



CHENEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT

Team Operating Principles

INTRODUCTION

Successful organizations are the result of effective and dynamic leadership. To assure a quality operation, leaders must agree on basic ways of operating together. Operating principles define the beliefs, values, and methods of working together.

The manner in which the Board and Superintendent conduct their business becomes a model throughout the District for students, teachers, parents and staff on how problems are solved. *Robert's Rules of Order Revised* is used by the Board as a guide (Policy No. 1400).

Individual board members adhere to the Washington School Board Standards adopted by the Washington State School Directors' Association.

The following principles outline a philosophy of cooperative behavior that is agreed upon by the Board and the Superintendent in the Cheney Public Schools. As members of the leadership team, we are committed to upholding these principles.

LEADERSHIP TEAM ROLES

School Board	Superintendent
<p>GOVERNS (<i>Guides, Directs</i>) Reviews and Suggests What Requests Information Considers Issues Creates, Reviews, Evaluates and Adopts Policy Approves and Reviews Plans Monitors District Progress Approves Contracts with Personnel Approves Evaluation Criteria and Procedures Creates Contract and Evaluates Superintendent Adopts and Monitors Annual Budget Represents Public Interest</p>	<p>MANAGES (<i>Administers, Operates</i>) Decides How Seeks and Provides Information Provides Recommendations Recommends and Carries Out Policy Implements Plans Reports Progress Supervises Hiring Process and Practices Supervises and Evaluates Personnel</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Formulates Budget Acts in Public Interest</p>

BOARD LEADERSHIP

To be effective, an individual board member:

1. Contributes to thoughtful governance discussions and decisions by being well informed, open minded and deliberative.
2. Understands that authority rests with the board as a whole and not with individual directors.
3. Is able to articulate and model appropriate school director roles and responsibilities.
4. Actively participates in school director duties and responsibilities.
5. Demonstrates group membership and leadership skills, working within the board structure.
6. Respects the board's role in policy making and supports all adopted board policies.

In order to fulfill the school director role and responsibility, each board member is obligated to attend board meetings and work sessions (including SIP discussions and Board retreats) regularly (Policy No. 1220). It is strongly encouraged that each board member attend district-wide annual events of significance, such as employee recognition night, commencement, etc. if at all possible in support of the Essential Foundations.

In addition, throughout the year the superintendent will invite board members to attend community and district events as a representative of the school district. Attendance at other community and district events would be appreciated, and notification of such events will be provided through the superintendent's office.

In keeping with the need for continuing training and development to enhance effective governance, the Board encourages the participation of its members in appropriate Board conferences, workshops and conventions (Policy No. 1822).

COMMUNICATION, COOPERATION AND SUPPORT

Open communication requires trust, respect, and a fundamental belief in goodwill among board members and the superintendent. We will work to minimize misunderstandings and reduce conflict by:

- Supporting each other constructively and courteously; encouraging constructive disagreement.
- Maintaining confidentiality.
- Focusing our discussions on issues, not personalities.
- Upholding the integrity of every individual.
- Pursuing through understanding.
- Involving those parties who will be affected by the decision and solution.
- Expressing our opinions and positions on issues honestly and openly while being sensitive to others' opinions.

The board will give direction to the superintendent as a total board through adopted policies or action taken at a board meeting.

If a board member is acting outside his/her defined role, the board president or other board member(s) will talk with the individual board member regarding the problem. (*Robert's Rules of Order Revised*).

The board will give the superintendent feedback on his/her performance on a regular basis. (Policy No. 1630)

The superintendent will let the board know as soon as possible of any major issue that may arise which could be problematic for the district.

The board president will be the official recipient of correspondence directed to the Board and will provide, or cause to be provided to other board members and the superintendent, copies of the correspondence received on behalf of the board. (Policy No. 1220)

The board president will be the official spokesperson for the board. The superintendent will be the official spokesperson for areas of district operation.

