

**Board Members  
(Number / Terms / Residency / Elections / Orientation / Officers /  
Expenses / Compensation / Advisors)**

- I. **Number of Members.** The board shall consist of five members, elected by ballot by the registered voters of the district.
- II. **Terms and Oath of Office.** Directors of school districts shall be elected at regular school elections and, except as otherwise provided by law, board members shall hold office for terms of six years and until their successors are elected and qualified. Terms of board members shall be staggered as provided by law. Newly elected directors shall take office at the first official meeting of the Board of Directors after the election results have been certified by the county auditor. Every person elected, re-elected, or appointed to the office of school director, before entering upon the discharge of the duties thereof each time the person begins a designated term of office, shall take an oath or affirmation to support the Constitution of the United States and the State of Washington and to faithfully discharge the duties of the office according to the best of his or her ability. A school district official or notary public authorized to administer oaths must certify to this oath and the signature of the member. The following school district officials are authorized to administer oaths: Secretary to the Board of Directors and Superintendent. All oaths of office, when properly made, shall be filed with the county auditor.
- III. **Residency.** No person shall be eligible to the office of school director who is not a citizen of the United States and the State of Washington and a registered voter of the school district. A school director's office shall become vacant if the school director ceases to be a legally registered voter of the school district.
- IV. **Elections.** Candidates for the position of school director shall file their declarations of candidacy as provided by law. In case of a void in candidates, filings shall occur as provided by law. Board elections shall be held on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November of odd-numbered years.
- V. **Financial Disclosures.** Before April 15<sup>th</sup> of each year, all board members shall file an "F-1" statement of financial affairs for the preceding calendar year with the Public Disclosure Commission. Each director appointed to fill a vacancy on the board shall, within two weeks of appointment, file an "F-1" statement of financial affairs for the preceding twelve months.
- VI. **Background Checks.** All board members must disclose any criminal conduct in accordance with Policy 5005 and will have their records checked through the Washington State Patrol criminal identification system and through the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The record check will include a fingerprint check using a complete Washington state criminal identification fingerprint card. The record check must be completed before a board member is sworn in.

VII. **Orientation.** The board will help newly elected or appointed directors to understand the policies and procedures of the board. New board members will be provided with a copy of the SPS Board of Directors Handbook. The Orientation will include substantially the items listed below, and the new board member may be accompanied by an existing board member at any of these meetings if the new board member wishes:

- A. Meetings with superintendent and executive assistant to superintendent and board: Review Board Handbook, Organization Chart, Policies and Procedures, Operating Procedures. Arrange photo, an initial school site visit and Orientation Calendar;
- B. Receipt of a notebook containing the items listed below for use as a reference source. It is not expected that directors thoroughly review such materials but rather to enable directors to be in a position to have such materials readily accessible as a reference source when pertinent issues arise:
  - 1. District Goals and Plans;
  - 2. Policies and procedures relating to student rights, responsibilities and conduct;
  - 3. Staff and student handbooks;
  - 4. Collective bargaining agreements;
  - 5. Prior year board minutes;
  - 6. Achievement test results and other relevant data for evaluating student learning; and
  - 7. Staff member job descriptions.

The superintendent may suggest a person with whom the new director will be scheduled to meet who could be of assistance in providing a brief introduction to each such reference item.

- C. Meetings with each person who reports directly to superintendent, each of their department heads, and any other key people, as determined by the executive;
- D. Meeting with attorney for district to review statutory powers of board, how to use the RCWs and WACs, and guidance on policies and procedures;
- E. Open Government Training. All board members shall participate in the required trainings addressed in [Policy 1805](#);
- F. Review current budget, financial statements, budgeting process and school finance laws and procedures with appropriate staff.

The board president or a designee and the superintendent will assist each new director by reviewing the role and function of the various administrators employed by the district. The orientation will include, as per district policy, how to: (1) arrange for visits to school or administrative offices; (2) request information regarding school operations; (3) respond to a complaint concerning staff or program; and (4) handle confidential information.

