



**Responsible Office:** Office of the Superintendent

## **BOARD POLICY 9051**

### **BOARD CONDUCT, ETHICS, AND OPERATIONAL PROTOCOLS**

#### **PURPOSE**

The Board of Trustees (Board) commits itself to the Balanced Governance Model. Necessary elements of this governance model are Board Conduct, Ethics and Operational Protocols.

#### **POLICY**

1. Trustees shall honor the high responsibility the governance position demands, and practice Board beliefs and actions that support increased stability on the Board, improve satisfaction from community, and a climate for improved student learning. This includes Trustees following the 10 Individual Board Member Characteristics of the Balanced Governance Model:
  - a. Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #1 - Role Boundaries: Trustees practice balanced governance through the role of informed oversight. They avoid operating through either micromanagement (over-reach into operations) or disengagement (rubberstamping of administration proposals).
  - b. Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #2a Role Orientation: Trustees engage in open dialogue focused on general interests and welcome various viewpoints but make decisions based on the best course of action for the entire school community. Trustees avoid open debate focused on activism or special interests and value collective consensus over individual viewpoints in decision-making and governance protocols.
    - i. Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #2b - Role Orientation: While open dialogue is encouraged, Trustees are expected to support the final decision made by the whole Board. Trustees may confirm to the public that they voted against a Board decision but shall not engage in undermining the decision or publicly criticizing the Board or individual Trustees regarding the decision.

- c. Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #3 - Advocacy Focus: Trustees focus on common interests by seeking to understand the multiple and varied positions of all District constituencies but supporting shared, mutually beneficial solutions that can be applied to many students and achieved through various means.
- d. Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #4 - Student Concern Focus: Trustees shall support a broad focus regarding student concerns. Trustees ensure that all students are afforded opportunities to succeed. Trustees avoid a targeted focus on providing opportunity for single groups of students to the exclusion of others.
- e. Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #5 - Solution Focused: Trustees will ensure that their deliberations, requests, and reports are focused on solutions to improve student learning. Trustees make decisions based on an understanding that the District and each school have unique and shifting needs; often requiring locally developed, innovative solutions. Trustees avoid promotion of standardized, one-size-fits-all programs and focus on designed solutions and programs that fit the unique need of each school as supported by diverse evidences of student learning.
- f. Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #6 - Exercise of Influence: Trustees understand and commit to practices supporting Nevada state law that only the Board has authority and that a Trustee shall not give direction individually to the Superintendent.
- g. Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #7 - Use of Voice: Trustees use their voice to seek to hear and understand each other's interests and support mutually beneficial resolution and reconciliation.
- h. Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #8 - Use of Power: Trustees use power with practices to ensure that all voices are heard, collaborative processes are followed, and mutually beneficial solutions are employed. Trustees avoid using power over practices designed to promote only their own solutions or further their own special interests.
- i. Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #9 - Decision-making Style: Trustees seek to collaboratively evaluate data and, through consensus, confirm issues and needs and adopt proposed policy and solutions that fit stated needs and District goals.
- j. Balanced Governance Model: Individual Board Member Characteristic #10:

Trustees serve and act on the Board in a manner reflecting altruistic service; to serve the community at large and meet the needs of all students. Trustees should avoid fulfilling personal agendas regarding policy, programs, or personnel.

2. The Board shall follow principles that enable it and its members to operate lawfully, efficiently, respectfully, and strategically focused on District progress toward the District Values, Mission, Vision, Strategic Goals, and Balanced Governance Model Standards to improve learning for all students.
3. Trustees shall ensure all policies support the Balanced Governance Model Standards. Board Member discussion should focus on the extent to which policy, programs, and processes of both the District educational system and Board governance actions support Balanced Governance Model Standards. Balanced Governance Model Standards include:
  - a. Vision-Directed Planning (Balanced Governance Model Standards-1). The Board engages communities and employees in the development of a shared vision focused on student learning. The vision is the foundation of the mission and goals that direct Board policymaking, planning, resource allocation and activities. Indicators for this Standard are:
    - i. The Board collaborates with the community to articulate core values and beliefs for the District;
    - ii. Trustees can clearly articulate the vision and goals of the District;
    - iii. The Board, in collaboration with the Superintendent, has developed a long-range plan for improving student achievement;
    - iv. The Board regularly monitors the progress of goals to improve student learning;
    - v. The Board adopts a budget and appropriates resources aligned to the vision and goals;
    - vi. The Board establishes and models a culture of high expectations for all students; and
    - vii. Trustees have a vision and expectations for excellence beyond the present.
  - b. Community Engagement (Balanced Governance Model Standards-2)
    - i. The Board recognizes that all members of the community are stakeholders in the success of their schools. The Board practices community engagement as a reciprocal advocacy process that

creates and sustains meaningful conversations, systems connections, and feedback loops with multiple groups in the community. The Board measures successful community engagement, in part, through the creation of collaborative partnerships and new types and levels of community participation in schools;

ii. Indicators for this Standard are:

- 1) The Board promotes practices that solicit input and involvement from all segments of the community;
- 2) The Board collaboratively develops vision and goals with employees, parents/guardians, students, and the broader community;
- 3) The Board recognizes and celebrates the contributions of school and community members in school improvement efforts;
- 4) The Board is responsive and respectful to community inquiry and feedback; and
- 5) The Board advocates for public policy that supports education through relationships with community leaders, city and county government officials and state legislators.

c. Effective Leadership (Balanced Governance Model Standards-3)

i. Board leadership is proactive, integrated, and shared. The Board establishes focus, direction, and expectations that fosters student learning. Across education systems, the Board supports policy to develop and implement collaborative leadership models and practices that are guided by shared student learning goals. Within the District, the Board shall work to ensure the alignment of authority and responsibility so that decisions can be made at levels closest to implementation as possible;

ii. Indicators for this Standard are:

- 1) Trustees develop relationships to improve student learning and opportunities for students;
- 2) Board activities, analysis and decision-making are aligned to vision and goals;
- 3) The Board solicits input from multiple sources to assist in

making informed decisions;

- 4) The Board establishes and sustains relationships with community leaders, city and county government officials, and state legislators;
- 5) Trustees model an empowering leadership style;
- 6) Trustees promote change through dialogue and collaboration; and
- 7) Trustees understand and are knowledgeable about school improvement initiatives and their role in supporting those initiatives.

d. Using Data for Continuous Improvement and Accountability (Balanced Governance Model Standards-4)

i. The Board communicates high expectations for all students and holds themselves and the District accountable for reaching those goals. The Board uses data and information, from multiple sources and in various formats, to identify areas for improvement, set priorities, and monitor improvement efforts. At the same time, the Board continually seeks new and innovative ways to increase student success and achievement in programs already established;

ii. Indicators for this Standard are:

- 1) Trustees use, and expect the Superintendent to use, a variety of types of relevant quantitative and qualitative data in decision-making (e.g., survey results, interviews, employee evaluations, employee and student feedback, test results);
- 2) The Superintendent provides data to the Board on the measurable outcomes of all programs that they have approved;
- 3) The Board uses data to identify discrepancies between current and desired outcomes;
- 4) The Board identifies and addresses priority needs based on data analysis;
- 5) The Board communicates to the public how policy decisions are linked to student learning data;
- 6) The Board creates a culture that encourages the use of data

to identify needs throughout the system; and

- 7) The Board regularly conducts a self-evaluation to monitor its performance.

e. Cultural Responsiveness (Balanced Governance Model Standards-5)

i. The Board creates a climate of expectations that all students can learn at high levels and fosters a positive and safe learning climate that supports this vision. The Board recognizes that cultural diversity of a community has many facets, including but not limited to social, economic, political, religious, geographical, generational, linguistic, ethnic, racial, physical, gender, and sexual orientation. The Board develops an understanding of this diversity and hold perspectives that reflect the cultures in their community. Effective community engagement and expectancy strategies build on the strengths of a community's cultural diversity;

ii. Indicators for this element are:

- 1) Board outreach and community engagement activities accommodate cultural differences in values and communication;
- 2) The Board actively encourages and expects the Superintendent to facilitate the participation of culturally diverse groups;
- 3) The Board has a process to review policies that involve cultural, racial, and ethnic bias.
- 4) Trustees approach decision-making with culturally diverse perspectives;
- 5) A climate of caring, respect, and the valuing of all cultures is established through Board policy and goals; and
- 6) The Board ensures that the Superintendent regularly assesses the District climate.

f. Learning Organizations (Balanced Governance Model Standards-6)

i. The Board recognizes that a learning organization is a self-renewing professional community that supports reflection, discovery, learning, improvement, and success at all levels. The Board encourages professional development that empowers and nurtures leadership capabilities across the organization,

ii. Indicators for this element are:

- 1) Board policies nurture leadership capabilities across the organization;
- 2) The Board creates and pursues opportunities to learn about research-based strategies that ensure continuous improvement for the next generation of learners;
- 3) Trustees promote positive change through dialogue and collaboration;
- 4) The Board encourages professional development that increases learning and empowerment; and
- 5) The Board fosters an environment of mutual cooperation, emotional support, and personal growth throughout the organization.

g. Systems Thinking (Balanced Governance Model Standards-7)

i. Systems thinking requires Boards to assess policy and program decisions with a holistic and integrated view of education within and across systems and levels (e.g., K-12, Educational Co-Operatives, community college, and university). The Board practices systems thinking by collaborative partnerships with local, state, and national entities, coordinated programs, and shared resource models to improve student learning;

ii. Indicators for this Standard are:

- 1) The Board works to avoid shifting problems from one part of the system to another;
- 2) The Board engages in process thinking, seeing beyond the immediate situation and easy solutions;
- 3) The Board analyzes issues for their impact on other parts of the system;
- 4) The Board team is solution oriented; and
- 5) The Board works collaboratively with other agencies to encourage dialogue that fosters continual growth.

h. Innovation and Creativity (Balanced Governance Model Standards-8)

i. The Board recognizes, values, and supports the advancement of

innovation and creativity across the District. Innovation and creativity are assets to the process of development and change, leading to new types of thinking and better ways of meeting student needs. The Board recognizes that innovation and creativity are not predictable, so will balance the need for aligned vision, mission, and strategic goals with encouraging engagement in unanticipated collaborative partnerships, and encourage dialogue, new ideas, and differing perspectives.

ii. Indicators for this Standard are:

- 1) Trustees create time and opportunities for their own creative thinking;
- 2) Trustees partner with community and educational organizations to remove real and perceived barriers to creativity and innovation;
- 3) The Board sets meeting agendas that allow it to proactively identify and explore strategic issues;
- 4) The Board incorporates flexibility into its future plans to enable the District to look and move in unforeseen directions in response to unexpected events;
- 5) The Board recognizes the risk of creative and innovative practice and supports such practices at all levels of leadership; and
- 6) The Board creates a culture of acceptance for innovation that increase student success and achievement.

i. Board Member Conduct, Ethics and Relationship with Superintendent (Balanced Governance Model Standards-9)

i. The relationship between the Board and the Superintendent is a delicate one and it is essential that they have a clear, mutual understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities. Team building is an essential part of this relationship and a clear District goal shall help maintain a respectful relationship;

ii. Indicators for this Standard are:

- 1) Each member of the Board understands and respects the distinction between the Board's responsibilities and the Superintendent's duties;



