

Billings School District 2

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Board Operation and Communication

1. **Student's interests come first.** The board will represent the needs and interests of all the students in our district.
2. **The board acts only as a body.** Individual board members do not have authority. Only the board as a whole has authority. We agree that an individual board member will not take unilateral action. The board chair will communicate the position(s) of the board on all issues, unless other board members have been given authorization.
3. **Follow the chain of command.** The last stop, not the first, will be the board. We agree to follow the chain of command and insist that others do so, too. While the board is eager to listen to its constituents and staff, each inquiry is to be referred to the person who can properly and expeditiously address all the issues.
4. **Clearly stated goals.** The board will set clear goals annually for themselves and the superintendent. The board and superintendent will set clear goals for Billings Public Schools.
5. **Communication between staff and the board is encouraged.** Requests by board members for information that is already in existence and readily available may be addressed to an appropriate staff member. Requests for new reports or other new compilations of information should be addressed to the superintendent. The superintendent may submit these requests to the full board for approval. All personnel complaints and criticisms received by the board or its individual members will be directed to the superintendent.
6. **Board approval of information requests.** In addition to requests submitted by the superintendent, an individual board member may request that the full board approve his or her request for information that is not currently available or has not been provided by staff.
7. **Practice the governance role.** The board will emphasize planning, policy making, and communication rather than becoming involved in the management of the schools.
8. **Practice efficient decision making.** Board meetings are for decision-making action and votes. A board member may call for the question when discussion is repetitive.
9. **Utilize superintendent input.** The superintendent should make recommendations, proposals or suggestions on most matters that come before the board.
10. **Debate the issues.** Conduct at the board meeting is very important. We agree to avoid words

and actions that create a negative impression on an individual, the board or the district. While we encourage debate and differing points of view, we will do so with care and respect.

**11. Conduct efficient and effective board meetings.** Long board meetings should be avoided. Points are to be made in as few words as possible; speeches at board meetings will be minimal. If a board member believes he/she doesn't have enough information or has questions, they are advised to contact the superintendent or board chair before the meeting.

**12. Do not spring surprises on other board members or the superintendent.** We agree to ask the board chair and the superintendent to place an item on the agenda instead of bringing it up unexpectedly at the meeting.

**13. Annually conduct a board evaluation.** The board will address its behaviors by yearly self-evaluation and by addressing itself.

**14. Clerk.** The clerk is appointed by the Board of Trustees and is responsible for duties prescribed by the Montana Code and Constitution.

Cross References:     1400   Board Meetings  
                              1511   Code of Ethics for School Board Members  
                              1520   Board/Staff Communications  
                              1610   Annual Goals and Objectives

Legal References:   § 20-3-324(21), MCA Powers and Duties

Policy History:  
First Reading:        March 16, 2015 – Board of Trustees  
Second Reading:  
Third Reading:  
Adopted on: