

Rappahannock County School Board

Governance Norms & Protocols

We agree to employ the following norms in all our interactions:

- **We will hear each opinion, but ultimately act as one.** We will speak candidly and courteously to each other and listen to dissenting or different viewpoints with an open mind. We will help each other to depersonalize disagreements. Once we reach a decision or compromise as a board, we will each support the will of the board in word and deed.
- **The chair (or designee) will speak as the official voice of the board.** A single board member will not represent the board without the consent of the board, and board members making personal statements (in any format, including speeches, articles, social media posts, etc.) should clearly state that these statements are their opinion and not the position of the board.
- **We will be mindful of the different roles and responsibilities throughout the school system and maintain a focus on policy and governance.**
- **We will be aware that we are perceived as school board members, even though we may hold multiple roles as individuals (i.e. parent, citizen, member of other boards).**
- **We will be focused on our work as a board and not interfere with the day-to-day operations of the school system, which is the responsibility of the superintendent.**
- **We will maintain open communication with each other, the administration, and the community-at-large.**

We agree to follow the following protocols:

Developing the board agenda	The agenda is established by the superintendent and approved by the chair.
Placing items on the board meeting agenda	A board member can make a request to add an item through the chair and superintendent no later than on Wednesday the week prior to a meeting. Or, the request can be made during a meeting as a “future agenda item”.
Obtaining information about board meeting agenda items before the meeting	The agenda will be provided to the board one week prior to a meeting. Regular agenda item materials will be provided by Friday prior to a meeting.
Responding to staff or community comments at board meetings	Board members will not respond to any comments or questions made during public comment. Board members may respond to staff during presentations by the staff member.
Responding to staff or community comments outside of board meetings	Listen and direct them to the appropriate level to address the problem. Let the superintendent know about the issue.
Communications between and among board members	Email, text and phone calls with individual board members. Board member communication protocols will follow FOIA guidelines.
Communications between board members and the superintendent	Board members can email, phone and/or text the superintendent. If all board members will benefit from having the information, it will be communicated through the Friday updates or at a meeting.
Communications between board members and staff (including requests for information)	Board members shall not communicate with staff. All requests for information must go through the superintendent.
Assignment of committee members and representatives to other boards	Assignments are established annually at the organizational meeting in January.

Committee reporting expectations	Reports are made as needed at meetings.
Responding to media inquiries	It is inappropriate for any board member to make comments to the media on personnel, student, or legal matters. Board members are encouraged to direct further inquiries to the superintendent for the most accurate information.
Use of social media	Board members are permitted to have social media platforms to inform constituents about school board business as long as it adheres to previous protocols.
How, when and whom to notify about visiting school sites	School board members will let the superintendent know if they plan on visiting a school on official business.
How, when and whom to notify about volunteering in schools or at school events	School board members can volunteer without notifying the superintendent.
How, when and whom to notify about attending school events (concerts, sporting events, etc.)	School board members can volunteer without notifying the superintendent.
Expectations for participation in professional development	School board members will meet the minimum requirements for professional development.
Expectations for participation in local meetings and conferences	School board members are not required to attend board of supervisors or other local meetings.
When and how the board evaluates the superintendent	The board reviews the superintendent's annual goals throughout the year and conducts a formal evaluation to be completed in May each year.
When and how the board conducts a self-evaluation	The board will conduct a self-evaluation annually.

When and how the board monitors and updates the school board's strategic plan	The board updates the strategic plan every 5 years. It is reviewed every other year.

Violation of these norms and protocols will result in the following actions:

VIOLATION 1- The board will address a board member that is in violation in a closed session.

VIOLATION 2- The board will address the board member in closed session. Proper protocols will be put in writing and signed by the board member in violation.

VIOLATION 3- The board will censure the board member in violation by majority vote.