

---

**2022-2023 BOARD OF EDUCATION  
HANDBOOK ON GOVERNANCE PRACTICES AND PROTOCOLS <sup>1</sup>  
FOR NEW AND VETERAN BOARD MEMBERS**

---

This handbook was written for members of the Skaneateles Central School District ("SCSD") Board of Education (the "Board") in Skaneateles, New York. It is meant to provide new and veteran Board members guidance on District best practices and protocols. This handbook was compiled after extensive review of other successful Manuals, Handbooks and Procedures from other districts and NY State Law. It is meant to be reviewed and updated regularly as facts, practices, laws, circumstances change and the District evolves.

---

<sup>1</sup> This document is a summary of key points and insights to inform Board procedures and processes and should not be deemed a substitute for School Board Law and/or Board or District policy but rather to work in tandem.

# Skaneateles Central School District

## Table of Contents

<b>I. Getting Started/Overview</b>	<b>4</b>
A. What Do We Do As A Board	4
B. How Can The Board Be Most Effective	4
C. What Characteristics Are Important For A Board Member	5
D. What Can I Do To “Get Up To Speed”	6
E. How Do I Prepare For Meetings	7
F. What Professional Development Opportunities Are Recommended For New Or Veteran Board Members	7
G. What Are Some Common Procedural Pitfalls I Should Avoid	8
<b>II. Role And Authority Of The Board Of Education</b>	<b>8</b>
A. What Is The Board’s Primary Role	8
B. What Other Roles And Duties Are Included In Board Service	8
C. What Kind Of Authority Does The Board Have To Make Decisions That Affect The Districts	10
D. What If I Don’t Agree With A Particular Decision Reached By The Board	10
E. How Do We Know If We Are Doing A Good Job	11
F. How Much Time Do I Need To Spend On Board Matters	11
G. What Does It Mean To Be Fiduciary	12
H. Board President/Vice President	12
<b>III. Role And Authority Of The Superintendent</b>	<b>13</b>
A. What Does The Superintendent Do	13
B. What Is The Relationship Between The Board And The Superintendent	13
C. What Are Some Examples Of Responsibilities Of The Superintendent As Opposed To Responsibilities Of The Board	14
<b>IV. Duty Of Confidentiality</b>	<b>14</b>
A. What Constitutes Confidential Information	14
B. What Happens If Someone Discloses Confidential Information	14
<b>V. Communication And Information Sharing</b>	<b>15</b>
A. Can Board Members Communicate With Each Other About An Issue	15
B. What About Emailing	15
C. What If I Have A Question Or Concern Between Regularly Scheduled Meetings	16
D. What Can I Discuss With Parents, Friends And Other Members Of The Community	16
E. What Do I Do If A Parent Or Community Member Complains About Something To Me	16

# Skaneateles Central School District

F. What Do I Do If A Parent Or Community Member Complains About A Specific Board Decision Or Vote	17
G. How Do I Know Where To Send A Person If Someone Has A Concern	17
H. What If I Have Children In The District	18
I. What If I Am Contacted By The Media	18
<b>VI. Agenda Setting And Board Packets</b>	<b>18</b>
A. How Is The Agenda Set	18
B. How Do I Get An Item Added To The Agenda, Whether On My Behalf Or On Behalf Of The Community	19
C. What If I Have Questions About An Agenda Item	19
D. Is There A Specific Meeting Format That The Agenda Must Follow	19
<b>VII. Meeting Dynamics</b>	<b>19</b>
A. How Can I Actively Participate In Board Meetings Even As A New Member	19
B. Can The Public Participate In Board Meetings	19
C. Board Meetings Vs Work Sessions Vs Retreat: What's The Difference	20
<b>VIII. Executive Sessions</b>	<b>20</b>
A. What Type Of Matters Are Discussed In Executive Session	20
B. When And How Are Executive Sessions Administered	20
<b>IX. Participation On Committees</b>	<b>21</b>
A. Who Can Be On A Committee	21
B. Do Committees Vote	21
C. Are Committee Meetings Public	21
<b>X. Timeline/General Calendar</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Schedule A: School Board Meetings – Order Of Business</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Schedule B: Common Acronyms</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Schedule C: Helpful Websites</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Addendum 1: Policy 1620 – Annual Organization Meeting</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Addendum 2: Policy 1510 – Regular Board Meeting And Rules</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Addendum 3: Policy 1540 – Executive Sessions</b>	<b>30</b>

## I. GETTING STARTED/OVERVIEW

---

### A. WHAT DO WE DO AS A BOARD?

*Cross-ref: BOE policy 1310*

The Board generally oversees the District's affairs and is responsible for establishing and maintaining a basic organizational structure: for the District, for developing curriculum, for meeting Federal and State mandates, providing financial oversight and for adopting an annual budget, for creating a climate that promotes educational excellence and for appointing a superintendent. The Board is entrusted with the responsibility of developing policies under which the District is managed. It is also responsible for implementing State and Federal laws and regulations that affect public education. The Board provides leadership for the District, adopting a unifying vision and mission for the District, soliciting and balancing the participation and input of members of the community as well as the administrative team, and advocating on behalf of the educational needs of **ALL** children. Additionally, complete and final authority on all District educational matters, except as restricted by law, will be vested in the Board. The Board may also enter into contracts and agreements in conformity with State law.

### B. HOW CAN THE BOARD BE MOST EFFECTIVE?

#### **Structure**

The most effective school boards not only help to establish and implement the District's vision, goals and mission, they also stand behind it. Effective school boards work collaboratively with one another, with the administration, staff and the community, in a mutually respectful manner in order to advance student achievement and school improvement. The SCSD Board is made up of seven members. While the Board may have common goals, it is obviously not possible for seven people with varying backgrounds to always agree on how to best achieve those goals.

#### **Collaboration**

Notwithstanding those differences, effective Board members will express their differing opinions and may voice alternatives, and while they may respectfully disagree and will vote their conscience, once a motion has been passed or rejected by the Board, all Board members should publicly support the decision of the majority. Board unity should be a priority to ensure the most effective and productive board. Learning to recognize the specific contributions that each Board member brings to the table enables the Board to utilize and appreciate those contributions which in turn creates a healthier and more effective Board as a whole.

#### **Differing Viewpoints**

You should not be afraid to disagree on an issue. A discussion about an issue that reflects differing viewpoints often results in a better decision than if everyone agrees from the onset. Be certain to treat one another with respect and be sure to debate an issue, rather than a person. Each Board member has a right to be heard once on an issue prior to others having a second chance. Board members agree to listen to one another and not interrupt. Motions

## Skaneateles Central School District

should be used to focus discussion on action items, and any member may "call the question" to test whether the Board is ready to vote. The Board President is authorized to focus discussion toward closure. Board members should address the Board as a whole, rather than the public.