Directors will be encouraged to attend meetings, workshops, and conferences to increase their knowledge and competencies.

VIII. **Election of President and Vice President.** At the first regular meeting at which newly

elected board members are seated in election years, and at the first regular meeting in November in nonelection years, the board shall elect from among its members a president and a vice president to serve one-year terms. Officers shall not be elected following the appointment of a director to fill a vacancy on the board unless a majority of the board is appointed. If a board member is unable to continue to serve as an officer, a replacement shall be elected immediately. In the absence of both the president and the vice president, the board shall elect a president pro tempore who shall perform the functions of the president during the latter's absence. The superintendent shall act as board secretary. In order to provide a record of the proceedings of each meeting of the board, the superintendent shall appoint a recording secretary of the board.

- IX. **Board Member and Officer Duties.** It shall be the duty of the board president to:
- A. Preside at all meetings of the board;
  - B. Conduct meetings in the manner prescribed by the board's policies, provided that the president shall have the full right to participate in all aspects of board action without relinquishing the chair, including the right to vote on all matters put to a vote;
  - C. Be the official recipient of correspondence directed to the board and to provide, or cause to be provided to other board members and the superintendent, copies of the correspondence received on behalf of the board;
  - D. Formulate agendas for board meetings, in cooperation with the superintendent and, when time or circumstances demand a decision prior to when the board has an opportunity to confer, make decisions on behalf of the board, except that the decision shall be communicated as soon as practical thereafter to all members of the board for information purposes and for review/ratification at the next scheduled board meeting;
  - E. Serve as the spokesperson of the board in dealing with the media and the public in general. The president is authorized to report and discuss those actions which have been taken and those decisions made by the board as a body. The president shall avoid speculating upon actions or decisions which the board may take but has not yet taken; and
  - F. Appoint a parliamentarian to serve as the board president's advisor on rules of conduct for board meetings. The parliamentarian shall assume office following the reorganizational meeting each year. The parliamentarian shall advise the board president on implementation of *Roberts Rules of Order (Revised)* and board policy at board meetings. The parliamentarian shall advise the board president on framing motions, on matters where a procedural action is questioned, and on upholding board policies and bylaws applicable to board meeting conduct. The parliamentarian shall rule on the order of motions when called upon by the board president to do so. In the event no board member is elected to serve as parliamentarian, or the elected parliamentarian is absent from the meeting, the board secretary shall fulfill this function.
  - G. Perform such other duties as the board may prescribe.

It shall be the duty of the board vice president to perform all the duties of president in case of the president's absence or disability.

Individual board members shall:

- A. Participate in actions taken by the board as a whole when legally in session;
- B. Abide by the terms of the “Role of Board, Code of Conduct, and Protocol for Handling Citizen Correspondence” (Attachment A to Policy 1100) or similar document adopted by the board;
- C. Not assume responsibilities of administration or other staff members.
- D. Abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the board. This does not preclude the board as a whole from revisiting a topic when new information or changes in circumstances occur.

The board or staff shall not be bound in any way by any action taken or statement made by any individual board member except when such statement or action is pursuant to specific instructions and official action taken by the board.

- X. **Committees.** Committees of the board and liaisons to other entities (e.g., a Legislative Liaison to Washington State School Directors Association) may be created by a majority of the board. The president shall appoint board members to serve on such committees and as such liaisons. The purpose and terms of the committees and liaisons shall be determined by a majority vote of the board.
- XI. **Board Secretary.** In addition to such other duties as a district school board shall prescribe, the school district superintendent shall serve as board secretary, and
  - A. Attend all meetings of the Board of Directors (except when matters pertaining to the superintendent's employment are being considered) and cause to have made a record as to the proceedings thereof.
  - B. Keep such records and reports and in such form as the district Board of Directors require or as otherwise required by law or rule or regulation of higher administrative agencies and turn the same over to his or her successor.
  - C. Keep accurate and detailed accounts of all receipts and expenditures of school money. At each annual school meeting, the superintendent must present his or her record book of board proceedings for public inspection and shall make a statement of the financial condition of the district, and such record book must always be open for public inspection.
  - D. Give such notice of all annual or special elections as otherwise required by law; also give notice of the regular and special meetings of the Board of Directors.
  - E. Sign all orders for warrants ordered to be issued by the Board of Directors.
  - F. Carry out all orders of the Board of Directors made at any regular or special meeting.
- XII. **Expenses and Compensation.**
  - A. Reimbursable Expenses for Board Members. Reimbursable expenses include:

1. Transportation expense including fares for commercial or public carriers and mileage at the district-approved rate when using one's own private vehicle; economics of travel by private vehicle shall be considered;
  2. Fees and registration costs for conferences and meetings;
  3. Hotel or motel fees at a single-room rate;
  4. Expenditures for meals incurred at a per diem rate established for regular and high-cost locations (see Procedure 6213); and
  5. Such incidental expenses as parking fees, reasonable duplication costs and the like which are incurred for the benefit of the district.
  6. A director may be reimbursed for gratuities not exceeding customary percentages for the cost of meals as well as reasonable amounts for such services as baggage handling when the costs are incurred while the individual is engaged in district business or other approved travel.
- B. **Expenses of Others.** Likewise, the expenses of the superintendent and other school representatives chosen by the directors to attend any conferences or meetings or to attend to any urgent business at the behest of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction or the Board of Directors shall be paid. The school district may pay the actual and necessary expenses for travel, lodging and meals a superintendent candidate incurs when they attend an employment interview in the school district.
- C. **Advances.** The school directors, school superintendent, other school representatives or superintendent candidates may be advanced sufficient sums to cover their anticipated expenses in accordance with rules and regulations promulgated by the state auditor and which shall substantially conform to the procedures provided in [RCW 43.03.150](#) through [43.03.210](#).
- D. **Compensation.** Each board member may receive compensation of \$50 per day or portion thereof for attending board meetings and for performing other services on behalf of the school district, not to exceed the maximum amount set by statute, which is currently \$4,800 per year. The district calculates this on a calendar year. Such compensation shall come from locally collected excess levy funds available for that purpose, and shall be in addition to reimbursement of expenses paid to such director by the school district.

This includes:

- Graduation ceremony
- WSSDA/NSBA conference
- Other local, state, and national conferences
- Board committees for District workgroups (e.g., Citizens Advisory Committee, Diversity Advisory Council, SPS Foundation)
- Travel to Olympia or another locale as a representative or advocate for the district
- As a representative of the district with a third party (e.g., Greater Spokane, Inc., another school district or other governmental entity). Board members will not be compensated for attendance at functions like luncheons and programs where they are not actively participating.

- Public Hearing
- Attendance at any other meeting or function for a period of two (2) or more hours including travel time in the capacity of a school board member or for the purpose of representing the school district.

E. **Waivers.** Any board member may waive all or any portion of his/her compensation for any month or months during his/her term of office, by written waiver filed with the district. The waiver must be filed by the director before the date on which the compensation would otherwise be paid. The waiver shall specify the month or period of months for which it is made.

XIII. **Vacancies.** In case of a vacancy from any cause on the Board of Directors, such vacancy shall be filled as provided by law. As noted in Policy 1200(2), excessive absenteeism can result in a position being declared vacant.

When a vacancy occurs on the board, it is in the best interest of the district to encourage as many able citizens as possible to consider becoming a school director. The board shall appoint the nominee who in the judgment of at least three members of the board is most likely to contribute to the growth and development of the district's educational programs and operations.

XIV. **Censoring/Reprimanding Board Members.** 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, refusal to attend to conflicts of interest, engaging in prohibited acts, failure to abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the board, and failure to attend to duties and commitments. Concerns regarding school board members will be communicated to the School Board President and Superintendent.

