



“Academic Excellence”

The mission of Rio Hondo ISD is to develop a positive environment that promotes academic excellence in college readiness and lifelong skills while developing productive, successful citizens.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS’ OPERATING PROCEDURES



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School Board Members' Operating Procedures

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Preface

The Board Operating Procedures contained in this guide are set of and agreed upon steps and statements that define how we as a team (school board and superintendent) are to handle and respond to school matters associated with the fulfillment of our role as board members. By having these procedures in a written form and having had them approved by the board, we hope to clarify public and staff expectations, minimize confusion, and maximize our efficiency and effectiveness as school board members. These operating procedures will be reviewed periodically; at least once a year. They may also be revised and changed as deemed appropriate at the time and under circumstances requiring additional clarification.

Board of Trustees Code of Conduct

I realize that to be the most effective advocate for children we, as the Rio Hondo I.S.D. Board of Trustees, must function as a team. To this end, I pledge to do my best to adhere to the principles listed below. Should I, for whatever reason, fail to follow these guidelines, I ask my fellow board members to call it to my attention. I pledge to accept the feedback without anger or finger pointing, and to renew my efforts to follow this Code of Conduct.

1. I will always strive to put needs of children above the wants of adults and will make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of all children in the District regardless of ability, race, creed, ethnicity, sex, or social standing.
2. I will follow board policy and will abide by the decisions of the Board of Trustees as a whole.
3. I will respect the role of the administration and will not encroach on administrative duties or attempt to micromanage the affairs of the Rio Hondo Independent School District.
4. I will refer to the superintendent any and all complaints received by me from citizens, including students, parents and employees, where any action by the administration may be required.
5. I shall not try to solve complaints or grievances individually, except that I may counsel patrons or employees who inquire as to the correct procedure to be followed for the resolution of complaints or grievances.
6. I will not conduct meetings with personnel.
7. I will not place myself in a position that may present a conflict of interest or that may bring into question the impartiality of the Board. In this regard, I will be cognizant of the fact that I may be called upon to sit as final arbiters in connection with grievances filed by employees or patrons, as well as due process hearings.
8. I will not make negative comments about Board Members or district employees, either publicly or privately.
9. I will make a good faith effort to understand and accommodate the views of other board members.
10. When talking to another board member or the superintendent, it is my responsibility to alert the board member if I wish for the discussion to be confidential. What is said to me in confidence will remain in confidence.
11. I will not attempt to state or otherwise represent the position of another board member on any issues even if asked to do so by another board member. I understand any such matter needs to go on the board agenda for the entire board to hear, discuss, and take action on if applicable.

12. I will come to Board Meetings prepared.
13. I will accept criticism without getting defensive or angry.
14. I will be on time to Board meetings or inform ahead of time when I will be late.
15. I will not put items on the agenda for the purpose of making a political statement, nor will I “play to the audience” at board meetings.
16. I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to school that, if disclosed, may needlessly injure individuals or the schools.
17. I will respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law or executive session.
18. I will not let pride, ego, grudges or other personal considerations influence my decision making or voting.
19. Other than general discussion, I will not discuss specific school-related issues with an employee of the district other than the superintendent or his/her designee.

Under normal circumstances, violations of the above guidelines will result in a warning to the individual board member by the Board as a whole. Repeated violations are strongly discouraged. Such violations will be documented and reported to the Texas Education Agency’s School Board Governance Division.

After each Board election and before the regular June meeting the Board of Trustees will conduct an orientation session to review these guidelines and will reaffirm these guidelines so that each board member will be aware of their existence, their duty to follow them, and the potential consequences of their failure to abide by them.

A. Board Agenda

1. The Board Agenda will be prepared by the Superintendent with the advice and consent from the Board President or Board Vice-President.
2. Each school board member has the right to place an item on the agenda and that item shall not be removed without the board member's consent.
3. Agenda items must be submitted by board members in writing by 12:00 p.m. no later than on the fifth day before the regular meeting as established by board policy.
4. Board agendas shall be delivered to the board members' residence or place of business as requested by the individual board member no less than 72 hours before the board meeting.
5. If a board member desires additional information concerning an item on the agenda, he/she shall call the Board President or the Superintendent prior to the meeting.
6. Information not related to the agenda shall be requested through the Superintendent.

B. Board Meetings

1. There shall be one scheduled regular school board meeting which shall be held on the second Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. When determined necessary and for the convenience of Board members, the Board President may change the date, time or location of a regular meeting with proper notice.
2. Special Called meetings shall be called according to Board Policy.
3. The meetings shall be regularly held in the Rio Hondo Independent School District, Board Room, located at 215 W. Colorado Street, Rio Hondo, Texas, unless the board agrees to a different location.
4. In addition to posting the agendas outside of the Administration Building, agendas shall be posted on the Rio Hondo Independent School District Web-Page (rhisd.net).

C. Communications Amongst Board Members and Board Members and the Superintendent

1. If a board member has a concern about any aspect of the superintendent's duties or performance, he/she should go to the superintendent and discuss the problem.
2. Board members will not reprimand or try to provide direction to staff. Any directives to the superintendent shall be made in the confines of a duly called board meeting.
3. Board members will not attempt to exert pressure or influence the staff in order to coerce them into making particular recommendations or decisions.
4. Board members will not conduct interviews with prospective employees.
5. Individual board members cannot speak in an official capacity for the Board outside the board room unless otherwise authorized by the Board.
6. Board members will not give unsolicited recommendations in support of candidates for jobs throughout the district.
7. Board member will not direct personnel to consider vendors other than those recommended through the competitive bidding or proposal process.

