

ARTICLE VIII

INTERNAL BOARD OPERATIONS  
SERIES 8000

I. Organization	
A. Official Actions	8100
B. Philosophy and Operation of the School	8110
1. Purpose	8110.1
C. Standing Committees	
1. Committee on Americanism and Curriculum	8131
II. Members	
A. Orientation	8210
B. Opportunities for Development	8220
C. Remuneration and Reimbursement	8230
D. Use of Public Resources by Board Member & Employees	8232
E. Conflict of Interest	8250
1. Code of Ethics	8251
2. Boardmanship	8252
F. Conflict of Interest	8261
III. Methods of Operation	8300
A. Formulation of Policies	8310
B. Formulation of Administrative Regulations	8330
C. Meetings	8340
1. Determining Agenda	8342
2. Procedures during Meetings	8344
D. Membership in School Board Associations	8350

Official Actions

Official actions may be taken only at a regular or special meeting of the board. In cases of emergency, the superintendent or president may poll members individually on actions to be taken, but such actions shall be ratified in official manner at the next meeting of the board.

A board member or group of board members as individuals have no authority to give a decision on matters affecting the school or residents of the district, school patrons, teachers, employees, pupils, or persons having business with the schools when not in a regular or special meeting of the board, unless authorized by the board to do so. If the board member is approached by any of the foregoing for the purpose of making a request for some action on the part of the board, the member should listen to the request but should not commit himself to a course of action until the matter is presented in a board meeting. The board member should urge the person also to discuss the matter with the superintendent of schools.

Philosophy

The Wisner-Pilger Schools exist to provide quality educational, social, and cultural experiences and to enhance knowledge, character, skills, and attitudes. The school district will strive to provide an comprehensive education, which will help develop competence for living in society and attempt to instill the desire to continue learning throughout life. These purposes encourage all people in the school district to assume their rightful places as creative, participating, and discerning citizens and make maximum contributions to the improvement of our democratic society.

Operate the School

The board of education shall carry out the duties imposed on it or authorized by law. It shall determine policies and programs which are for the purpose of providing the best schools and educational programs possible for pupils of the district and surrounding area.

Purpose

The Wisner-Pilger Public Schools exist to provide quality educational, social, and cultural experiences and to enhance knowledge, character, skills, and attitudes. The school district will strive to provide a comprehensive education, which will help develop competence for living in society and attempt to instill the desire to continue learning throughout life. These purposes encourage all people in the school district to assume their rightful places as creative, participating, and discerning citizens and make maximum contributions to the improvement of our democratic society.

Wisner-Pilger Public Schools will.....

1. provide for the needs of all students
2. provide quality educational opportunities enhanced by current technology and modern media resources.
3. help and encourage each student to pursue the best possible physical and mental health by providing a comprehensive/diverse curriculum that is broad enough to encourage academic excellence, vocational and career education, and other activities, consistent with the needs and financial capabilities of the community.
4. emphasize the skills of reading, writing, spelling, and use of technology in all areas of the curriculum.
5. provide a program of guidance and counseling which emphasizes student responsibility.
6. encourage educational growth and development, competence, and retention of qualified school personnel.
7. encourage communication between the school and community, as well as between students and parents with faculty and administration.
8. encourage and develop community programs for early childhood and adult education.
9. designate the superintendent as responsible for overall school district management and the principals and teachers for building management.
10. annually evaluate the quality of the educational opportunities available to all the people of the school district by the Board of Education.

Committee on Americanism and Curriculum

The committee on Americanism shall consist of two members which shall comply with statutory requirements governing such committees.

Orientation

The board and its staff shall assist each new member-elect or appointee to understand the board's functions, policies, and procedures before he or she takes office. The following methods shall be employed:

1. The electee or appointee shall be given selected material on the job of being a member of the board.
2. The electee or appointee shall be invited to attend board meetings and participate in board discussions.
3. The secretary shall supply material pertinent to board meetings and the superintendent or board president shall explain its use.
4. The incoming member shall be invited to meet with the superintendent for orientation.
5. A copy of the board's policies and bylaws, a copy of the school budget, a copy of Becoming a Better Board Member, and any other material deemed helpful shall be supplied to the incoming member by the secretary.