### C. WHAT CHARACTERISTICS ARE IMPORTANT FOR A BOARD MEMBER?

*Cross-ref: BOE policies 1110-E; 6110*

Yearly, at our Annual Organization Meeting, every Board member will sign the **Board Code of Ethics** as outlined below:

As a member of my Board of Education, I will strive to improve public education, and to that end I will:

1. Remember always that my first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of all students of the school district;
2. Observe the regulations and policies of the school system and the laws, rules, and regulations governing education in New York State;
3. Attend regularly scheduled Board meetings and study the issues to be considered at those meetings. (And attend additional meetings as necessary. The regularly scheduled meetings of the SCSD Board are generally held on the first Tuesday of each month, but the actual schedule will be delivered to all Board members in advance and will be posted on the SCSD website); In addition, board members will serve on at least one committee that has been established for the school year.
4. Focus Board action on policy-making, planning, and evaluation; and on ensuring the prudence and ethics of the District's operation and recognize that the Superintendent, not the Board, is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the district;
5. Recognize that the Board functions only as a Board through duly adopted policies and actions approved at public sessions; that individual Board members have no authority to act on behalf of the District or the Board;
6. Render all decisions based on the available facts and independent judgment, and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups;
7. 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;
8. Become informed about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed information, such as those sponsored by state and national school boards associations;
9. Support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as school staff, and insist on a regular and impartial evaluation of all staff;  
Communicate to other Board members and the Superintendent expressions of public reaction to Board policies and school programs.

Board Member Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Skaneateles Central School District

### D. WHAT CAN I DO TO 'GET UP TO SPEED'?

#### *i. Orientation Cross-ref: BOE policy 2110*

New Board members will be paired up with a sitting Board member as their mentor to help in the transition in this new role. A mentor will be there to answer questions and provide guidance when needed. New Board members will also participate in an informal orientation process on the District level, which may include a meeting with the Superintendent and Board President, fellow Board members, legal counsel and/or tours of District schools. Board members should become familiar with District policy, procedures, operations, facilities, financials and other information relevant to their fiduciary responsibility and the scope of student services provided.

This can be accomplished in a number of ways including but not limited to the review of this handbook; the SCSD Policies which are posted on the SCSD website; our mission and vision statement - also found on the SCSD website; minutes from prior meetings; the annual budget and other significant contracts and reports affecting the District; speaking with other Board members; asking questions; and reviewing your copy of New York School Law which will be provided to you. The New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) is a good resource to explore as well, particularly their guide, *Essentials of School Board Service: A Guide to Surviving Your First Year* from NYSSBA. The District Clerk can assist you with how to access these documents.

As a new Board member, it is useful to listen, ask questions, and learn how the public school system works. It is useful to learn about different areas of the system (e.g., academics, business office, food service, transportation, athletics, and operations and maintenance). In order to gain perspective on District culture and resident viewpoints, Board members are also encouraged to attend District events, community budget presentations, student/faculty events and school tours (scheduled in advance in coordination with administrators and the Board).

You will probably have a lot of ideas, but it is important to get the lay of the land first, think before you speak, and listen. Try to focus on the big picture, keep an open mind, and don't take a myopic or robotic approach. Keep foremost in your mind what is best for the District and the students for the long-term rather than looking at only the short-term.

At your first Board meeting as a Board member (the July "Annual Organization Meeting", Cross-ref: BOE policy 1620 - also Addendum 1) you will take an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New York and to serve the children of New York State and the District.

## Skaneateles Central School District

### *ii. New and Current Board Member Education and Training Cross-ref: BOE policy 2110*

New York State law requires fiscal oversight and governance training for every trustee or voting member of a School Board or BOCES, to be completed within the first year of their term. Each new Board member must take, at minimum, a six-hour fiscal training course and a six-hour governance training course along with any additional, legally required coursework. Programs are available both as in-person seminars and online webinars and more information will be provided to you regarding these programs. Registration for these programs is facilitated by the District Clerk. Compliance with this requirement will be fulfilled by filing with the District Clerk a certificate of completion of such course issued by the provider. Actual and necessary expenses incurred in complying with this requirement shall be a charge against the school district. You may not always feel that you have all of the answers or knowledge that you think you may need and should feel free to ask questions. NYSSBA is also a great resource for Board Members ([www.nyssba.org](http://www.nyssba.org)).

### **E. HOW DO I PREPARE FOR MEETINGS?**

On Fridays prior to Tuesday's scheduled Board meeting, you will receive a "Packet" containing the Agenda and backup materials relating to the actions on which the Board is being asked to vote. This will be delivered "paperless" by providing the Agenda and Backup Materials on BoardDocs. You sign in to BoardDocs with an individual username and individual password to gain access to the Packet online. Please note that board members' access to BoardDocs may at times provide access to documents that are NOT accessible by the general public. Due care must be exercised so as to not inadvertently discuss/share information publicly that is meant exclusively for Board member consideration. If the "paperless" delivery method is not suitable, you can request the District Clerk have your materials printed and hand delivered to your home address. There may also be times when printed materials are received and there is no electronic version, in those instances, the materials will be available through the district office.

Board members may also contact the Board President in advance of the weekly meeting with any questions and/or concerns. Board members may register for and use SCSD School Messenger school alerts, as well as any social media groups maintained by the District and/or the PTC, as additional sources of information.

### **F. WHAT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARE RECOMMENDED FOR NEW OR VETERAN BOARD MEMBERS?**

Recognizing the need for ongoing training and development for its members, the Board encourages the participation of all members at outside programs, conferences, workshops, and conventions New York State School Boards Association [NYSSBA], etc.), as well as area legislative meetings, particularly because school board members often do not have significant experience in school district governance. New York State law requires newly-elected school board members to take mandatory training within their first year of service. This training requires topics on the essentials of school board governance and a minimum of six hours in fiscal oversight, accountability and fiduciary responsibilities of a school board member.

## Skaneateles Central School District

It may be decided by a Board consensus that for more costly events only 3 Trustees attend and report back to the rest of the Board. If this practice is followed then a rotation should be followed to allow for exposure to all Board members.

The Board as a whole will participate in Board professional development workshops, legal education workshops and/or retreats at least once annually. These workshops, designed to evaluate and improve Board practices, will be coordinated through the District Clerk and are not open to the public as permitted by NYS open meetings law guidelines.

### G. WHAT ARE SOME COMMON PROCEDURAL PITFALLS I SHOULD AVOID?

- Asking staff for information without going through appropriate channels
- Visiting schools unannounced without approval from both building principal and superintendent.
- Attempting to directly solve community or employee complaints, instead of directing such complaints to appropriate administration/staff
- Engaging in email conversations that run afoul of the Open Meetings Law
- Surprising members or superintendent at a meeting with contentious question or issue
- Public comment segment that goes awry
- Disclosing confidential information

---

## II. ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

*Cross-ref: BOE policy 1310*

---

### A. WHAT IS THE BOARD'S PRIMARY ROLE?

The Board primarily functions as a policy-setting body and delegates the administration of schools to the Superintendent, administration and staff. The Board is tasked with monitoring key outcomes and overall District performance without prescribing how to manage the components of the system unless it is prescribed as a result of thoughtful collaboration with the Superintendent, administration and staff. Please remember that with your election as a Board member, you are entrusted by your community to act as their representative, a steward of the District's resources, a leader of the District and an advocate for public education.