Communication with Legal Counsel

1. The Board authorizes the superintendent to contact legal counsel on behalf of the district.
2. Board members, as a body in a called session, are authorized to contact legal counsel on behalf of the district.
3. Individual board members may contact legal counsel to ask school business related questions. Prior to contacting legal counsel, individual board members are asked to inform the Board President or Superintendent of their intent to do so. Please keep in mind that legal counsel represents the Board as a whole and not individual Board Members.

D. Selection of Board Officers

Criteria and Process for Selecting Board Officers

1. School board elections are held in May.
2. Following the elections, and prior to the Board meeting at which board officers are elected, the secretary to the board will poll individual members for nominations for elections as board officers. The secretary will poll each nominee to see if the nominee wishes his or her nomination to advance and then informs the Board and the superintendent of the confirmed nominations received for each position.
3. By law, it is the responsibility of the board secretary to conduct the nomination and election of officers.
4. At the board meeting during which board officers are elected, the secretary of the board will present the slate of candidates and call for nominations from the floor.
5. No board member should hold the office of President or Vice President without a minimum of one year of board experience.
6. The board president is limited to a maximum of two consecutive full terms as board president.

Role and Authority of Board Members and/or Board Officers (as set by state statute)

1. No board member or board officer has authority, except when the board meeting is in session.
2. No board member can direct employees in regard to performance of their duties.
3. Board members shall not try to resolve complaints individually.
4. By law, the board supervises and evaluates only the superintendent and no other employee.

The President:

- Shall preside at all meetings.
- Shall call special meetings.
- Shall appoint committees.
- Shall sign all legal documents required by law.
- Along with the superintendent, sets the board's agenda.

The Vice President:

- Shall act in the capacity of president in his/her absence.

The Secretary:

- Is responsible for accurate minutes of board meetings.
- Shall act in the capacity of president in the absence of the president and vice president.
- Shall conduct the nomination and election of officers and board reorganization after each election.

E. Request for Additional Information

1. Short answers to specific questions which may need some previous communication clarified:

- Board members may contact the Superintendent to get an answer.

2. Additional information that is readily available within the district:

Board members are to notify the Superintendent of the specific request.

- An appropriate time frame for preparation and presentation of the information will be negotiated between the requesting Board member and the Superintendent.
- If the requested information is deemed not to be readily available or a satisfactory time line cannot be negotiated, either the Board member or the Superintendent can place the issue on the next board meeting agenda to determine the Board's desire for the information.

3. Additional information that does not currently exist and requires additional time and research:

- These requests must be placed in a written form before the Board at its next scheduled meeting to determine the Board's desires in directing the Superintendent to develop the requested information.
- If the Board determines that the request is to be honored, it will determine an appropriate timeline for presentation of the information at the same meeting that directs the development of the requested information.
- Information requested by one board member will be disseminated to all.

F. Contacts With and Visits to Campuses

1. Board members are encouraged to attend as many school events as their time permits.
2. Board members may visit any campus after first advising the Superintendent and then as checking in at the main campus office; appointments may be set.
3. Board members may informally interact with any staff member or student during free periods, lunch, or recess.
4. Board members shall not go unannounced to any district building or classroom.
5. Board members may not give advice or direction to any staff or student except when safety or liability is an issue; must immediately notify the Superintendent shortly thereafter.
6. While members of the Board have no authority as individuals, it is sometimes difficult for staff members to see them as ordinary parents. Therefore:
 - When visiting with teachers of their own children, Board members will make it clear that they are acting as parents rather than as members of the Board.
 - Board members will not request nor accept extraordinary consideration for their students.
7. When a family member of one of our Board members contacts or visits a campus, district procedures will be followed.

H. Correspondence of a Public Nature (School Business) addressed to the Board shall be handled as follows:

1. If the correspondence is received by the District, the Board President shall be informed as soon as possible depending on the importance of the matter.
2. If the President is not available, the Superintendent shall follow the Board Chain of Command until a Board Officer is informed.
3. If no School Board Officer is found, then the Superintendent shall inform the next Board Member in order of Years of Service to the Board.
4. If the President of the Board receives official correspondence addressed to the Board, the President shall inform the Superintendent of the nature of the correspondence received.
5. The Board President shall use his/her judgment in determining the extent of the details of the correspondence to be released to the Superintendent.
6. The Board President and Superintendent shall disregard or follow-up on anonymous correspondence which is not personally signed and dated and without a confirmed return address. Anonymous correspondence, as described here, shall be made a matter of public record.

H. Board Member Responses to Community/Employee Complaints

Procedure:

1. Listen respectfully and remain impartial.
2. Ask if the complainant has followed the District's procedures and/or chain of command.
3. If the complainant does not know the procedures or chain of command, provide the following information:
 - A. The complainant must first speak with the appropriate staff member. If not satisfied then...
 - B. The complainant must go to the appropriate administrator in charge of the campus or department where the concern arose. If not satisfied, then...
 - C. The complainant must contact the appropriate Central Office Administrator. If not satisfied, then...
 - D. The complainants will conference with the Superintendent or designee.
4. The Board Member will inform the Superintendent if an issue has advanced to or beyond Step B, and will include the nature of the complaint, the complainant and to whom the complainant has been referred.
5. The Superintendent will inform the Board Member of the resolution of any referred issue.

***The procedure shall not be construed to apply to complaints alleging criminal activity.**

J. Board Travel

The Board has agreed to the following perimeters:

1. Board Members will have the option to attend two state, two local, and one national conference.
2. Reimbursements will be given based on the better value to the district as it pertains to the mode of travel.
3. Per diems will be given at a state rate.