Opportunities for Development

Attendance at meetings directly or indirectly related to education or school matters shall be encouraged for the value they have to the school district and for the professional growth of board members.

The superintendent shall notify board members of meetings and other opportunities for development.

Remuneration and Reimbursement

Members of the board shall not receive compensation nor expense money for attending meetings of the board, except that the secretary of the board shall receive such compensation for his/her services as the board may direct under the provisions of Nebraska State Law. The board may authorize the entire membership, or part of it, to attend state, national, or regional meetings of board of education organizations, or other professional programs with actual expenses incurred to be paid from school funds.

Amenities

The Board may from time to time make provisions for meals and refreshments when to do so assists employees, Board members, advisory committees, and others engaged in the business of accomplishing the philosophy and objectives of the District.

The Board finds that relationships with staff members, administrators, and community members are facilitated and rendered more efficient due to the provisions of this policy.

Use of Public Resources by Board Members and Employees

Restrictions on Use

No Board member or employee of Wisner-Pilger Public Schools shall use or authorize the use of his or her public office or any confidential information received through the holding of the public office to obtain financial gain, other than compensation provided by law, for himself or herself, a member of his or her immediate family, or a business with which the individual is associated.

No Board member or employee shall use or authorize the use of school district personnel, resources, property, or funds under his or her official care and control other than in accordance with prescribed constitutional, statutory, and regulatory procedures or use such items, other than compensation provided by law, for personal financial gain.

No Board member or employee shall use or authorize the use of school resources for the purpose of campaigning for or against the nomination or election of a candidate or the qualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question. For purposes of this restriction, "school resources" means personnel, property, resources, or funds under the official care and control of the Board member or employee.

Authorized Uses

The uses described below are not authorized by employees, and violate this policy, where an employee's use: (1) interferes with the conduct of school business; (2) interferes with the performance of the employee's duties and responsibilities; (3) is contrary to another Board policy or a rule or directive set forth in an employee handbook or other employee communication device; (4) is contrary to a supervisor's directive; or (5) the use is for the employee's personal financial gain or potential for potential for personal financial gain.

*Incidental or De Minimis Use:* Use of school resources by a Board member or employee which is incidental or de minimis does not constitute a violation of this policy.

*Personal Use as Part of Compensation:* Use of school resources for personal purposes is authorized by this policy if:

1. the use of the resource for personal purposes is part of the employee's compensation provided in an employment contract or is consistent with this policy; and
2. the personal use of the resource as compensation is reported in accordance with the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, and taxes, if any, are paid by the affected employee.

Employees who engage in such personal use shall, upon request of the Board of Education or the administration, provide evidence to establish that the compensation has been reported and taxes paid as required by the Tax Code.

*School Vehicles:* Use of a school vehicle by a Board member or employee to travel to a designated location or the home of the Board member or employee is permissible when the primary purpose of the travel serves a school district purpose. Such use is authorized by this policy. No travel other than directly to the school-related trip destination shall occur, however, when students are in the vehicle or if the vehicle is a school bus.

*Communication Devices:* A Board member or employee may use a telecommunication system, a cellular telephone, an electronic handheld device, or a computer under the control of the school district for email, text messaging, a local call, or a long-distance call, to a child at home, a teacher, a doctor, a day care center, a baby-sitter, a family member, or any other person to inform any such person of an unexpected schedule change or for other essential personal business. Any such communication shall be kept to a minimum and shall not interfere with the conduct of school business or the performance of an employee's duties.

A Board member or employee shall be responsible for payment or reimbursement of charges (e.g. long distance charges), if any, that directly results from any such communication. The Board member or employee shall promptly report any such communication that results in an expense to the School District to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee. The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee shall establish procedures for reimbursement of charges incurred as a result of such communications.

