

BOARD OF EDUCATION HANDBOOK

The Board of Education of Anne Arundel County



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INTRODUCTION

This Board of Education Handbook has been developed to capture, in one place, the operating procedures and governing guideposts of the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County, in plain language, so as to serve as a resource for Members of the Board as they assume their office and acquit their responsibilities.

This Handbook will be posted on the Board's website and updated annually, as appropriate, with limited print copies available for distribution.

The Board of Education of Anne Arundel County Mission Statement

The mission of the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County is to provide leadership, vision, and support to Anne Arundel County Public Schools that ensures an equitable, world-class education and creates a lifelong learning by:

- promoting community collaboration
- developing responsive policies
- holding ourselves accountable for the results

DEFINITIONS

Conference:

Board members' attendance at a conference involves education, exposure and networking with other Board Members at an event sponsored by an educational association such as the Maryland Association of Boards of Education or the National School Boards Association. Conferences usually take place over a 2-3 day period in a city other than Annapolis. No official business of the Board is conducted at conferences.

Hearing:

An open hearing is a public event where individuals provide direct and extensive citizen input to the Board, on a particular issue, such as budget adoption or proposed redistricting. The purpose of a hearing is for citizens to educate the Board on their views, as opposed to a back-and-forth conversation between Board Members and speakers. Hearings take place at Central Office or in a school auditorium. No official business of the Board is conducted at hearings.

A closed hearing is held pursuant to the Open Meetings Act to protect the privacy or reputation of an individual with respect to a private matter that is not related to public business.

Meeting:

A meeting is any official, scheduled convening of the Members of the Board for any length of time with no break in the proceedings for more than a few minutes.

Sessions, open hearing, retreats, and workshops all fall under the definition of a meeting. The Board adopts a master calendar of meetings in the spring which determines its schedule from July through June of each year. This calendar can be amended by the Board at any time throughout the year.

Retreat:

A Board of Education retreat is an informal off-site meeting of the Board where topics such as the Strategic Plan, Environmental Literacy and Board Self-Evaluation take place. Retreat discussions often set the course for future work of the Board. No official business of the Board is conducted during retreats. The public is welcome to attend Board retreats but no public testimony is taken.

Session:

A session refers to a meeting or series of meetings working completely through an entire agenda or order of business. If the session is more than one meeting, each meeting picks up where the previous one left off.

Workshop:

A Board of Education workshop is an informal meeting of the Board in which the Superintendent and his staff advise Board Members, and answer Board questions on a particular topic, such as the capital budget. Workshops are held in advance of the Board formally voting on a particular topic. No official business of the Board is conducted at workshops. The public is welcome to attend workshops but no public testimony is taken.

BOARD GOVERNANCE

AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The powers and mandatory duties of the Board of Education are defined in the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and Title 13A of the Code of Maryland Regulations. They are divided among executive, legislative, and quasi-judicial responsibilities, as follows:

Executive

1. Selecting and appointing the Superintendent of Schools
2. Appointing personnel, including school-based administrators
3. Appointing Board counsel
4. Making a continuous appraisal of the educational and administrative management of the school system, through the evaluation of the Superintendent
5. Periodically adopting a multi-year strategic plan
6. Communicating and meeting with community members, staff, and students as to Board views on educational issues
7. Ratifying collective bargaining agreements

Legislative

1. Adopting and interpreting policies
2. Adopting operating and capital budgets
3. Establishing curriculum guides and courses of study
4. Establishing school boundaries
5. Advancing a legislative agenda
6. Making decisions on facility, procurement, and financial matters
7. Authorizing legal settlements

Quasi-Judicial

1. Deciding appeals of the Superintendent's administrative decisions
2. Deciding appeals of long-term student suspensions and expulsions
3. Considering recommendations of the Superintendent to suspend or dismiss a certificated employee.

KEY WORK OF SCHOOL BOARDS

The Board is committed to the “Key Work of Schools Boards,” developed by the National School Boards Association, encompassing the following five key areas:

- 1 Vision.** Effective school boards establish a clear vision with high expectations for quality teaching and learning that supports strong student outcomes. They establish clear and specific goals to move districts forward.
- 2 Accountability.** High academic standards, transparency, and accountability undergird a world-class education. True accountability depends on open decision making, community engagement and support, and receptivity to new ideas and constructive criticism.
- 3 Policy.** Policy is how a board sustainably exercises power to serve students. Through policy, school boards establish a set of cohesive guidelines able to transform vision into reality.
- 4 Community Leadership.** Through public advocacy and community engagement, school boards share their concerns and actions with the public. Community leadership that builds public support is vital to implement the board’s vision.
- 5 Board/Superintendent Relationships.** Both the school board and the superintendent have essential leadership roles that are interconnected but different. Effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each in their respective roles with strong collaboration and mutual trust.

COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD AND BOARD MEMBER QUALIFICATIONS

The Board is currently comprised of nine Members: five Members, each of whom resides in a different legislative district (Districts 30, 31, 32, 33, and that part of District 21 that lies within Anne Arundel County); three appointed from the county at-large; and one Student Member. With the exception of the Student Member, all Board Members must be registered voters of Anne Arundel County and may not be an employee or contractor of the Board.

Non-student Members are now appointed by the School Board Appointment Commission of Anne Arundel County, and continue to serve until a successor is appointed and qualifies.

As a result of new Maryland law, the composition of the Board will change beginning December 3, 2018. The composition of the Board will move towards seven nonpartisan elected Members (one Member from each of the seven councilmanic districts in Anne Arundel County) and one student member. The first four elected Board Members will take office on December 3, 2018, and the remaining three elected Board Members will take office on December 7, 2020. The elected Board Members must be residents of Anne Arundel County and a Member elected from a councilmanic district must be a resident of that district. However, if the boundary line of a councilmanic district is changed, the term of an incumbent Member of the Board who no longer resides in that councilmanic district because of the change is not affected during that term.

STUDENT BOARD MEMBER

The qualifications, election, and provisions relating to the Student Member of the Board are set forth in state law. The Student Member has the same voting rights and privileges of the other Members of the Board. The Student Member must be a resident of Anne Arundel County and a regularly enrolled senior-year student of good character and in good standing in an Anne Arundel County public high school. The Student Board Member is elected for a one-year term each year by the Chesapeake Regional Association of Student Councils (CRASC). The student's term of office begins on July 1 after the election upon confirmation and appointment by the Governor, and shall continue until a successor is appointed and qualifies. A Student Member who completes a full term on the Board shall be granted a scholarship of \$8,000, to be applied toward the student's higher education costs.

OATH OF OFFICE/SWEARING IN

Each new Board Member, upon being appointed or elected shall appear before the Clerk of the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County, at a time to be arranged by the Executive Assistant to the Board of Education, to take the Oath of Office, upon being advised that the Clerk of the Court has in his or her possession the Member's Commission declaring his/her eligibility in meeting the qualifications for holding office.

AUTHORITY OF INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Power belongs not to individual Members of a Board of Education but to the Board of Education acting as a corporate body through collective action. Board Members have authority only when acting as a Board of Education in a legally constituted session, with a quorum being present. The statement or action of an individual Member or group of Members of the Board of Education shall not bind the Board of Education itself, except when that statement or action is specifically authorized by an official act of the Board. This does not preclude individual Board Members from representing the Board at meetings and ceremonial events or speaking to constituent groups in their capacity as Board Members.

If a Board Member is invited to speak on a Board topic in the community, the Board Member should notify the Board Office and/or the Board leadership about the engagement in advance. When speaking at the event, such as meetings of PTA's, PTO's, community organizations and special interest groups, the Board Member should be mindful that he/she is speaking on his/her own behalf and not on behalf of the entire Board, unless otherwise previously agreed upon by the Board.

NEW BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION

Following the appointment of new Members, the Board Office and Superintendent's Office will provide for an orientation, as to the Board's operation and processes, the working relationships with the Superintendent of Schools and the staff of Anne Arundel County Public Schools, and substantive background information pertaining to school system issues and procedures. A copy of this Handbook will be provided. New Board Members are encouraged to attend the orientation sessions organized by the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE).

REMOVAL OF BOARD MEMBER

Pursuant to statute, the State Superintendent of Schools, with the approval of the Governor, may remove a Board Member for immorality, misconduct in office, incompetence, willful neglect of duty, or failure to attend, without cause, at least 75 percent of the scheduled meetings of the Board in any 1 calendar year. Before removing a Member, the Member shall be sent a copy of the charges and may request a hearing for an opportunity to be heard publicly before the State Superintendent.

DUTIES OF BOARD OFFICERS

The officers of the Board of Education are the President and Vice President.

The President calls Board sessions, presides at all sessions, determines Board agendas, executes authorized or approved contracts and other documents on behalf of the Board, represents the views of the Board in all communications and correspondence, and performs other duties prescribed by law or by the Board. The President may appoint committees to hear appeals of decisions of the Superintendent, appoint ad hoc or special committees of the Board and/or staff members to assist the Board with its work, study specific issues, or undertake Board projects, and serve as ex-officio members of all committees appointed. The President, with input from Board Members, determines seating on the dais. The President shall periodically appoint a committee to review this Handbook and recommend revisions as appropriate.

In the absence of the President, the Vice President performs these duties. If both the President and Vice President are temporarily unavailable to acquit the above responsibilities, the remaining Members may designate another Member by a majority vote to serve in such a capacity. The President and Vice President are elected at the Board's annual organization session, to be held on or as near as possible to the second Tuesday in July.

The Vice President shall have charge of coordinating Board retreats and setting the agenda for these retreats, in consultation with the Superintendent and Board President.

