

## Coffee County Board of Education Operating Protocol

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

1. **Students' interests come first.** The board will represent the needs and interests of all of the students in our district.
2. **Don't spring surprises** on other board members or the superintendent. There should be no surprises at a board meeting. We agree to ask the board chair or the superintendent to place an item on the agenda instead of bringing it up unexpectedly at the meeting. Additional information regarding agenda items will be requested prior to the board meeting via the superintendent.
3. **Communication** between staff and the board are encouraged. Board requests of staff are to be directed to the superintendent.
4. **Follow the chain of command.** The last stop, not the first, will be the board. We agree to follow the chain of command and insist that others do so. Each inquiry is to be referred to the person who can properly and expeditiously address the issue. Board requests that will likely require considerable time or have political implications are to be directed to the superintendent. All personnel complaints and criticisms received by the board or its individual members will be directed to the superintendent.
5. **Board acts only as a body.** Only the board as a whole has decision making authority. Individual members do not have this authority. The board and administration will support decisions made by the board.
6. **Exemplify the governance role.** The board and superintendent will support and periodically review district policies. The board recognizes the role of stakeholders in the development and deletion of policies by having the same posted online.
7. **Periodically conduct a self-assessment/evaluation.** The board commits to continuous improvement through a periodic self-assessment process and board retreats.
8. **Clearly state goals.** The board periodically will set clear goals for themselves and the superintendent. The board and superintendent periodically will set clear goals for the district.
9. **Utilize CEO input.** The superintendent is the chief executive officer and should recommend or provide proposals on most matters before the board.
10. **Meeting protocol.** Conduct at a board meeting is very important. We desire to have a legacy of a well-functioning, effective board. We agree to avoid words and actions that create a negative impression on an individual, the board or the district. We will be open minded and attentively listen to all speakers and presenters. We agree that we can disagree and will do so using common courtesy and respect for others. We will not react to

impromptu complaints on the spot, but will assure individuals that the school district will follow-up.

11. **Avoid marathon board meetings.** To be efficient and effective, long board meetings must be avoided. Points are to be made in as few words as possible; speeches at board meetings will be minimal. If a board member believes he or she does not have enough information or has questions, generally the superintendent or board chair should be called before the meeting if possible.
12. **Practice efficient decision-making.** Board meetings are for decision-making, action and votes, not endless discussion. We agree to move to the question when discussion is repetitive.
13. **Speak to agenda issues.** The board will not play to the audience. We agree to speak to the issues on the agenda and attend to our fellow board members. Facts and information needed from the administration will be referred to the superintendent. Additional information will be requested prior to board meeting via the superintendent.
14. **Executive sessions** will be held only for appropriate subjects. Board members will be sensitive to the legal ramifications of their meetings and comments. Members will honor the confidentiality of the discussion.

Approval Date: August 25, 2011