

RAYMONDVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE

BOARD OF TRUSTEE

I realize that to be the most effective advocate for children we, as a Board, 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 standings.
2. I will follow Board policy and will abide by the decisions of the Board 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 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.

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.

5. I will not conduct meetings with personnel.
6. 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.
7. I will not make negative comments about Board members or district employees, either publicly or privately.
8. I will make a good faith effort to understand and accommodate the views of other Board members.
9. When talking to another Board member or the Superintendent, it is my responsibility to alert that Board member if I wish for the discussion to be confidential. What is said to me in confidence will remain in confidence.

10. I will not attempt to state or otherwise represent the position of another Board member on any issue. (If a board member calls and says you need to do this....It needs to go to agenda for whole board.)
11. I will come to Board meetings prepared.
12. I will accept criticism without getting defensive or angry.
13. I will be on time to Board meetings or try to inform ahead when I will be late.
14. I will not put items on the agenda for the purpose of making a political statement, nor will I “play to the audience” in board meetings.
15. I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to school business that, if disclosed, may needlessly injure individuals or the schools.
16. I will respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law or executive session.
17. I will not let personal pride, ego, grudges or other personal considerations influence my decision making or vote.
18. 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.
19. I will not talk negatively about my community, district or district personnel, including members of the RISD board.

Under normal circumstances, violations of the above guidelines will result in a warning to the individual Board member by the Board as a whole. For repeated violations, or for violations which the Board determines to be sufficiently egregious to warrant more severe action, the Board may initiate a complaint with the Texas Education Agency or appropriate law enforcement. In extreme situations, the Board may pursue legal action against, the individual Board member in order to protect the District and the Board from unnecessary exposure to legal liability.

After each Board election and before the regular November Meeting, the Board 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.

BOARD OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

I. DEVELOPING BOARD MEETING AGENDA

- A. Who can place the items on the agenda?
 - 1. The tentative agenda is created by the administration and presented to the board president.
 - 2. The superintendent, the board president, or any board member can request items on the agenda for presentation to the board.
 - 3. Board members must request to the board president, in advance (5 calendar days) any item they wish to have considered for placement on the agenda.
 - 4. In accordance with Texas open meetings laws, no member can place an item on the agenda less than 72 hours in advance of the posted meeting, except in an emergency as defined by the Texas Government Code.
- B. Items that cannot be on the agenda
 - 1. All personnel issues must be conducted in an executive session unless specifically required by the Texas Open Meetings Act.
 - 2. Anything that violates right to privacy, as defined by Texas Open Meetings Act and Texas Open Records Act, cannot be placed on the agenda.
- C. Use of Consent Agenda
 - 1. If a board member has a problem with any consent agenda item he/she should call the superintendent prior to the board meeting.
 - 2. If a board member has information that he/she feels the superintendent should know the member should call the superintendent before the board meeting.
 - 3. If requested by a board member, an item listed under the consent agenda shall be immediately withdrawn for separate discussion and acted upon individually.
- D. Items under Consent Agenda
 - 1. Routine items
 - 2. Annual renewals of Region One ESC and TEA items
 - 3. Budget amendments
 - 4. Tax refunds for less than \$500
 - 5. Gifts, donations, and bequests
 - 6. Financial information
 - 7. Minutes of regular and special board meetings
 - 8. Updates of board policy
 - 9. Routine personnel items
 - 10. Routine bid recommendations

