

Lancaster Independent School District

Board of Trustees



Board Operating Guidelines

Effective: [August 29, 2019](#)

LANCASTER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CODE OF CONDUCT & STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

(Adopted: [August 29, 2019](#))

The purpose of the Lancaster ISD's Board of Trustees Code of Conduct and Standard Operating Procedures is to provide Information that will help with the questions and pave the way for successful school board meetings. Not all district policies and procedures are included. Policies and procedures included have been summarized. The Board of Trustees Code of Conduct and Standard Operating Procedures is not a substitute for the official district policy manual. It is a guide to and a brief explanation of district policies and procedures related to the Board of Trustees Standard Operating Procedures.

These guidelines are not intended to replace or act as a substitute for state law, administrative rule, or adopted Lancaster ISD Board policy. In the event that it is determined that any provision is inconsistent with a provision of state law, state or federal administrative rule or adopted Lancaster ISD Board policy, this manual shall be interpreted to the extent possible to harmonize the provisions. In the event that they cannot be harmonized, provisions contained in state law, state or federal administrative rule, or adopted Lancaster ISD Board policy shall control.

These policies and procedures can be changed at any time by the Board of Trustees. In the event of Board adopted amendments to these procedures, such changes shall supersede any handbook provisions that are not compatible with the change. For more information, please refer to the policy codes that are associated with specific topics. The Texas Association of School Board policy manual is located under the subheading "School Board" on the Lancaster ISD web site at www.lancasterisd.org.

BOARD MEMBERS ETHICS

The Board President will present a copy of the Board Member's Ethics policy to each Board Member annually. Each Board Member shall be responsible for signing an agreement to abide by the Ethics policy.

As a Board Member:

- I will promote the best interests of students, staff, and the District as a whole.
- I will be fair, just, and impartial in all my decisions and actions.
- I will base my decisions on information and data.
- I will respect the majority decision as the decision of the Board.
- I will encourage expressions of different opinions and listen with an open mind to others' ideas.
- I will give others the respect I wish for myself.
- I will consistently uphold all applicable laws, rules, policies, and governance procedures.
- I will keep matters confidential as required by law.
- I will focus my attention on fulfilling the Board's responsibilities of goal setting, policymaking, and evaluation.
- I will avoid personal involvement in activities the Board has delegated to the Superintendent.

RULES OF ORDER FOR BOARD MEETINGS

Board Members:

- Shall ensure that their behavior contributes to the effective operation of Board governance;
- Shall treat each other, the Superintendent, staff, and community members respectfully;
- Shall ensure that all deliberations directly relate to items listed on the agenda for the meeting;
- Shall first seek recognition from the Board President if they wish to comment on a topic being discussed;
- Shall not dominate discussions;
- Shall not conduct private discussions during meetings;
- Shall refrain from directing derogatory remarks at other persons;
- Shall address to the Board President, not other Board Members, all remarks in disagreement with another Board Member;
- Shall listen to comments and may ask clarifying questions during the Citizens Communication;
- If the Question is called, to end debate will require a majority vote; and
- To table an agenda item will require a majority vote.

I. DEVELOPING THE BOARD MEETING AGENDA

- A. Placement of items on the Regular Meeting Agenda (BE LOCAL):
1. Proposed agendas are drafted by the Lancaster Independent School District administration and presented to the Board President for finalization.
 2. Any member of the Board may request in writing that a subject be included on the agenda. Such requests must be submitted to the Superintendent no later than 4:00 p.m. (6) six calendar days prior to the date of the regular Board meeting. Items submitted by board members after the deadline shall be considered at the next board meeting.
 3. If two (2) Board members make a timely written request for putting an item on the agenda, then the Board President may not fail to include the item without the consent of the requesting Board members.
Trustees receive the agenda of regular meetings, along with all supporting documentation and reports, (3) three calendar days prior to the meeting date in electronic form.
- B. Placement of items on the Special Meeting Agenda:
1. See Board Policy BE (Local)
- C. Placement of items on the Emergency Meeting Agenda:
See Board Policy BE (Local)
- D. Consent Agenda Action Items:
1. The Board President at his or her discretion may group routine items on the agenda for possible group action as part of a posted consent agenda, provided the consent agenda specifically and individually lists each such item for Board approval, and provided supportive documentation for those items is included as part of the Board materials.
- E. Board Member Preparation for Regular Meetings:
1. Each Trustee will prepare to address the agenda by reading agenda packet materials in advance of the meeting.
 2. Each Trustee should submit any agenda related questions or request for additional information to the Superintendent at least (24) twenty-four hours in advance, if possible, prior to the meeting to allow a reply.

