

# BOARD OF EDUCATION



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
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## HANDBOOK

REVISED DECEMBER 2010



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# BOARD OF EDUCATION HANDBOOK

*A guide for Members of the Board of Education,  
PGCPS staff, students, and the community-at-large  
regarding the manner by which the Board typically operates  
and carries out the authority delegated to it by law.*



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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide guidance for Members of the Board of Education (the “Board”), PGCPS staff, students and the community-at-large regarding the manner by which the Board typically operates and carries out the authority delegated to it by law. This Handbook is not intended to mandate any process that is binding upon the Board unless that process is otherwise required by law. References to legal authority and/or Board Policies which apply to specific subjects are included as appropriate.



## RESOLUTION ADOPTING HANDBOOK

**WHEREAS**, a clear understanding of the roles, responsibilities and duties of the Board of Education is critical to a well functioning school system; and

**WHEREAS**, each Board Member is responsible for understanding and properly executing the duties of the office consistent with the Board’s Mission and Core Beliefs; and

**WHEREAS**, an informed and well functioning Board is essential to effective school district governance, consistency, continuous student achievement, and closing the achievement gap; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board is accountable to the public, must operate in a transparent manner and must hold itself accountable; and

**WHEREAS**, an effective Board requires a common and well understood framework for operations; now therefore be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education approves the attached *Handbook for the Board of Education of Prince George’s County*; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Board staff is directed to post online and publish the Handbook in a convenient format to be made readily available, as soon as feasible, to Board Members, PGCPS staff, Board candidates, and the community-at-large; and be it

**FINALLY RESOLVED**, that staff for the Board will, in a timely manner, update provisions of the Handbook as appropriate and publish such updates on the Board’s website at [www.PGCPS.org](http://www.PGCPS.org).





## MISSION

The Board of Education of Prince George’s County will advance the achievement of its diverse student body through community engagement, sound policy governance, accountability, and fiscal responsibility.

*Reference: Board Policy 0120, “Systems Oversight”*

## FIVE CORE OPERATING BELIEFS

1. Children ARE our business – and THEY come first;
2. Parents are our partners;
3. Victory is in the classroom;
4. Continuous improvement in teaching, leadership and accountability is the key to our success; and
5. EVERY member of this community shares the responsibility for successful schools.

*Reference: Board Policy 0118, “Core Beliefs and Commitments”*



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## Authority and Responsibilities of the Board of Education

The powers and mandatory duties of the Board of Education are defined in the *Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland* and Title 13A of the *Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR)*. The Board’s primary responsibilities, aligned to support the school system’s strategic plan *Bridge to Excellence Master Plan*, include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Selecting and appointing the Superintendent of Schools, Educ. Art., §4-201.
2. Enacting, interpreting and implementing policies, (Board Policy 9340, “Policy Development”).
3. Adopting operating and capital budgets, Educ. Art., §5-101.
4. Making decisions on educational, budgetary, facility, and financial matters (including authorization of contracts and legal settlements), Educ. Art, §4-108.
5. Establishing curriculum guides and courses of study, Educ. Art., §4-111.
6. Appointing personnel, Educ. Art., §4-103 and §6-201.
7. Establishing school boundaries, Educ. Art. §4-109.
8. Communicating with residents, staff, and students.
9. Acting in a quasi-judicial capacity, in particular, deciding student and employee appeals, Educ. Art., §3-1006; §4-205(c); §6-202.
10. Advancing a legislative agenda.
11. Making a continuous appraisal of the educational and administrative management of the school system, Board Policy 0120, “System Oversight”.

In addition to those mandatory duties that are defined in law, the Board is committed to the Key Work of School Boards, developed by the National School Boards Association. The Key Work of School Boards encompasses the following eight areas of action:



1. Establishing a clear vision of student achievement as the top priority of the school board, staff, and community.
2. Setting clear standards for student performance.
3. Establishing an assessment process that measures success at regular intervals.
4. Establishing a strong accountability process.
5. Aligning resources to focus on students meeting the standards.
6. Creating a positive climate for student success.
7. Building collaborative relationships with parents, students, employees, clergy, political and business leaders, with a focus on developing a consensus for student success as a top community priority.
8. Committing to continuous improvement for student achievement.

*Reference: Educ. Art., §§4-108, 4-109, 4-111, and 4-114*

## Authority of Individual Board Members

State law establishes that power belongs not to individual members of a Board of Education but only to the Board of Education itself. Board Members have authority only when acting as a Board of Education in a legally constituted session, with a quorum being present. The statement or action of an individual member or group of members of the Board of Education does not bind the Board of Education itself, except when that statement or action is authorized by an official act of the Board.

*Reference: Educ. Art., §§3-1002 and 3-1004; Board Policy 9270, “Actions by Individual Board Members”*





## Composition of the Board and Board Member Qualifications

The Board is composed of ten (10) members: nine elected district members, each of whom reside in a different school board district, one student member. With the exception of the student member, all Board Members must be registered voters of Prince George’s County and a resident of the school board district the candidate seeks to represent. A Board Member may not hold another office of profit in county government during a term. In addition, while serving on the Board, a Member may not be a candidate for public office other than a position on the Board.

The terms of the elected Members are staggered. The five elected Members who received the lowest percentage of votes, as determined by the final vote count of the 2010 General election shall serve for a term of 2 years; and the other four members elected in the 2010 General Election shall serve for a term of 4 years. After the 2010 terms expire, an elected Member serves for a term of 4 years. Notwithstanding when the ceremonial oath of office is administered, Board Members’ terms begin on the first Monday in December after the election and continue until successors are elected and qualify.

