

SANTA ROSA COUNTY  
SCHOOL BOARD  
OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL



**BOARD MEMBERS**

Linda Sanborn – District 1

Elizabeth Hewey – District 2

Carol Boston – District 3

Charles Elliot – District 4

Wei Ueberschaer – District 5

Dr. Karen Barber, Superintendent

Terry Harmon, Sniffen & Spellman, School Board Attorney

Mission: Preparing Students for Success by Providing a Superior, Relevant Education

Vision: Our Students Will Be Productive, Successful Contributors to Society

# **Table of Contents**

**New Member Welcome Letter**

**School Board Operating Procedures**

- I. Orientation of New School Board Members**
- II. Powers and Duties of the School Board**
- III. Public Records Law**
- IV. School Board Meeting and Workshop Protocol**
- V. School Board Member Protocol**
- VI. Chairperson Protocol**
- VII. Vice Chairperson Protocol**
- VIII. Communication with Superintendent**
- IX. Communication with School Board Attorney**
- X. Communication with District Administrators and Employees**
- XI. Communication with the Public**
- XII. Communication with the Media**
- XIII. Official Capacity Travel**
- XIV. Dues and Fees**
- XV. School Board Office, Equipment and Supplies**
- XVI. Assignment of School Board Members to Committees**
- XVII. Vacancies**



SANTA ROSA  
C O U N T Y  
DISTRICT  
SCHOOLS

*Mission: Preparing Students for Success by Providing a Superior, Relevant Education*

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Dear Newly Elected School Board Member,

***Congratulations on your election and welcome to the Santa Rosa County School Board.***

On behalf of the entire board, I congratulate you for being elected to the Santa Rosa County School Board. Now that it's official, we'd like to make your transition from private citizen to elected official as smooth as possible.

There are a few things you will need to know regarding laws that govern your position. They are very important to understand so that you can be successful as a board member. The Santa Rosa County School District provides each school board member with membership in the Florida School Boards Association, Inc. (FSBA). FSBA is a non-profit corporation representing elected school boards in Florida and provides professional development and training for members. You are encouraged to attend their upcoming annual conference in Tampa, Florida. Please contact our school board secretary, Melanie Pattullo, at 850-983-5010 and she will assist you with registration and reservations.

**Oath of Office**

The Florida Department of Education will send you a letter containing an Oath of Office and Acceptance form, a request for a commission fee which the Board Member is responsible to pay and bond information for your term of office which the district will handle. When you receive this information from the DOE, please contact the school board secretary. She will assist you in completing the forms in the appropriate timeframe.

Your swearing-in ceremony will be scheduled prior to your first board meeting. We encourage you to invite any family and friends you would like to attend to witness your taking the Oath of Office. A judge will perform the ceremony and you are welcome to have your family stand with you with a member holding a Bible or other sacred book for you to place your left hand on during the oath.

**Organization meeting**

The organization meeting will be your first board meeting and is statutorily set for the second Tuesday following the general election. At this meeting, the Superintendent will preside as the chairperson as the board elects a chairperson and vice chairperson. The board will also approve a meeting calendar through the next organization meeting.

**School Board Operating Procedures Manual**

The school board chairperson, vice-chairperson, and/or board secretary will meet with each newly elected or appointed school board member prior to the reorganization meeting or their first board meeting to present and discuss the *School Board Operating Procedures Manual*.

New school board members are encouraged to attend trainings offered by the Florida School Boards Association, Inc. (FSBA) that are specifically designed to orient them in their new position. FSBA also has an informative website, [www.fsba.org](http://www.fsba.org) and is readily accessible by phone (850-414-2578).

Once again, congratulations on your election to the school board. Our board, in partnership with the Superintendent, make up the leadership team of the Santa Rosa School District and we know that your success is our success and ultimately that of the students in our district.

Kind regards,

Wei Ueberschaer  
Santa Rosa County School Board Chairperson

# **School Board Operating Procedures**

## **I. Orientation of New School Board Members**

The Superintendent shall provide a newly elected or appointed School Board member with a comprehensive orientation. At that time, they will be provided either copies or electronic links to the Florida School Laws, State Board of Education rules, the Santa Rosa County School Board policies, the current collective bargaining agreements, the current district budget, and other documents the Superintendent deems essential to an understanding of the operation of the school district.