BOARD COMMITTEES

The Board of Education has three standing committees the Board Policy Committee, the Board Budget Committee and the Board Scholarship Committee. Each committee is composed of three Board Members, who meet once a month or as needed with appropriate staff members. The Board also has a Board Handbook Committee which has an Ad Hoc status. Other Ad Hoc Committees can be added depending upon the needs of the Board. It is expected that each Board Member, with the exception of the President, will serve on at least one Board committee each school year.

BOARD COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Board endeavors to keep community members informed of the activities of the Board of Education and the school system. A vehicle to achieve this is Board outreach events which may be held in libraries, community centers and churches in diverse areas of the county. The format is informal and all outreach events are open to the public.

ETHICS POLICY AND FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

Board policy and state law require that each Board Member complete an annual financial disclosure form for the preceding calendar year. These statements will be made available during normal office hours for examination and copying by the public, subject to whatever reasonable fees and administrative procedures are established. The Board of Education has established a five-member Ethics Panel, responsible for reviewing all financial disclosure statements for completeness of form and for determination of any existing or potential conflicts of interest, as well as to process and make determinations as to any complaint filed by a person alleging a violation of the Ethics Policy and Regulation.

By August 1 of each year, Board Counsel will review the Ethics Policy with the Members of the Board. An acceptable time for this review would be the organization meeting in July, if appropriate.

BOARD OPERATIONS

BOARD OF EDUCATION CORRESPONDENCE PROCEDURES

Board Members receive numerous e-mails and letters per week from constituents regarding matters relating to the school system. The Executive Assistant serves as the coordinator of Board correspondence. Correspondence received by a Board Member or e-mails sent to the “Board Office” link on the school system website are typically acknowledged by the Board’s Executive Assistant and forwarded to the Superintendent’s office, where they are assigned to the appropriate staff member to prepare a timely response. The Board Office is copied on the response to the constituent, if requested.

Individual Board Members have the option of responding directly to correspondence addressed to the Board or the individual Member; however, the correspondence must clearly reflect that the views expressed therein are those of the individual Member and not necessarily those of the entire Board of Education. Inasmuch as identical e-mails are often personalized to each Board Member, Board Members may contact the Executive Assistant to ascertain if the same one has been received by all, with a response to be sent on behalf of the Board President. If the Board receives numerous e-mails on a particular topic, the Executive Assistant will send out automatic acknowledgements at the direction of the Board.

BOARD MEMBER REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Requests by Board Members for specific information, data, and/or reports from Administration staff – whether as a follow-up to an item discussed at a prior Board session or a separate matter of interest to an individual Member – shall be made through the Board President or Board Office for forwarding to the Superintendent, or directly to the Superintendent’s Office, but not directly to Administration staff. By doing so, requests may be coordinated, duplication can be avoided, and the Superintendent can best determine the appropriate use of staff in responding timely to such requests. Within reason, and excluding individual student or personnel records, the Superintendent will be responsive to all reasonable requests. If a request is deemed overly time consuming or unreasonable, the matter will be brought to the attention of the Board President for consideration by the full Board. Materials and information requested by individual Members will be shared electronically with the entire Board.

Individual Board Members shall not make requests for printing, PowerPoint presentations, or media work of the Communications Office, the Design and Print Services, or the Superintendent, entailing labor and materials, whether for use in their capacity as Board Members or in the community, without bringing such request to the full Board for its approval.

BOARD MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Board Members are strongly encouraged to meet regularly with the Superintendent, visit schools and attend community and school system events to better understand the individuality of schools and the communities in which they are located. When at all feasible, Board Members, as a matter of courtesy, working through the Board Office and/or the Superintendent's Office, should schedule the visit so as to provide the school principal the courtesy of optimum advance notice, to avoid potential conflicts with student testing, staff evaluations, or other critical activity necessitating the attention or presence of the school principal. In the event of such conflict the Board office, and/or Superintendent's Office will schedule the visit for a mutually convenient time.

Board Members attend various non-professional development activities during the year, such as the County Arts Council gala, Teacher of the Year banquets, the Martin Luther King, Jr. breakfast and Maryland Hall's Arts Alive. The school system bears the cost of some of these events. Board Members are welcome to bring a guest to an event and are responsible for reimbursing the Board for any expense for that guest.

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

- Board Members should endeavor to respond to emails, correspondence and phone calls in a timely manner, especially in response to those from other Board Members and elected officials.
- Members should copy all Board Members on correspondence to the Superintendent of general application and import, rather than being selective or, alternatively, copy the Board's Executive Assistant for appropriate routing of correspondence.

BOARD MEMBER COMPENSATION, EXPENSES, AND EQUIPMENT: PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

OBJECTIVE: The following procedures and guidelines are to govern not only the compensation and expenses due and owing Board Members in the course of discharging their responsibilities, but to ensure that as expenditures are made, they are done in a cost effective, prudent, and reasonable manner.

