



# POINT ISABEL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES CODE OF CONDUCT

**I realize that to be the most effective advocate for children we, as the Point Isabel I. S. D. Board of Trustees, must function as a team. To this end, I pledge to do my best to adhere to the principles listed below. Should I, for whatever reason, fail to follow these guidelines, I ask my fellow board members to call it to my attention. I pledge to accept the feedback without anger or finger pointing, and to renew my efforts to follow this Code of Conduct.**

1. I will always strive to put needs of children above the wants of adults and will make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of all children in the District regardless of ability, race, creed, ethnicity, sex or social standings.
2. I will follow board policy and will abide by the decisions of the Board of Trustees as a whole.
3. I will respect the role of the administration and will not encroach on administrative duties or attempt to micromanage the affairs of the Point Isabel Independent School District.
4. I will refer to the superintendent any and all complaints received by me from citizens, including students, parents and employees, where any action by the administration may be required.

I shall not try to solve complaints or grievances individually, except that I may counsel patrons or employees who inquire as to the correct procedure to be followed for the resolution of complaints or grievances either in person or on social media.

5. I will not conduct meetings with personnel.
6. I will not place myself in a position that may present a conflict of interest or that may bring into question the impartiality of the Board. In this regard, I will be cognizant of the fact that I may be called upon to sit as final arbiters in connection with grievances filed by employees or patrons, as well as due process hearings.
7. I will not make negative comments about Board Members, the district or district employees, either publicly or privately including the use of social media.
8. I will make a good faith effort to understand and accommodate the views of other board members.
9. When talking to another board member or the superintendent, it is my responsibility to alert that board member if I wish for the discussion to be confidential. What is said to me in confidence will remain in confidence.

10. I will not attempt to state or otherwise represent the position of another board member on any issue even if asked to do so by another board member. I understand any such matter needs to go on the board agenda for the entire board to hear, discuss, and take action on if applicable.
11. I will come to Board meetings prepared.
12. I will accept criticism without getting defensive or angry.
13. I will be on time to Board meetings or inform ahead of time when I will be late.
14. I will not put items on the agenda for the purpose of making a political statement, nor will I “play to the audience” at board meetings.
15. I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to school that, if disclosed, may needlessly injure individuals or the schools.
16. I will respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law or executive session.
17. I will not let pride, ego, grudges or other personal considerations influence my decision making or voting.
18. Other than general discussion, I will not discuss specific school-related issues with an employee of the district other than the superintendent or his/her designee.

Under normal circumstances, violations of the above guidelines will result in a warning to the individual board member by the Board as a whole. Repeated violations are strongly discouraged.

As soon as reasonable, after each Board election the Board of Trustees will conduct an orientation session to review these guidelines and will reaffirm these guidelines so that each board member will be aware of their existence, their duty to follow them, and the potential consequences of their failure to abide by them.

**POINT ISABEL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES**

**I. DEVELOPING BOARD MEETING AGENDA**

- A. Who can place items on the agenda?
  - 1. The tentative agenda is created by the administration and presented to the board president.
  - 2. The superintendent or the board president or any two board members collectively may place items on the agenda for presentation to the board.
  - 3. Board members must make a request to the board president, six working days in advance for any item they want to have considered for placement on the agenda.
  - 4. In accordance with Texas open meetings laws, no Board member can place an item on the agenda less than 72 hours in advance of the posted meeting, except in an emergency as defined by the Texas Government Code. All emergency meetings, due to health or safety reasons, may be posted two hours in advance.
  
- B. Items that cannot be on the agenda
  - 1. All personnel issues must be conducted in an executive session unless specifically required by the Texas Open Meetings Act.
  - 2. Anything that violates right to privacy, as defined by Texas Open Meetings Act and Texas Open Records Act cannot be placed on the agenda.
  
- C. Use of Consent Agenda
  - 1. If a board member has a concern with any consent agenda item he/she should call the superintendent prior to the board meeting.
  - 2. If a board member has information he/she feels the superintendent should know, the member should contact the superintendent before the board meeting.
  - 3. If requested by a board member, an item listed under the consent agenda shall be immediately withdrawn for separate discussion and acted upon individually.
  