II. MEMBERS CONDUCT DURING BOARD MEETINGS

- A. Citizens addressing the board
 - 1. Citizens may sign up before the meeting to speak to the board during public forum. Individuals will have 5 minutes to comment.
 - 2. When multiple persons want to speak on the same issue, a spokesperson will be selected by the group and will be given up to 5 minutes to speak.
 - 3. The board president can use his/her discretion to limit the open forum time period to no more than 30 minutes.
 - 4. Board member can hear comments and will not respond.
 - 5. Board will accept written comments.
- B. Discussion of employees' performance (board/audience)
 - 1. The board members will not entertain comments on individual district personnel or students in public session.
- C. Hearings and open forums
 - 1. During hearings and/or open forums, the board is assembled to gather input only.
 - 2. The board will not answer questions or enter into two-way dialogue except with its attorney in the case of an employee hearing.
 - 3. Rules for the open forum will be strictly adhered to:
 - Board will limit comment to 5 minutes per testifier.
 - Board will accept written and/or oral testimony.
 - Board will not allow duplicate testimony.
 - Board will not allow any derogatory comments.
- D. Board shall observe the parliamentary procedures in Robert's Rules of Order
 - 1. A copy of Robert's Rules of Order will be provided to each board member except as superseded by this document.
 - 2. Robert's Rules of Order will be part of the new board member orientation packet.
- E. Discussion of Motions
 - 1. All discussions shall be directed solely to the business under deliberation.
 - 2. The board president has the responsibility to keep the discussion to the motion at hand and shall halt discussion that does not apply to the business before the board.
 - 3. The board president will recognize board members before they give their comments.
 - 4. Board members will not direct questions to the audience during discussion of motion but if the superintendent has identified a member of the audience as an expert, then the board members may direct questions to that person.

III. VOTING

- A. The board president will vote on all action items
- B. All board members will vote on all action items, except when there is a legal conflict of interest.

IV. BOARD MEMBER REQUEST FOR INFORMATION OR REPORT

- A. Any board members may request that the superintendent provide a report. The request must be in writing and specify the information requested. The board member must sign the request for the report.
- B. Upon receipt of the request the superintendent will notify all members of the request.
- C. The superintendent will gather the information and/or report and disseminate it in a timely manner to the entire board, unless the board member specifies he/she does not want a copy.

V. CITIZEN REQUEST/COMPLAINT TO INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER

- A. The board member should hear the citizen's request/complaint for understanding of persons involved, date, and place.
- B. The board member should repeat problem back to citizen.
- C. The board member should review the chain of command with citizen.
- D. The board member should remind citizen of due process and that the board member must remain impartial in case the situation goes before the board.
- C. The board members should notify superintendent of the citizen's request/complaint in a timely manner.

VI. EMPLOYEE COMPLAINT TO INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER

- A. The board member should hear the employee's complaint.
- B. The board member shall not become individually and personally involved in the issue/complaint.
- C. The board member must remind the employee that as a board member they must remain impartial in the event the situation comes before the board.
- D. The board member shall notify the superintendent as soon as possible of the complaint.

VII. INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER VISIT TO SCHOOL CAMPUS OR SCHOOL GROUNDS

- A. All board members are encouraged to attend any school's event as their time permits.
- B. All board members must sign in with the principal's office upon arrival at the building.
- C. Individual board members are not to visit buildings, classroom, or other workstations unannounced.

- D. Board members must notify the superintendent and the building principal of board visits.
- E. Board members are not to stand on any playing field that any other member of the community does not have access to ordinarily.
- F. Board members are not to go into teacher classrooms or on campuses for the purpose of investigation or personnel evaluation.
- G. As a parent within the district, a board member will:
 - a. When communicating with staff, member is expected to make clear to the staff that he/she is acting as a parent and not as a Board member.
 - b. Must not request, expect, or require extra consideration or preferential treatment for their children due to their position on the Board.
- H. Make positive observations about the campus and express any concerns privately to the Superintendent.

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. 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.
- B. Board members will not reprimand or try to provide direction to staff. Directives to the superintendent shall be in the confines of a duly called board meeting.
- C. When a board member becomes concerned about the performance of district employees and/or student welfare, he/she must bring his/her concerns directly to the Superintendent and inform the Board President. Such concerns must be limited to the following:
 - 1. Actions which are illegal
 - 2. Egregious violations of board policy.

Board members must remain cognizant that district personnel and student welfare are the responsibility of the Superintendent, not the board. The Superintendent is obligated to listen to such concerns, review the matter, and notify the board/board member of the resolution of the matter to the extent allowable by policy and law.

- D. Board members will not attempt to exert pressure or influence the staff in order to coerce them into making particular recommendations or decisions.
- E. Board members will not individually conduct interviews with prospective employees.
- F. Individual board members cannot speak in an official capacity for the board outside the board room unless otherwise authorized by the board.
- G. Board members will not give unsolicited recommendations in support of candidates for jobs throughout the district.
- H. Board member will not direct personnel to consider vendors other than those recommended through the competitive bidding or proposal process.

