

# **GARRISON UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION BOARD OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES**

## **STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING**

It is incumbent upon all members of the Board of Education to ensure that the Board function according to the guidelines suggested below or as otherwise deemed appropriate. The success of the Board in its fulfillment of its duties cannot be achieved without the active cooperative participation of all members.

### **I. MEETINGS**

1. Board of Education Meetings will start on schedule and will strive to end no later than 10 PM.
2. Members will notify the Board Officers about planned absences, and copy the Superintendent and Board Clerk.
3. Meeting agendas shall be approved by the BOE at the start of each meeting. Late additions to the agenda are discouraged but as needed, the BOE may approve such additions.
4. The Board of Education will work to bring closure to any topic under discussion, assuring that all members have had an equal opportunity to speak.
5. Members will model active listening skills. Such skills include listening for understanding, asking clarifying questions, and waiting until the speaker is finished before speaking, waiting to be recognized by the moderator (usually the BOE President) unless the discussion is freeform, and seeking to solve problems.
6. Members shall agree to maintain confidences shared among members in executive and retreat settings.
7. Employee/public input will be sought as it relates to a topic under discussion if such input is deemed appropriate for informational purposes.
8. Sub-committees may be established in order to do BOE business more efficiently. The sub-committee will have a chairperson who is responsible for seeing that the committee meets.
9. The sub-committee will keep minutes of its meetings and forward them to the District Clerk to be posted in the board portal. Sub-committee chairs will provide an oral report at a public meeting of the board.
10. Any topic that may result in a resolution should not be acted upon until the following meeting unless this "two-meeting rule" is waived.

### **II. PARTICIPATION**

1. Superintendent will provide initial orientation for new Board members prior to the reorganizational meeting. The Vice President of the Board will mentor the new Member(s).
2. Board packets will be read by board members in preparation for each meeting.
3. Problems and concerns about packet contents, including FYI's, should be brought to the attention of the Board Officers and the Superintendent prior to the meeting.
4. Requests for information that must be researched or compiled should be made through the Board Officers and copied to the Superintendent.
5. The Code of Conduct of the New York State School Boards Association shall guide our members in their actions and behavior.
6. Communication from officers to trustees, on issues that will come before the board as a whole, will strive to provide all members with the same information at the same time.

7. When a trustee has a concern or issue about staff, community, or personal interest they will communicate that concern via the BOE officers (family/parent issues are explicitly excluded, provided that the chain of command has been followed) and copy the Superintendent.

### **III. PRODUCTIVITY**

The Board will:

1. Learn governance and practice governance.
2. Establish a detailed Board calendar in the Spring, for the coming year.
3. Strive to build respectful relationships with one another and with the Superintendent.
4. Avoid micromanagement.
5. Be mindful when talking with district employees, whether formally or informally, that you may be viewed as a person of authority. In all instances interaction should be amicable and non-coercive. In no instance may a Member require or appear to require any specific action or position from any district employee.
6. Establish and evaluate Board goals on an on-going basis.
7. Conduct annual operational self-evaluation followed by an improvement plan if needed.
8. Strive to participate in a pro-active manner.

### **IV. COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

1. The BOE will be conscious of the image created by their behavior at the Board table.
2. In their communication with the press or public, Members are to:
  - Express only personal opinions and not speak for the Board
  - Be supportive of BOE decisions
3. The BOE will listen actively to the residents of the Garrison Union Free School District on matters concerning the district and its governance. Members will take care not to create the impression of promised action or outcome but rather make it clear that decisions can only be made by the Board as a whole with the involvement of the Superintendent. When appropriate, constituents will be directed to the appropriate school official if known if such direction would help in the resolution of the matter presented. Members should encourage the use of proper chain of authority.
4. When a situation occurs where four or more members of the BOE are together outside of a duly convened board meeting, members shall practice due diligence to assure no BOE business is conducted or discussed.
5. Community input is one important facet of communication and information for the Board. When information is presented to or made known to a Board member, including information posted on a social networking site, the information should not be considered as factual. Board members should not offer opinions and should recommend the community member follow the chain of command if appropriate. The Board member should, at his/her discretion, bring the information to the attention of the Board President and Superintendent so that it may be investigated. If appropriate, the issue may be deliberated by the Board at a duly convened public meeting.

**Adopted by Resolution on: 08/26/2020**