The student member shall be an eleventh or twelfth grade student in the Prince George’s County Public Schools system during the student’s term in office. The student Board member is elected for a one-year term each year by student representatives to the Prince George’s County Regional Association of Student Governments (PGCRASG) enrolled in middle and high schools in Prince George’s County Public Schools. The student member serves for a term of one year beginning at the end of a school year.

*References: Educ. Art., §3-1002; Board Policy 9110, “Number of Members and Terms of Office”*



## Student Board Member

The qualifications, election, and provisions relating to the Student Member of the Board are found in state law. The Student Member has the same rights and privileges of an elected adult member, except that the student member may not vote on matters related to capital and operating budgets, school closings, school re-openings, and school boundaries; collective bargaining decisions; student disciplinary matters; teacher and administrator disciplinary matters as provided under Educ. Art., §6-202; and, other personnel matters. Unless invited to attend by an affirmative majority vote of the nine elected adult Members of the Board, the Student Member may not attend an executive session that relates to the hearings on appeals of special education placements, hearings held under Educ. Art., §6-202 (a), or collective bargaining. During regular meetings, the Student Member may make motions or second motions made by others. However, his or her right to vote on such motions is predicated upon whether it concerns a matter on which the student may vote.

A Student Member who completes a full term on the Board shall be granted a scholarship of \$20,000 to be applied toward the student’s higher education costs and provided by the Prince George’s County Council. Upon completion of his/her tenure on the Board, the Student Member is awarded one (1) full credit in social studies and student service learning hours equivalent to hours devoted to being the Student Member of the Board.

The Student Member may participate in the distribution of diplomas and/or certificates at high school commencements but may not confer his or her own diploma.

*Reference: Educ. Art., §§3-1002 and 4-107 (d)(2); Board Policy 9271, “Student Board Member”*





## Board Candidates and Members-Elect

Board candidates for election by the general public are required to file public financial disclosure statements for the preceding calendar year with the Prince George's County Board of Supervisors of Elections at the time they submit their certificate of candidacy. After the candidate's election to the Board of Education, a financial disclosure statement must be filed annually with the Board's Ethics Panel. Orientation sessions are usually held twice a year—in the fall just before the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) annual conference and in December after the general elections. The Board may also schedule other training for its Members as necessary. Materials, except items of a confidential nature for Board business meetings, are available to candidates and the general public on the school system's website. Board members are prohibited from using school system resources for political campaign purposes. School system staff or equipment may not be employed for purposes of promoting any candidate for elected office.

*Reference: Board Policy 0111, "Board Financial Disclosure"*

## New Board Member Orientation

Following the election of new members, the Board of Education officers provide for an orientation to the Board's operation and processes. Information is provided about the functions of the office of the Board of Education and the working relationships with the Superintendent of Schools and the staff of Prince George's County Public Schools. In addition, information is provided about the roles and responsibilities of Board members as well as the role and responsibilities of the Superintendent of Schools. New Board members are encouraged to also attend the orientation sessions sponsored by the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), and participate in other Board sanctioned training as agreed upon by the Board.



## Filling Vacancy of Board Member's Unexpired Term

A seat that becomes vacant more than 180 days before the end of that member's term of office shall be filled for the remainder of the term at a special election. No later than 7 days after the occurrence of a vacancy on the Board that must be filled at a special election, the County Council shall adopt a resolution directing that a special primary election and special general election be held in the school board district where the vacancy occurs. The County Council shall consult with the Board of Elections before adopting the resolution. The resolution shall include information regarding the requirements for candidacy for the special election and the dates of the special primary and special general election.

If a seat on the Board becomes vacant 180 days or less before the end of a Member's term of office, that seat shall remain vacant until a successor is elected and qualifies.

The Prince George's Regional Association of Student Governments may establish the election procedures and protocol to fill a vacancy for the student member, which are subject to the approval of the elected members of the Board.

*Reference: Educ. Art., §3-1002*





## Conduct of Board Members

The Board may, by majority vote, censure or reprimand a Member if the Member culpably fails to perform the duties of office or engages in other conduct that conflicts with the duties and responsibilities of office.

*Reference: Board Policy 109, “Conflict of Interest”; Board Policy 8251, “Code of Ethics”; Board Policy 9270, “Actions by Individual Board Members”, Robert’s Rules of Order*

## Removal of Board Members

With the approval of the Governor, the State Board may remove a Member of the Board for immorality, misconduct in office, incompetency, or willful neglect of duty. Before removing a Member, the State Board shall send the Member a copy of the charges pending and give the Member an opportunity within ten (10) days of receipt of the charges to request a hearing. If the Member requests a hearing within the ten (10) day period, the Member shall have an opportunity to be heard publicly before the State Board in the Member’s own defense, in person or by counsel. A Member removed has the right to judicial review of the removal by the Circuit Court for Prince George’s County.

*Reference: Educ. Art. §3-1002*



## Duties of Board Officers

The Officers of the Board of Education are the Chair, Vice-Chair, and by law, the Superintendent of Schools as the Executive Officer, Secretary and Treasurer.

The Chair presides at all meetings, signs authorized or approved contracts and other documents on behalf of the Board, represents the views of the Board in all communications and correspondence, and performs other duties prescribed by law or by the Board. The Chair may appoint ad hoc committees of the Board and/or staff members to assist the Board with its work, study specific issues, or undertake Board projects. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair performs these duties.