### B. WHAT OTHER ROLES AND DUTIES ARE INCLUDED IN BOARD SERVICE?

**Vision:** The Board envisions where we want the District to be, rather than focusing on what or where we are, and then formulates its goals and sets the course for the schools within the District. The District's mission is closely related to its vision. Our mission is intended to capture and reflect the core values and beliefs that guide the District and its members in the pursuit of stated aims and goals.

**Standards:** The Board also endeavors to establish standards for performance. In order to assess



## Skaneateles Central School District

whether we are performing in accordance with expectations, we need to establish specific, clearly delineated and realistic standards that are tied to the expectations of the community.

**Assessment:** The Board promotes outstanding student achievement and performance based on standards and goals set by the Board for the District and then determines how well students are doing in meeting those standards. The Board needs and utilizes information in order to make decisions, not only about how well we are doing, but also about what may be needed in order to ensure that District goals will be met. Comparing current outcomes with desired outcomes and analyzing gaps between them should then lead to the development and implementation of strategic plans for the accomplishment of key objectives. Each year, the Board establishes its own personal goals and responsibilities, typically at a year-end annual retreat, where it also conducts an annual self-evaluation.

**Accountability:** Districts are increasingly held accountable for what happens to students and how well they perform on a variety of assessment measures. Federal and State legislation requires Districts to meet ongoing improvement mandates for student achievement, assessment and accountability. Fiscal and professional accountability are major concerns for the Board. While boards are generally discouraged from becoming involved in the day to day operation and administration of schools, public accountability requires that the Board must, at a minimum, provide oversight, adopt standards, and assess progress toward the accomplishment of key District objectives.

**Review of Policies:** It is the responsibility of the Board to review the Policies of the District. The Board has established a Policy Committee, which updates existing policy and/or established new policies at the request of the board and reports back for review by the full board. Policies are received by the District Clerk who prepares the policies for review. The draft policies undergo administrative review first, followed by attorney review when needed. Once both reviews are completed, the draft policies are then reviewed by the Policy Committee at a regularly scheduled work session. The approval, acceptance and/or modification of District Policy shall conform to District Policies and State and Federal mandates.

Both new policies and updates to existing policy will go through a public reading at a regularly scheduled board meeting followed by a 2nd reading at the next scheduled meeting. At that time the policy may be put up for vote by the board.

**Developing and Passing the Annual School Budget:** One of the biggest and most important responsibilities of the Board is to assist with the development and passing of the annual school budget. The Board works with the Superintendent and School Business Administrator, who in turn work closely with school administrators, to develop the school budget which takes into account long term planning of the District's needs.

**Other responsibilities:** Other responsibilities of the Board include the hiring, evaluation and if necessary the termination of the Superintendent of Schools. Additionally, the hiring of qualified school personnel based upon recommendations by the Superintendent and Administrators, granting tenure to qualified personnel, ratification of contracts for instructional and non-instructional staff, and development and maintenance of good collaborative relationships with the Superintendent, Administrators, Instructional and Non-Instructional (support) Staff and the

## Skaneateles Central School District

Community. Additionally, Board members are encouraged to attend community and District events and participate in professional development activities.

**Leadership:** The School Board strives to lead the District through a clear mission, an articulated vision, shared goals, clearly written policies and monitoring of progress and performance.

**Advocacy:** The School Board advocates for the public schools and their students which may also include advocacy in legislative endeavors in Albany, with local government as well as on a national level.

**Goal Setting:** The Board is committed to the education of **ALL** our students and the advancement of District goals. The Board endeavors to set annual goals for itself as well as the District, typically during an August work session, to the extent feasible.

### **C. WHAT KIND OF AUTHORITY DOES THE BOARD HAVE TO MAKE DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THE DISTRICT?**

*Cross-ref: BOE policy 1110*

Members of the Board of Education may legally act only as a body, pursuant to majority vote in a properly convened Board meeting. The actions of individual Board members have no legal authority and cannot be considered binding on the Board. The Board as a corporate body may act only through the collective action of its membership taken at a Board meeting. Without specific authorization as a result of a lawful vote, no individual Board member may exercise the authority of the Board nor may a member commit the Board to any course of action. Individually, a Board member's rights are no greater or different than those of any qualified voter of the school district.

A quorum is a simple majority (more than half) of the total number of Board members. A quorum is required for the Board to conduct any business. As a general rule a majority of the entire Board, not simply those present at any given meeting, is required for the Board to take any official action, or at least 4 out of 7 members of the SCSD Board.

### **D. WHAT IF I DON'T AGREE WITH A PARTICULAR DECISION REACHED BY THE BOARD?**

Individual opinions on matters being considered by the Board can and should be discussed and may be defended vigorously, at the discretion of each Board member. However, once a decision is reached by the Board, those decisions are binding on all Board members and should be accepted gracefully and implemented wholeheartedly. The Board strives to reach decisions through consensus; however as a general rule, a decision to take action requires only a majority vote.

## Skaneateles Central School District

### **E. HOW DO WE KNOW IF WE ARE DOING A GOOD JOB?**

Cross-ref: BOE policy 4240 and 2340

#### *a. Evaluating Performance and Effectiveness*

The Board will evaluate the performance of the Superintendent at least annually using criteria adopted and approved by the majority of the Board in collaboration with the Superintendent. The Board will hold the Superintendent responsible for the administration of the school system through regular constructive written and oral evaluations of the Superintendent's work. (Effective evaluation is an ongoing effort and should be linked to goals established by the Board with the assistance of the Superintendent.)

The Board of Education shall review the effectiveness of its internal operations at least once annually through the self-evaluation process. The Superintendent of Schools and others who work regularly with the Board shall be asked to participate in this review and to suggest ways by which the Board can improve its functioning as a deliberative and legislative body. The Board shall set forth the standards by which it will evaluate itself, taking into account the degree to which it executes its powers and duties in an effective manner pursuant to stipulations set forth in BOE policy 1110. All decisions of the Board are to be supported by as much objective evidence as possible. Implied in this approach is an assumption that any school Board is capable of improvement. The chances that improvement will result are enhanced if evaluation is carried out systematically in accordance with good planning, conscientious follow-through, and careful assessment of results.

### **F. HOW MUCH TIME DO I NEED TO SPEND ON BOARD MATTERS?**

Board members are expected to attend all regularly scheduled Board meetings, executive meetings and their respective committee meetings, which occur generally once a month. When a Board member cannot attend a meeting, that Board member is responsible for determining what happened at the meeting, preferably by watching the video of the meeting that is posted to the District website. The member should also seek updates from other members as to subjects discussed in the executive session, if any.