XV. **Student Advisor.** There shall be, during the school year, two high school students serving as advisors to the Board of Directors. The student advisors will participate in board discussions, but will not have the right to make motions, vote, hold board offices, or attend executive sessions. The student advisors shall serve as the student voice, both to the board from students and the board to students. As such, the student advisor will:

- Provide student insight and perspective to the Board of Directors and district administration;
- Serve as a formal linkage to the students of Spokane Public Schools through the established student government and communications networks;
- Report to students about the work of the school district and the Board of Directors; and,
- Create two-way communication by bringing student issues to the board and communicating the issues and projects the board is working on back to the students.

All student advisors will serve a one-year term unless the board decides to reappoint a student to a second year.

In order to achieve representation from each high school, applications will be received from schools on a rotating basis. Each student will serve as an alternate for the other. In order to achieve representation from the high schools on an equitable basis, the two schools represented by students during any given year shall not be eligible to submit student applications for the following school year.

Cross References:

[Policy 1200\(2\)](#) Board Meetings (Attendance and Absence)

[Policy 1805](#) Open Government Training

Legal References:

[RCW 28A.320.040](#) Directors – Bylaws for board and school government  
[RCW 28A.320.050](#) Reimbursement of Expenses, Advancing Anticipated Expenses  
[RCW 28A.330.010](#) Board President, Vice President, Secretary  
[RCW 28A.330.020](#) Certain Board Elections, Manner and Vote Required  
[RCW 28A.330.030](#) Duties of the President  
[RCW 28A.330.040](#) Duties of Vice President  
[RCW 28A.330.050](#) Duties of the Superintendent as secretary of the board  
[RCW 28A.330.080](#) Payment of Claims – Signing of warrants  
[RCW 28A.330.100](#) Additional Powers of the Board  
[RCW 28A.330.200](#) Organization of the board – Assumption of superintendent’s duties by board member, when  
  
[RCW 28A.343.300](#) Director, Elections, Terms, Numbers  
[RCW 28A.343.320](#) Directors, Declaration of Candidacy  
[RCW 28A.343.330](#) Directors, Ballots, Form  
[RCW 28A.343.340](#) Directors, When Elected, Eligibility  
[RCW 28A.343.350](#) Residency  
[RCW 28A.343.360](#) Directors, Oath of Office  
[RCW 28A.343.370](#) Directors, Filling Vacancies  
[RCW 28A.343.390](#) Directors – Quorum – Failure to attend meetings  
[RCW 28A.343.400](#) Directors, Compensation, Waiver  
[RCW 28A.400.030](#) Superintendent Duties  
[RCW 29A.04.151](#) Residence  
[RCW 29A.24.171](#) Reopening of Filing, Before Eleventh Tuesday Before Primary Vacancies in office.  
  
[RCW 29A.24.181](#) Reopening of Filing, After Eleventh Tuesday Before Primary Regular filing period — Voids in candidacy.  
  
[RCW 29A.24.191](#) Scheduled Election Lapses, When  
[RCW 29A.20.030](#) Local Officers, Beginning of Terms, Organization of District Boards of Directors  
  
[RCW 29A.60.280](#) (recodified pursuant to 2013 c 11 § 93. Local Elected Officials, Commencement of Term of Office – Purpose  
  
[RCW 29A.76.010](#) Redistricting by counties, municipal corporations, and special purpose districts  
  
[RCW 42.12.010](#) Causes of Vacancy  
[RCW 42.17A.700](#) Elected and appointed officials, candidates, and appointees – Reports of financial affairs and gifts  
  
[RCW 43.03.150-210](#) Procedures Relating to Advance Payment of Travel Chapter 28A.345  
RCW Washington State School Directors Association

[AGO 1975 No. 8](#); Vacancy upon voluntary change of residence out of director district (note modification by 1999 amendment codified as RCW 28A.343.350)

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Superintendent: Dr. Adam Swinyard

## **Role of the Board, Code of Conduct, and Protocol for Handling Citizen Correspondence Attachment A to Policy 1100**

### **A. Code of Conduct**

Spokane Public Schools is governed by a board, not by individual directors. While understanding their separate roles, the board and superintendent work together as a “governance team”. This team assumes collective responsibility to work together and create a positive organizational culture in order to lead effectively.