1. Adult Members, as authorized by state law, are entitled to receive \$6,000 per annum; the Board President receives \$8,000 per annum during his or her tenure, payable biweekly via automatic payroll deposit. As the Board transitions into an elected Board in December 2018, Board members will be entitled to receive \$8,000 per annum, with the President receiving \$10,000 per annum and the Vice President receiving \$9,000 per annum.
2. The Student Member, as authorized by state law, is entitled to receive a scholarship of \$8,000 upon the completion of a full term on the Board of Education, to be applied toward higher education costs.
3. As authorized by state law, Board Members receive a monthly allowance toward reimbursement for local travel and other expenses incidental to attending sessions and transacting Board business and attending local events in the course of a month.

4. For travel outside of the county, Board Members may be reimbursed for actual mileage, tolls, and parking; and reasonable meal expenses upon submission of dated, itemized receipts to the Executive Assistant to the Board of Education, annotated with the numbers and names of those covered by any expenses. The cost for alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed. Minor expenses such as bus or subway fares or parking meter fees may be allowed without a receipt where obtaining one would not be practical.
5. Expenses related to Board Member attendance at approved conferences (e.g. Maryland Association of Boards of Education or National School Boards Association), such as registration, travel fare, and hotel, shall be handled exclusively by the Executive Assistant to the Board in advance. Airfare shall be at a reasonable coach class rate.
6. No travel or meal expenses will be assumed for spouses or family members who accompany Board Members to conferences or events. In the event that such expenses are co-mingled, Board Members shall reimburse AACPS for their spouse's/family member's additional expense.
7. Non-Reimbursable Expenses (this list is not all inclusive)
 - Entertainment while in attendance at a conference (e.g., movies; plays; concerts; tours)
 - In-room movies at hotel
 - Mini-bars
 - Laundry and related services
 - Membership fees for airline/frequent flier clubs
 - Pet care
 - Air flight/travel insurance
 - Parking tickets/traffic violations
 - Clothing/personal items
 - Airline upgrades
8. Members shall be reimbursed for other expenses incurred in the performance of their duties, other than personal-related expenses, as approved by the Executive Assistant to the Board of Education.
9. Upon assumption of the office of a Board Member, the Executive Assistant to the Board shall arrange for an AACPS computer to be provided to the Member for use at Board sessions, and a smartphone to conduct Board business. These devices remain the property of AACPS and revert to AACPS at the end of the Member's term of office.

DISPUTES: Should a question arise whether an expense is covered under these provisions, the matter shall be referred to the Board President for a ruling, and if unresolved by the President, referred to the Board's Ethics Panel for a ruling. The Board Member in question may present evidence as to the nature of the challenged expenses to the Ethics Panel, provided however that the ruling of the Ethics Panel shall be determinative.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERSHIPS

To ensure that Board Members are aware of best practices, trends in education, and issues facing school boards and districts statewide and nationwide, the Anne Arundel County Board of Education has maintained memberships in organizations that magnify its influence and knowledge. From time to time, the Board of Education determines which organizations can best serve its purposes. Currently, the Board of Education has memberships in the Maryland Association of Boards of Education, the Legal Services Association, and the National School Boards Association.

Service on MABE Committees

Board Members are encouraged to join their colleagues from other counties in serving on various MABE committees, specifically, Budget & Planning, Legislative, Conference Planning, Federal Relations Network, Nominating, Resolutions, and the Legal Services Association as well as ad hoc committees as needed. The duration of committee memberships is 1 year, commencing in early October of each year at the annual MABE conference.

POLICY ADOPTION

The Board of Education has a policy that provides a format for policy development. Discussion of a new or revised policy usually occurs over the course of four sessions: review by the Board's Policy Committee (a three Member standing committee of the Board) of a draft policy prepared by the Superintendent's staff; the scheduling and first reading of a draft policy at a public Board session after which the policy will be posted on the Board's website for a 30-day comment period; a second reading and consideration of the draft policy at a subsequent public meeting session of the Board; followed by adoption upon third reading of the policy at a public Board of Education session. Regulations to implement policy are within the domain of the Superintendent to adopt. All adopted policies and regulations will be posted on the Board's website.

A request for policy review/revision must be submitted in writing by two Board Members and should include the section of the policy to be considered, as well as suggested/requested revisions to be considered.

BUDGET ADOPTION

Operating Budget

1. The operating budget includes salaries and benefits for staff, stipends, materials of instruction, supplies, instructional equipment, contractual services, and other expenditures and funds necessary for the daily operation of the school system.
2. The Superintendent usually recommends his or her operating budget for the following fiscal year at a December board session.
3. During the month of January, the Board usually conducts at least two public hearings on the Superintendent's proposed operating budget – one to be held at a school and one to be held at the Parham Building, in the evening, at which testimony will be received.
4. Usually at the second Board session in February but no later than March 1, the Board of Education shall adopt a proposed operating budget for the following fiscal year and submit it to the County Government for its consideration.
5. Upon action by the County Council on the proposed operating budget no later than June 15, the Board shall adopt its final approved budget, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, no later than June 30, but usually at the second Board session in June.