The Superintendent shall set aside such time as is necessary to answer any questions arising from the study of these documents and shall cooperate fully in assisting the new member to become an informed and active board member.

The Board Attorney shall set aside such time as is necessary to provide legal information and answer any questions concerning school law that the new member may have and shall cooperate fully in assisting the new member to become an informed and active board member.

## **II. Powers and Duties of the School Board**

The powers and duties of the school board are described in Florida State Statutes 1001.42. It can also be found online at [Chapter 1001 Section 42 - 2018 Florida Statutes - The Florida Senate \(flsenate.gov\)](http://www.flsenate.gov/Chapter%201001%20Section%2042%20-%202018%20Florida%20Statutes)

The School Board shall:

- approve the vision and mission for the district
- approve the district strategic directions and strategic goals
- monitor progress towards the strategic goals
- align resources
- establish accountability measures
- incorporate continuous improvement
- build a positive culture
- form collaborative relationships necessary to achieve district goals

## **III. Public Records Law**

It is very important that new school board members familiarize themselves with Florida's Public Records Laws, also known as the Sunshine Laws, located at [Florida Attorney General - Open Government \(myflsunshine.com\)](http://www.myflsunshine.com). Once elected or

appointed, these laws govern members' actions. School board members will be required to complete four (4) hours of ethics training each year, which will help familiarize them with the Sunshine Laws. This training is offered in conjunction with the FSBA annual conference or through other sources that can be provided to new board members by the school board secretary.

#### **IV. School Board Meeting Protocol**

- **Preparation for the Meeting**

Board members will read the agenda and all attachments prior to the meetings. Board members will come to meetings well-prepared having reviewed and researched supporting material and other pertinent information. It is important that decisions be based on information and facts, not personal feelings.

Typically, the meeting agenda will have an Administrative Agenda and an Action Agenda. The Administrative Agenda is a consent agenda that is acted on in one resolution and contains those items that are routine in nature and that all board members will generally agree to approve. Items will be removed from the Administrative Agenda and acted on separately at the request of any Board member. The Action Agenda items will be taken individually.

- **Standards & Behavior**

Conduct at meetings is important. To have a well-functioning, highly effective board, members must keep focus on the business of the district and the welfare of the students. Board members will treat each other, staff, and citizens with respect. Board members will voice opinions respectfully and maintain good relations with other Board members, the Superintendent, administrators, staff, and members of the public. Board members will listen with an open mind and consider each other's views using common courtesy and respect.

- **Participation**

Board meetings are for decision-making, action, and votes and not for unnecessary discussion, speeches, self-serving talk, or off-topic matters. Board members agree to effectively employ parliamentary procedures to facilitate a smooth meeting. Through active listening, Board members will remain focused on discussions. Board members will enhance efficiency of meetings by keeping discussions within the context of the agenda items and by avoiding sidebar conversations.

- **Avoid surprises**

For issues to be sufficiently addressed, the Board, Superintendent, and staff need information ahead of time. Board members will not bring any unexpected items

up for discussions. Board members wanting to place items on or remove items from the agenda will discuss this with the Superintendent prior to meetings.

- **Avoid unnecessary dialog**

The Board recognizes the value of public input on educational issues and the importance of allowing citizens an opportunity to express themselves on such issues. Public comment time is designed for members of the public to talk and for Board members to listen. Board members agree to listen attentively and to not dialog. The Board chairperson or Superintendent will respond for the board. Board members agree to make people feel welcome and to show them respect with our words and actions.

- **Support the decision**

The power of School Boards exists as a corporate board (the majority of the Board), not as individuals. After a vote on any issue, it becomes a Board's position regardless of whether a Board member voted on the prevailing side. Board members agree to support the majority decision of the Board no matter how each member voted individually on the issue.

- **Workshops**

Workshops are intended as a forum for presenting background information that is considered too lengthy for a regular school board meeting. Also, workshops may be used to engage in preliminary discussions of unfamiliar issues or topics, but only to gain a sense of the information necessary to understand the issue. In depth discussions that head down the decision-making trail should be routed to a regular board meeting. No action will be taken by the Board at workshops.

- **Executive/Closed sessions**

These meetings will be held only for appropriate subjects and only when specific needs arise such as strategy for contract negotiations or pending litigation. No Board action will be taken during these sessions. Board members agree to be extremely sensitive to the legal ramifications of their comments and agree to maintain confidentiality of information and discussions conducted during these sessions.