Education Law outlines that three meetings missed in a row (without valid reasons for the absences) can be grounds for removal. You are also strongly encouraged to serve on at least one committee, but a general rule is to divide the number of committees evenly among the Board members. During Budget season, the time commitment may be higher. As a Board member you should also keep yourself informed about issues and pursue development opportunities for yourself.

It is also expected that Board members will attend school events (sports, performing arts, music, etc.) Visibility within the District and around the community is helpful to build relationships and show interest. To limit disruption to instruction, the Superintendent will coordinate Fall and Spring learning visits to the building for the entire board. Never visit the schools for official purposes in your capacity as a Board member (e.g. to meet with staff or inspect buildings)

## Skaneateles Central School District

without advance notice and consensus from the Board and Superintendent, in order to remain consistent with New York State Law and so as to avoid disruption of regular school business.

### **G. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A FIDUCIARY?**

A Board member must act in good faith and exercise the degree of diligence, care, and skill that an ordinary prudent individual would use under similar circumstances in a like position. To conform with this standard, Board members should regularly attend and participate in Board meetings; read, review, and inquire about materials that involve the District, especially Board minutes, reports, plans, policies; have a fiduciary responsibility for the assets, finances, and investments of the District; exercise due diligence, care, and caution as if handling one's own personal finances; and use one's own judgment in analyzing matters that have an impact on the District.

Board members must act in good faith with the best interest of the District in mind. The conduct of a Board member must further the District's goals and not the Board member's personal or business interests.

### **H. BOARD PRESIDENT/VICE PRESIDENT**

*Cross-ref: BOE policy 1320*

A School Board is required by law to elect a President and may elect a Vice President at its discretion. Elections occur at the Annual Organization Meeting. An effective Board President will (but not be limited to):

- Conduct Board meetings in accordance with the law and District policy.
- Participate in Board actions as a regular voting member.
- Execute all documents on behalf of the Board.
- Act as the Board's primary spokesperson
- Act as liaison between the Board and Superintendent; providing updates and recaps regularly.
- Serve as an ex-officio member of all committees.
- Ensure that Board members understand their roles and responsibilities, providing guidance where needed.
- Develop meeting agendas in cooperation with the Superintendent, as set forth in policy.
- Coordinate and oversee the Superintendent evaluation process.
- Is a leader among leaders of Board members?
- Keep abreast of current events such as educational trends, District performance, and pending litigation against the District.
- Communicate with the District's legal counsel on District legal matters.

The Vice President has the power to exercise the duties of the President in his or her absence. Therefore to maintain continuity, should the Board President not be able to carry out his or her responsibilities, the Board President will ask the Vice President to fill on their behalf.

### **III. ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

*Cross-ref: BOE policy 4310*

---

#### **A. WHAT DOES THE SUPERINTENDENT DO?**

The Superintendent serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the District and is responsible for its administration. The Superintendent is responsible for carrying out all policies adopted by the Board and ensures that the rules, regulations and directives of the Board are enforced. The Superintendent is a visible presence in the schools to underscore that the most important interactions that occur are in the classrooms. The Superintendent shall suggest regulations, rules, policies and procedures for the operation and management of the school district. It is the Superintendent's primary responsibility to provide visionary and inspirational leadership that enables the District to continually improve the educational experiences of the children. The Superintendent provides the Board with the information and analysis it needs to formulate policy and take other appropriate actions. The Superintendent creates and sustains a climate of respect and cooperation among members of the staff, parents and students. The Superintendent acts as the educational leader of the community.

Under the direction and control of the Board, the Superintendent generally supervises and directs the management and operations of all schools in the District, including educational, social and recreational activities, and all personnel in the District.

#### **B. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BOARD AND THE SUPERINTENDENT?**

*Cross-ref: BOE policy 4320*

The Board sets the vision, mission and goals of the District (i.e., the “what”). The Superintendent implements District policy in order to attain the goals, mission and vision that the Board sets (i.e., the “how”). In simple terms, the Board governs and the Superintendent administers the District. The Board will set priorities, establish policies and evaluate outcomes of the operation of the District. The Superintendent helps to identify needs within the District, provides leadership and manages day-to-day operations.

Collaboration, transparency and candid communication between the Superintendent and the Board is essential, not only in connection with initiatives that the Superintendent desires to implement, but also with regard to school operations. The Superintendent will fill in gaps in information and act as go-between vis-à-vis the Board and administration. The Superintendent will express the concerns of the Board to the administration and in turn, will express the concerns of the administration to the Board. An informed Board is an effective Board.

At no time should board members engage in direct communication with the administrative team in their capacity as a board member. Any board concerns should flow through the superintendent.

## Skaneateles Central School District

### C. WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SUPERINTENDENT AS OPPOSED TO RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD?

The Board governs, guides and directs the District while the Superintendent manages, administers and operates the District. The Board determines the “what” and the Superintendent determines the “how”. The Board represents the community’s interests and the Superintendent acts in the community’s interest. The Board will consider issues brought before it and the Superintendent will provide recommendations on those issues. The Board creates and adopts policy and routinely reviews it, and the Superintendent recommends policy and carries out the policies adopted by the Board. The Board will review and approve plans and the Superintendent will implement them. The Superintendent formulates the budget and the Board reviews and approves it.

---

## IV. DUTY OF CONFIDENTIALITY

---

### A. WHAT CONSTITUTES CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION?

Typically, personnel matters and student records are confidential, as is anything discussed in executive session. The duty to maintain confidentiality is codified in the New York State General Municipal Law, which provides that no municipal officer may disclose confidential information acquired by him/her in the course of his/her official duties both while serving their board term and in perpetuity.

Confidential information includes collective bargaining negotiations, particular personnel items, matters relating to students, negotiations relating to real estate transactions and information relating to litigation. Board Members should not discuss or even allude to confidential information even if specifically asked. - See Addendum 3 for BOE Policy 1540.

**Confidential information learned during a board term must remain confidential even upon completion of board service. The District may not be required to defend or indemnify current or former Board members who violate their duty of confidentiality.**

### B. WHAT HAPPENS IF SOMEONE DISCLOSES CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION?

The Commissioner of Education has the power to remove a Board Member from office for a breach of confidentiality when presented with evidence thereof. The Board may also remove a Board Member for unauthorized disclosure of confidential information following a formal due process. Additionally, if a Board member willfully and knowingly breaches an official duty, the

## Skaneateles Central School District

transgression can be prosecuted as a misdemeanor under the General Municipal Law.

In addition, it is grounds for removal for a School Board member to reveal confidential information learned in Executive Session (or otherwise). The disclosure of confidential executive session material constitutes a violation of a Board member's fiduciary duties and oath of office. Such disclosure also violates provisions of the General Municipal Law that prohibit Board members from disclosing confidential information obtained while discharging their official duties.