- D. Items under Consent Agenda
  - 1. Routine items
  - 2. Annual renewals of Region One Education Service Center and Texas Education Agency items
  - 3. Budget amendments
  - 4. Tax refunds
  - 5. Gifts, donations, and bequests
  - 6. Financial information
  - 7. Minutes of regular and special board meetings
  - 8. Routine personnel items
  - 9. Routine bid recommendations

## II. MEMBERS CONDUCT DURING BOARD MEETINGS

- A. Citizens addressing the board
1. Citizens may sign up before the meeting to speak to the Board during public forum. Citizens will have five minutes to speak.
  2. When multiple persons want to speak on the same issue, a spokesperson will be selected by the group and will be given up to 5 minutes to speak.
  3. The board president can use his/her discretion to limit the open forum time period to no more than 30 minutes.
  4. The Board can hear the comments, but will not respond.  
*(Responding is a violation of the Open Meetings Act, because the issue/item was not posted.)*
  5. Board of Trustees will accept written comments.
- B. Discussion of employees performance (Board and/or audience)
1. The Board will not entertain comments on individual district personnel or students in public session.
- C. Hearings and open forums
1. During hearings and/or open forums, the Board is assembled to gather input only.
  2. In the case of an employee hearing, the Board will not answer questions or enter into two-way dialogue except with its attorney.
  3. The board will strictly adhere to the following rules for the open forum:
    - > Board will limit response to five minutes per testifier.
    - > Board will accept written and/or oral testimony.
    - > Board will not allow duplicate testimony.
    - > Board will not allow any derogatory comments.
- D. Board shall observe the parliamentary procedures in Robert's Rules of Order
1. A copy of or a summary of Robert's Rules of Order will be provided to each new board member except as superseded by this document.
  2. Robert's Rules of Order will be part of the new board member orientation packet.
- E. Discussion of Motions
1. All discussions shall be directed solely to the business under deliberation.
  2. The board president has the responsibility to keep the discussion to the motion at hand and shall halt discussion that does not apply to the business before the Board.
  3. The board president will recognize board members before they comment.
  4. Board members will not direct questions to the audience during discussion of a motion, but if the superintendent has identified a member of the audience as an expert, the board members may direct questions to that person.



### **III. VOTING**

- A. The board president will vote on all action items.
- B. All board members will vote on all action items, except when there is a legal conflict of interest.
- C. If a board member abstains for a legal reason, the member must tell the Board the reason.
- D. If a board member abstains without a valid reason, that abstention will be counted as a vote in favor of the motion.

### **IV. BOARD MEMBER REQUEST FOR INFORMATION OR REPORT**

- A. Any two board members may collectively request the superintendent provide/create a report.
- B. Upon receipt of the request, the superintendent will notify all members of the request.
- C. The superintendent will gather the information and/or report and disseminate it in a timely manner to the entire board, unless the board member specifies he/she does not want a copy.

### **V. CITIZEN REQUEST/COMPLAINT TO INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER**

- A. The board member should be sensitive to the citizen's request/complaint for understanding, but should direct the request/complaint to the appropriate administrator.
- B. The board member should repeat the request/complaint back to citizen for clarification.
- C. The board member should review the chain of command with the citizen.
- D. The board member should remind the citizen of due process and that the board member must remain impartial in case the situation goes before the Board. The board members should notify the superintendent of the citizen's request/complaint in a timely manner.

### **VI. EMPLOYEE COMPLAINT TO INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER**

- A. The board member may hear the employee's complaint only to the extent to direct the employee to the proper remedy.
- B. The board member shall not become individually and personally involved in the issue/complaint.
- C. The board member must remind the employee that as a board member he/she must remain impartial in the event the situation comes before the Board.
- D. The board member shall notify the superintendent as soon as possible of the complaint.

### **VII. INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER VISIT TO SCHOOL CAMPUS**

- A. All board members are encouraged to attend any school's event as their time permits.
- B. Individual board members must notify the superintendent and the building principal of their visit.
- C. All board members must sign in at the principal's office upon arrival at the building.
- D. Individual board members are not to visit buildings, classrooms, or other work-stations unannounced.

### **VIII. COMMUNICATIONS**

- A. If a board member has a concern about any aspect of the superintendent's duties or performance, he/she should go to the superintendent and discuss the problem.
- B. Board members will not reprimand or try to provide direction to staff. Any directives to the superintendent shall be made in the confines of a duly called Board meeting.
- C. Board members will not attempt to exert pressure or influence the staff in order to coerce them into making particular recommendations or decisions.
- D. Board members will not conduct interviews with prospective employees.
- E. Individual board members cannot speak in an official capacity for the Board outside the board room unless otherwise authorized by the Board.
- F. Board members will not give unsolicited recommendations in support of candidates for jobs throughout the district.
- G. Board member will not direct personnel to consider vendors other than those recommended through the competitive bidding or proposal process.

**IX. COMMUNICATION WITH LEGAL COUNSEL**

- A. The Board authorizes the superintendent to contact legal counsel on behalf of the district.
- B. Board members, as a body in a called session, are authorized to contact legal counsel on behalf of the district.
- C. Individual board members are not authorized to contact legal counsel or to otherwise incur legal expenses to the district except for conflict of interest issues.