If both the Chair and Vice-Chair are unable to officiate a Board meeting, the Chair at his/her discretion, may designate another Board Member to serve in this capacity. The Chair and Vice-Chair are elected individually at the Board’s annual organization meeting held the first Monday in December.

*References: Educ. Art. §3-1004 (a); Board Policies 9100, “Officers”; 9210, “Chair”; 9220, “Vice-Chair”; 9230, “Secretary, Treasurer and Executive Officer”*

## Ethics and Code of Conduct

The Board of Education, the Superintendent of Schools, and Prince George’s County Public Schools employee organizations have adopted a compact of an organizational culture of respect. The compact is part of the school system’s strategic plan, *Bridge to Excellence Master Plan*. With this compact, all parties commit to an organization that recognizes and values the role of all employees as contributors to a learning community that sets high standards of performance for staff and students.





In addition to the Board’s Code of Ethics and related policies, which govern actions of its Members, school officials, and employees, the Board has also adopted the following Code of Ethics, as recommended by the National School Boards Association:

“As a member of my local Board of Education I will strive to improve public education and, to that end, I will—

- Attend all regularly scheduled Board meetings insofar as possible and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings;
- Recognize that I should endeavor to make policy decisions only after full discussion at publicly held Board meetings;
- Render all decisions based on the available facts and my independent judgment, and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups;
- 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;
- Work with other Board Members to establish effective Board policies and to delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the Superintendent of Schools;
- Communicate to other Board Members and the Superintendent of Schools expressions of public reaction to Board policies and school programs;
- Inform myself about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed information, such as those sponsored by my state, national school boards associations, and local Board sanctioned activities;
- Support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as school staff, and insist on a regular and impartial evaluation of all staff;
- Avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest, and refrain from using my Board position for personal or partisan gain;



- Safeguard and be held accountable for all school system issued equipment, complying with the proper use of such equipment as required by all school system personnel pursuant to board policies and administrative procedures;
- Take no action using my position as a Board Member to circumvent established policies and procedures for securing the use of school system resources or facilities for my own, or for another individual or groups benefit;
- Take no private action that will compromise the Board or administration, and respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law, and
- Remember always that my first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the public schools; and,
- Be bound by PGCPs policies and procedures.

Board Members adhere to the following principles, which reflect their commitment to work together as a Board in the best interest of the school system:

- Respecting individual differences and opinions and being open-minded
- Being prepared to do the work of the Board
- Supporting decisions of the Board and not working against those decisions
- Reassessing the way the Board does business
- Disagreeing on issues without making it personal
- Keeping confidential issues and executive session items within the confines of the Board
- Being candid in expressing opinions
- Improving communications among all Board Members
- Maintaining professional decorum during Board meetings
- Ensuring all information is shared equitably among Board members.

Members shall maintain the confidentiality appropriate to sensitive issues and information that otherwise may tend to compromise the integrity or legal positions of the Board or the school system, especially those matters discussed in Executive Session.





If, for any reason, a Board Member prefers not to participate in a confidential discussion that is authorized or has a conflict of interest with the subject under discussion, he or she should leave the meeting before it begins or that particular subject is discussed. (See Executive Session section of this handbook for additional information).

During the annual organizational meeting, which is described below, the Board should review and re-affirm all the principles concerning the Code of Conduct and the compact concerning the organizational culture of respect. Given that the Board is committed to faithful compliance with the provisions of these documents and the Board’s policies, the Board may take appropriate action in the event of a Member’s willful and continuing violation, including but not limited to, admonishing the Member, referral of the matter to the Ethics Panel for review and/or referral to the state for consideration of removal from office.

*Reference: Board Policies 0107 – 0108, “Ethics”; 8251, “Code of Ethics”*

## Immunity for Board Members

A Board Member, acting within the scope of the Member’s authority, without malice or gross negligence, is not personally liable for damages resulting from a tortuous act or omission. A Board Member is also immune as an individual from civil liability for any act or omission so long as the Member acts within the scope of the Member’s authority, without malice and in a discretionary capacity. A judgment in tort for damages against a Board Member acting within the scope of the Member’s authority shall be levied against the Board of Education only and may not be executed against the Board Member personally.



The Board may pay all or part of the counsel fees for the defense of a Board Member involved in litigation because of service and official capacity on the Board. These payments are a valid educational expense.

*References: Educ. Art., §§4-104 (c) and 4-106; Courts and Judicial Proceedings Art., §5-518*

## Financial Disclosure

Each Board Member is required to complete an annual financial disclosure statement for the preceding calendar year. The Board’s Ethics Panel is responsible for reviewing all financial disclosure statements for completeness of form and for determination of any existing or potential conflicts of interest. The Student Member of the Board does not complete a financial disclosure form.

These statements will be made available during normal office hours for examination and copying by the public, subject to the established administrative procedures for disclosure and copying of public records.

*Reference: Board Policy 0111, “Board Financial Disclosure”*

## Appointment of the Superintendent of Schools

Maryland state law governs the appointment, term, qualifications, vacancy, and removal of the Superintendent of Schools. The term of the Superintendent of Schools is four (4) years, beginning on July 1. The Superintendent of Schools serves until a successor is appointed and qualifies. By February 1 of the year in which a term ends, the Superintendent of Schools must notify the Board whether or not he/she is a candidate for reappointment.