Board members should call the school principal or stop in the office prior to visiting classrooms or campus.

The superintendent will provide the Board with a routine weekly communication at the end of each week.

COMMUNICATION STANDARDS

A healthy climate for communication requires trust, respect and a fundamental belief in the goodwill among team members. Messages are open, honest, and tactful. We work to minimize misunderstandings and reduce conflict. We strive for mutual understanding and support.

As a leadership team, we make the following commitments, expressed in the Washington School Board Standards adopted by the Washington State School Directors' Association:

- Build and maintain positive connections with the community and staff.
- Communicate accurately and honestly, with awareness of the impact of words and actions.
- Listen carefully and with an open mind.

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- Maintain civility and treat all people with respect.
- Maintain confidentiality of appropriate matters.
- Refer and guide people with concerns to appropriate staff.
- Welcome parent, student and community input.

JUDGMENT AND TRUST

The complexities of operating a school district cannot be fully addressed in policies, procedures or operating principles. Working with people and handling difficult and controversial issues on a daily basis requires good judgment, common sense and a strong trust relationship between board and superintendent. Every complaint cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved; every issue or concern will not be foreseen. For these reasons trust in each other, allowance for error, and team efforts to address problems are a key part of an effective school district operation. We will approach these situations with the belief the other person is working in good faith with reasonable expectations.

DECISION MAKING

The identification and evaluation of alternatives, and awareness of short- and long-term consequences, an appreciation for the needs of the group, as well as individuals, and sensitivity toward collective action are essential to the decision-making process.

In order to formulate and execute sound decisions, we agree to:

- Resolve problems at the lowest level possible.
- Provide for input from all concerned when possible.
- Use a decision-making style appropriate to the situation.
- Reevaluate the effectiveness of the decision when appropriate.
- Clearly communicate decisions that are made.

Using this process, we recognize that a decision may sometimes be superseded by a higher level of authority. When this occurs, the rationale will be communicated to those involved before releasing the information.

Further, as the Board of Directors of the Cheney Public Schools, we will make all decisions about the education of our students by being:

- Ethical
- Respectful
- Accessible
- Thorough
- Fiscally responsible

DEALING WITH CITIZEN OR STAFF COMPLAINTS

When a board member or the superintendent is contacted by a community member or a staff member who has a complaint, he/she will:

- Listen to the individual's concern.
- Inquire if the individual has discussed the issue with the person immediately responsible. If this has not been done, tell them how to contact the appropriate person.
- Explain the district process for resolving concerns and conflicts (Policy and Procedure 4220). Describe the appropriate channels that should be followed if the complaint is not resolved.
- Explain that, as a final resource, a complaint can be submitted to the board, but that the board practice is to carefully investigate complaints before taking any action. Explain that complaints raised against individuals will not be addressed in a public meeting. To protect the rights of individuals, those concerns are scheduled for executive sessions. Because of the potential requirements of an investigation and collective bargaining agreement language, no promise of confidentiality can be made.

- Be cautious of giving the appearance of agreeing with the person – sometimes just listening makes people think you are on “their side.” Remember that anything you say might be understood as the “position of the board or superintendent.” Again, be cautious about inferring confidentiality.
- Be accountable for addressing complaints.

Board members will contact the superintendent (if superintendent is unavailable, contact assistant superintendent or finance director) directly when they hear concerns in the community regarding issues relating to district administration, programs or personnel.

KEY FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD

Acting on behalf of the people of each community, the Board will fulfill the following functions (Policy No. 1800).

1. Responsible Governance.
2. Creating Conditions for Student and Staff Success.
3. High Expectations for Student Learning.
4. Accountability for Student Learning.
5. Community Engagement.

Each year the Board will formulate goals and objectives to guide effective Board governance (Policy No. 1810). At the conclusion of the year, the Board will reflect on the degree to which it has met its goals and objectives by conducting a Board self-assessment (Policy No. 1820).

