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER REQUEST FOR INFORMATION OR REPORT  
(BBE LEGAL), (BBE LOCAL)**

- A. Board members are entitled to the information they require to make informed decisions on the matters before them.
- B. Individual members shall seek access to records or request copies of records from the superintendent or other designated custodian of records. When a custodian of records other than the superintendent provides access to records or copies of records to individual trustees, the provider shall inform the superintendent of the records provided (BBE LOCAL).
- C. Individual members shall not direct or require district employees to prepare reports derived from an analysis of information in existing district records or to create a new record compiled from information in existing district records. Directives to the superintendent or custodian of records regarding preparation of reports shall be by board action (BBE LOCAL).
- D. If a member requests information that requires an excessive amount of staff time to compile, the superintendent and board president should consult with the member to find a reasonable solution.
- E. When requests for information are made at a board meeting, it shall be determined whether or not the information requested is appropriate and necessary by “the will of the board”.
- F. Information requested by and provided to a board member will be provided to all trustees.
- G. A calendar of reports will be included with the annual agenda planning calendar and information requested from individual board members that is deemed appropriate will be added to the calendar of reports.
- H. Information requested by individual board members that is deemed by the board to be unnecessary for the fulfillment of the board role will be processed in the same manner as citizen requests for information.

**V. BOARD MEMBER VISIT TO SCHOOL CAMPUS**

- A. Board members are encouraged to attend any school's events as often as possible as their time permits. However, board members should use good judgment with regard to actions, discussions, and frequency of visits.
- B. Board members may visit campus in her/his role of parent. If the visit is for other than routine purposes, the trustee should notify the superintendent prior to the visit.
- C. Board members should notify the superintendent's office, in advance, of the time and purpose of an uninvited visit or any visit to a campus that is made in the role of trustee.
- D. Board members should notify the campus principal any time they plan to be on a campus and board members are to follow check-in procedures with the principal's office before going to teachers' classrooms.
- E. Campus visits may not be made in conjunction with campaigning for re-election.
- F. Board members are not to assume a supervisory role for staff or students during campus visits.
- G. 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.
- H. Board members will not request or accept extraordinary consideration or "favors" from any district employee.

## **VI. SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION**

**(BJCD LOCAL) (BJCD LEGAL)**

### **CRITERIA**

The board shall prepare a written evaluation of the superintendent at annual or more frequent intervals and may at any time conduct and communicate oral evaluations to augment its written evaluations. The written evaluation shall be based on the superintendent job description (see BJCD) and other criteria identified by the board.

The board shall furnish the superintendent with a copy of the completed evaluation and shall discuss its conclusions with the superintendent in closed meeting.

### **DEFINITIONS**

Formative Conference – meeting held between board members and superintendent designed to modify and improve the ongoing performance of the superintendent.

Summative Conference – meeting held between board members and superintendent designed to make a final judgment about the continuation of the superintendent’s employment.

A formative evaluation is continuous. A summative evaluation is “one-time” and final.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The board shall strive to accomplish the following objectives in conducting the superintendent’s evaluation:

1. Clarify to the superintendent his or her role, as seen by the board.
2. Clarify to board members the superintendent’s role, according to the board’s written criteria, as expressed in the superintendent’s job description and the district’s goals and objectives.
3. Foster an early understanding among new board members of the evaluation process and the superintendent’s current performance objectives and priorities.
4. Develop and sustain a harmonious working relationship between the board and the superintendent.
5. Ensure administrative leadership for excellence in the district.

### **TIME OF EVALUATION**

Each year, the board will conduct a formative evaluation at the Jan. meeting of the board.

Each year, the board will conduct a summative evaluation at the Jan. meeting of the board. Superintendent contract discussion and negotiation will also be dealt with in Jan. of each year, following the summative conference.

## PROCEDURE

In compliance with the Texas Education Code, the Board shall prepare a written evaluation of the superintendent, based on the superintendent's job description. (See BJCD) A copy of the completed evaluation shall be provided to the superintendent prior to meeting with the board in closed session. The summative evaluation shall reflect a consensus of the board and the superintendent regarding the performance of the superintendent in the previous year and expectations for future performance. The feedback and direction provided by the board to the superintendent during the evaluation process is essential for quality leadership and goal attainment in the district.

If consensus cannot be reached regarding the evaluation and contract proposals, the superintendent may request further consideration. He or she may request a public or private hearing regarding any aspect of the evaluation process.

Once consensus has been reached regarding the superintendent's evaluation and proposed contract amendments and no later than the January board meeting, the board shall convene in Open Session to vote on the adoption of the superintendent's evaluation and any amendments to be made to the contract.

Formative evaluation meetings may be held between the board and the superintendent during the year to review progress and to allow adjustments to performance expectations based on significant changes in the district.

Board members are required to attend a formal training on the topic of superintendent performance appraisal prior to taking part in the superintendent appraisal.

## SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION (BJCD LEGAL)

### PENALTY FOR NONCOMPLIANCE

Funds of the district may not be used to pay a superintendent who has not been appraised in the preceding 15 months. *Education Code 21.354(d)*

### APPRAISAL PROCESS

The board shall appraise the superintendent annually using either:

1. The commissioner's recommended appraisal process and criteria (see BJCD EXHIBIT); or
2. An appraisal process and performance criteria that are:
  - a. Developed by the district in consultation with the district- and campus-level committees; and
  - b. Adopted by the board Education Code 21.354(c)

### ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

The information in the annual report describing the educational performance of the district (see AIB) shall be a primary consideration of the board in evaluating the superintendent.