In the year in which a term begins, the Board of Education appoints the Superintendent of Schools between February 1 and June 30. Should the Board decide to reappoint the incumbent Superintendent of Schools, the Board must take final action at a public meeting no later than March 1 of that year.

The appointment of the Superintendent of Schools is subject to written approval of the State Superintendent of Schools. If there is a vacancy in the office, the Board shall appoint an interim superintendent of schools who serves until July 1 after his/her appointment.

*Reference: Educ. Art., §4-201*

## Responsibilities and Duties of the Superintendent of Schools

The Superintendent of Schools is responsible for the administration of his/her office and carries out the laws, bylaws, and policies of the Maryland State Board of Education as well as the rules, regulations, and policies of the Prince George's County Board of Education. The Superintendent of Schools is appointed by the Board pursuant to a contract of employment that establishes the Superintendent's duties and responsibilities.

The Superintendent of Schools:

- Advises the Board of Education on educational policies of the school system, school attendance areas, curriculum guides and courses of study, and any question under consideration by the Board;
- Recommends contracts, to the extent required by law, and other documents for Board approval;
- Informs the Board in advance of administrative reorganizations, including transfers of functions, establishment of positions and offices, and consolidations of positions and offices;



- Proposes annual operating and capital budgets to the Board of Education;
- Attends all meetings of the Board, as well as committee meetings as requested, except when the Board is considering appeals in its quasi-judicial role in closed session, or when the Superintendent's tenure, salary, or the administration of his/her office is under consideration;
- Advises the Board on any question under consideration at the meetings that he/she is permitted to attend but may not vote;
- As Executive Officer, Secretary and Treasurer of the Board, keeps a record of the proceedings of each meeting of the Board and of all actions taken by the Board;
- Recommends the appointment and/or transfer of administrative and supervisory personnel to the Board for its approval, whether by discrete personnel actions or by way of a bi-monthly personnel report approved by the Board; and,
- Administers disciplinary actions of PGCPs personnel and students.

In the absence of the Superintendent of Schools, the Deputy Superintendent of Schools or designee fulfills these duties. In accordance with the terms of the contract of employment, the Board of Education regularly evaluates the Superintendent of Schools on the achievement of mutually agreed-upon priorities and objectives.

*References: Educ. Art., §§4-205 and 6-201, ; Board Policies 0113, "School Boundaries – Attendance Areas"; 0120, "System Oversight"; 4112, "Appointment of Personnel", 6180.1, "Evaluation and Selection of Classroom Material"; 7100 "Capital Improvement Program"*





## Meetings of the Board of Education

All meetings of the Board of Education are public meetings, except for closed meetings (Executive Session) and as otherwise permitted under state law. The Board of Education shall, at its meetings, promote equity in educational achievement by means of ethical, legal and fiduciary standards that focus on improving student achievement and implementation of educational reform initiatives.

The Board typically conducts two meetings per month, except for the month of July during which the Board is in recess, August and November.

Emergency meetings shall be designated by the Chair of the Board of Education or at the written request of three (3) Board Members. Electronic notice shall be posted at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Said notice shall cite the purpose of the meeting and the business to be considered.

Changes to regularly scheduled Board meetings to accommodate holidays, special events or other circumstances, such as inclement weather, may be presented by the Board Chair upon notification to Board members. All meetings of the Board are considered regular meetings, unless specifically designated as a closed meeting, special meeting, oversight meeting, work session, retreat, award or recognition ceremony, committee meeting or public hearing. The Board may during any of these identified meetings adjourn to convene in Executive Session.

Special meetings of the Board may be called by the Chair or at the written request of three (3) Board Members, by notice of the meeting at least 72 hours in advance of the hour of the meeting. Said notice shall cite the purpose of the meeting and the business to be considered. No business shall be transacted at said meeting except that for which the meeting is called.

*Reference: Board Policies 9360, "Meetings of the Board"; 9361 "Time and Place of Meetings"*



## Agenda Setting for Board Meetings

The Board of Education has control over educational matters that affect Prince George's County and promotes the interests of schools under its jurisdiction. The Board of Education adopts a strategic plan to guide the school system in developing, implementing, and improving educational programs for its students. With recommendations from the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education establishes priorities together with specific objectives for the attainment of these priorities.

Following the establishment of priorities, the Superintendent of Schools and Board Members recommend agenda items for Board meetings based on these priorities and by adhering to the following process:

1. The Board staff schedules regular agenda-setting meetings with Board Officers, the Superintendent of Schools, and designated administrative staff. Board members are notified of such meetings and may attend if desired. The following items are discussed at the agenda-setting meetings:
  - a. The agenda for future Board meetings. The Superintendent of Schools or designee advises the Board Officers of time requirements for agenda items, the status of major items to be discussed at Board meetings, and the availability of staff to be present for Board discussions.
  - b. A list of items to be scheduled for future system oversight meetings. The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee works with Board Officers to identify the status of items to be scheduled and suggests dates for their presentation. The Board office maintains a continuous listing of future agenda items.





- c. Review of future Board meetings. The Superintendent of Schools or designee and Board Officers review a calendar of future Board meetings (regular and special), executive sessions, public hearings, and work sessions.
2. After the agenda-setting meeting, copies of materials agreed upon are sent to Board Members and executive staff, and posted to the Board's website via BoardDocs. Board Members are encouraged to share their interest regarding scheduled items and submit questions in advance of staff presentations.
3. Prior to a Board meeting, with as much advance notice as possible, Board Members who need information or desire staff members to be available to answer questions at the table about an issue should alert Board staff to request that the Superintendent of Schools answer those questions and/or provide the information needed.
4. After Board meetings and public hearings, the Board and Superintendent's staff discuss items raised during the Board meeting, assign responsibilities for follow-up items, and review draft agendas and calendars for future Board meetings.