Note that Board members who violate the rules, regulations or policies of the Board, interfere with the orderly and efficient operation of the Board or act in ways that are contrary to their fiduciary obligations to the District and are not in the best interest of the District can be subject to a resolution criticizing or distancing itself from any such action by the Board. Board officers may also be removed for cause from their position as an officer by a majority vote of the Board.

**Confidential information learned during a board term must remain confidential even upon completion of board service. The District may not be required to defend or indemnify current or former Board members who violate their duty of confidentiality.**

---

## V. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SHARING

---

### A. CAN BOARD MEMBERS COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER ABOUT AN ISSUE?

Board members must always be mindful of and respect the Open Meetings Law – a law that governs the conduct of board of education meetings, to which the Board is subject because School Boards are public bodies, including that any meeting of at least a quorum (4 members) of the Board that is conducted to discuss School District business must be open to the public. For purposes of the Open Meetings Law, School District business includes not only binding votes by a School Board, but also informal discussions and any activity preliminary to a vote or involving consideration of a matter that could be the subject of Board action.

Board committees are also subject to the Open Meetings Law and notice of these meetings must be posted in advance of the meeting.

Intra-Board communication, by telephone, email or in person, is important, but should not violate the Open Meetings Law. The Board President will endeavor to share with all Board members and the Superintendent (when appropriate) all substantive communications between the President and any particular Board member. Obviously social interactions are perfectly acceptable and encouraged, but be mindful not to discuss any school board matters if you have a quorum (4 or more Board Members) which would violate New York State's Open Meetings Laws.

# Skaneateles Central School District

## **B. WHAT ABOUT EMAILING?**

Board members will be assigned a District email address. Members should strive to check their District email account daily. All Board email communications should originate from and be sent to the District email account. Board members should NOT use email for the discussion of confidential matters, to debate issues, seek consensus or conduct a de facto Board meeting. Board members should also not email staff members directly. Questions requiring staff input should go through the superintendent.

Board members should copy their fellow members on email communications, including, but not limited to, all communication with the Superintendent. Board members should consistently and promptly share information and communications (emails, phone calls, letters, etc.) with the Board President and the Superintendent (as appropriate) and copy their fellow Board trustees, to maintain a practice of “no surprises,” particularly in public meetings. All Board members shall have equal access to all information.

In your capacity as a board member you should direct all communications/questions/concerns about district matters to the Superintendent and not to other members of the administrative or support staff.

As a parent or caregiver of a student in the district you may communicate directly with faculty and staff as needed on behalf of your student. You do not/should not include the board in these communications. However, personal matters should be discussed utilizing your personal email, not your board provided email address.

It is the Board President’s responsibility, as the spokesperson for a School Board, to respond to emails and other correspondence addressed to the Board. At times the board president may ask the Superintendent to respond to a community member’s message if more appropriate.

For more in depth information refer to the NYSSBA ‘Email Usage Handbook’.

## **C. WHAT IF I HAVE A QUESTION OR CONCERN BETWEEN REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETINGS?**

Board members should direct all questions regarding District business to the Superintendent or Board President using their @skanschools.org email address (do not direct questions to individual central office administrators, principals, directors etc.) and they will be answered or otherwise addressed as soon as reasonably possible. For emails to Board members only, use the email address boe@skanschools.org

The Superintendent or his/her designee will endeavor to provide weekly “Board updates” to update the Board as needed. “Board Updates” will be delivered via BoardDocs, email or any means previously agreed to by the Board and will be sent out to all Board members on Fridays. Follow up questions can and should be asked during Board meetings when necessary to ensure full understanding of all topics **keeping in mind confidential matters can not be discussed in open session.**



## Skaneateles Central School District

### **D. WHAT CAN I DISCUSS WITH PARENTS, FRIENDS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY?**

Matters discussed in executive session or relating to confidential matters like personnel or student discipline must not be discussed with any person (i.e., parents or community members) other than the Superintendent or another Board member. When in doubt, if a matter has not been discussed in a public school board meeting, it is best not to discuss it.

### **E. WHAT DO I DO IF A PARENT OR COMMUNITY MEMBER COMPLAINS ABOUT SOMETHING TO ME?**

*Cross-Ref: BOE Policy 3230*

If a parent, community member or other party raises an issue with you, it is important that you be a good listener, and also to advise that person to go through the appropriate channels, which may include talking to the teacher, the principal, the Superintendent, etc.

Board members should always encourage community members/parents to follow the chain of command with any issue or concern they have. This typically starts with the classroom/subject teacher, then the building principal, superintendent and ultimately the board.

The Board member should inform the Superintendent and Board President of the conversation/communication/ complaint in case they are also approached. Between meetings of the Board, individual members should inform the Superintendent and/or the President of matters occurring in the community which affect the interest of the public schools via the BOE@skanschoolsSkaneateles.org email. This also ensures all board members are equally updated.

Emails sent to the Board via the BOE@skanschools.org email address are automatically distributed to all Board members and to the Superintendent. The Board President, after consultation with the Superintendent and the Board, will determine how best to reply. The goal is a prompt, personal response from the Board or staff member. Board members who receive any communications directly from the community at large regarding District issues should share these communications with the full Board and the Superintendent.

The District Clerk will maintain a record and file of all community communications and as such, any communications and relevant materials should be forwarded accordingly. The District Clerk acts as the official record keeper, and also organizes Board meetings, handles correspondence and oversees the budget and trustee annual vote. Committee liaisons organize their respective committee meetings.

### **F. WHAT DO I DO IF A PARENT OR COMMUNITY MEMBER COMPLAINS ABOUT A SPECIFIC BOARD DECISION OR VOTE?**

It is not unusual for members of the community to disagree with certain actions that are taken by the Board since it is common for individuals to agree as well as disagree on a variety of matters. You will find yourself dealing with complex and, at times, controversial issues, and final decisions can sometimes be unpopular. It is perfectly appropriate to discuss the thought process that resulted in a certain decision and why the Board voted one way or another, as long as the process does not involve a confidential or Executive Session matter. Remember that one of your

## Skaneateles Central School District

roles as a Board member is to be an advocate for the District and that being asked about Board decisions provides you with an opportunity to discuss positive matters and activities that are happening around the District.

Your main responsibility and consideration when making decisions is the effect it will have on the students of the District. If you keep that in mind and make sure the community understands that is your primary concern when making a decision, it will enable you to not only make good decisions notwithstanding outside pressures that certain constituent groups will exert, but also to help the community understand that you are acting in the best interest of the students and the District, even if a particular decision is unpopular.

### **G. HOW DO I KNOW WHERE TO SEND A PERSON IF SOMEONE HAS A CONCERN?**

*Cross-Ref: BOE Policy 3230*

It is best for a Board member to notify the Superintendent and Board President in the event a member of the community approaches you about a concern and that you refer them to the appropriate person in the District. You should also advise the person of the proper protocol and procedures as set forth below, based on the area of concern.