**X. EVALUATION OF SUPERINTENDENT**

See attachment

**XI. EVALUATION OF THE BOARD**

See attachment

**XII. CRITERIA AND PROCESS FOR SELECTING BOARD OFFICERS**

- A. The school board election is held in May of each year.
- B. Following the election, and prior to the Board meeting at which board officers are elected, the secretary to the board will poll individual members for nominations for elections as board officers. The secretary will poll each nominee to see if the nominee wishes his or her nomination to advance and then informs the Board and the superintendent of the confirmed nominations received for each position.
- C. By law, it is the responsibility of the board secretary to conduct the nomination and election of officers.
- D. At the board meeting during which board officers are elected, the secretary of the board will present the slate of candidates and call for nominations from the floor.
- E. No board member should hold office without a minimum of two years of board experience.
- F. The board president is limited to a maximum of two consecutive full terms as board president.

**XIII. ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF BOARD MEMBERS AND/OR BOARD OFFICERS**

(as set by state statute)

- A. No board member or board officer has authority, except when the board meeting is in session.
- B. No board member can direct employees in regard to performance of their duties.
- C. Board members shall not try to resolve complaints individually.
- D. By law, the board supervises and evaluates only the superintendent and no other employee.

**The President:**

- A. shall preside at all meetings.
- B. shall appoint committees.
- C. shall call special meetings.
- D. shall sign all legal documents required by law.
- E. along with the superintendent, sets the board's agenda.

**The Vice President:**

- A. shall act in the capacity of president in his/her absence.

**The Secretary:**

- A. is responsible for accurate minutes of board meetings.
- B. shall act in the capacity of president in the absence of the president and vice president.
- C. shall conduct the nomination and election of officers and board reorganization after each election.

**XIV. ROLE OF THE BOARD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- A. The Board can only discuss those items listed on the executive agenda and as limited by law.
- B. All votes must be made in public session.
- C. Information discussed and received during executive session must remain confidential.

**XV. MEDIA INQUIRIES TO THE BOARD**

- A. On issues before the board, the board president shall be the Board's official spokesperson to the media.
- B. All board members who receive calls from the media about issues before the board should refer them to the superintendent or the board president as appropriate.
- C. All board members who receive calls from the media about their own position or vote on an issue may speak to the media, but must specify they are speaking for themselves and not for the board.

**XVI. ANONYMOUS PHONE CALLS AND UNSIGNED LETTERS**

- A. The Board of Trustees encourages input.
- B. Anonymous calls or unsigned letters will not receive board attention, discussion, or response and will not result in a directive to the administration for follow up unless it makes reference to child abuse.

**XVII. RESPONSE TO SIGNED LETTERS**

- A. Only signed letters, if appropriate, will be forwarded to the Superintendent.
- B. If appropriate, a response using a standard format, will be sent by board members acknowledging receipt of the letter and noting that the letter is being sent to the superintendent for review.
- C. If appropriate, the superintendent will formally respond to the individual who sent the letter.

**XVIII. REVIEWING BOARD OPERATING PROCEDURES and Code of Ethics**

- A. Standard Board Operating Procedures will be reviewed and updated annually.
- B. The Code of Ethics will be reviewed annually.

**XIX. BOARD WORK SESSION AND BOARD TRAININGS**

- A. Team of Eight Training: At a convenient time, soon after the May board elections, the Team of Eight will attend a teambuilding and board orientation work session to review the adopted Board Operating Procedures, Board Code of Conduct, and other information. All members must attend.
- B. All board members will attend required trainings as specified in board policy and Texas Education Code.
- C. The members of the Board of Trustees will rotate attending the National Conference whereby only two board members attend at a time as determined by the board. All board members are encouraged to attend the Summer Leadership Conference and the TASA/ TASB Conference in the fall, if budget permits.

**XX. BOARD TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT**

- A. Board travel mileage reimbursement will be done through a reasonable distance not to extend beyond Austin, Houston, and San Antonio as stated in Bing Search Engine regardless of the destination.

**XXI. PIISD Wall of Fame**

- A. Any two board members can join to nominate an individual to the PIISD Wall of Fame. Nominations are accepted annually during the month of May for considerations during the June board meeting. The board members making the nomination will present supporting evidence to the entire board during a meeting. Induction in the PIISD Wall of Fame requires a unanimous vote of the Board. Newly approved members will be recognized in August of each year. Nominees are those who demonstrate a significant contribution to the Laguna Madre community in the areas of education and public/community service. The criteria for induction to the PIISD Wall of Fame will be reviewed at minimum every five years, beginning in 2023.