### Preparation of Meeting Materials

Before every business meeting, packets of Board agenda materials are prepared for Board Members and identified staff. Board packet materials are not released to the public until after Board Members have received them. Board meeting packets are normally available online on the Friday prior to regular Board meetings in BoardDocs. Complex items, which require extensive study, should be distributed to Board Members in advance of the regular distribution of Board materials to allow sufficient time for review and Board consideration.



### Open Public Meetings and Notice

Meetings of the Board of Education, including its standing and ad-hoc committees are open to the public, except when meetings may be held in closed session under the Maryland Open Meetings Act. The public must be provided with notice that provides information concerning the time and location of meetings and the matters that will be deliberated by the Board. When a meeting is held in open session, the general public is entitled to attend. Under state law, the Board of Education has the authority to adopt and enforce reasonable rules regarding the conduct of persons attending its meetings, as well as the videotaping, televising, photographing, broadcasting or recording of its meetings.

If the presiding officer determines that the behavior of an individual is disrupting an open session, the Board may have an individual removed. Unless the Board of Education, its members, or its agents acted maliciously, they are not liable for having an individual removed from the meeting.

*References: State Government Article, §§10-501, et seq.; Board Policy 9360, "Meetings of the Board"*

### Annual Organizational Meeting

According to state law, the Board of Education must conduct an annual meeting on the first Monday in December for the election of Chair and Vice-Chair.

The annual organizational meeting is traditionally combined with a regular Board meeting.





This meeting is called to order by the Secretary-Treasurer (by law, the Superintendent of Schools). Members elect a Chair and Vice-Chair from among the currently sitting members by majority vote. The election for Chair shall be taken in a separate vote and will precede the election for Vice-Chair. To initiate the process, the Superintendent opens the floor for nominations of the Chair. Any Board Member may nominate himself or herself, or another Board Member. Once all nominations for the position of Chair have been received, the Superintendent closes nominations and proceeds to conduct a roll call vote in the order in which the nominations were received. Immediately following the election of the Chair, the same process is used to elect the Vice-Chair. All members present, to include the Student Member, may cast a vote. All votes must be individually recorded. Immediately upon their election, the Chair and Vice-Chair shall assume the duties of their office.

In addition to selecting the Chair and Vice-Chair, the Board should also reaffirm its commitment to the Core Beliefs, Mission Statement, Code of Ethics and the compact concerning the organizational culture of respect.

*References: Educ. Art., §§3-1004 (a) and 4-107(3); Board Policy 9361, "Meetings, Election of Officers"*

## Regular Board Meetings

Unless otherwise noted, at Regular Board meetings the Board will consider and vote on business action items recommended by the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall also provide information to the public regarding Student Achievement at these meetings. These meetings will occur in the Board Room of the Board of Education's Administration Building. Two weeks public notice must be given if the date, time or place of the meeting is to be changed unless there is an emergency situation warranting change in scheduling of a meeting, as determined and declared by the Board or Board Chair.

*Reference: Board Policy 9360, "Meetings of the Board"*



## System Oversight Meetings

The purpose of these meeting is to review key information related to the major areas of operation of the school system. Areas intended for discussion typically include *Human Resources, Information Systems, Transportation, Safety & Security Services, Food Service, Custodial Service, and Finance Accounting & Budget*. System Oversight Meetings will begin at 12:00 pm, adjourn to Executive Session and reconvene in public at 1:00 pm. These meetings will occur in the Board Room of the Sasscer Administration Building.

*References: Board Policies 0120, "System Oversight"; 9360, "Meetings of the Board"*

## CIP and FAB Meetings

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) or Finance, Audit, and Budget (FAB) meetings will be regularly scheduled Bi-monthly (at least every other month) on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday unless otherwise noted. The meeting schedule will be included in the Board Meeting Calendar.

*Reference: Board Policy 9360, "Meetings of the Board"*

## Executive Session (Closed Meetings)

The Board may conduct Executive Sessions in accordance with the law. The Board may meet in Executive Session to carry out administrative functions and quasi-judicial functions, as defined in state law, which include the following:

1. Discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals;
2. Protect the privacy or reputation of individuals with respect to a matter that is not related to public business;





3. Consider land and site acquisitions and matters directly related thereto;
4. Consider the investment of public funds;
5. Consider the marketing of public securities;
6. Consult with counsel to obtain legal advice;
7. Consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation;
8. Conduct collective bargaining negotiations or consider matters that relate to the negotiations;
9. Discuss public security, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to the public or to public security, including:
  - a. The deployment of fire and police services and staff; and
  - b. The development and implementation of emergency plans;
10. Prepare, administer, or grade a scholastic, licensing, or qualifying exam;
11. Conduct or discuss an investigative proceeding on actual or possible criminal conduct;
12. Comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter; or
13. Before a contract is awarded or bids are opened, discuss a matter directly related to a negotiating strategy or the contents of a bid or proposal, if public discussion or disclosure would adversely impact the ability of the public body to participate in the competitive bidding or proposal process.