Capital Budget

1. The capital budget includes funding for the construction and planning funds for new facilities, modifications, renovations, and revitalizations; furniture and equipment associated with these projects; countywide maintenance; roof replacements; and related expenditures and costs.
2. For purposes of state funding, the Superintendent shall recommend a Capital Budget and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to the Board at its first session in September, after which the Board shall hold a public workshop with staff.
3. Following a public hearing at which testimony will be taken, the Board will adopt at its second session in September a Capital Budget and CIP to be submitted to the Interagency Committee for Public School Construction for state funding.
4. At the December session at which the proposed Operating Budget is submitted, the Superintendent shall also submit the entire recommended Capital Budget.
5. Usually at the second session in February, but no later than March 1, the Board shall approve a recommended Capital Budget to be submitted to the County Government for its consideration as part of the overall budget request for the following fiscal year.
6. Upon action by the County Council on the proposed capital budget no later than June 15, the Board shall adopt its final approved budget, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, no later than June 30, but usually at the second Board session in June.

GRADUATION CEREMONIES

Board Members must participate in at least two graduation ceremonies of our 13 high schools and 7 special schools. Although each school maintains its own traditions, the ceremonies are conducted within the framework of protocols established by the Office of School Performance.

On an annual basis, working through the Executive Assistant to the Board, one Board Member shall be assigned to each graduation ceremony to speak on behalf of the Board and to award the diplomas and certificates. At least one other Board Member must participate by being on stage. Board Member attendance at graduations should be scheduled far enough in advance by informing the Executive Assistant, in order that the appropriate logistics (seating, parking, placement in the processional and recessional, etc.) can be arranged.

Those Board Members speaking at the graduation ceremony shall bring brief remarks, appropriate to the occasion. Schools have been asked to invite the assigned Board Member to the school to meet with or be briefed by the senior class officers and class sponsor in advance of graduation so as to assist the Board Member in the preparation of his or her remarks at the ceremony.

The designated Board Member shall follow the principal's introduction, in recommending the candidates for diploma [and certificates], with the following statement, certifying the graduation of the students:

“By virtue of the authority vested in the Anne Arundel County Board of Education, under the laws of the State of Maryland, I do now award diplomas [and certificates] evidencing the satisfactory completion of the prescribed course of studies to the students of _____ School, who have been recommended for graduation by the faculty of this school.”

BOARD ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCES/ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Funds are earmarked in the school system operating budget for professional development activities in support of Board Members' service to Anne Arundel County Public Schools. If their schedules permit, Board Members typically attend two conferences per year: the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) conference and the National School Boards Association (NSBA) conference. The cost of registration, lodging and travel associated with the conference is the responsibility of the Board of Education. Attendance at any conference must be approved, budget permitting, by the Board President.

In lieu of the above conferences, a Board Member may participate in an alternative education-related opportunity if the Board Member chooses to do so. The alternative professional development opportunity must begin and end during the Board Member's term of service on the Board and must be approved by the Board President in advance of enrollment.

Board Members are required to file a written report to the Executive Assistant within 14 days of completion of the professional development, whether it be attendance at the MABE conference, NSBA conference or any other professional development opportunity. The report should detail how the Board Member's participation in the event enhanced his or her service to the Board. Once the report is submitted, an expense reimbursement form will be filed for expenses incurred during the event.

Should a Board Member resign from the Board while engaged in professional development that has been paid for by the Board, that Board Member will reimburse the Board for any unattended sessions. Should a Board Member resign from the Board prior to attending a conference or event that has been paid for by the Board of Education, the Board Member will reimburse the Board for all non-reimbursable or non-transferrable expenditures.

When attending a conference, the Board Member is expected to attend and fully participate in the workshops and other professional development opportunities. Should a Board Member not participate in the majority of the professional development activities, that Member will reimburse the Board for unattended sessions.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD MEMBERS

Members of the Board of Education are incrementally offered the opportunity for continuing education and attendance at diverse community functions. These opportunities represent a financial investment from the school system's operating budget. When Board Members voluntarily accept participation in a professional development opportunity or a community function, they are expected to view this as financial commitment, knowing that if they must cancel within a reasonable amount of the time prior to the event, they are responsible for the cost of their participation if they cannot find a replacement for their attendance, unless the Board approves an exception.

BOARD NORMS

BOARD MEMBERS ARE EXPECTED TO:

- make decisions based upon a desire to serve the students in Anne Arundel County in the best way possible.
- be prepared to take action on items on the closed and open session agendas, by reading the materials, including those sent or posted electronically, in advance.
- maintain the confidentiality, and expect others to do so.
- maintain high standards of professional and ethical behavior at all times.
- avoid surprising fellow Board Members or the Superintendent by articulating concerns in advance of public sessions.
- keep their comments brief without monopolizing a discussion.
- abide by and support publicly the decisions of the majority of the Board.
 - respond in a reasonable time to invitations, emails, and telephone calls from Board colleagues, Board staff, the Superintendent and staff and executive team members.
 - continually strive to expand their knowledge of public education and skills in governance through:
 - conferences
 - workshops
 - seminars
 - books and publications
 - retreats

STAFF TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL BOARD ATTORNEY

Pursuant to State law, the Board has hired legal counsel to represent its interests in legal matters that affect the Board. Pursuant to policy, the Board appoints legal counsel at its annual session each July and contracts for payment of reasonable legal fees. The school board's attorney represents the Board's interests working in tandem with the Superintendent of Schools and in-house legal counsel.