1. If there is a classroom concern, the first step is to contact the building teacher.
2. If there is a concern about a teacher, the first step is to contact the building principal.
3. If there is a concern about a building principal or other certified administrator, he or she should contact the Director of Personnel and Operations.
4. If there is a concern about a classified administrator, he or she should contact the School Business Manager.
5. If there is a concern about the School Business Manager, he or she should contact the Superintendent.
6. If there is a concern about the Superintendent, the person should contact the School Board.
7. If there is a concern about transportation, buildings & grounds or food service, the person should contact the head of that department.
8. Any questions for staff members regarding the business of the District should be directed to the Superintendent and the Board President should also be copied or otherwise informed. While it is important for you to listen to any concerns that are raised with you, you should not try to solve the problem yourself.

### **H. WHAT IF I HAVE CHILDREN IN THE DISTRICT?**

For Board members with children attending school in the District, it is important and appropriate to continue to advocate for your child and to inform staff when you are acting in your capacity as a parent rather than in your capacity as a Board Member. When contacting staff as a parent, a personal email account should be used, not a board email account. Individual board members have no authority to direct District personnel. If you have a concern that your child(ren)'s education is affected by your Board service, you can speak with the Board President to help resolve your concerns.

# Skaneateles Central School District

## **I. WHAT IF I AM CONTACTED BY THE MEDIA?**

All official Board statements, as well as responses to media inquiries, shall come from the Board President and/or the Superintendent (or their designees) and if possible should reflect input from the full Board. All media inquiries received by Board members should be forwarded to the Board President and/or the Superintendent.

---

## **VI. AGENDA SETTING AND BOARD PACKETS**

*Cross-ref: BOE policy 1510*

---

### **A. HOW IS THE AGENDA SET?**

The Superintendent and board president share the responsibility for agenda setting, along with 2 additional members (for non-special and non-work session meetings) who will participate on a rotational basis in the conversation. Preparation of the agenda is the responsibility of the Superintendent in collaboration with the Board President.

### **B. HOW DO I GET AN ITEM ADDED TO THE AGENDA, WHETHER ON MY BEHALF OR ON BEHALF OF THE COMMUNITY?**

Board members may suggest agenda items by emailing the Board President and the Superintendent including all Board members in the request at least five (5) days prior to the meeting. A majority interest will allow for inclusion on an upcoming agenda depending on urgency and timeliness.

### **C. WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT AN AGENDA ITEM?**

Board members are expected to review the agenda and back-up materials in advance of the meeting. You may email the Superintendent, cc'ing the Board, to ask questions and/or provide comments by noon on the Monday prior to the meeting in order to avoid surprises and allow administration proper time to prepare. Please ensure you reference the Agenda Section and item number to ensure clarity. Also this will ensure that any changes that need to be made to any of the documents are made prior to the Board being asked to vote on such item, so that the item does not need to be tabled until the next Board meeting. Whenever possible, Board members should strive to inform the Superintendent and the Board President in advance about any questions which they intend to raise at the Board meeting, and the Superintendent will do the same, so that everyone can come prepared. There will be times when items will be tabled due to the need for more information and will be placed on the next meeting agenda.

### **D. IS THERE A SPECIFIC MEETING FORMAT THAT THE AGENDA MUST FOLLOW?**

The agenda will generally follow the Order of Business set forth on Schedule A, which is attached hereto for informational purposes.

## VII. MEETING DYNAMICS

---

### A. HOW CAN I ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN BOARD MEETINGS EVEN AS A NEW MEMBER?

In both public meetings and Executive Sessions, each Board member has a right to be heard, but should also agree to listen respectfully to, and not interrupt, each other. The Board President shall focus and organize discussions and determine next steps.

### B. CAN THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATE IN BOARD MEETINGS?

Public comment is welcome and encouraged during Board meetings at specified times as designated on the agenda, with an emphasis on civility and mutual respect. Interruption of Board discussion is not permitted. It is generally Board practice and protocol to not respond to questions asked during public comment, but when possible will be addressed after the close of public comment. The Board President shall acknowledge the speaker and direct next steps. The Board President shall request that any person wishing to address the Board on school-related items to state his/her name and topic of comment. Audience members should remain respectful while a fellow community member is addressing the Board. Public comment will be limited as specifically outlined in BOE Policy 1510 – See Addendum 2

### C. BOARD MEETING VS WORK SESSION VS RETREAT: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

A *Board meeting* is where a quorum (4 Trustees) of school Board members is required. The Board will deliberate and vote on school business matters and the meeting follows an outlined protocol enforced by the Board President. These meetings also allow for presentations to be made on matters of interest as they relate to the District. It must be held in a venue that allows for public observation and times are designated in the agenda for public comment.

A *work session* is a meeting that allows for the Board to have in depth discussions on a particular topic. This meeting also allows for public comment or exchange with the public on a potentially modified basis.

A *retreat* is a closed meeting that allows the Board to meet and perform team building exercises. No public business can occur during a retreat.

---

## VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

(Cross-Ref: BOE Policy 1540 – see Addendum 3)

---

## Skaneateles Central School District

### A. WHAT TYPES OF MATTERS ARE DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION?

Executive Session is a closed meeting for the Board and the only matters that are appropriately discussed in Executive Session are matters that would endanger the safety of the public; information that would disclose an informant or law enforcement agent's identity; information relating to an ongoing or future criminal investigation or prosecution; information relating to proposed, pending or current litigation; collective bargaining negotiations (pursuant to Article 14 of the Civil Service Law); personnel matters and employee records; student records; exam preparation, grading or administration; and matters relating to the acquisition, lease or sale of real property or securities; and any matter deemed confidential by state or federal law.

### B. WHEN AND HOW ARE EXECUTIVE SESSIONS ADMINISTERED?

Discussions in the Executive Session must remain completely confidential. Typically, when an Executive Session is needed, a motion will be taken at a duly noticed public Board meeting to move into Executive Session. A reason for the need for an executive session will be given at that time. As a general rule, no Board action or vote will be taken during an Executive Session (except as permitted by law). If a vote or action needs to be taken following discussion during an executive session, another motion will be taken to re-enter the public meeting. It is at this time the public meeting will either continue or be closed.

---

## IX. PARTICIPATION ON COMMITTEES

---

### A. WHO CAN BE ON A COMMITTEE?

Not all work can be accomplished at regularly scheduled Board meetings. Accordingly, the Board routinely establishes committees in order to dedicate sufficient time and focus to certain issues, as necessary. The SCSD establishes committees each year at the re-rg meeting. The Board may add additional committees and/or eliminate committees as District needs change (*Cross- Ref: BOE Policy 2210*); provided, however that the Board shall not have the right to eliminate any Committee that is required by State Law (e.g., Audit Committee – *Cross-Ref: BOE Policies 5572 and 5573*). All Board members are encouraged to hold positions on standing committees (e.g. Audit, Facilities, Governance, etc.) and membership is determined at the Annual Organization Meeting. Committees meet as agreed to at the convenience of its members. Each year the Board will establish board committees, with each member serving on at least one committee. Ideally Committee membership will be divided up equally amongst the Board. Board members will also serve as liaisons to other school-related organizations. Whenever possible, committee reports should be presented at regular board meetings. Minutes should be saved in a folder bearing the committee's name on BoardDocs.

