

EXCERPT from  
Thursday, October 22, 2015  
Special Meeting Minutes

Board Member Roles and Responsibilities Training Session by Eileen Brownlee, General Counsel

Eileen Brownlee, General Counsel, provided a session on Board Member Roles and Responsibilities. Topics covered were as follows:

- The primary relationship of Board members is other Board members. Be courteous, civil, and listen.
- Be prepared for Board meetings. If not, it is discourteous to all.
- Vote on the tough decisions. Don't abstain just to avoid voting. If you must abstain, do so before discussion on the topic ensues.
- Attend Board meetings. The burden to catch up after missing a meeting is on the Board member.
- Listen at Board meetings.
- Stay on point with the agenda. Avoid digression and conform to the open meetings law.
- There are no tiny issues. No matter who brings an issue to the Board's attention, address it with the same diligence as you would for all.
- Don't make promises to individuals on issues of concern. You are 1 of 9 members on the Board. Check with the President about getting items on the agenda, if they are items under the Board's responsibilities. Direct individuals to follow policy about filing complaints or making requests.
- Comply with the open meetings law and post notices with a certain level of specificity. Avoid walking quorums—in person and via email. Do not discuss with other Board members outside of Board meetings any matters that will come before the Board for action.
- The Board's function is to set policy language, handbook language, contracts, and job descriptions. The administration administers the language day-to-day—not the Board. Not good practice to continually change the Employee Handbook during the school year.
- You are a Board member when you are convened at Board meetings. You must meet the same requirements as other community members for the following: making an appointment to meet with an administrator; making a request for information; visiting schools; requesting public records, etc.
- The Board has the power to remove a fellow Board member for gross misconduct or criminal action. Censorship can also be imposed on a Board member.
- Attendance at workshops pertaining to teacher and administrator effectiveness is encouraged in this evaluation era. Evaluations are not grievable, but employees can reply with a rebuttal for the personnel file.
- The Board is never the first resort to respond to staff complaints.
- Employee grievances that can come before the Board are for discipline, discharge, or workplace safety. Disclose all information at the beginning of the hearing process.
- Follow the code of ethics. You may accept gifts under \$25 value. It is fine to accept gifts on the district's behalf at any amount.
- If a Board member's employer contracts with the district, it cannot be for the Board member's personal gain.