II. CONDUCTING BOARD MEETINGS

The Lancaster ISD School Board will meet in a regular monthly business session on the 3rd Thursday of each month in the Administration Building Board Auditorium. Adjustments to the scheduled meetings will be made at the discretion of the board president and superintendent.

- A. Electronic devices shall be turned off/silenced. A board member with emergency needs for outside contact during a meeting will notify board president prior to the meeting.
- B. Public Participation at Board Meetings:
1. At each scheduled meeting at which a public comment portion is posted, the Board President will specify the operational conditions of the public comment portion of the meeting.
 2. A person who wishes to participate must sign up using the appropriate form provided by the District 5 minutes prior to the beginning of the regular meeting. The topic described

on the form shall be complete and in sufficient details as to determine the appropriateness of the topic prior to addressing the Board.

3. Public comments may be on items listed on the agenda, or other areas of school district operations, but shall not include complaints concerning employees or officials of the District. Such matters shall be resolved under the District's grievance policy set forth at DGBA (LOCAL), FNG (LOCAL), or GF (LOCAL).
4. Speakers will have 3 minutes to address the Board may not use any individual's name, or identifiable titles, when addressing the Board if the speaker is presenting a complaint regarding that person. Upon determination by the Board President (or presiding officer) that the subject of the speaker's comments is a matter that is subject to DGAB (Local), FNG (Local), or GK (Local), and determines that the speaker has not attempted to resolve the matter through the resolution procedure provided, the speaker will be referred to the appropriate resolution procedures.
5. If the speaker fails to follow the identified rules, the Board President (or presiding officer) may rule them out of order and terminate their comments.

C. Response to public Comments:

1. Trustees will listen attentively to comments.
2. In response to public comments, the President may do the following:
 - a) Refer the speaker to applicable Board Policy.
 - b) Place the item on a future Board agenda for discussion if not listed on the current Board agenda.
 - i. Direct the Trustees not to respond or enter into discussion with the audience during the meeting.

D. Hearings will be conducted according to existing Board policies and Texas State Laws.

E. Town Meetings:

1. Board member may represent their representative District at called Town Hall Meetings.
2. Any board member may attend a called Town Hall meeting not located in their District.

F. Discussion of Motions:

1. The Board President has the responsibility to keep the Board discussion at meetings to the motion at hand, and shall halt discussion that does not apply to the item before the Board for consideration.
2. The Board President may make motions, second motions, and enter into debate.
3. Board Members shall not consider proxy votes from absent board members. Any Trustee with privileged knowledge regarding a topic of discussion will consider himself to have a conflict of interest. In the event that a Trustee has a conflict of interest under this section or any other conflict of interest, the Trustee shall disclose the conflict, refrain from discussion, and refrain from voting.

III. EMPLOYEE OR CITIZEN COMPLAINT TO INDIVIDUAL TRUSTEES

When a person complains to a Trustee regarding school personnel or an operations or administrative issue, the Trustee will do the following:

- A. The Board member will hear employee's problem for full understanding and:

1. Advise the complaining party that the Board member must remain impartial in case the situation goes before the Board.
2. Refer the employee or citizen to the Superintendent or his/her designee. The complaint must go through the chain of command established in adopted Board policy and regulations.
3. The Trustee should advise the Superintendent of any substantive or significant complaint, and the Board member shall notify the Superintendent as quickly as possible after learning of an issue. If appropriate, the Trustee may follow up with the Superintendent to be sure action was taken on the complaint.

IV. TRUSTEE'S VISIT TO SCHOOL CAMPUS

- A. Trustees are encouraged to attend scheduled school events, if time permits, to show support of school activities.
- B. Trustees shall not go into teachers' classrooms or campuses without an administrator being present or for the purpose of investigation or evaluation.
- C. Trustees shall contact the Superintendent's office prior to their visit, except when attending a scheduled school function or activity to which parents or members of the public are invited.
- D. Trustees must follow all security procedures when visiting a campus.

V. TRUSTEES AS PARENTS

While a Trustee has no authority over staff members, it is often difficult for staff members to view the Trustee as a parent rather than as a Trustee. Trustees are encouraged to do the following:

- A. When acting as parents, make it clear that they are acting as parents.
- B. Neither request nor accept extraordinary consideration for their children.
- C. Trustees/Parents must follow all security procedures when visiting a campus.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. The President of the Board shall meet with the Superintendent on a regular basis.
- B. The Superintendent will communicate weekly with Trustees via the electronic Board Newsletter.
- C. The Superintendent will communicate to all Trustees any information requested by any Trustee, unless release of such information is unlawful.
- D. The Board will internally communicate through public hearings, board meetings, conferences and conventions, school publication, and electronic communications through the Superintendent's office.