The primary responsibilities of the board are to set a direction for the district, provide a structure by establishing policies, ensure accountability and provide community leadership on behalf of the district and public education. To fulfill these responsibilities, there are a number of specific jobs that effective boards must carry out.

The board must fulfill its statutory duties specified in RCW 28A.150.230 by adopting policies to:

1. Establish performance criteria and an evaluation process for its certificated personnel, including administrative staff, and for all programs constituting a part of such district’s curriculum.
2. Adopt, evaluate and update policies consistent with the law and the district’s vision and goals.
3. Maintain accountability for student learning by adopting the district curriculum and monitoring student progress.
4. Hire and support the superintendent so that the vision, goals, and policies of the district can be implemented.
5. Conduct regular and timely evaluations of the superintendent based on the vision, goals and performance of the district, and ensure that the superintendent holds district personnel accountable.
6. Adopt a fiscally responsible budget based on the district’s vision and goals, and regularly monitor the fiscal health of the district.
7. Ensure that a safe and appropriate educational environment is provided to all students.

8. Establish a framework for the district's collective bargaining process and adopt responsible agreements.
9. Provide community leadership on educational issues and advocate on behalf of students and public education at the local, state and federal levels.
10. Determine the final assignment of staff, whether certificated or classified, according to the board enumerated classroom and program needs.
11. Determine the amount of instructional hours necessary for any student to acquire a quality education.
12. Determine the allocation of staff time, whether certificated or classified.
13. Establish final curriculum standards consistent with law and rules of the superintendent of public instruction.
14. Evaluate teaching materials, including textbooks, teaching aids, handouts, or other printed material in public meeting upon complaint.

To accomplish these goals each director commits to:

1. Operate openly, with trust and integrity with no hidden agendas.
2. Govern in a dignified and professional manner, treating everyone with civility and respect.
3. Govern within board-adopted policies and procedures.
4. Take collective responsibility for the board's performance.
5. Periodically evaluate our effectiveness as a group.
6. Ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform board deliberations.
7. Keep focused on learning and achievement for all students.
8. Attend all regularly scheduled board meetings insofar as possible and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings.
9. Recognize that the superintendent is the board's advisor and should be present at all meetings, except when the board is considering the superintendent's evaluation, contract or salary.
10. Respect the right of the public to attend, observe and participate in all open board meetings.
11. Respect the right of the public to be informed about district decisions and school operations as allowed by law.
12. 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.

13. Respect the right of other board members to have and voice opinions and ideas that differ.
14. Maintain respect for our colleagues on the board without ridicule and personal attacks.
15. Recognize that decisions are made by a majority vote and will be supported by all board members.
16. Make decisions only after the facts are presented and discussed.
17. Take action only after hearing the superintendent's recommendations.
18. Comply with the open Public Meetings Act and make decisions only after full discussion at publicly held board meetings.
19. Render all decisions based on the available facts and independent judgment and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups.
20. Set the standards for the district through board policy; board members do not manage the district on a day-to-day basis.
21. Observe the chain of command and refer problems or complaints to the proper administrative office.
22. Present personal criticism of district operations to the superintendent, not to the district staff or at a board meeting.
23. Give the staff the respect and consideration due skilled professional employees.
24. Communicate to other board members and the superintendent expression of public reaction to board policies and school programs.
25. Inform self about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed information, such as those sponsored by the state and national school boards association.
26. Support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as school staff and insist on a regular and impartial evaluation of all staff.
27. Refuse to use board membership for personal or family gain or prestige; announce conflict of interest before board action is taken.
28. Refuse to bring personal or family interests or problems into board consideration.
29. Take no private action that will compromise the board or administration and respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law.
30. Agree that the board makes decisions as a team. Individual board members may not commit the board to any action.
31. Remember that the first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the public schools.