*References: Educ. Art., §4-107(d) (2); Open Meetings Act, §§10-501, et seq.*



## Protocols for Absentee Participation

Members of the Board may participate in a closed meeting of the Board of Education by means of a telephone conference call, pursuant to the following:

1. Member must make a request to the Board Chair to participate remotely at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the time the meeting is scheduled, so that the necessary arrangements can be made for such participation.
2. At least a quorum of the Board is physically present at a meeting that is otherwise lawfully convened and assembled.
3. The meeting may not be chaired by a person that is not physically present at the meeting. If the Chair is participating remotely, the Vice-Chair shall chair the meeting.
4. The electronic means utilized must permit each person participating in the meeting remotely to hear and be heard by all other participants in the meeting.
5. Any Board Member participating remotely may cast a vote on the issue being debated.

In the event that the electronic means utilized becomes a distraction to the meeting or if the Member is unable to hear or communicate through that electronic means at any time, the Board Chair, may, at his or her discretion, terminate the use of such electronic means and end the participation by the Board Member who is not physically present.

The Minutes for the meeting shall reflect the name of any Board Member who participated in the meeting remotely.

Members may not participate remotely in public meetings.





## Conduct of Meeting

The Board of Education observes *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* in conducting its meetings, except as provided otherwise either in this handbook or Board policy. Moreover, the Board is guided by its own rules, state statutes, and COMAR, which establish the following:

1. A motion is adopted with the approval of a minimum of six members, with the exception of those matters on which the student member is not entitled to vote, in which instance the motion requires the approval of five members.
2. The Board adopts its agenda at the beginning of a business meeting. Unless changed by the Board, the order in which items appear on an agenda will be followed. Any changes in the adopted agenda are made by majority vote.
3. A quorum consisting of a majority of the full Board shall be present to convene a meeting. Thereafter, the quorum required to approve an agenda item will vary, depending upon whether the student member's vote counts.
4. Unless a new business item is an emergency or a Consent item, it shall be treated as a first reader until the next business meeting.

The rules and regulations governing the operations of the Board (except those required by statute and governing special meetings and policy issues) may be amended by a majority vote of the Board at any meeting, provided that each member shall have been furnished a copy of the proposed amendment at least one week in advance.

The Board's Legal Counsel serves as parliamentarian to the Board of Education during all meetings.

*References: COMAR 13A.02.01.00, et seq.; Board Policy 9366, "Order of Business: Parliamentary Procedure"*



## Record of Board Meetings

The Board of Education maintains records of meetings as follows:

1. Records of the Board's business meetings and hearings are retained in the Board Office and posted online. All Board business meetings are televised on Channel PGCPSTV 96 (Comcast)/38 (Verizon) and are available online via webcast.
2. The minutes of all public meetings contain actions taken by the Board and a summary of the Board's discussion. A Board Member may specifically request that a statement on a subject be reflected in the minutes.
3. Minutes of closed sessions include, but it is not limited to, a list of each item considered, the action taken, and each recorded vote.
4. Recordings and minutes of meetings open to the public are available as a matter of public record on the Board's website, as well as in the Board Office.

## Public Participation

The members of the Board of Education desire to hear the views from interested residents. To help ensure effective public participation in the decision-making process, the Board does the following:

1. Advertises the agenda and supporting documents on the school system's website no later than the Friday before the business meeting. Furthermore, copies of agenda materials are available to the public on the day of the regular and special meetings.
2. Involves residents and students on advisory committees.
3. Holds public hearings on the strategic plan, "Bridge to Excellence", the operating and capital budgets, and other issues of public interest.



4. Provides time at its business meetings for the public to comment on educational issues and other matters before the Board.
5. Encourages residents to communicate with Board members by publishing public telephone numbers, fax numbers, mailing addresses, and e-mail addresses.
6. Widely circulates proposed policies for comment.

## Board Advisory Committees

The Board of Education is empowered by state law to create citizen advisory committees to advise the Board, facilitate activities and programs in the school system, and recommend possible changes in Board policy. This input guides and informs decisions made by the Board.

Committees may be ongoing or created for special purposes on a short-term basis. Committees appointed by the Board are subject to the Open Meetings Act. Moreover, pursuant to law and policy, the Board of Education has appointed an Ethics Panel, which interprets the Board’s ethics policy, reviews financial disclosure statements, and advises persons subject to the policy as to its application.

In addition, there are advisory committees that report to the Superintendent of Schools. As provided by their charges, the Board’s and Superintendent’s advisory committees present their annual reports to the Board of Education.

*References: Educ. Art., §4-112; Board Policy 9140, “Organization - Citizens Advisory Committees”*



## Public Hearings

The Board of Education schedules public hearings on issues it determines to be of widespread interest and concern. A quorum of the Board is not required to be present for a hearing to be conducted because no action is taken by the Board at public hearings.

In addition to special public hearings, the Board holds hearings on its strategic plan, annual operating budget, proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and school openings, closings, and changes in attendance boundaries.

Recognizing that certain contemplated actions of the Board of Education (e.g., boundary changes, proposed capital projects, proposed school closings, etc.) have extraordinary public impact or are of widespread public concern, the Board of Education may from time to time designate certain dates and locations for the purpose of conducting Public Hearings on such announced topics.

The Board will allow individuals who desire to address the Board to register on-site on the day of the meeting. Public testimony shall also be provided to the Board via email or written correspondence.

The Assistant to the Board shall obtain the register of individuals listed to speak during the hearing and track the time limitations for speakers at a Public Hearing. Recognizing that Public Hearings are for the purpose of hearing the opinion of citizens, not for Board debate with the public, Board Members shall be limited in their comments. Board Members will be recognized by the Chair only for the following reasons:





(1) To correct misinformation presented in testimony, and (2) To add information so that citizen comment may be heard in context. Board Members will not be recognized to question or debate citizens or to express their support or opposition to testimony presented on the issue being considered.

The Chair may ask a staff member to meet with a person presenting testimony, if appropriate. At the conclusion of public comments, the Board and Superintendent of Schools may engage in discussions related to information provided by citizens.

## Strategic Plan Development and Approval Process

The strategic plan for PGCPSS, *Bridge to Excellence Master Plan*, is designed to guide the work of schools and offices for achieving the visionary goals approved by the Board of Education. The Board of Education allows for a process for public involvement in the development of its strategic plan and operating budget. The Board's goals and objectives include greater public involvement in the development phase of the strategic plan and operating budget.

The Board works with staff to review and recommend changes to the strategic plan. In addition, community forums are held in which participants are asked to address principal questions to assist the Board in developing/modifying the strategic plan. Substantial feedback on a wide range of issues involving the strategic plan has been received at the forums and summaries of the comments made at the forums are posted on the PGCPSS website.

*Reference: Educ. Art., §5-401*



## Operating Budget Approval Process and Long-Range Educational Facilities/ Capital Budget Process

Two major issues that come before the Board of Education each year are the operating budget and the long-range educational facilities plan, which includes action on the capital budget.

The operating budget includes salaries, contractual services, supplies and materials, furniture and equipment, and other funds necessary for the daily operation of the school system. The operating budget is developed under the direction of the Superintendent of Schools, who receives a wide range of input from staff, local and state government leadership and members of the community. The Superintendent of Schools recommends the budget's adoption to the Members of the Board. The Board holds work sessions and public hearings in January prior to adoption of the budget to secure additional information on the recommendations of the Superintendent of Schools.

The date for submission of the operating budget to the County Council is established by law. The budget must be submitted to the county by March 1 of each year and adopted by the County Council by June 1. In June the Board makes adjustments to the budget to conform to Council action and to reflect the final judgment of the Board on expenditure priorities prior to the July 1 deadline for submitting the school system's final operating budget to the County Council.

Each spring the Superintendent of Schools reviews all Board of Education facilities decisions and capital budget requests. The capital budget includes construction and planning funds for new facilities, modernizations and renovations, furniture and equipment associated with these projects, and countywide maintenance efforts. Facilities issues include building utilization, educational program capacity, enrollment projections, boundary changes, and school closings/consolidation.





During the spring, cluster, school and community representatives meet to discuss feasible school program and facility alternatives and, by June 1, cluster representatives send the Superintendent of Schools proposed solutions, priorities, or concerns the cluster has identified for its schools.

Early in October the Superintendent of Schools holds a public work session with the Board to discuss new school enrollments and projections. On or about November 1, the Superintendent of Schools publishes a proposed six-year Capital Improvements Program or amendments thereto, subsequent to which the Board holds a work session at which members may propose alternative solutions to boundary changes. During November, the Board holds public hearings on facilities and boundary proposals, with decisions scheduled prior to the end of November. The Board may opt to defer until a later time (usually March) selected boundaries and facilities decisions.

*References: Educ. Art. §5-101, Board Policy 3130, “Fiscal Responsibility and Control – Annual Operating Budget”*

## Appeals to the Board of Education

There are generally three categories of appeals under various sections of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland: Disputes involving rules and regulations of the Board; suspensions or dismissals of professional or certificated personnel and non-certificated personnel; and, student matters including suspensions of more than 10 days or expulsions and transfers.

Once an appeal is initiated, it is not appropriate for Board Members to discuss the issue with the appellant, the public, or staff. Once the appeal is properly filed, unless the appeal is subsequently withdrawn by the appellant or the Superintendent of Schools has granted the requested relief, only the Board itself can dismiss the appeal.



It is expected that Board Members will maintain the confidentiality of documents related to the appeal and not discuss these materials with those who should not be privy to such information. Additionally, individual Board members should not initiate research or attempt to supplement information included in the appeal. Generally, matters related to special education and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are not subject to review by the Board of Education. Furthermore, complaints concerning the conduct of PGCPs personnel should be directed to the Superintendent of Schools.

*References: Educ. Art., §§ 4-205 (c), 6-202 (a) and 7-305 (c); Board Policies 5115, “Student Appeals of Long-Term Suspensions and Expulsions; 5116, “Appeal Process of Student Transfer Requests”*

## Negotiations

The Board of Education designates the Superintendent of Schools as its representative in contract negotiations with the Association of Supervisory and Administrative School Personnel (ASASP), the Prince George’s County Education Association (PGCEA), and the Association of Classified Public Employees and American Federation of County Municipal Employees (ACE-AFSCME/Local 2250) and Service Employees International Union (SEIU/Local 400). By law, the Board of Education is permitted to meet in closed session to discuss issues related to contract negotiations with the employee organizations.

Board members will maintain the confidentiality of issues discussed during closed sessions.

*References: Educ. Art., §§6-408 and 6-510*





## Personnel Appointment Procedures

Under state law, it is the responsibility of the Superintendent of Schools to recommend the appointment of personnel to administrative and supervisory positions. These appointments are discussed by the Board of Education in closed session and confirmed by majority vote in public session.

The Superintendent of Schools notifies the Board in advance of the transfers of personnel to administrative and supervisory positions and any personnel to serve in such position(s) in an acting capacity.

