

Walla Walla Public Schools

BOARD POLICY

Policy No. 1620

Page 1 of 4

THE BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP

The successful operation of schools requires a close, effective working relationship between the board and the superintendent. The relationship must be one of trust, good will, and candor. As the legally designated governing body, the board retains final authority within the district. The board exercises those powers that are expressly required by law and those implied by law. The superintendent is the executive officer of the board who advises and makes recommendations to the board and to whom the board delegates executive responsibility, and such powers as may be required to manage the district in a manner consistent with board policy and state and federal law.

The superintendent, as executive officer of the board, shall be responsible for the administration of the schools under applicable laws and policies of the district. The board shall delineate in procedure the duties of the superintendent and shall use them as the basis for evaluating the superintendent's performance. Unless specifically limited, the superintendent may delegate to other staff the exercise of any powers and the discharge of any duties imposed by district policy or a vote of the board. The delegation of power or duty shall not relieve the superintendent of responsibility for the actions taken under such a delegation.

In order to perform their responsibilities, board members must be familiar with the operations within the schools. The superintendent shall establish communication procedures, which can enhance the board member's understanding of student programs and school operations.

Superintendent-Board Operating Protocols

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

Walla Walla School Board	The Superintendent
GOVERNS	LEADS
Decides What	Decides How
Requests Information	Seeks and Provides Information
Considers Issues	Provides Recommendations
Creates, Reviews, and Adopts Policy	Recommends and Carries Out Policy
Establishes Vision and Approves and Reviews Plans	Implements Vision and Plans
Monitors Progress	Reports Progress
Contracts with Personnel	Supervises Hiring Process and Practices
Approves Evaluation Criteria and Procedures	Supervises and Evaluates Personnel
Reviews and Approves Budget	Formulates Budget
Represents Public Interests	Acts in Public Interest

Walla Walla Public Schools

BOARD POLICY

Policy No. 1620

Page 2 of 4

1. The board will represent the needs and interests of ALL the children in our district.
2. The board will represent the needs and interests of ALL the patrons of our school district and will be a good steward of tax dollars.
3. The board will lead by example. We agree to avoid words and actions that create a negative impression of an individual, the board, or the district. While we encourage debate and differing points of view, we will do it with care and respect.
4. Communicating with and listening to parents and community members are some of the board's primary responsibilities. Providing good information to the public is essential to the operation of the district or staff. When a parent or community member expresses a concern or complaint about their child's school program or some operation of the district, board members will listen carefully to the individual, recommend that the person speak directly to the teacher or principal of the school and/or indicate to the individual that they will convey this information to the superintendent. The superintendent will contact the individual or will have the responsible party speak to them. Board members put themselves in a precarious position when they promise resolution of a situation.
5. Visiting school facilities, and communicating and listening to staff, is an important way for board members to develop a better understanding of district operations. Official school visits by board members will be carried out only under board authorization and with the full knowledge of staff, including the superintendent. Board members wishing to visit schools or classrooms for individual purposes must first route their request through the superintendent who will coordinate access.
6. The board will establish the vision, determine policies, and assure a process to address accountability. The superintendent will manage the schools.
7. Surprises to the board or the superintendent will be the exception, not the rule. Should a board member have a new topic to discuss, or a grievance or other concern, that board member is to confer with the superintendent and board president, where consideration will be given to place the matter on the agenda for future discussion.
8. The superintendent is the chief executive officer and should recommend, propose, or suggest on most matters before the board.
9. To be efficient and effective, long board meetings will be avoided. If a board member needs more information, either the superintendent or the board president is to be contacted before the meeting. Audience input will be encouraged at board meetings and appropriate protocol for receiving the input is in place. The citizens' comment section of the board meeting is to provide community members an opportunity to address the board about the general operations of the district. During this time, board members listen attentively, perhaps take notes then, if necessary, either the board president or the superintendent indicates that the speaker's issue will be researched and/or a response will be made by the superintendent.

BOARD POLICY

Policy No. 1620

Page 3 of 4

10. During the Board Report agenda item, board members are to relay positive information about the district, such as their involvement in associated committee work, school related activities they have attended, or productive experiences with fellow board members. The Board Report agenda is not a time for board members to air grievances/concerns, weigh in on matters that would best be discussed during report, study or action item agendas, or surprise their fellow members or staff with new topics.
11. The board will consider research, best practice, cost implications, and public input in their decision-making.
12. For decisions that have major impact on students and/or patrons, the board will use a public hearing process to gather input prior to making final decisions. Community forums are held at times on a single topic. These forums give the community at large the opportunity to be informed about the topic, to discuss the issue, and to give the board input.
13. The board will speak to the issues on the agenda. Facts and information needed from the administration will be referred to the superintendent.
14. A regular board business meeting is conducted formally, with titles, when appropriate (Director, Dr.)
15. Board members will do their homework and participate in board training opportunities. Board members are expected to read and study material received prior to the board meeting.
16. Executive sessions will be held when specific topics arise which are within the legal parameters for such closed meetings. Board members must be sensitive to the legal ramifications and confidentiality of executive session meetings.
17. As school directors of the Walla Walla School District, board members belong to the Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA) and adhere to the WSSDA Washington School Board Standards (<https://wssda.org/leadership-development/school-board-standards/>).
18. Board members understand that board members individually do not have authority. Only the board as a whole has authority. Board members agree that individual board members will not take unilateral action. The Walla Walla School District Board of Directors conducts its meetings using Roberts Rules of Order. A quorum is three board members. The board members only have authority when acting in a scheduled public board meeting.
19. New board members assume office at the first board meeting following official certification of their election. Election of officers will occur annually at the December meeting during a non-election year or after the new board members have taken office in an election year.
20. The board president or their designee will be the spokesperson pertaining to official board correspondences and the superintendent or their designee will serve as the spokesperson for official district correspondences.
21. Once a final decision has been made on a proposal by board vote/action, board members and the superintendent will publicly support the implementation of the decision, individually and collectively.

Walla Walla Public Schools

BOARD POLICY

Policy No. 1620

Page 4 of 4

Legal References:

RCW 28A.320.010 Corporate powers

RCW 28A.330.100 Additional powers of the board (First Class Districts Only)

RCW 28A.400.010 Employment of superintendent - Superintendent's qualifications, general powers, term, contract renewal

RCW 28A.400.030 Superintendent's duties

Adopted: July 16, 2002
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