Use of the District's internet system for such communications shall not be permitted to the extent such use violates the terms of the E-Rate program, which restricts use of the internet system to "educational purposes."

*Election Issues:* A Board member or the Superintendent, in the normal course of his or her duties, may use school resources to research and prepare materials to assist the School Board in determining the effect of a ballot question on the School District.

Mass mailings, mass duplication, or other mass communications at school expense for the purpose of qualifying, supporting, or opposing a ballot question is not permitted. Mass communications does not include placing public records demonstrating the consequences of the passage or defeat of a ballot question affecting the School District on its existing websites.

A Board member or employee may campaign for or against the qualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question or the nomination or election of a candidate when no school resources are used. An employee shall not engage in campaign activity for or against the qualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question or the nomination or election of a candidate while on duty time.

A Board member or authorized employee may make school facilities available for campaign purposes if the identity of the candidate or the support for or opposition to the ballot question is

not a factor in making the facilities available or a factor in determining the cost or conditions of use.

The School Board may discuss and vote upon a resolution supporting or opposing a ballot question.

A Board member may respond to specific inquiries by the press or the public as to his or her opinion regarding a ballot question or provide information in response to a request for information.

A Board member or employee may identify himself or herself by his or her official title when communicating about a ballot question. Employees who do so shall clearly communicate that their communication is their personal opinion and does not reflect the position or views of the Board of Education or the School District unless express authorization is given by the Board of Education or the Superintendent.

Date of Adoption: July 13, 2009

Conflict of Interest

Members of the Board of Education should abstain from voting on matters on which they may have a conflict of interest. Any board member who would be required to take any action or make any decision in the discharge of his or her duties that may cause financial benefit or detriment to him or her, a member of his or her immediate family, or a business with which he or she is associated, should take action to disclose the potential conflict as defined in Nebraska statute.

Forms to be used in this disclosure process are to be kept by the Board secretary.

Policy Revised: OCTOBER 2001

Code of Ethics

The board of education subscribes to and shall adhere to the code of ethics of the state and national school board associations.

Boardmanship

The acceptance of a Code of Ethics implies the understanding of the basic organization of school boards under the laws of the State of Nebraska. The acceptance of his office by a school board member to adherence to those state laws which apply to boards of education since boards of education are agencies of the State.

The Nebraska Association of School Boards Code of Ethics for school board members is divided into three areas of responsibility: (1) responsibility to the school district community, (2) responsibility to the school administration, and (3) responsibility to fellow board members.

A school board member in his relations with his school district community should:

1. Realize that his primary responsibility is to the students.
2. Recognize that his basic function is policy making.
3. Remember that he is one of a team and must abide by and support all board decisions once they are made.
4. Be well informed concerning the duties of a board member on both the state and the local level.
5. Remember that he represents the entire school district community at all times.
6. Accept the office of board member as a means of unselfish service with no intent to benefit personally, in any manner, from his board activities.
7. Recognize that a board's responsibility is not to run the schools but to see that they are well run.
8. Work through the properly appointed administrative officers according to adopted board policy.
9. Refer, as far as possible, all appropriate requests to the proper administrative officer.
10. Familiarize himself in a broad and nontechnical manner with the total school system, including its problems, strengths, and weaknesses.
11. Try to interpret to the school staff through the administration the attitudes, wishes, and needs of the people of the district, and try to interpret to the people the needs, problems, and progress of the schools.

12. Voice opinions frankly in board meetings and vote for what seems best for the students of the district.
13. Vote only for the best qualified technical and professional employees who have been properly recommended by the appropriate administrative officer.
14. Visit the schools and attend extracurricular activities to gain clearer understanding of the functions of the school, but not to interfere in the day-by-day administration of the schools.
15. Support and protect school employees in the proper performance of their duties.
16. Treat confidential information with utmost respect.