BOARD MEETINGS

1. The public will have input to the Board of Directors during the public comment section at regular school board meetings.

Although work sessions are open meetings, testimony from the public will not be heard (Policy No. 1400).

At regular board meetings, there will be a public comment section at the beginning of the meeting. Comments will be limited to a time period established by Board Policy No. 1400. The Board will also allow individuals to express an opinion prior to Board action on agenda items that the Board determines require or will benefit from public comment (Policy No. 1400).

2. Board members and staff need not debate or argue with public during board meetings. If the board is questioned by the public during the public comment section, the board president may do the following:

If the question is concerning district policy: Ask the superintendent to take note and answer the person later after consulting with the president for direction if needed.

If the question is concerning areas of district operation: Ask the superintendent to address the issue with the person at a later time.

Thank the public for making comments to the board (without follow-up comment by the president).

3. Changes on minutes will be called to the superintendent’s secretary or the superintendent and, in most cases, will not be addressed at meetings. All board members with changes will call the district office prior to the board meeting. An updated copy of the minutes will be given to each board member and to the public at the scheduled meeting.
4. Board agendas will be developed as a partnership between the board president and the superintendent (Board Policy No. 1420). Board members requesting items for the agenda will contact the superintendent or board president with the items.

5. Board meeting agenda and background material on agenda items will be provided by the superintendent to all board members at least three (3) days in advance of the meeting (Policy No. 1420).
6. In the event of an emergency involving fire, flood, earthquake, possible personal injury or property damage, the Board may meet immediately and take official action without prior notification (Policy No. 1400).
7. Board members will review all material provided and seek clarification or additional information as needed prior to the board meeting. Board members will discuss proposals they have concerns about with the superintendent and/or board president prior to the board meeting.
8. Board members requesting information from staff at board meetings will do so through the superintendent. All items addressed to the board for action or discussion by staff will be given in an objective fashion explaining both the positive and negative aspects of the decisions. If board members feel “rushed” or feel they do not have enough information, the board member will request a “table” or postponement until such time as adequate information is presented.
9. Open and honest discussion of issues, ideas and positions on proposals is encouraged.
10. The board president or other board member acting in his/her stead may interrupt or terminate a member of the public’s statement or a board member’s statement when it is too lengthy, irrelevant, or is deemed uncivil conduct. Uncivil conduct does not include the expression of controversial or differing viewpoints that may be offensive to some persons, so long as (1) the ideas are presented in a respectful manner and at a time and place that are appropriate, and (2) such expression does not materially disrupt, and may not be reasonably anticipated to disrupt, the process. (Policy No. 1400)
11. Once a final decision has been made on a proposal, board members and superintendent will individually and collectively publicly support successful implementation.
12. All discussions that occur during executive sessions are privileged and shall not be shared with anyone unless it is the express decision of the board to do so.

HONESTY, LOYALTY, AND DISAGREEMENT

A sustained commitment to a group, person, or organization survives and is nurtured in an open environment that recognizes the need and right of the parties to construct, express, examine, and synthesize divergent thought. Understanding opposing viewpoints helps us to better represent the Cheney Public Schools’ interests.

We accept the challenge of pursuing a common intent through a review of opinion and fact, to an end that is understood and defensible by all. Once a final decision is reached, each member will support the decision and aid in its implementation.

By way of fulfilling our commitment to the challenge, we agree:

- To support each other constructively and courteously.
- To maintain confidentiality.
- To allow ourselves and others the freedom to admit mistakes.
- To focus our discussions on issues, not personalities, free of defensiveness.
- To pursue thorough understanding.

The Board reserves the right to censor or reprimand an individual Board member for violation of Board policies, including but not limited to poor boardmanship, uncivil conduct including intimidation or bullying of another Board member, refusal to attend to conflicts of interest, engaging in prohibited acts, failure to abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the Board, or failure to attend to duties and commitments (Policy No. 1825).

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