Traditionally, the Board President is the primary contact with the attorney when appropriate regarding legal issues. Individual Board Members are encouraged not to contact Board counsel outside of regular business sessions.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT AND DIRECTOR OF INTERNAL AUDIT

Other than the Superintendent of Schools, the only staff reporting directly to the Board shall be the Executive Assistant to the Board of Education and the Director of Internal Audit. Both serve at the pleasure of the Board and receive specific assignments from the Board President and the Board. Both acquit the responsibilities of their position as spelled out in policy and provide general support to the Board of Education and its Members to facilitate the discharge of their statutory responsibilities, working in tandem with the Superintendent of Schools. With the approval of the Board, additional support staff may be hired for the Board office and will report to the Board Executive Assistant.

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

APPOINTMENT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Maryland state law governs the appointment, term, qualifications, vacancy, and removal of the Superintendent of Schools. The term of the Superintendent of Schools is four years, beginning on July 1. The Superintendent of Schools serves until a successor is appointed and qualifies. By February 1 of the year in which a term ends, the Superintendent of Schools must notify the Board whether or not he/she is a candidate for reappointment.

In the year in which a term begins, the Board of Education appoints the Superintendent of Schools between February 1 and June 30. Should the Board decide to reappoint the incumbent Superintendent of Schools, the Board must take final action at a public session no later than March 1 of that year.

The appointment of the Superintendent of Schools is subject to written approval of the state Superintendent of Schools. If there is a vacancy in the office, the Board shall appoint an interim Superintendent of Schools who serves until July 1 after his/her appointment.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

The Superintendent of Schools is responsible for the administration of his/her office and carries out the laws of the State of Maryland, the bylaws and policies of the Maryland State Board of Education, as well as the policies of the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County and the Administrative Regulations that implement them.

The Superintendent of Schools:

- Advises the Board of Education on educational policies of the school system, school attendance areas, curriculum guides and courses of study, and any question under consideration by the Board.
- Recommends contracts, to the extent required by law, and other documents for Board approval.
- Informs the Board in advance of administrative reorganizations, including transfers of functions, establishment of positions and offices, and consolidations of positions and offices.
- Proposes annual operating and capital budgets to the Board of Education.
- Attends all sessions of the Board, as well as committee meetings as requested, except when the Board is considering appeals in its quasi-judicial role in closed session, or when the Superintendent's tenure, salary, or the administration of his/her office is under consideration.
- Advises the Board on any question under consideration at the session that he/she is permitted to attend.
- Recommends and/or advises of the appointment and/or transfer of administrative and supervisory personnel to the Board for its approval (where appropriate) whether by discrete personnel actions or by way of a monthly personnel report approved by the Board.

- Administers disciplinary actions of AACPS personnel and students.
- Implements State law and State Board of Education regulations insofar as they govern local school system operations.
- Provides leadership and direction with planning, coordination, and evaluation of all aspects of the operations of AACPS, and is responsible for day-to-day operations and management of the public schools.
- Promotes an awareness of, and advocacy for, matters involving public education in Anne Arundel County including reaching out to professional organizations, civic groups, and public officials of the national, state, and local levels.

BOARD SESSIONS

ANNUAL ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION

According to state law, the Board of Education must conduct an annual session on or as near as possible to the second Tuesday of each July for the election of a President and Vice President. The Board traditionally conducts its election of officers as the first order of business at its business session in July. The annual session is traditionally combined with a regular business session.

The session is called to order by the current President. A motion is made and seconded to place a name in nomination for President and, subsequently, for Vice President. Through an individually recorded vote, the Members elect a President and Vice President from among the current sitting Members by a majority vote. The election for President shall precede the election for Vice President. Immediately upon their election, the President and Vice President shall assume the duties of their office.

MASTER CALENDAR OF SESSIONS

Prior to July of each year, the Board of Education approves a master calendar of Board sessions, including meetings, hearings and workshops for the ensuing school year. The calendar shall be posted on the Board's website. A table detailing information regarding changes to regularly scheduled Board sessions, hearings, and workshops due to inclement weather, can be found before the Conclusion of this handbook.

AGENDA DEVELOPMENT AND SESSION MATERIALS

Board agendas are developed through coordinated efforts of key staff and the Executive Assistant with guidance from the Board of Education. A request for an item to be placed on the agenda must be submitted in writing by two Board members.

