

 TUCSON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD POLICY	POLICY TITLE: Board Member Authority and Responsibilities
	POLICY CODE: BBAA

Board Authority to Act

Generally, and with only a few exceptions described in more detail below, activities of the Governing Board shall take place in the context of the meeting scheduled and held pursuant to the Arizona Open Meeting Law, [A.R.S. § 38-431](#) *et. seq.*

Role of the Board

The role of the Governing Board is to establish District-wide policy and direction, appoint employees, approve budgets and compensation and otherwise to direct the affairs of the District in the manner specified by law.

The Board generally delegates day-to-day management of the District to the superintendent and staff.

The Board must approve the job descriptions of all employees that report directly to the board. The board evaluates and supervises such employees in accordance with procedures established in this and other policies and the Board-adopted job descriptions.

Pursuant to its statutory oversight responsibilities, the Board may vote to authorize any of its members to review the personnel files of any district administrator(s). Any such vote must specify which board member(s) have such authorization, which administrators' files may be reviewed, and the date at which such authorization expires.

Officers of the Board

The Board shall elect, at its first meeting of each calendar year, a President and a Clerk to serve one-year terms.

Board Officer Duties

The Board President shall preside over all Board meetings and maintain order in accordance with the Arizona Open Meeting Law and Governing Board Policy [BEDB](#). The President shall also implement board action when a vote of the Board in an open meeting gives the President authority to act.

The Board Clerk shall perform duties during Board meetings as assigned by the Board President, or act as President in the President's absence, in accordance with Policy [BEDB](#).

The Board President supervises all persons assigned to work in the Governing Board office, within the limitations established by policy and those employees' board-adopted job descriptions, which may specify a different reporting relationship. No other board member has individual authority to supervise or direct persons assigned to work in the Governing Board office, except as granted explicitly by the Board.

Annually, or more frequently in the discretion of the Board, the Board President and Board Clerk shall evaluate the performance of all employees assigned to work in the Governing Board office, unless policy or the employee's job description specifies a different reporting relationship. These evaluations shall occur after soliciting input from each of the other Board members. Each Board member shall have the opportunity to add an unedited commentary of his or her individual observations or evaluation.

**Individual Board
Members' Authority**

Individual Board members exercise authority over District affairs only by way of votes taken at a legal meeting of the Board. An individual Board member has authority only when and to the extent that the Board, by vote or by its adopted policy, has so delegated such authority.

Individual Governing Board members are not otherwise authorized to make requests of District employees, and any such requests or directives have no force.

When engaged in individual activities such as correspondence, speaking engagements, or meeting with constituents or employees, individual Governing Board members may represent their personal opinions. They may not represent the Governing Board as a whole except to report on the Governing Board's official actions or as expressly authorized by action of the Board taken in an open meeting.

**Employee
Protections**

No district employee will be disciplined or have a negative notation in the employee's performance evaluation for declining to comply with a request or a directive of an individual Governing Board member which is contrary to the terms of this policy, or for reporting an alleged or attempted violation of this Governing

Board policy. This provision shall not be construed to limit the Governing Board's ability to address unprofessional conduct.

Board Members' Use of District Resources

There are some instances where an individual Board member properly may request or require use of District resources, outside of a board meeting. Aside from these instances, listed below, such use requires the explicit authorization of the Board.

For the purpose of this policy, "use of district resources" means use of district equipment, materials, travel, rooms, facilities and efforts of district employees.

A. Requests for Information from the Governing Board

Individual Governing Board members may make requests for information to Governing Board staff, other than the Internal Auditor, through the Director of Staff Services. The Director of Staff Services may answer the request for information or may assign the task to other employees who report to the Director of Staff Services.

Governing Board members should be considerate of staff time required to fulfill information requests. No individual Board member shall request the Superintendent, board office staff or any other District employee to:

- (a) retrieve and produce existing records requiring staff time estimated to be more than two hours. If more than two hours of staff time will be required, the request shall be by Board action which shall include a specific finding by the Board that the information is necessary to fulfill the Board Members' ability to govern the District and/or to vote on an upcoming item.
- (b) engage in research projects, compilation of data, or create a new record compiled from information in existing District and/or other public records. Directives to the Superintendent or other District employees regarding the preparation of such research or reports shall be by Board action, which shall include a specific finding by the Board that the information is necessary to fulfill the Board Members' ability to govern the District and/or to vote on an upcoming item.

B. Individual Governing Board Member Correspondence

A Governing Board member may request the preparation and mailing of replies to written or oral inquiries from constituents of the District. Such correspondence should not have the purpose of violating any Governing Board policy or law, must conform to all laws and regulations concerning the use of District resources, and be available for review by all Governing Board members.

C. General Use of District Resources

An individual Governing Board member may engage in activities requiring the use of District resources only when expressly authorized by Governing Board policy or action.

An individual Governing Board member shall have an expectation to equal access to budgeted monies for authorized Governing Board activities, such as travel to approved conferences and similar purposes.

D. Signing of Warrants and Orders

Governing Board members are permitted to sign warrants and orders for salary or expenses between meetings if a resolution to that effect has been passed by the Governing Board prior to the signing as permitted by A.R.S. §15-321 (G). The orders must be ratified at the next regular or special meeting of the Governing Board.

E. Governing Board Members Acting as Private Citizens

Nothing in this Governing Board policy is intended to restrict an individual Governing Board member in the role of a private citizen when the activity does not require the use of District resources.

Accountability

Any inappropriate exercise of board member authority shall be reported to either the Superintendent or the Director of Staff Services for the Governing Board who in turn shall report the allegation to the Board President or to the most senior Governing Board member not involved in the alleged violation.

The Governing Board member who receives the report will meet personally with the Governing Board member who is the subject of the report to discuss the content of the report, the behavior, its impact, and an understanding of the interests of the parties.

Media Relations

The Board recognizes its responsibility to provide information to the community and actively seeks to establish a good working relationship with local news media.

To promote a positive relationship between the District and the media, the Board shall provide information to the media concerning the programs and activities of the District as well as matters pending before the Board.

Guidelines for Board Member Conduct

Board members represent the District and serve as role models. Expectations include the following:

- Attend all Board meetings insofar as possible;
- Arrive at meetings on time and be thoroughly prepared;
- Encourage discussion which fully explores issues;
- Stay focused on the topic at hand;
- Debate in a constructive way, which is civil and focused solely on issues;
- Render all decisions based on the available facts and independent judgement without surrendering that judgment to individuals or special-interest groups;
- Demonstrate mutual respect for the meeting rules;
- Ensure that all Governing Board interactions with District employees, students and the public who appear before the Governing Board are respectful in tone of voice, language and demeanor;
- Encourage the free expression of opinion by all Board members, and seek systemic communications between the Board and students, staff, and all elements of the community;
- Work with other Board members to establish effective Board policies;
- Be informed about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in meetings and programs that provide useful information;
- Avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest, including compliance with all provisions of Policy BCB;
- Respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law;
- Recognize that decisions should be made only at publicly held Board meetings;
- Remember that a Board member's first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the public schools.

Adopted: February 20, 1996
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Legal Ref:

[A.R.S. §15-321](#) - Organization; election of officers of the board; meetings; execution of warrants; exemption
[A.R.S. §15-381](#) - Liabilities of the governing board; payment of liabilities; Immunity

Cross References:

BDAA – Procedures for Governing Board Members (eliminated 9-12-17)
[BCB – Board Member Conflict of Interest](#)
[BEDB – Board Meeting Agenda Posting and Organization](#)