# Skaneateles Central School District

## B. DO COMMITTEES VOTE?

Committees do not make decisions on behalf of the Board. Committees only make recommendations to the Board for the Board to discuss and act upon as a whole. The Board may adopt, reject or change all or any part of a Committee recommendation.

## C. ARE COMMITTEE MEETINGS PUBLIC?

Board committee meetings are subject to the Open Meetings Law and must be open to the public (unless items can be discussed in Executive Session) and posted in advance. Minutes of the meetings shall be subsequently posted as well when required.. Board committees are not obligated to take comments from the public.

---

## X. TIMELINE/GENERAL CALENDAR

(THESE DATES ARE APPROXIMATE; CHECK DISTRICT WEBSITE FOR MOST UP TO DATE SPECIFIC INFORMATION)

---

- July: Annual Organization Meeting (1st Tuesday of July by state law unless the Board approves a different date in July no later than July 15).
- August: Board retreat with Superintendent; at least once annually. Goal alignment Work Session.
- September: Superintendent evaluation criteria must be adopted and filed with District Clerk by September 10<sup>th</sup>.
- January/February: Board retreat/mid-year review for Superintendent and BOE self-evaluation.
- August/November/February/May: Superintendent check-in/review quarterly. Electronic portfolios among other sources will be utilized to assist in the evaluation of the Superintendent.
- March: Board of Education presentation of Fixed Costs portion of tentative budget and follow-up meeting.
- April: Follow-up Budget Meeting.
- April: Submission of petitions for School Board candidacy (generally falls during the third week of April).
- April: Board of Education adopts Budget for voter consideration-generally third week of month.
- May: Informational Budget hearing typically falling during the first week of May and Budget Notices to be mailed out.
- May: Annual Budget Vote and Election (generally falls on the third Tuesday in May).
- May/June: review year; discuss District goals, vision and mission for next year.
- May/June: Final Superintendent evaluation to be performed with opportunity for discussion between the Board and the Superintendent and opportunity to present additional information to the Board. BOE self-evaluation final.
- July/August: Review and determine Superintendent evaluation for next school year.

# Skaneateles Central School District

---

## **SCHEDULE A: SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS – ORDER OF BUSINESS**

---

For the general transaction of business, the standard parliamentary rules shall be observed; and, in case any disputed questions shall arise, Robert's Rules of Parliamentary Procedure shall be taken as authority.

The meeting may include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Call Meeting to Order - The meeting shall be called to order and attendance of the School Board members shall be taken. If a quorum is not established, no business may be conducted.
2. Anticipated Adjournment to Executive session
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Public Comment - The Board President shall request that any person wishing to address the Board on school-related items to state his/her name, address and keep comment to the allotted time.
5. Board does not respond to Public comment. The superintendent or appropriate administrator may follow up after the meeting with the community member to answer a question or provide additional information in response to a public comment.
6. Recognition/Presentations/Reports– Presentations from District and/or school administrators, outside organizations such as our internal or external auditors, architects regarding capital projects or renovation projects, etc. will be made at this time. Followed by the Superintendent's Report, Assistant Superintendent for Business Report and Committee Reports.
7. Action Items – The Action Items will include all items that the Board is required or requested to approve and will include Resolutions, Contracts, and the Board shall be given sufficient back-up information to review prior to the Board Meeting and Vote to enable each Board member to make an informed decision on such matter. Care will be taken to protect confidential student, personnel and other sensitive information as required by applicable law.
8. New Business
9. Upcoming and Next meeting dates
10. Adjournment.

The Board will also endeavor to post a video recording of the meeting on the District's website.

## **SCHEDULE B: COMMON ACRONYMS**

---

AE – Academic Enrichment  
AIS – Academic Intervention Service  
BEDS – Basic Educational Data System  
BOCES – Boards of Cooperative Educational Services  
CSE – Committee on Special Education  
ELA – English Language Arts  
ELL – English Language Learners  
ESL – English as a Second Language  
FERPA – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act  
FOIL – Freedom of Information Law  
FTE – Full Time Equivalent  
GAO - Skaneateles Administrative Organization  
GASB – Governmental Accounting Standards Board  
GCSO - Skaneateles Civil Service Organization  
GEA – Gap Elimination Adjustment  
GTF – Skaneateles Teachers’ Federation  
IB- International Baccalaureate  
IEP – Individual Education Plan  
LAC – Legislative Action Committee  
NYSCBSB - New York State Caucus of Black School Board Members  
NYSCOSS – New York State Council of School Superintendents  
NYSSBA – New York State School Boards Association  
NYSUT – New York State United Teachers  
PTC – Parent Teacher Committee  
PTSA – Parent Teacher Student Association  
RTI – Response to Intervention SED – State Education Department  
SEL – Social Emotional Learning  
STAR – School Tax Relief  
STEM – Science Technology Engineering Math  
TRS – Teachers Retirement System  
WPSBA – Westchester Putnam School Boards Association



# Skaneateles Central School District

---

## SCHEDULE C: HELPFUL WEBSITES

---

Skaneateles Central School District: <https://www.Skaneatelescsd.org>

Lee F. Jackson (Grades K-1) PTA: <https://www.facebook.com/PTALFJ/>

Highview (Grades 2-3) PTA: <https://www.facebook.com/Highview-Elementary-School-PTA-146836280816/>

Richard J. Bailey (Grades 4-6) PTA: <https://www.facebook.com/RJBPTA/>

Woodlands Middle/High School (Grades 7-12) PTA:

Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES: <https://www.pnwboces.org/>

Every Student Success Act: <http://www.ed.gov/essa>

New York State School Boards Association: <http://www.nyssba.org/>

New York State Education Department: <http://www.nysed.gov/>

New York State Homepage: [www.ny.gov](http://www.ny.gov)

Governor Andrew Cuomo: <http://www.governor.ny.gov/>

Representative Nita Lowey: <https://lowey.house.gov>

United States Senator Kirsten Gillibrand: <https://www.gillibrand.senate.gov/>

United States Senator Charles Schumer: <https://schumer.senate.gov/>

NY Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins: <https://www.nysenate.gov/senators/andrea-stewart-cousins/contact>

Assemblyman Thomas J. Abinanti: <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Thomas-J-Abinanti/>

County Executive George Latimer: <https://www.westchestergov.com>

County Legislator Alfreda Williams: <https://www.westchesterlegislators.com/district-8>

County Legislator MaryJane Shimsky: <https://www.westchesterlegislators.com/district-12>

# Greenburgh Central School

## **Addendum**

### **1620**

#### By-Laws

#### **Annual Organization Meeting**

The Annual Organizational Meeting of the Board of Education shall be held on the first Tuesday in July of each year, unless that day is a legal holiday, in which event it shall be held at the rescheduled date.