Before every business session, packets of Board agenda materials are prepared for Board Members and key staff. Board materials are not released to the public until Board Members have received them. Board session packets for the open sessions are normally available online (in the BoardDocs™ section of the Board's website) on the Fridays prior to regular Board meetings. Previous minutes, agendas, and documents from prior sessions dating back to 2003, may also be found on the BoardDocs™ section of the website.

PROTOCOLS

It is expected that Board Members will:

- Refrain from using cell phones during a Board meeting.
- Endeavor to be on time so as to participate fully in all closed and open sessions.
- With as much advance notice as reasonably practicable, notify the Board President and Executive Assistant if the Board Member's personal commitments will interfere with attendance at scheduled Board sessions, workshops, or hearings, or any portion thereof.

OPEN PUBLIC SESSIONS AND NOTICE

Sessions of the Board of Education, including its standing committees, are open to the public, except when held in closed session pursuant to the Maryland Open Meetings Act (see below). The public must be provided with adequate notice of the time and location of sessions. When the Board meets in open session, the general public and media are entitled to attend.

Under state law, the Board of Education has the authority to adopt and enforce reasonable rules regarding the conduct of persons attending its sessions, as well as the videotaping, televising, photographing, broadcasting, or recording of its sessions. If the President or presiding officer believes that the behavior of an individual is disrupting an open session, he or she may propose to the Board that it determine so, and have the individual removed. Unless the Board of Education, its Members, or its agents acted maliciously, they are not liable for having an individual removed from the meeting.

CLOSED SESSIONS

Under the Maryland Open Meetings Act, the Board of Education is authorized to meet in closed session and retreats to discuss, among the 14 statutorily-authorized circumstances, personnel matters, acquisition of real estate, pending litigation, collective bargaining issues, matters protected from public disclosure by law, and to obtain legal advice. The Open Meetings Act also requires that, before meeting in closed session, the Board must give reasonable advance notice of the closed session. Immediately prior to convening a closed session for the current Board meeting, the President shall conduct a recorded vote on closing the session. Further, after a closed session is held, the Board, as part of its minutes, must also provide a report concerning the closed session's topic(s) of discussion. Additional items may be added to the closed session agenda at the request of two Board Members within a reasonable amount of time prior to the closed session. Board Members and staff are expected to maintain the confidentiality of closed session discussions at all times. Administrative functions and quasi-judicial functions are exempt from the Open Meetings Act.

Closed session shall usually be held in the Caucus Room at the Parham Building in Annapolis, Maryland. The Caucus Room shall not be utilized by individual Board Members to conduct meetings with non-AACPS personnel or meetings with constituents, and is off-limits to outside groups.

REGULAR BUSINESS SESSIONS

1. The Board usually conducts two business sessions per month, except for the months of July and August when the Board usually meets once a month. A daytime business session is usually held on the first Wednesday of the month, and an evening business session is usually held on the third Wednesday of the month. If a holiday or school break interferes with the bimonthly session schedule, the Board may opt to meet just once during that month. These sessions are held at the offices of the Board of Education at the Parham Building in Annapolis, Maryland, unless otherwise designated.
2. AACPS' Communications Office routinely announces all open and closed sessions of the Board of Education. Such notices are done through news releases, emails to parents, announcements on the AACPS website, and postings on individual school and school system social media pages. Notices include the date, time and location of the session as well as a link to the full agenda and supporting documents. Information regarding live web streaming, cablecasting, and rebroadcasting of Board sessions is also provided.
3. At every business session the Board will set aside time to accept public comment on items not appearing on that session's agenda. Public comments on agenda items will be permitted after official presentations of each item on the Board agenda. Public input on policy, program, and practices is encouraged, but Public Comment is not the appropriate venue to address specific student or employee concerns. Personnel concerns are confidential matters and should be referred to the Superintendent of Schools or processed through available channels. Comments are limited to three minutes per speaker, inclusive of Board answers to any questions speakers may pose. Speakers are requested to provide copies of their testimony and to complete a "Public Testimony Registration Card" available at the door or table, so as to assure the correct spelling of one's name for the Board minutes, and for any follow-up.
4. The advance session agenda shall indicate if an item is intended for review (R), action (A), and/or information (I). Notwithstanding the designation, any Member can make a motion germane to an agenda item before the Board. Additional items may be added to the open session agenda at the request of two Board members within a reasonable amount of time prior to the session.
5. At every business session time shall be set aside for consent items, consisting of matters which the Board President or Superintendent of Schools believes will be adopted by a single vote. Approval of the consent agenda shall include the approval of all items included as consent items, provided that any Member may defer to the end any item on which discussion is desired, after which a separate vote shall be taken.
6. Sessions are to begin promptly at the starting time on the agenda, provided a quorum is present. Closed sessions normally are scheduled at the start, lunch hour, and/or end of the meeting. Usually, evening sessions will be scheduled to begin with closed session at 5:30 p.m., with open session at 7:00 p.m. Usually, day sessions will be scheduled to begin with closed session at 8:30 a.m., and open session at 10:00 a.m. However, the Board President may, by advance notice, establish a different starting time.
7. The usual order of the agenda for the open session of a regular Board meeting will be as follows, subject to modification by the President:
 - Opening (Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance/Approval of Minutes)
 - Recognitions
 - Reports
 - Public Comment
 - Consent Items
 - Action Items
 - Review Items
 - Adjournment

BOARD RETREATS

The Board usually schedules one or more retreats a year for team building, priority setting, discussion of Board operations, and/or to prepare for contract negotiations. The retreats will be held in compliance with the Maryland Open Meetings Act, as required by law.