- E. Individual Trustees cannot speak in an official capacity outside the Boardroom or call or attend meetings as a representative of the Board, except as set forth herein and in Board policy, without prior authorization of the Board.
- F. The Superintendent will phone or email all Trustees any urgent information that cannot wait until the weekly update.
- G. Trustees who wish to share information relevant to district business or issues before the Board should relay the information to the Board President or Superintendent for distribution to all Trustees in the weekly electronic Board Newsletter.
- H. Identifiable letters addressed to the Board or a Trustee from the community will be forwarded to the Board President or Superintendent for inclusion in the weekly electronic Board Newsletter.

VII. BOARD & SUPERINTENDENT

Decisions or instructions of individual Board members, officers, or committees are not binding on the Superintendent except in rare instances when the Board has specifically authorized such exercise of authority.

- A. In case Board members request information not related to a meeting agenda:
 - 1. The request should be made directly to the Superintendent.
 - 2. The Superintendent will determine if the information requested is available from existing sources or records or if it requires a special one-time-only report.
 - 3. If the requested information can be provided from readily available data with little use of staff time, it will be provided as soon as is reasonable. All Board members will receive a copy of the information provided to the requesting Board member.
 - 4. In the event the request requires a special report that divert staff time from established priorities, the Superintendent will notify the requester and the Board President.
 - 5. The Board President will place the request for information on the next meeting agenda to determine if a majority of the Board agrees that the requested information is important for its future decision-making.
 - 6. If the Board agrees that the information is important for future decision-making, the Superintendent will direct that a report be developed and provided as requested by the Board. All Board members will receive a copy of any report generated by the Board member's request in accordance with this procedure.

VIII. MONITORING SUPERINTENDENT PERFORMANCE

The Board as a whole nor any individual Board Member will never direct or give instructions to any employee other the Superintendent.

- A. The Board will evaluate the Superintendent in September and establish Superintendent Goals for the present year. These goals will create the Superintendent Evaluation Document.
 - 1. Evaluation of the Superintendent will be in closed session.

2. Should the Board desire to change the Evaluation Instrument used for the Superintendent, the Board will provide the Superintendent at least six months' notice prior to the date of the evaluation.

IX. EVALUATION OF THE BOARD

- A. The board will establish goals by the end of August for the coming year. The goals set will create the Board Evaluation Document for Board Self-Evaluation in April.
- B. Board members will use this evaluation document to establish new goals at the Team of 8 training by the end of August and address the following areas:
 1. Are we following the Code of Ethics?
 2. Are we following the Code of Conduct and Standard Operation Procedures?
 3. Is the team of eight functioning efficiently and effectively?
 4. Are Board and District goals effective?

X. PROCESS FOR SELECTING BOARD OFFICERS

- A. Election of Board officers will be held at the first regularly scheduled meeting after the May election.
- B. A Trustee may not serve as a Board Officer until the Board member has completed at least one year of service.
- C. Any Trustee deficient in training is not eligible for a nomination to hold an office of the Board.
- D. The President for the current school year will participate in Graduation Ceremony by extending a greeting from the Board of Trustees; if the Board President is no longer on the Board, then the newly selected Board President will certify all graduates.

XI. ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF TRUSTEES AND BOARD OFFICERS

- A. **See Board Policy BDAA (Local)**
- B. President shall do the following:
 1. Appoint committees, if required to conduct Board business.
 2. Sign all legal documents required by law.
- C. No Trustee or Officer has authority to act on behalf of the District outside the Board meeting unless authorized by a majority vote of the Board.
- D. Requests for legal advice or opinions from the public shall be directed through the Board President or Superintendent. The Board President may consult the attorney for clarification of items for the Board and for legal opinions as needed.
- E. Trustees will be responsible for attorney's fees if legal advice or opinions are requested from attorneys without prior Board approval.

XII. ROLE OF BOARD IN CLOSED SESSION

- A. Board can only discuss those items listed on the closed agenda and as limited by the law, Texas Government Code Chapter 551.
- B. Information discussed during the closed session must remain confidential.
- C. The certified agenda form will be filled out by the secretary and be signed by both the presiding officer and secretary verifying it is correct.