- **Special/Emergency Meetings**

These meetings may be called by the Superintendent or by the request of the Board chairperson or majority of the members of the School Board. Actions taken

at these meetings shall have the same force and effect as if taken at a regular meeting.

- **Student Hearings**

In accordance with Florida Statutes 1006.07(1)(a) [Chapter 1006 Section 07 - 2021 Florida Statutes \(flsenate.gov\)](#), the School Board decides all student expulsion recommendations from the Superintendent. Expulsion hearings are governed by Florida Statutes 120.569 [Chapter 120 Section 569 - 2021 Florida Statutes \(flsenate.gov\)](#) and 120.57 [Chapter 120 Section 57 - 2021 Florida Statutes \(flsenate.gov\)](#) and are exempt from Florida Statute 286.011 [Chapter 286 Section 011 - 2021 Florida Statutes \(flsenate.gov\)](#) (Government in the Sunshine Law). Students are entitled to due process which includes the right of notice and a fair hearing prior to expulsion. These hearings are limited to only the topic on hand and typically have no public attendance.

- **Items from Board Members**

Board members may contact the Superintendent if they wish to place an item on the agenda and the Superintendent will make the decision as to whether to do so. Board members will be given an opportunity during each meeting to comment about items not on the agenda.

## **V. School Board Member Protocol**

- **Avoid micromanaging**

The basic powers and responsibilities of the School Board are defined in Florida Statute 1001.42 [Chapter 1001 Section 42 - 2021 Florida Statutes \(flsenate.gov\)](#). Powers and duties of the School Board includes the organization and control of the schools and the adoption of policy. The Superintendent's responsibilities, as defined in Florida Statute 1001.51 [Chapter 1001 Section 51 - 2021 Florida Statutes \(flsenate.gov\)](#), includes the execution and administration of all policies, the management of the schools, the supervision of instruction, and the direction and supervision of all employees. There is a distinct line between the Board's governance and the Superintendent's administrative role. Board members agree to not cross over the line of governance to administration and allow the Superintendent to perform their administrative duties without interference.

- **District Personnel matters**

By Florida statute, School Board create policies and procedures for personnel matters and the Superintendent directs and supervises all employees. Board members understand that the Superintendent has ultimate accountability for all



staff, therefore it is their responsibility to manage them. Board members agree to not direct, manage, or evaluate staff.

- **Chain of Command**

It is important that concerns or complaints from citizens or staff be properly addressed. However, the School Board should be the last stop in the complaint process. Board members have no authority to solve problems, but they can ensure that they are properly addressed. Board members agree to refer each concern to the relevant person or department. Board members agree that personnel concerns will be directed to the applicable school administrator, department leadership, or to the Superintendent. All personnel complaints and criticisms received by the board, or its individual members, will be directed to the Superintendent. Board members shall not give directives to any school administrator or employee, publicly or privately.

- **Site Visits**

Board members are encouraged to visit schools and attend events. However, it is important to respect staff time and follow individual campus visitor guidelines.

Board members agree to do the following when visiting sites:

- Check in with the front office and have them notify the principal
- Make an appointment in advance with the principal if the visit will be lengthy
- Not give direction to staff or students
- Not evaluate staff
- Communicate any concerns from the visit with the Superintendent

- **Serve as ambassadors**

It is important that Board members support the district when attending community meeting or events or talking to the media. While out in public, Board members agree to emphasize the positive aspects of the district and be advocates for students, the district and public education. Personal Board member views will not be expressed as the view of the School Board.

- **Overview of School Board and Superintendent Responsibilities**

<b>School Board</b>	<b>Superintendent</b>
Governs, Guides and Directs	Administers, Operates and Manages
Decides What	Decides How
Requests Information	Seeks and Provides Information
Considers Issues	Provides Recommendations

Creates, Reviews and Adopts Policies	Implements
Monitors Progress	Reports Progress
Designates Positions & Approves Job Descriptions	Directs Employees' Work and Recommends Job Duties
Acts on Personnel Recommendations	Nominates Personnel for Positions
Reviews and Approves Budget	Formulates the Budget
Represents the Public Interest	Acts in the Public Interest

## **VI. Chairperson Protocol**

The School Board Chairperson will:

- preside over all board meetings following school board policy and Robert's Rules of Order.
- prior to each board meeting communicate with the Superintendent to discuss the agenda to maximize the meeting's efficiency and productivity.
- work collaboratively with the Superintendent to plan, organize, and facilitate the board workshops and leadership discussions.
- have the same rights and privileges as all other Board members, including the right to make motions, speak in debate, and to vote on all items. Substantive or main motions can be moved by the chairperson, but it is advisable for motions to be initiated from members other than the chairperson.
- be accessible and work cooperatively with the board secretary.
- be responsible for promoting a cooperative team atmosphere among the Board members, Superintendent, Board attorney and district staff.
- be expected to attend the Florida School Board Association (FSBA) chairperson training.
- work with the Superintendent to appoint ad hoc committees, as needed, with Board input and approval.
- set aside personal views when speaking or answering correspondence on behalf of the board.
- initiate updating the *School Board Operating Procedures Manual*.
- ensure all Board members have a current copy of the *School Board Operating Procedures Manual*.

## **VII. Vice Chairperson Protocol**

The School Board Vice Chairperson will:

- preside over meetings and workshops in the absence of the chairperson.
- accept the duties as delegated by the chairperson.
- serve as the spokesperson at events in the absence of the chairperson.

## **VIII. Communication with Superintendent**

The Superintendent will inform the Board of pertinent activities of the district. If an activity is likely to be in the media, the Board will be informed first. The Superintendent will include the School Board members in the distribution of any press releases. If an incident is deemed to be of a critical nature, information will be relayed to the Board members directly from either the Superintendent, Assistant to the Superintendent, or Public Information and Family Outreach Officer.

Board members are encouraged to inform the Superintendent of any communications they receive from district stakeholders and the media, whether positive or negative in nature. This can provide valuable information to the Superintendent.

The Superintendent takes direction from the Board as a whole. Individual Board members should refrain from making requests of the Superintendent, except for explanation or clarification, and from giving direction to the Superintendent regarding district operations. If a Board member request will require substantial investment of time or resources in order to respond, the Superintendent shall advise the member that the matter should be raised at a regular meeting of the Board to see if a majority of the Board authorizes the Superintendent to proceed.

#### **IX. Communication with School Board Attorney**

The School Board attorney will act as the legal advisor to the board, the Superintendent, and the district. The School Board attorney may provide information and opinions to individual Board members concerning matters affecting them in their official capacity; provided, however, that if the request will require substantial investment of time or resources in order to respond, the School Board attorney shall advise the member that the matter should be raised at a regular meeting of the Board to see if a majority of the Board authorizes the Board attorney to proceed. The School Board attorney shall represent the School Board should a conflict occur between the Superintendent and the School Board.

#### **X. Communication with District Administrators and Employees**

Board members are encouraged to channel formal communications to district administrators and other employees through the Superintendent. Board members shall include the Superintendent in requests for explanations and clarification from district administrators and other employees.

#### **XI. Communication with the Public**

All correspondence related to a Board member's position is subject to Public Records laws. It is the responsibility of each Board member to maintain appropriate Public Records of emails. This can most easily be accomplished by using the district email system (@santarosa.k12.fl.us) for communication.

If a call is received by the board secretary and requests to speak directly with Board members, the appropriate phone number will be given to them. If the caller wishes to leave a message for the Board member, the board secretary will take the message and handle appropriately. If the caller requests their comments be shared with all Board members, an email is sent.

Board members may face challenges regarding their use of social media. The school district has systems and resources that are used to communicate with families, employees, and the public with oversight procedures to ensure content is archived for records retention and control of confidential information. Board members should exercise the greatest caution using their private social media accounts. If a discussion or post on a Board member's private social media starts to move into a discussion of board or district business, the Board member should immediately advise the other person(s) to send that concern via the district email system (@santarosa.k12.fl.us) and maintain the appropriate public records or forward the records to the district for retention.

In addition, to the extent that a Board member had a campaign-related social media site, the Board member should consider either closing the site (after capturing any applicable public records) or letting it sit dormant since that site could be confused with an official, district sponsored communication tool. A suggested message is: *Please note that I will no longer be monitoring this Facebook page since I am now a sitting School Board Member, and I will be using official resources regarding the public education in Santa Rosa County. Please email me at [@santarosa.k12.fl.us](mailto:@santarosa.k12.fl.us) or call me at XXX-XXX-XXXX and I will be happy to respond to your questions and assist where I can.*

Board members are encouraged to refer communication that are operational in nature to the Superintendent. If the matter may be resolved by an administrator, Board members may direct the concerned party to the appropriate staff member. However, the Board member should inform the Superintendent of the concern. It is common for a person to contact multiple Board members to share thoughts, ideas, and issues. It is a violation of Sunshine Law for the person to act as an intermediary or liaison to transmit views and opinions of one Board member to another. Members of the public may not be aware that this is not permissible. Board members shall educate the person that sharing opinions of Board members not in a public meeting is a Sunshine Law violation. Board members are encouraged not to include the other Board members in their email responses.