A school board member in his relations with his school administration should:

1. Endeavor to establish sound, clearly defined policies which will direct and support the administration.
2. Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and refer all complaints to the administrative staff for solution and discuss them at board meetings only if such attempted solutions fail.
3. In all matters of employment or dismissal of school personnel, act on the recommendation of the chief administrator.
4. Give the chief administrator full responsibility and authority for discharging his professional duties, and hold him responsible for acceptable results.
5. Recognize fully that the chief administrative officer is entirely responsible for carrying out a particular policy in accordance with state law and local regulations.
6. Help to frame policies and plans after considering the recommendations of the appropriate administrative officer together with his reasons for making such recommendations.
7. Require oral and written reports for the purpose of keeping the board properly informed on school matters.
8. Grant to the chief administrative officer power to delegate authority to all other school personnel in keeping with their responsibilities.
9. Establish job descriptions for the school's administrative officers and develop criteria for evaluating their performance.

10. Present personal criticisms of school employees only to the appropriate administrative officer.

A school board member in his relations with fellow board members should:

1. Recognize that only that action taken at official meetings is binding on the board.
2. Remember that he should not make promises about how he will vote on matters that will come before the board.
3. Uphold the intent of executive sessions and respect the privileged communication that exists in executive sessions.
4. Share pertinent information on school matters or personnel problems with members of his own board and the chief administrator, and with members of boards who may be seeking help and information on school problems.
5. Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.
6. Maintain harmonious relations with other board members when harmonious relations are consistent with their obligations to the schools.

Anyone aspiring to school board leadership must realize that the position of school board member plays a key role in the total affairs of his school district community.

Consequently, a school board member is looked upon as one of the school district community leaders.

In that respect, therefore, every school board member should:

1. Be enthusiastic and interested in maintaining a quality educational program for students of all ages.
2. Remember that after he is elected, he must represent all the people of his district and uphold all the laws governing the activities of the office.
3. Know that school laws are the result of legislation and only proper legislative action can change them.
4. Be aware that school board members are individually and collectively liable for their own violations of the laws. They are not exempt from court suit.
5. Know that to seek and successfully hold the office of board member requires much homework and an ability to cope with situations objectively. Decisions based on emotion lead only to chaos and discord, and the students suffer the results.

6. Act as a member of a team or unit. Board members have authority only when attending a legally called meeting.
7. Become committed to those interests which will be of greatest benefit to the students and the school district community as a whole.
8. Create lines of close communication with the school administration to develop and maintain objectivity and balance between the board and the administration.
9. Be prepared to counter the comments of self-appointed authorities and critics who might be familiar with only a small part of the school district's total operation. Tactfully direct that "authority" or critic to the chief administrative officer of the school.
10. Be aware that what he says publicly in school board matters may be taken as the opinion of the entire school board.
11. Know that most programs exist because of cultural pressures from patrons, communities, legislators, etc. No program should be added to satisfy a mere whim.
12. Recognize that community involvement is a necessary part of any school district's activities.
13. Attend all board meetings and be willing and able to spend time to attend and participate in workshops and activities that contribute to the growth of each board member.
14. Realize that, at school board meetings, there is room for neither personal biases, certain religious convictions, the assumption that rumors are truths, nor decisions based on second-hand information.

School board meetings are occasions when a school district can put its best foot forward or fall flat on its face. By law, school meetings are required to be public meetings specifically to keep the local citizens informed about their schools. A school board which conducts an informative meeting goes far in carrying out the spirit of the right-to-know laws.

Those boards which acknowledge the presence of local citizens at a public meeting by affording them an opportunity to address the board will build much trust and public faith with the community.

On the other hand, boards which conduct public meetings in a vacuum by failing to explain certain actions to citizens in attendance serve to build a climate of mistrust with the very persons who can help the schools.

