

SAMPLE GOVERNANCE TEAM OPERATING NORMS/PROTOCOLS

Describe your purpose for committing to agreeing on operating procedures for your governance team.

The governance team agrees to:

Operate in a manner that reflects:

- Trust
- Integrity
- Positive Communication
- Hard Work
- Respect
- Equity (All Students Matter)
- Consistency
- Accountability
- Excellence
- Honesty

A. Governance Roles and Responsibilities

The governance team agrees to:

- Lead as a unified team with the superintendent, each in their respective roles with strong collaboration and mutual trust
- Always put students first when making decisions and keep student achievement as the main focus of board actions
- Educate students – ethically and with fiscal responsibility
- Follow the Code of Conduct and disclose any conflicts of interest
- Not micromanage the superintendent in the day-to-day operations of the district
- Operate with the understanding that the school board and the superintendent have leadership roles that are interconnected but different
- Lead as a united team with the superintendent, each in their respective roles with strong collaboration and mutual trust
- Act as a policymaking body separate from the roles and responsibilities authorized to the superintendent
- Establish and follow its written policies, while continuing to annually study and review policies for effectiveness
- Commit to accountability and spend less time on operational issues and maximum time focused on policies to improve student achievement
- Fiscal accountability managing and aligning finances to meet the needs of strategic plan implementation

- Have the superintendent keep board members informed regarding personnel decisions for key positions in the district, which may involve an executive session before the board votes vote on the Personnel Report at its regular monthly meeting

Applicable Domains

Domain 1: Governance Structure

Domain 8: Ethics

B. Chief Executive Officer

The governance team agrees to:

- Designate the superintendent as chief executive officer fully delegating authority to provide educational leadership, manage daily operations and perform all duties assigned by law
- Operate as a governance team with the superintendent as a key member
- Establish the superintendent’s annual performance goals jointly with the superintendent in alignment with the strategic plan and provide feedback to the superintendent at least bi-annually via formative and summative evaluation procedures

Applicable Domains

Domain 1: Governance Structure

Domain 2: Strategic Plan

C. Chain of Command

The governance team agrees that:

- It will follow the chain of command and insist that staff and all stakeholders do the same
- The superintendent is responsible and accountable for the day-to-day with equity and consistency
- Issues and concerns received by the Board or individual members will be referred to the superintendent
- The board will educate the public about the chain of command and instruct them to follow it when approached with requests about day-to-day operational issues

Applicable Domains

Domain 1: Governance Structure

D. Decision-Making Process

The governance team agrees to:

- Always put students first when making decisions, taxpayers a close second
- Support decisions made by the Board and/or administrative team once a decision is made
- Support the majority decision in the public, even when members voted in opposition
- Be open-minded and respectful of all opinions, seeking input from all sides
- Provide a safe space for communications for all stakeholders
- Be prepared and knowledgeable about educational issues and topics

Applicable Domains

Domain 1: Governance Structure

E. School Visits

The governance team agrees that:

- Board members wishing to visit schools must make arrangements with the district or school administrators at least 24 hours in advance unless they were invited directly by the school administration or district. If 24-hour notice is not possible, board members will send a quick text to the superintendent so he/she can notify the appropriate staff.
- All school visits must be conducted for an appropriate purpose
- Board members must follow visitor procedures
- Protocol does not preclude board members from attending school functions as a parent or as a community member

Applicable Domains

Domain 3: Board and Community Relations

F. Communication

The governance team agrees to:

- Ongoing, transparent communication with community stakeholders while maintaining confidentiality regarding sensitive matters, including items discussed in executive sessions, and refraining from discussing the intentions of fellow board members
- Incorporate good, timely, open, and constant communication
- Only utilize social media in a manner that adheres to all board policies, procedures, and regulations

Applicable Domains

Domain 3: Board and Community Relations

G. Communication Among Board Members/Superintendent

The governance team agrees to:

- Expect the superintendent to communicate with all board members regularly using selected modes
- Direct all stakeholders' questions, input, or discussion to the superintendent who will communicate them as needed to the board
- When a board member has information or data to share with other board members and/or staff, the board member will provide the information/data to the superintendent who will distribute it to pertinent parties
- When all five board members receive emails from constituents, the board chair will reply to all, include the superintendent on the thread, and inform the constituent that the superintendent will respond to the inquiry/request. If the superintendent and board are all copied on a constituent's email, then the superintendent will reply all in his/her response.
- Requests for information from individual board members to the superintendent that will likely require considerable time and effort must be approved by a majority of the board

Applicable Domains

Domain 3: Board and Community Relations

H. Communication with Staff

The governance team agrees that:

- There is an open line of communication between board members and the superintendent and board members may always contact the superintendent
- When board members have inquiries and/or concerns or have been notified of inquiries and/or concerns from stakeholders, they should refer the issue to the superintendent or his designee
- The superintendent is the only employee that reports directly to the Board of Education
- They will go through the superintendent when wanting to communicate with staff
- If there are concerns about a staff member, they will speak privately with the superintendent about it
- There will be no surprises during staff presentations at board meetings
- They will always be respectful to the staff

Applicable Domains

Domain 1: Governance Structure

Domain 3: Board and Community Relations

I. Self-Assessment

The governance team agrees to:

- Complete an annual governance team self-assessment aligned with the required eight domains
- Develop and implement action plans based on the self-assessment results
- Sign, annually, certification of the individual and collective commitment of the Georgia State Standards for School Boards and the Code of Ethics

Applicable Domains

All Domains, 1-8

J. Strategic Planning

The governance team agrees to:

- Commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision
- Make sure these goals remain their district's top priorities and that nothing detracts from them
- Have strong shared beliefs and values that meld the limitless possibilities for student learning with unshakeable confidence in the district's ability to teach all children at high levels
- Annually commit to support and report the action plans outlined in the district's strategic plan

Applicable Domains

Domain 2: Strategic Planning

K. Communication with the News Media

The governance team agrees to:

- Designate the board chair as the official spokesperson for the board when it pertains to matters of the board
- Embrace the superintendent or his designee as the official spokesperson for the school district
- A process to ensure that board members are kept informed of incidents, district positions, and position statements

Applicable Domains

Domain 3: Board and Community Relations

L. Social Media Communications

The governance team agrees to:

- Only utilize social media in a manner that adheres to all board policies, procedures, and regulations
- Use social media as a tool to promote positive and important news about the school district
- Not engage with the public on controversial topics on social media
- Not respond to negative comments on social media
- Be positive and mindful of how their actions on social media reflect on the whole Board
- Be mindful of posting about politics
- Stay away from responding during a crisis and rely on the district's social media sites to relay critical information

Applicable Domains

Domain 3: Board and Community Relations

M. Board Meetings

The governance team agrees to:

- Act and conduct the business of the school district before the public in a respectful and professional manner
- Focus a majority of its meeting time on student achievement issues
- Align actions items with the system's Strategic Plan
- Conduct board meetings that provide a strong force for the public and other stakeholders in forming their views and perception about the effectiveness of the governance team
- Establish procedures to ensure that meetings are in accordance with local board policy and the open meetings law
- Be on time and fully prepared to discuss and act on action items
- Dress appropriately – business casual at work sessions and board meetings; casual attire at board retreats
- Be recognized by the board chair before speaking following Roberts Rules of Order
- Be mindful of airtime so as to not monopolize the discussion
- No surprises for staff or fellow board members
- Use active listening skills during presentations from the staff and public comment – and no sidebar conversations or looking at their phones.
- Use the consent agenda appropriately
- Keep an open mind while listening to the opinions of fellow board members, staff, and the public
- Respect the confidentiality of items discussed during executive session

Applicable Domains

Domain 5: Meetings