

 <b>Tucson, Arizona</b>  <b>GOVERNING BOARD POLICY</b>	<b>POLICY TITLE:</b> Board Member Authority and Responsibilities
	<b>POLICY CODE:</b> BBAA

Generally, and with only a few exceptions described in more detail below, activities of the Governing Board 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. 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.

## **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.

The 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 gives the President authority to act.

The Clerk shall perform duties during Board meetings as assigned by the President, or act as President in the President’s absence, in accordance with Policy BEDB.

## **Individual Board Members’ Authority**

A Governing Board member generally has authority only as a member of the Board as a whole and within the confines of Governing Board meetings.

No district employee will be disciplined 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.

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 the Board in an open meeting.

## **Board Members' Use of Resources**

There are some instances where an individual Board member properly may request or require utilization of District resources outside of a board meeting. For the purpose of this policy, "use of district resources" means use of district equipment, materials, travel, rooms, facilities and efforts of district employees.

The following is a list of the situations where Governing Board members are authorized to request the use of District resources outside of the scheduled Governing Board meeting:

### **A. Directives to and Requests for Information from District Employees**

Individual Governing Board members are not authorized to issue directives to or make requests of District employees, other than as authorized by Subsection III (B) below relating to Governing Board staff, or as otherwise expressly permitted by Governing Board policy or official action of the Governing Board taken in an open meeting. Individual Governing Board members are authorized to make requests for information reasonably related to issues that have been, or reasonably may be addressed by the Governing Board. All such requests for information must be directed through the office of the Superintendent. The Superintendent's office will be responsible for responding to each request. The Superintendent shall forward a copy of each request for information and the response thereto, or a summary of the response, to the entire Governing Board. Governing Board members should be considerate of staff time required to fulfill information requests.

### **B. Directives to, and Requests for Information from, Governing Board Staff**

Governing Board Staff act at the direction of the Governing Board as a whole as specified by Governing Board policy or by official action taken at an open meeting pursuant to the Open Meeting Law. Individual Governing Board members shall make requests of, or give directives to, Governing Board staff through the Director of Staff Services to the Governing Board. All other employees in the Governing Board Office report to the Director of Staff Services.

### **C. Individual Governing Board Member Correspondence**

An individual Governing Board member has the authority to request or direct the preparation and mailing of any correspondence when expressly authorized by vote of the Governing Board. A Governing Board member may request or direct the preparation and mailing of correspondence in response to written or oral inquires from constituents of the District. Correspondence should not have the purpose of influencing the outcome of an election or furthering an individual Governing Board member's name recognition for seeking election to public office. All correspondence will conform to all applicable laws and regulations

which address the use of District resources and all correspondence shall be available for review by all Governing Board members.

#### D. Other Authorized Activities for Individual Governing Board Members

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.

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. Such activities include District-sponsored meetings and District-sponsored forums. Unless authorized by the Governing Board in an open meeting, individual Governing Board members may not sponsor activities that require the use of District resources. 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.

#### Signing of Warrants and Orders

Governing Board members are permitted to sign warrants and orders for salary or expenses between meetings in a manner permitted by A.R.S. § 15-321 (G). The orders must be ratified at the next regular or special meeting of the Governing Board.

#### Conflicts of Interest

Governing Board members shall comply with all provisions of Governing Board Policy BCB, Board Member Conflict of Interest.

### **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 judgment, 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 systematic 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 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, BCB – Board  
Member Conflict of Interest