Prior to and during the meeting of the board, members will want to check this list of things to do in order to see that their school board meetings is most effectively organized and conducted:

1. Provide adequate seating for guests.
2. Distribute agendas containing all the nonconfidential material the board members have.
3. When necessary, have legible name-plates in front of every board member.
4. When necessary, provide a special place for the press, preferably near the board members. Also, assign a school representative to sit with the reporters to answer any immediate question. A press table near the board will enable the reporters to cover all details of the meeting. This proximate to board action will minimize inaccurate reporting.
5. Start on time.
6. Conduct board meetings in a business-like and expeditious manner. Wandering from the subject is to be avoided.
7. Explain to the public any action or discussion by the board which may need clarification.
8. Give citizens an opportunity to address the board.. A specific time should be set aside for this purpose. Permitting citizens to speak out at any point in a meeting encourages control of the board meeting by those citizens.
9. Permit non-residents to address the board only if the content of their remarks is known and approved ahead of time. In this day and age, it is not uncommon for organized groups to send representatives to board meetings in a number of districts to espouse a cause and unwittingly or even intentionally spread alarm and aggravation.
10. Be discrete with off-the-cuff remarks.
11. When time permits, take the opportunity to have some phase of the school district highlighted. It is an ideal occasion to have students talk about a program, teachers explain a new course of studies, or a non-instructional person show slides or transparencies on transportation, cafeterias, or maintenance.
12. Schedule, whenever possible, any executive sessions to be held after the agenda items have been disposed of.
13. Listen courteously to a citizen's remarks and respond with a polite "thank you". Avoid argumentation.

14. Spend the briefest amount of time possible on minor items. Save the majority of time for items of major importance.

Conflict of Interest - Employment of Family Member of Board Member or Supervisor and Employment of Board Member

1. A member of the Board of Education or an administrator or other employee with supervisory responsibilities may employ or recommend or supervise the employment of an immediate family member if:

- a. He or she does not abuse his or her official position (for this purpose, "abuse" means employing an immediate family member: who is not qualified for and able to perform the duties of the position; at an unreasonably high salary; or who is not required to perform the duties of the position);
- b. He or she makes a full disclosure on the record to the Board of Education and a written disclosure to the Superintendent and/or Secretary of the Board; and,
- c. The Board of Education approves the employment or supervisory position.

2. No immediate family member of a Board of Education or an administrator or other employee with supervisory responsibilities shall be employed by the School District:

- a. Without first having made a reasonable solicitation and consideration of applications for such employment.
- b. Who is not qualified for and able to perform the duties of the position.
- c. For any unreasonably high salary.
- d. Who is not required to perform the duties of the position.

3. Neither the Board of Education nor an administrator or other employee with supervisory responsibilities shall terminate the employment of another employee so as to make funds or a position available for the purpose of hiring an immediate family member.

4. This policy shall not apply to an immediate family member of a member of the Board of Education or an administrator or other employee with supervisory responsibilities who was previously employed in a position with the School District prior to the election or appointment of the Board member or employee. Prior to or as soon as reasonably possible after the official date a Board member takes office or an employee assumes his or her responsibilities, such Board member, administrator or other employee with supervisory responsibilities shall make a full disclosure of any immediate family member employed in a position subject to this policy.

5. A member of the Board of Education may not be engaged in a contract to teach with the Wisner-Pilger Public School District. Nor shall a member of the Board of Education cast a vote in favor of the election of any employee when the Board member is related by blood or marriage to such employee.

Methods of Operation

The board exercises authority over the school in accordance with applicable laws. It determines policy, delegates executive, supervisory, and instructional authority to its employees, and appraises the results achieved by comparison with the goals of the school system.

The board shall concern itself primarily with broad questions of policy and with the appraisal of results, rather than with administrative details. The application of policies is an administrative task to be performed by the superintendent and members of the superintendent's staff; the superintendent shall be held responsible for the effective and efficient administration and supervision of the entire school system.

All matters to be submitted to the board shall first be submitted to the superintendent for the superintendent's consideration and recommendations. If these matters require board action, they shall be presented to the board by the superintendent.

Formulation of Policies

The Board, representing the people of the district, is the governing body which determines all questions of general policy to be employed in the conduct of the public school district.

Action on policy proposals shall be taken by the board. The board shall take action after a proposed policy has been considered by the superintendent and the superintendent has presented a recommendation to the board. Board of Education policies will be reviewed annually.