- 2) The Board and Superintendent trust and respect one another;
  - 3) Trustees represent the interests of the entire District;
  - 4) Trustees preserve the confidentiality of items discussed in closed session;
  - 5) Trustees do not use their office for personal gain or advancement;
  - 6) Trustees do not attempt to individually speak on behalf of the entire Board or commit the Board;
  - 7) Trustees direct complaints and requests to the Superintendent rather than attempting to solve them directly;
  - 8) The Board and Superintendent agree on the information needed by the Board, and when and how the Board receives that information;
  - 9) The Board and Superintendent participate in learning opportunities as a team; and
  - 10) Trustees come to the meeting familiar with the agenda and prepared to discuss, ask questions, and take action, on agenda items.
- j. Budgeting and Financial Accountability (Balanced Governance Model Standards-10)
- i. One of the important activities in translating the educational goals of schools into reality is the adoption of a budget and making sure that the school district is fiscally sound. Boards utilize fiscal resources based on student needs and District policies and goals;
  - ii. Indicators for this Standard are:
    - 1) Trustees are knowledgeable and provide oversight for the District budgeting process;
    - 2) Budgeting decisions are based on student needs, adopted District policy and goals, and the District's financial ability to meet those needs;
    - 3) Trustees have a basic understanding of District revenues and expenses; and

- 4) The Board reviews quarterly financial statements provided by the Superintendent and understand their role in the oversight of the budget.
4. Trustees who fail to follow governance process policies, either during or outside of a Board meeting shall be addressed using the Balanced Governance Progressive Response Process listed below:
- a. Concerns about a Board Member shall be reported to the Board President privately;
  - b. If the Board President determines it necessary, the Board President shall meet with the subject Board member and remind them of their pledge to follow governing policies and protocols;
  - c. If subparagraph (b) is ineffective, the Board President and one other Board Member shall meet with the subject Board member, remind him/her of the pledge to follow governing policies and protocols, and ask him/her to honor the commitment through appropriate action;
  - d. If subparagraph (c) is ineffective, the Board President, during a public Board meeting, shall remind the Board member(s) of their pledge to follow governing policies and protocols, and ask them to honor their commitment through appropriate action;
  - e. If subparagraph (d) is ineffective, the Board President shall engage in informal censure of the subject Board member through interrupting ensuing infractions in Board meetings and making formal public statements both during the Board meeting and outside the Board meeting as needed, to distance the Board's position from the subject Board member's position or statements;
  - f. In the event that the Board President fails to follow governance policies and processes, the Board Vice President shall engage the Balanced Governance Model Progressive Response process listed above in items a-e. If these steps are ineffective, the Board Vice President may entertain a recall vote of the seated Board President. By a two-thirds super-majority, the seated President can be removed. The Board Vice President shall assume the role of Board President and employ the Balanced Governance Model Progressive Response process item d, if necessary; and
  - g. As a last resort, and only after thoughtful deliberation, the Board may vote to censure the subject Board member.

**LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

1. This Board Policy reflects the goals of the District’s Strategic Plan and aligns/complies with the governing documents of the District, to include:
  - a. Board Policy 6175, Student Performance Growth;
  - b. Board Policy 9051, Board Conduct, Ethics and Operational Protocols;
  - c. Board Policy 9055, Officers and Duties of the Board of Trustees;
  - d. Board Policy 9060, Annual Goals, Objectives, and Evaluation of the Board of Trustees;
  - e. Board Policy 9062, Orientation and Continuous Education of the Board of Trustees;
  - f. Board Policy 9080, Employment and Duties of Superintendent Performance; and
  - g. Board Policy 9110, Meeting Protocols.

**REVISION HISTORY**

Date	Revision	Modification
01/01/2001	1.0	Resolution Adopted
11/13/2001	2.0	Revised
10/08/2002	3.0	Revised
08/05/2004	4.0	Revised
10/25/2016	5.0	Revised: Formerly BP 9002.1, documents the standards under the Balanced Governance Model
11/24/2020	6.0	Revised: For clarity and consistency
01/20/2022	6.1	Revised: Update format per BP 9070
11/01/2022	6.2	Revised: Update format per BP 9070