

Lake Oswego School District School Board Norms and Expectations

I. How We Treat Each Other

1. Treat each other, staff, students, and community with respect.
2. Engage with the work - distinguish between board work and staff work.
3. Tie work to the mission, our values and our strategic plan.
4. Make data-informed decisions.
5. Communication with the public is a two-way street.
6. Maintain a culture of learning and curiosity.

II. How We Work with the Superintendent and Staff

The Superintendent is the CEO of our District. The formal role of the board is to hire, manage, evaluate, and if necessary, fire the Superintendent. When not doing that, we oversee the district budget and set policy and direction for the board based on our position as elected representatives with the wider community, many of whom have no direct connection to schools.

Contact with Superintendent

The board chair will meet weekly with the Superintendent, unless another mutually agreeable schedule is agreed to.

Board members are encouraged to have regular meetings with the Superintendent as well. These meetings may be conducted as 1:1 or 2:1 configurations, by mutual agreement and based on the Superintendent's availability and preference.

Contact with Other Board Members

Chair to meet regularly with other board members.

Contact with Staff

At times, board members may want or need additional information from a member of faculty or staff (for example, financial information). We will coordinate with the Superintendent on a mutually agreeable arrangement before contacting a member of the staff.

Superintendent Evaluation

We will annually conduct an evaluation for the Superintendent. The strategic plan shall serve as a basis for evaluation.

Community Relations

As members of the community, board members should communicate what they are hearing from constituents to the Superintendent in a timely fashion and allow the Superintendent to determine how and what the response should be. Board members should remember that their primary constituents are the (mostly) non-voting students of our schools.

Board members are encouraged to meet with community members and community groups to listen to issues affecting those groups and the community at large and report back to the Superintendent on those issues.

From time to time, board members may wish to advocate for issues involving school policy and direction. Board members are encouraged to work with fellow board members and the Superintendent to come to consensus and establish direction where possible.

Board members will not always agree on every issue and may have passionate differences of opinion. They should always be respectful of these differences in both public and private meetings.

To maximize our visibility within the community, board members are encouraged to attend community meetings (i.e. Neighborhood Associations, Respond to Racism, Rotary, LO for Love). Additionally, board meetings and town halls should be hosted in locations other than the district board room. Any technological issues around video or live streaming should be addressed and solved.

Responding to Community Inquiries

From time to time, members of the public may contact one or more board members via in person communication, phone, email, text, or social media. We encourage this communication.

For one-off communications sent to the entire board, the board chair should:

- Where a simple acknowledgement reply is appropriate, reply within 24 hours and ensure that all board members (including student members for non-privileged information) and the Superintendent are included in the reply

- Where more research or a more complex reply involving coordination with the Superintendent is needed, let board and superintendent know that a response is being developed and the timeline for this response
- Delegate the response to the Superintendent and/or another board member

In general, board members should refrain from replying to individuals addressing the entire board. There are some exceptions, such as acknowledging a student, or positive acknowledgement of some achievement. For example, if a student sends an email saying that they are forming a club to save narwhals, brief emails from board members such as “Great job, Hiram!” or “Way to go, Keesha!” would be appropriate. Or if a community member is thanking the board for building a pool, a short “We couldn’t have done it without you, Mr. Wilson!” would be nice. The board chair should still be expected to speak on behalf of the board.

For communications to individual board members, or to one or two board members, the response should be forwarded to the chair. The board member receiving the communication should work with the chair to determine the response.

For formal media communications, always work with the Superintendent and communications staff on responses to media requests.

III. Board “Must Do’s”

1. Participate in OSBA and district onboarding.
2. Complete all mandatory training (such as mandatory reporting rules).
3. Learn about public education, financing, and our district.
4. Prioritize attendance at all school board meetings, work sessions, trainings, back to school nights, high school graduations, and more on your personal calendar.
The commitment is big but make time for it.
5. Be visible at other community events, especially school-based events
6. Participate in community initiatives, such as Respond to Racism, City Council, etc.
7. Participate in annual board retreat.
8. Conduct an annual self-evaluation.
9. Get communications and administrative support from the district.
10. Review and update these board norms annually.

IV. Board Development

Things we must build to support our “must-dos”

1. Develop onboarding for new board members and update it annually.
2. Develop and deliver information education on public education basics and finance (for example: What is a 504 plan? What does Title I mean? What does ADMw mean?) for board members should be developed and delivered regularly to board members and members of the community to help educate the public and recruit future board members
3. Develop and maintain a regular calendar cycle for the year.
4. Establish process for board appointed committees, including selection process, bylaws, calendar cycle. Tie in our strategic plan to every committee.
5. Work toward development of a district annual report: committee reports, board norms, etc. consolidated into a single document.

V. Board Meetings

The School Board is the policy making body for district.

1. Read the packet and all supporting materials ahead of time.
2. Be prepared to speak on a topic if desired. Note that comments on every item is not expected, especially if your comments have been made by another board member.
3. When receiving presentations from staff or speakers, the chair or a designated board member can express appreciation on behalf of the board. Comments and questions from every board member are not expected, though if a board member has a specific point, these points should be brief.