Formulation of Administrative Regulations

The board shall delegate to the superintendent the function of specifying required actions and designing detailed arrangements for the operation of the school district.

The superintendent may delegate to staff the authority to specify required actions.

Rules and regulations specified by the superintendent and the superintendent's staff shall constitute the administrative regulations governing the school; provided, however, that administrative regulations must be consistent with policies adopted by the board.

Meetings

Meetings of the board of education shall be open to the public, except as otherwise provided by the Constitution of the State of Nebraska, Nebraska and Federal Statutes, and the policies of the district.

All formal actions of the board of education shall be taken only when the board is in open session.

Agenda Construction and Control

- A. Written meeting agendas will be prepared by the Superintendent of Schools in corroboration with the President of the Board of Education. Any Board member may submit agenda items to be placed on the agenda by the Superintendent and the Board President.
- B. Control of the agenda is the responsibility of the Board President.
- C. Agenda items shall be sufficiently descriptive to give the public reasonable notice of the matters to be considered at the meeting.
- D. An agenda, kept continuously current, shall be readily available for public inspection at the office of the Superintendent of School of the Wisner Pilger School District during normal business hours. Except for items of an emergency nature, the agenda shall not be altered later than 24 hours before the scheduled commencement of the meeting. The School Board shall have the right to modify the agenda to include items of an emergency nature only by action taken at the public meeting at which the item is to be considered.

Legal Reference: § 84-1411

Date of Adoption: June 5, 2006

Procedures During Meetings

In the absence of the president and vice president at any meeting the board shall choose a president pro tem. In the absence of the executive secretary at any meeting, the board shall choose an executive secretary pro tem.

Any action taken on any question or motion duly moved and seconded shall be by roll call vote of the board in open session, and the record shall state how each member voted or if the member was absent or not voting. Roll call votes shall be successively and consecutively rotated in order to permit each member the opportunity and right, periodically, to vote first.

The vote to elect leadership within the board shall be taken by secret ballot.

Members of the public shall be permitted to attend and to speak at board meetings. They will not be required to identify themselves as a condition for admission to the meeting.

The Board may allow advisors, consultants, and other persons who are not Board members to appear at the meeting via telephone or other similar means.

The chair has the authority to assure that people conduct themselves in an orderly manner at the meeting. Undue interruption or other interference with the orderly conduct of business will not be allowed. The chair may order persons who are disorderly to be removed from the meeting.

The board will, upon request, make a reasonable effort to accommodate the public's right to hear the discussion and testimony presented at the meeting.

Members of the public may use recording devices (tape recorder, video camera, etc.) to record any part of a meeting of a public body, except for closed sessions. No recording, other than note taking, shall be done without informing the President in advance. The President shall control the placement of the recording device so the device does not obstruct the view of Board members or other members of the public attending the meeting and does not otherwise interfere with the meeting.

At least one copy of all reproducible written material to be discussed at an open meeting will be made available at the meeting for examination and copying by members of the public.

Members of the public will be permitted to speak at Board meetings at which a public forum is on the Agenda. Members of the public may also speak when invited to make a presentation or when recognized by the chair. The Board is not required to allow members of the public to speak at each meeting. However, the Board will not forbid public participation at all meetings.

Members of the public will not be required to have their name be placed on the agenda prior to the meeting in order to speak about items on the agenda.

Members of the public who desire to address the Board will be required to identify themselves.

The President or chair for the meeting shall have the authority to establish reasonable time limits for individual speakers and for the duration of public forum sessions.

Speakers will be permitted to address the Board consistent with free speech rights. However, offensive language, defamatory remarks, and hostile conduct will not be tolerated. Further, charges or complaints against a school employee shall not be made for the first time at a public Board meeting without having followed the school's complaint procedure.

| REVISED MAY 2006

July 2, 2008

Membership in School Board Associations

The board shall ordinarily hold membership in such local and state school board associations as may exist and shall look upon such memberships as an opportunity for growth in board service.