Board members are encouraged to report any viewed item of concern or in need of attention to the Superintendent so that prompt, correct information can be disseminated, or issues can be addressed in a timely manner.

## **XII. Communication with the Media**

The School Board recognizes the value of maintaining a positive and productive relationship with its media partners. As individually elected officials, individual Board members may respond to questions from the Press. Individual Board members are encouraged to also coordinate their responses with the Superintendent so that a clear and unified message is presented. When offering independent opinions or views, individual Board members should make it clear that responses do not necessarily reflect the view of the School Board or of other Board members.

Board members are encouraged to coordinate with the Superintendent for accurate data and information when responding to media requests. As a courtesy, Board members shall inform the Superintendent when contacted by the Media and the subject of the contact.

## **XIII. Official Capacity Travel**

Funds are allocated within the budget for Board members' official travel.

### **In district travel**

Board members may be reimbursed for travel to meetings, workshops, graduations, groundbreakings, ribbon cuttings, and other events considered as official actions of the Board. The office of each Board member shall be his/her place of residence and all in district travel shall be computed on this basis in accordance Florida Statute 1001.39 [Chapter 1001 Section 39 - 2021 Florida Statutes \(flsenate.gov\)](http://www.flsenate.gov).

### **Out of district travel**

Board members who are elected/appointed to serve on other boards or committees (FSBA or NSBA for example), may incur travel expenses due to their roles or responsibilities in attending work-related conferences and/or meetings while representing the school district. Board members shall coordinate travel arrangements with the school board secretary. All out of district travel by Board members that exceed the statutory limit shall be subject to approval of the School Board. [Chapter 1001 Section 39 - 2021 Florida Statutes \(flsenate.gov\)](http://www.flsenate.gov)

## **XIV. Dues and Fees**

Dues to organizations, such as the Florida School Boards Associations, and registration fees to attend board-related conferences will be paid by the district budget line item assigned as such.

## **XV. School Board Office, Equipment and Supplies**

Offices and equipment are not provided for Board members, with the exception of a computer provided for use during School Board meetings and workshops. Board members needing meeting space shall coordinate with the School Board secretary. All individuals meeting with Board members must follow district visitor protocols.

Board members will receive a district identification/security badge. Individual purchasing card (pcard) may be issued to each Board member. Board members should sign their card when it is received. Board members are individually responsible for keeping their pcard for the length of their term. Some travel expenses, such as meals, may not be paid with the pcard and are subject to reimbursement.

#### **XVI. Assignment of School Board Members to Committees**

Board members are invited to serve on various district committees. Appointments should be discussed during a regular Board meeting with the official appointment being made by the Board chairperson. Committee assignments shall be reviewed by the Board chairperson annually.

Board members serving on FSBA, NSABA or community committees shall be nominated and approved by the school board at a regular meeting.

If a Board member is asked as an individual, not as a School Board member, to serve on a community committee, the decision would be a personal one. No board discussion is necessary. When serving as an individual community member, the Board member does not represent or speak for the district or the School Board.

#### **XVII. Vacancies**

The office of any Board member shall be vacant when the member removes his or her residence from the residence area from which he/she was elected. All vacancies on the School Board shall be filled by appointment by the Governor as directed in Florida Statute 1001.38 [Chapter 1001 Section 38 - 2021 Florida Statutes \(flsenate.gov\)](http://www.flsenate.gov)

**School Board members agree to abide by the protocols in the *Santa Rosa County School Board Operating Procedures Manual*. In addition, we agree to always act professionally, knowing that the office we hold is held to a high standard of behavior. School Board members' conduct will be a model throughout the district for students, teachers, parents, and staff on how problems are resolved.**

**Moreover, we collectively and individually agree that we each are responsible for making each other aware of any violation of this operating procedures manual, as allowed by law, and expect corrective action to be taken as necessary.**