SPECIAL SESSIONS

Special sessions may be called by the President of the Board, by the Superintendent of Schools, or at the written request of a majority of the Board, with the purpose given in the call of the meeting, to be provided as soon as feasible.

RULES OF ORDER

The Board of Education observes Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised in conducting its sessions, except as provided otherwise either in this Handbook or in Board policy. Moreover, the Board is guided by its own rules, state statutes, and Maryland State Department of Education bylaws, which establish the following:

1. A quorum consisting of a majority of the full Board shall be present to convene a session.
2. The Board adopts its agenda at the beginning of a business session. Times listed on the agenda are intended for guidance only. Unless changed by the Board, the order in which items appear on an agenda will be followed. Any changes in the adopted agenda are made by majority vote or by consensus.
3. A motion is not adopted without the approval of five Members.
4. In the event there is a disqualification or recusal of one or more Members because of a real or perceived conflict of interest, and the disqualification or recusal results in less than a quorum, the disqualified or recused Member(s) shall disclose the nature/circumstances of the conflict and may subsequently participate if necessary for the Board to take action on the item.

RECORD OF BOARD SESSIONS

The Board of Education maintains records of sessions as follows:

1. Records of the Board's business sessions and hearings are retained in the Board Office and online. All Board business sessions are televised and copies of cablecasts are maintained on file.
2. The minutes of all public sessions contain actions taken by the Board and a summary of the Board's discussion. A Board Member may specifically request that a statement on a subject be reflected in the minutes.
3. Minutes of closed sessions include a list of each item considered, the action taken, and each recorded vote.
4. Minutes of Board sessions open to the public are available as a matter of public record on the Board's website, as well as in the Board Office. Minutes of Board committee meetings are available in the Board Office.
5. Moreover, since July 1, 2010, Board votes have been published on line reflecting how Board Members voted in the final vote on any particular agenda item. One can ascertain this by going to www.aacps.org, go to the Board of Education tab at the top, and click on "Board Voting Record" for the spreadsheet that is posted following each Board session.

INCLEMENT WEATHER STATEMENT AS IT RELATES TO BOARD MEETINGS/HEARINGS/WORKSHOPS

If	Action
There is a <i>Code Red</i> and all buildings are closed	Any Board session/hearing/workshop will be cancelled
There is a <i>Code Blue</i> with liberal leave (with schools closed but Central Office open)	<p>Any Board session/hearing/workshop scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m. or after will go on as scheduled</p> <p>Any Board session/hearing/workshop scheduled to begin before 10:00 a.m. will be rescheduled</p> <p>A closed session of the Board scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m. will go on as scheduled</p>
If schools are opening two hours late	<p>Any Board session/hearing/workshop scheduled to begin 10:00 a.m. or after will go on as scheduled</p> <p>Any Board session/hearing/workshop scheduled to begin before 10:00 a.m. will be rescheduled</p> <p>A closed session of the Board scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m. will go on as scheduled</p>
If schools are closing two hours early and/or all afternoon activities are cancelled	Any Board session/hearing/workshop scheduled to begin after 3:00 p.m. will be rescheduled

CONCLUSION

The role of the school board, whether appointed or elected, is as important as ever. Its decisions impact everything from school boundaries to bus transportation, walking distance, adoption of curriculum, funding for extra-curricular activities, and salaries for school system personnel. As reflected on page 2 of this Handbook, the Board of Education's authority encompasses a wide range of Executive, Legislative, and Quasi-Judicial responsibilities.

As stated succinctly by the National School Boards Association, in a brochure published by its Center for Public Education, the following are the qualities, skills, and experience that are useful for a school Board Member to possess:

- *a vision and goals for high academic achievement for all students*
- *an ability to inspire parents and other stakeholders to have confidence in the local public schools*
- *an understanding that the board's role is about the big picture – that is, setting the direction for the district, and providing oversight and accountability, rather than day-to-day management*
- *an ability to work effectively with the rest of the Board*
- *the commitment to do what is right for all children, even in the face of opposition.*

Hopefully, as individuals aspire to serve on the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County and are fortunate to be chosen to serve, this Handbook will help them better understand their authority and responsibilities so as to display the foregoing qualities, skills, and experience.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I _____ have received the Board of Education Handbook, and I understand its contents and my obligations and responsibilities as a Member of the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County.

Signature

Date

NOTES