IX. COMMUNICATION WITH LEGAL COUNSEL

- A. The board authorizes the superintendent and or board president to contact legal counsel on behalf of the district.

- B. Board members as a body in a called session are authorized to contact legal counsel on behalf of the district.
- C. Individual board members are authorized to contact legal counsel. However, individual board members are not authorized to incur legal expenses to district.

X. EVALUATION OF SUPERINTENDENT

- A. Board President obtains input from all members of the Board on the approved indicators on the Superintendent's evaluation.
- B. Evaluation is conducted in closed session.
- C. Superintendent's performance goals will be set in February.
- D. Formative evaluation of the Superintendent will be conducted in July of each year. Summative evaluation of the Superintendent will be conducted in January of each year.

XI. CRITERIA AND PROCESS FOR SELECTING BOARD OFFICERS.

- A. The school board election is held in May of each year.
- B. Following the election, and prior to the board meeting at which board officers are elected, the President of the Board will poll the individual members for nominations for elections as board officers. The President will poll each nominee to see if the nominee wishes his or her nomination to advance.

XII. ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF BOARD MEMBERS AND/OR BOARD OFFICERS (as set by state statute)

- A. No board member or officer has the authority, except when the board meeting is in session.
- B. No board member can direct employees in regard to performance of their duties.
- C. Board members shall not try to resolve complaints individually.
- D. By law the board supervises and evaluates the superintendent only and not any other employee.
- E. If a board member acts in a manner that is unbecoming of a member and disruptive to the business of the district, the board can pass a resolution to censure that board member. This would consist of a calmly worded statement identifying the following:
 - a. The inappropriate behavior of the board member.
 - b. The desired behavior.
 - c. A statement of agreement by a majority of the board members that the behavior is inappropriate.

Resolutions are non-binding, but they have the effect of publicly disciplining a colleague, since removal from office is rare. The board may choose to withhold financial resources from the offending board member. Examples might be

disallowance of reimbursement for attendance at conventions, seminars or other district travel plans. Under extreme conditions the board may agree to ask the offending board member to resign. However, a board member may only be removed from office for incompetency, official misconduct, intoxication or conviction of a felony.

The President:

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

The Vice President:

- A. shall act in the capacity of president in the absence of the president.

The Secretary:

- A. Is responsible for accurate record of board meetings.
- B. Shall act in the capacity of president in the absence of the president and vice president.

XIV. ROLE OF THE BOARD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. Board can only discuss those items listed on the executive agenda and as limited by law.
- B. All votes must be made in public session.
- C. Information discussed and received during executive session must remain confidential.

XV. MEDIA INQUIRIES TO THE BOARD

- A. On issues before the board, the board president shall be the official spokesperson for the board to the media.
- B. All board members who receive calls from the media about issues before the board should refer them to the board president or his designee as appropriate.
- C. All board members who receive calls from the media about their own position or vote on an issue may speak to the media but must specify that they are speaking for themselves and not for the board.

XVI. ANONYMOUS PHONE CALLS AND UNSIGNED LETTERS

- A. The board encourages input. However, anonymous calls or unsigned letters will not receive board attention, discussion, or response and will not result in a directive to the administration for follow up.

XVII. RESPONSE TO SIGNED LETTERS

- A. Only signed letters if appropriate will be forwarded to the Superintendent. If appropriate, a response, using standard format, will be sent by board members acknowledging receipt of the letter and noting that the letter is being sent to the superintendent for review. If appropriate the superintendent will formally respond to the individual.

XVIII. REVIEWING BOARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

- A. Standard Board Operating Procedures will be reviewed and updated annually.

XIX. BOARD WORK SESSION AND BOARD TRAININGS

- A. Team of Eight Training: At a convenient time soon after the board elections, a work session for teambuilding and board orientation will be conducted to review the adopted board code of conduct, board operations of procedures and other information with the Team of Eight. All members must attend.
- B. All board members will attend required trainings as specified in board policy and Texas Education Code.

Approved by the RISD Board of Trustees:

September 20, 2017



Board President's Signature



Board Secretary's Signature