## B. Role of the Board

The role of the board is TO:

- Adopt policy
- Make decisions
- Prioritize resources
- Be accountable to the public
- Lead by example
- Communicate and listen
- Turn input into policy
- Advocate for public schools
- Create a positive environment

The role of the board is NOT to:

- Micromanage
- Create discord
- Shortcut chain of leadership
- Use office for personal agenda
- Create surprises

## C. Protocol for Handling Citizen Correspondence

- I. The board president will annually appoint one director to serve as primary board responder to citizen correspondence, the citizen correspondence secretary, who is authorized to initiate and manage Board response to written, patron concerns directed to the entire board.
- II. Citizen Correspondence Directed to the Entire Board
  - a. When citizen correspondence to the board is received, either by mail or electronically, the message shall be forwarded to all board members with a notation that it was addressed to the entire board and is being handled by the citizen correspondence secretary.
  - b. The citizen correspondence secretary will categorize the correspondence as one of three types; one of information exchange, one of concerns regarding events or operations at a specific school or one requiring or requesting board action/consideration. In all cases, the original correspondence and any response will be distributed to the entire board and superintendent in that week's board correspondence, at which time any appropriate board consideration or action would commence.
    - i. Examples of "information exchange" correspondences would include citizens sharing information with the board or a citizen requesting information regarding existing board/district policy. In these cases, the citizen correspondence secretary will contact the citizen to clarify any concerns and convey any requested information regarding existing board/district policy. The citizen correspondence secretary will also let the citizen know that all board members would be receiving a copy of the original message in that week's board correspondence and if any further discussion resulted, the citizen would be notified.

- ii. Examples of “concerns regarding events or operations within the district” would include any member of the public (including an employee) questioning policy or procedures at a specific school, a patron voicing concerns about a particular teacher or staff member at a school or concerns about operations within the district. In these cases, the citizen correspondence secretary will contact the patron acknowledging receipt of the correspondence and assure them it will be shared with the entire board in that week’s board correspondence. The patron will also be informed that the board is not involved in the day-to-day district operations nor procedures at specific schools. The patron will be referred to the superintendent’s office for attention and resolution and the correspondence will be forwarded to the superintendent’s office as well.
- iii. Examples of “board action” correspondences would be a citizen either requesting the board either consider or act on a particular issue or concern or any correspondence that required some action by the board to occur. In these cases, the citizen correspondence secretary will contact the citizen to clarify any concerns and inform them that their correspondence necessitates board action or consideration that can only occur at a board meeting. The citizen will be informed that their correspondence will be forwarded to the board president and superintendent for agenda consideration and that copies of the original message will be distributed to all board members in that week’s board correspondence. The citizen correspondence secretary will also follow-up with the citizen after any subsequent board action or consideration regarding the original communication.

### III. Citizen Correspondence Addressed to Individual Board Members

#### a. General Rule

When citizen correspondence is directed to individual board members, such board members shall use their discretion in how to respond, keeping in mind the three principles that guide the correspondence secretary with respect to matters addressed to the Board as a whole.

#### b. Exceptions

##### i. Media

Correspondence from members of the media shall be directed to the board president and superintendent.

##### ii. Litigants

Correspondence from persons whom the board member reasonably believes either have pending administrative or judicial litigation with the district or may be preparing to bring some administrative or judicial claim, shall be directed to the board president and superintendent, who shall confer with legal counsel regarding a response.

##### iii. Items addressed to each board member individually

If such correspondence comes initially to the executive assistant to the board, they shall make a notation so that each board member knows that it was directed to other

members of the board as well.

Board members shall use their judgment on whether to respond individually or not. One of the correspondence secretary or the board president, as may be worked out between the two of them, is encouraged to respond promptly, so that other board members will be able to see the response in that week's board correspondence, and make their decision on whether to respond themselves accordingly.

c. Copies to Other Board Members

As a general rule, unless such correspondence is of a predominantly personal nature, if it is written, the board member shall forward a copy to the executive assistant for the board, for later inclusion in "Board Correspondence", to be promptly distributed to all board members.