XIII. MEDIA INQUIRIES TO THE BOARD

- A. The Board President, through the District Communications Office, shall be the official spokesperson for the Board to the media and press on issues of media attention.
 - 1. All Trustees who receive calls from the media should direct them to the Board spokesperson.
 - 2. The Trustee shall notify the Board President and the Superintendent of the call.
- B. Anonymous Phone Calls, Letters, and E-mails:
 - 1. The Lancaster ISD Board of Trustees encourages community input.
 - 2. Anonymous calls, letters, and e-mails will not receive the Board's attention, discussion or response and will not be referred to the administration for action unless the direct safety and welfare of the students or employees of the District are at risk.
 - 3. Confidentiality is strictly maintained when possible.

XIV. REQUIRED TRUSTEE TRAINING

Trustees are required to complete training as specified by state law (Texas Administrative Code 61.1 and Texas Government Code 551.005 and 552.01).

- A. New Trustees shall participate and receive the following training
 - 1. Three hours Local orientation within sixty days after their election or appointment
 - 2. Three hours of orientation to the Texas Education Code within the first year of service.
 - 3. One two hour training of Open Meetings
 - 4. One two hours training of Open Records must be completed within the first 90 days of a newly elected Trustee.
 - 5. An additional 10 hours of continuing education is to be selected at the new Trustees' discretion.
- B. Trustees in their second year and thereafter are only required 5 hours of training.
- C. Both newly elected and returning Trustees along with the Superintendent need 3 hours of Team Building and Board needs assessment per year in addition to the minimum hours required. Every two years all Board members must receive training in Evaluating and Improving Student Outcomes.

- D. Each Trustee will select training sessions in order to meet the requirements to stay up to date on the Texas Education Code.

XV. FUNDING TRUSTEE TRAINING

The district is responsible for budgeting and providing funds for expenses for Board Members' training that is required by law. Any funds expended should be used to meet the hours required. If a Board member wishes to attend a conference, workshop, seminar, or any other like activity that is not required for the individual member's training, the board member shall request the item be placed on a Board agenda prior to encumbering any funds, and the full board will consider the request to approve the expenses.

- A. Each Trustee is allocated one-seventh (1/7) of the approved Board of Trustees travel budget, which is \$4500 per academic school year. If any Trustee needs to change his/her travel plans after the district has confirmed arrangements, the additional financial cost will be deducted and reflected in the Trustee's allocated portion of the travel budget.
- B. The Superintendent's administrative assistant will prepare annual reports with training expenses for each Trustee. The report will include the total amount of training and expenses requested for each Trustee and of all expenses to date. The entire report will be delivered to all trustees in electronic or printed form as required by district policy.
- C. Board members attending training and/or conferences with district funds will attend required sessions.

XVI. EXPENSES

A Trustee's reasonable expenses will be paid from budgeted fund in accordance with board policy BBG. Travel expenses for anything other than continuing education credits, must be approved by the majority of the Board.

- A. **HOTEL:** Out of town hotel accommodations must be a minimum of 50 miles. Hotel expenses for meetings that are more than one day in duration and held within 50 miles of the District are not covered as reimbursable expenses. Eligible hotel reservations will be charged to the district credit card. If the Trustee does not use the accommodation reserved, and there is a charge to the district, the Trustee will reimburse the district. No incidental charges will be paid with district funds (valet, bar, internet, room service). Any exception to this must be approved by a majority vote of the Board prior to the expenditure of funds.
- B. **TRANSPORTATION:** If a Trustee uses their personal vehicle, they will be reimbursed for any mileage 30 miles outside of Lancaster ISD. The rate will be determined by the current gsa.gov reimbursement schedule. Parking fees will be reimbursed if not included in the hotel bill. The Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent will arrange for any rental cars that may be required. Rental cars will only be reserved for travel at airport or other locations in which shuttles are not provided. The district has a limited number of district vehicles that may be available for out of district use. Bus, cab, shuttle, Uber, Lyft, and other alternative transportation will only be reimbursed for travel to and from airports, convention site, and

hotel. Transportation for shopping, tours, or other leisure activities is not reimbursable. Airfare will be coordinated by the Superintendent's administrative assistant and the Trustee. Airfare will be charged to the district credit card. Any changes to airline tickets will be at the expense of the Trustee. Any Trustee who cancels or does not use an air reservation that is non-refundable must reimburse to the district the charges of the cancelled or unused ticket.

- C. MEALS: Trustees will be issued an advance per diem for meals, according to the GSA guidelines. In order to reduce paperwork, no receipts will be required to be submitted at the conclusion of the travel. Trustees may use the meal per diem in any manner they wish (grocery store, restaurants, food kiosks). Trustees will be responsible for any expenses incurred for meals greater than the per diem allowance.
- D. REGISTRATION FEES: Superintendent's Administrative Assistant will complete all conference/convention/workshop/seminar registrations only after receiving a written request form the Board of Trustees. Any Trustee who is registered for an activity and does not attend must reimburse the district any non-refunded fees. Trustees may only attend one conference/seminar/workshop at district expense if the activity is offered in multiple locations.
- E. Trustees will provide travel receipts to Superintendent's office within fifteen business days of the event for reimbursement. These expenses will include mileage, parking, gas receipt for rental car, and any other reimbursable out of pocket expenses. Failure to comply may limit future travel or result in not being reimbursed. Trustees will follow district financial policy for reports of all travel.
- F. Trustees will be required to reimburse the school district for any advanced unused funds other than the food per diem within thirty business days after the district event. A Trustee who fails to return unused funds will not be eligible for future travel monies until the account is settled.

XVII. LEADERSHIP TASB

All LISD Trustees are encouraged to apply for Leadership TASB. If a Board member is accepted, the Board member shall request approval to attend from the Board of Trustees as an agenda item at the August meeting. No additional board training funds for Leadership TASB may be given for the first year or for a Trustee up for re-election. Any additional funds must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

XVIII. MEMBERSHIP DUES

If the Lancaster ISD Board of Trustee budget allows, all Lancaster trustees shall be members of the following organizations if they wish to join:

- Texas Association of School Boards (TASB)
- North Texas Area Association of School Boards (NTAASB)
- National School Board Association (NSBA)

Membership dues will be assessed from each Board members' prorated share of their travel budget. Any organization's membership fees, other than those listed above, in which an individual board member wishes to join, will also be paid out of the individual Board member's budgeted portion of funds.

XIX. GUEST SPEAKER

Any Trustee who is invited to be a presenter at a professional function should first ask the organization to pay the Trustee's expenses. If an offer to pay the expenses is not made, the Trustee may put the request on a Board agenda for the Board of Trustees to approve the district to pay the expenses. The Trustee requesting the Board to authorize the district to pay their expenses to be a Presenter must prepare a budget of the expenses being requested and a synopsis of the presentations benefit to Lancaster ISD. If the district pays the expenses, as approved by the Board, and the Trustee (Presenter) receives an honorarium, the honorarium must be relinquished to the district.

XX. REVIEWING BOARD CODE OF CONDUCT AND STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

- A. The Code of Conduct and Board Operating Guidelines shall be a part of the annual evaluation of the Board in April.

XXI. VIOLATIONS AND SANCTIONS (BBF LOCAL)

Upon inclusion on the agenda and public posting in accordance with the law, the Board may convene in a closed meeting to discuss a violation of The Code of Conduct and Board Operating Procedures, or other Board policies, as long as deliberation is confined to the duties, discipline, or complaint against a Trustee.

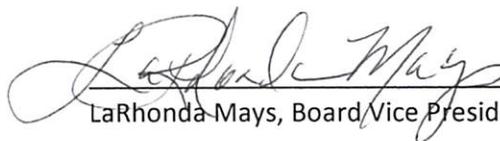
- A. The Trustee may request that the deliberation be conducted in open session.
- B. As a consequence of these deliberations, the Board may in open session do the following:
 - 1. Take no action.
 - 2. Publicly reprimand the Trustee.
 - 3. Recommend additional training for the Trustee.
 - 4. Vote to remove the Trustee from a leadership position in the district. Leadership positions include Board officer position and membership on any district or campus level committee.
 - 5. Utilize any or all of these sanctions as allowed by this section and law.
- C. Nothing provided herein shall be construed to alter, modify, or limit any way the rights of school district personnel and members of the public to file complaints against the Board of Trustees under applicable Board policies.

XXII. ATTESTATION

The following Trustees did on August 29, 2019, take an active role in the review and updating of the Lancaster ISD Board of Trustees Code of Conduct and Standard Operating Procedures and by a voice vote did adopt the above document and with this action did agree to adhere to these policies and procedures.



Ellen Clark, Board President District 7



LaRhonda Mays, Board Vice President District 4



Rhonda Davis, Board Secretary District 3

Marion F. Hamilton, Board Member District 1



LaShonja Harris, Board Member District 2



Ty G. Jones, Board Member District 5

Carolyn Ann Morris, Board Member District 6