The Board may pass a resolution, however, to hold its Annual Organizational Meeting at any time during the first fifteen (15) days of July.

#### **Officers**

The meeting shall be called to order by the District Clerk, who shall act as a Temporary Chairperson. The Board shall proceed to the election of a President. The President shall then take the chair. The Board shall then elect a Vice President. Election shall be by a majority vote.

#### **Oath of Office**

The District Clerk shall administer the Oath of Office to the newly elected officers and new members of the Board.

#### Legal

Education Law §§ 1701, 1706, 1707, 1709, 2109, 2502(9) and 2504(1)

## Addendum 2

---

### 1510

#### By-Laws

#### **Regular Board Meetings and Rules (Quorum and Parliamentary Procedure)**

All Board of Education meetings must be open to the public except those portions of the meetings which qualify as executive sessions. A "meeting" is defined as an official convening of a public body for the purpose of conducting public business and a "public body" is defined as an entity of two (2) or more persons which requires a quorum to conduct public business, including committees and subcommittees.

When the Board schedules a meeting on at least one week's notice, it will give or electronically transmit public notice of the time and place to the news media and conspicuously post the notice in one or more designated public locations at least 72 hours before the meeting. Notice of other meetings will be given or electronically transmitted, to the extent practicable, to the news media and conspicuously posted at one or more designated public locations at a reasonable time before the meeting. When the District has the ability to do so, it will conspicuously post the meeting notices on its website.

If videoconferencing or online technology is used to conduct a meeting, the public notice for the meeting shall inform the public, identify all locations for the meeting, and state that the public has the right to attend the meeting at any of the locations. If a meeting is streamed live over the internet, the public notice will inform the public of the website's internet address. Voting may be done through videoconferencing, provided that members can be both seen and heard voting and participating from remote locations.

Regular meetings of the Board of Education of Skaneateles Central School District shall take place on the day and time designated by the Board at the Annual Organizational Meeting, except as modified at subsequent meetings of the Board.

The District Clerk shall notify the members of the Board of Education in advance of each regular meeting. Such notice, in writing, shall include an agenda and the time of the meeting.

In the event that a meeting date falls on a legal holiday, interferes with other area meetings, or there is an inability to attend the meeting by Board members to the extent that a quorum would not be present, the Board shall select a date for a postponed meeting at the previous regular meeting, and shall direct the Clerk to notify all members.

Any meeting of the Board may be adjourned to a given future date and hour if voted by a majority of the Board present.

The Superintendent and members of his/her staff at the Superintendent's discretion shall attend all meetings of the Board. The Superintendent shall attend all executive session meetings of the Board except those that concern his/her evaluation, employment status, and salary determination. The Board may request the attendance of such additional persons as it desires.

### **Agenda Preparation and Dissemination**

The responsibility of providing an agenda for all Skaneateles Central School District Board of Education meetings will be shared cooperatively by the board president and 1-2 other board members who attend agenda setting and the Superintendent of Schools.

Any Board member may have a matter placed on the agenda of a meeting by submitting such to either the President of the Board of Education or the Superintendent of Schools, in writing, at least five (5) days prior to the meeting.

The agenda, together with supporting materials, shall be distributed to Board members at least two (2) days in advance of the scheduled meeting, if at all possible, to allow Board members to give items of business careful consideration. The agenda and all supporting documents will be posted to BoardDocs for members to review. The agenda and appropriate materials shall also be made available to the Superintendent of Schools and designated staff, and to members of the news media, the public, students and parents, upon request.

Any items added to the agenda after it has been disseminated to Board members shall be announced at the commencement of the Board meeting. Such may be excluded by majority vote of the Board of Education members present.

### **Public Participation at Meetings**

The Skaneateles Central School District Board of Education encourages public participation on school related matters at board meetings. Persons wishing to address the Board of Education shall advise the President of the Board of Education or the District Clerk prior to the scheduled starting time of the meeting. The request shall be made in writing on a form provided by the District and shall include the name of the speaker, the address, telephone number, name of organization represented (if any), and a brief description of the topic to be addressed. Any group or organization wishing to address the Board of Education must identify a single spokesperson.

Speakers will be permitted to speak for no longer than four minutes. Work session speakers may comment on matters related to any agenda item. The Board of Education will not permit in public session comments involving individual district personnel or students. All speakers are to conduct themselves in a civil manner. Obscene language, scandalous statements, threats of violence, statements advocating racial, religious, or other forms of prejudice will not be tolerated.

Persons making presentations at a board meeting will address remarks to the President of the Board of Education. Any written statement should be provided to the District Clerk for board

meeting minutes. Board members or the Superintendent of Schools shall have the privilege of asking questions of any person who addresses the Board of Education.

The President of the Board of Education shall be responsible for the orderly conduct of the meeting and shall rule on such matters as the time allowed for public discussion and the appropriateness of the subject being presented. The President of the Board of Education shall have the right to discontinue any presentation that violates this policy.

The Board of Education reserves the right to enter into executive session as specified in Policy #1540 -- Executive Sessions.

### **Quorum**

The quorum for any meeting of the Board shall be four (4) members. No formal action shall be taken at any meeting at which a quorum is not present. When only a quorum exists, the Board shall act by unanimous vote unless otherwise required by the laws of the State of New York.

### **Use of Parliamentary Procedure**

The business of the Board of Education shall be conducted in accordance with the authoritative principles of parliamentary procedure as found in the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

### **Legal**

Education Law §§ 1708 and 2504

General Construction Law § 41

Public Officers Law Article 7 §§ 103(d), 104, and 107

### **Cross References**

#1520: Special Meetings of the Board of Education

#1540: Executive Sessions

#5410: Purchasing

#6217: Employment of Relatives of Board of Education Members

#8340: Textbooks/Workbooks/Calculators/Instructional Computer Hardware

## Addendum 3

---

### 1540

#### By-Laws

##### **Executive Sessions**

The Skaneateles Central School District Board of Education reserves the right within the constraints of state law to meet in executive session. Such sessions can be requested by any member of the Board of Education or the Superintendent of Schools.

Upon a majority vote of its members, the Board of Education may convene in executive session to discuss matters where premature public disclosure might be detrimental to the operation of the School System (such as discussion of possible lease property), or where public disclosure might violate an individual's right to privacy (such as certain personnel problems); or any other topic(s) permitted by law.

Formal action or vote on such matters as disciplinary charges against an employee and finding and/or placement of students by the Committee for Special Education (CSE) may only be taken by the Board of Education during an executive session. No formal action or vote may be taken to appropriate monies during an executive session. The Board of Education shall reconvene in open session to take final action on other matters discussed, and to adjourn the meeting.

The Board of Education may permit staff and other persons whose presence is deemed necessary or appropriate to attend an executive session or any part thereof.

Legal

Education Law § 3020-a

Public Officers Law Article 7