**VII. BOARD SELF EVALUATION**

- A. The board may conduct on a regular basis, a self-evaluation of board and board member performance. The evaluation shall consider such items as role recognition, relationship with others, performance at board meetings, and self-improvement activities.

## VIII. INQUIRIES, COMPLAINTS TO THE BOARD (BBE LOCAL) (DGBA, FNG, GF LOCAL)

### INDIVIDUAL AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTING THE BOARD

Board members as individuals shall not exercise authority over the district, its property, or its employees. Except for appropriate duties and functions of the board president, an individual member may act on behalf of the board only with the express authorization of the board. Without such authorization, no individual member may commit the board on any issue.

### REFERRING COMPLAINTS

If employees, parents, students, or other members of the public bring concerns or complaints to an individual board member, he or she shall refer them to the superintendent. (See LOCAL policies DGBA, FNG, and GF)

When the concern or complaint directly pertains to the board's own actions or policy, for which there is no administrative remedy, the trustee may request that the issue be placed on the agenda.

**The board's position:** Board members shall not conduct investigations of allegations on their own. Board members shall inform the superintendent of complaints first, and then, if dissatisfied with the response of the superintendent, may bring the matter to the attention of the board during executive session, if appropriate for executive session.

**The superintendent's position:** The superintendent shall thoroughly investigate allegations of fraud, misconduct, theft, abusive behavior, incompetence, sexual harassment, cheating and other related activities that could be a threat to children or the reputation of the district. The superintendent shall inform the board at the appropriate time of the investigation.

**Protocol:** Board members are encouraged to be polite to patrons and encourage them to deal with their complaint at the source of the issue, but help them to understand that a formal process exists if they are unable to resolve the issue at the source. Also, politely remind patrons that you have no authority as an individual board member and that should you choose to get involved informally, you would need to recuse yourself in the event the formal process resulted in a hearing before the board of trustees.

## **IX. COMMUNICATIONS, GENERAL AND WITH MEDIA DURING CRISIS**

### **GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS**

- A. Board Meetings: Every effort will be made to cooperate with the news media to ensure complete and accurate coverage of all board meetings.
- B. News Releases: News releases of a political or controversial nature, as well as those concerning the overall operation of district schools, or that involve more than one campus shall be made by the superintendent or designee.

Routine news items concerning athletic events, programs, and local campus activities may be released to the news media by the principal or designee.

The broadcast or telecast of school events in compliance with UIL rules, and that does not identify the schools with the promotion of any commercial or political enterprise, shall be permitted with prior approval of the principal.

Media activities shall not cause more than a minimal interruption to students and staff in the instructional program.

### **COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE NEWS MEDIA DURING A CRISIS**

The superintendent or designee serves as the official spokesperson for the district to the media and press. In the event the board needs to provide information, the board president shall serve as the spokesperson for the board. If at any time, any other board member chooses to respond to a request for an individual comment or opinion from the media/press, they should clearly qualify any statement as being the opinion of the individual board member and not representative of the board as a whole or the school district.

In a building-level crisis situation, the principal shall advise the superintendent at the earliest appropriate time.

Individual board members are discouraged from visiting with the media and encouraged to direct the media to the district spokesperson regardless of the nature of the inquiry.

**X. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN BOARD MEMBERS**

Communication among board members:

1. Board members are free to communicate with each other on a one-to-one basis.
2. To avoid public speculation that the Open Meetings Act has been violated, board members must exercise extreme caution at social functions and avoid gathering in groups of more than two board members.
3. Unless a committee meeting has been posted according to the Open Meetings Act, board members that are not serving on the committee are not to attend the committee meeting.
4. Communications should not be sent from one board member to more than two other board members, even if no reply is requested, expected, or received.
5. Board members who have received messages should not forward them if the result is that a quorum of board members will receive the message.
6. If a board member wishes to provide information to the entire board, the information should first be submitted to the superintendent, who will provide the information to all board members.

## **XI. BOARD COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF**

Board members have the same rights as others to communicate with district employees regarding issues involving their own children.

Board members have the right to communicate with district employees in personal conversation and social settings as long as such communication does not circumvent the role and authority of the superintendent. Circumvention occurs when the board member's intent is to persuade employees, direct employees, elicit a position from employees, or obtain information from employees without the board's knowledge or superintendent's knowledge and/or consent.

**XII. BOARD COMMUNICATION WITH LEGAL COUNSEL**

**BDD (LOCAL)**

The board shall retain an attorney or attorneys, as necessary, to serve as the district's legal counsel and representatives in matters requiring legal services. Services to be performed and reasonable compensation to be paid by the board shall be set forth in a written contract between the board and the attorney or attorneys.

In accordance with the written contract, individual trustees shall channel legal inquiries through the superintendent when advice or information from the district's legal counsel is sought.

**BOARD LEGAL COUNSEL RELATIONSHIP**

In accordance with the written contract, individual trustees shall channel legal inquiries about the superintendent through the board president when advice or information from the district's legal counsel is sought.

Staff requests for legal advice from the district's legal counsel shall be submitted through the superintendent or designee.

A report of legal advice received shall be presented to the board when deemed appropriate by the administration or upon request of the board.

Individual board members are not to contact TASB legal division for prepaid legal consultation without providing prior notification to the superintendent.