The Board of Education also receives and reviews a monthly personnel report in closed session and takes a public vote on the report. The report contains appointments of administrative and supervisory personnel, teachers and supporting services personnel, terminations for all personnel, and notice of suspension and dismissal actions. In addition, the Board may adopt resolutions expressing sympathy on the death of an employee.

*Reference: Board Policy 4112, "Appointment of Personnel"*

## Staff to the Board of Education

Acting under the supervision of the Board, the Board of Education staff, which includes the Board's legal counsel, lobbyist, administrative support, internal audit, and consultants, shall provide general support to the Board of Education and its members to facilitate the discharge of their statutory responsibilities and coordinate with the Superintendent of Schools. Specifically, the Board staff:

- Responds to requests from members of the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Schools, staff, public, and other governmental agencies for information on past or pending Board business;



- Provides legislative and intergovernmental information and support, including representation of the Board of Education's interests before appropriate legislative bodies and the Maryland State Board of Education;
- Provides research assistance and analysis to members of the Board of Education;
- Provides assistance and support to the Board in the selection of a Superintendent of Schools;
- Keeps official records of Board of Education business and attends all Board of Education meetings as needed;
- Provides staff support, minutes, and follow-ups to Board of Education committees;
- Coordinates the process of recruitment of nominations for appointment to Board of Education advisory committees;
- Directs all appeal matters before the Board of Education, in consultation with legal counsel to the Board;
- Carries out the responsibility of the administration of the office of the members of the Board of Education, which includes various logistical and administrative functions such as those related to correspondence, scheduling, general staff support, ethics panel matters, financial disclosure process, travel expenses, use of technology, and Board Member orientation;
- Provides timely reports on meetings attended by Board staff and reports and analysis on Board functions such as ombudsman activities, ethics work, legislative work and development of a legislative platform, and appeals;
- Serves as an ombudsman; and
- Attends meetings of public committees and other school-community organizations at the direction of the Board, in the capacity of an observer.





## Board of Education Correspondence Procedure

The Board office maintains logs of all incoming and outgoing correspondence to/from the Board.

1. Incoming correspondence is distributed to all members of the Board and the Superintendent of Schools. Board Office staff determines whether correspondence requires a response and, if a response is required, assigns a due date for the preparation of the reply and directs the correspondence to the appropriate staff member. Staff prepares responses for the signature of the Board Chair or, in special cases, the Board Chair responds personally. Copies are provided to Members of the Board.
2. Petitions and form letters are not duplicated for Board Members. Staff counts the signatures and provides a sample page of the petition. One copy of the form letter is provided to the Board with a count of the number of form letters received.
3. Individual Board Members have the option of responding directly to correspondence addressed to the Board or the individual member; however, that correspondence must clearly reflect that the views expressed therein are those of the individual member and not necessarily those of the entire Board of Education.
4. All incoming and outgoing memoranda to the Board are distributed to all Board Members, the Superintendent of Schools, and appropriate staff. The Superintendent of Schools assigns the responsibility of preparing replies to Board memoranda and follows up to make sure a timely response is prepared. Exceptions are confidential memoranda, which may have expressly limited distribution. Board Members and staff are expected to maintain the confidentiality of confidential information.



## Maryland Public Information Act

All Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) requests received by Any employee or member of the Board of Education will be referred to Legal Counsel for the Board of Education and the General Counsel's office.

All referrals will include:

- A. A copy of the MPIA request with the date of receipt;
- B. A copy of the requested material unless it is too voluminous or has not yet been compiled;
- C. A summary of costs incurred to compile (including employee time) or, if not compiled, an estimate of the time and cost to compile; and,
- D. A recommendation from the legal counsel as to the appropriateness of disclosing the requested information.

Legal Counsel for the Board of Education will make the final determination as to whether the requested information will be disclosed.

Costs incurred in complying with MPIA requests will be reimbursed, pursuant to the provisions of the MPIA. Outstanding costs must be paid in full before new requests will be considered.

## Association Membership

The Board of Education maintains membership in state and national school board associations, as well as educational associations. The Board determines which, if any, state and/or national affiliations it wishes to add or maintain. Current organizational memberships include the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), the Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE), Council of School Attorney's (COSA), Center for Reform of School Systems (CRSS), and the National School Boards Association (NSBA).






## Board Member Compensation and Expense Standards

All Members of the Board of Education are entitled to be reimbursed for expenses directly related to Board business, beyond compensation provided by law. Elected adult members receive an annual compensation of \$18,000, and the Chair of the Board receives \$19,000 annually. Board members may not be reimbursed more than \$7,000 in travel and other expenses incurred in a single fiscal year. The student member receives a scholarship and is reimbursed for expenses.

All Board Members traveling on official business must exercise due care and prudence in incurring expenses. The expenses directly related to Board business for which a Board Member may be reimbursed are as follows:

1. The standard automobile mileage allowance as published by the Internal Revenue Service to attend Executive Session, Board meetings, oral arguments, public hearings, special meetings, and other travel related to Board business or their responsibilities as Board Members from their home offices to specified destinations.
2. Parking, tolls, taxis, rail, bus, or air fare at a reasonable coach class rate.
3. Actual expenses for business-related meals for three meals per day when traveling on behalf of the Board of Education.
4. Telephone installation and monthly charges for an additional private line, fax line, Internet access, and telephone calls related directly to Board business.
5. Reimbursement for local newspapers and professional publications; supplies, postage, and other materials necessary to support Board Members in discharging their responsibilities of Board Members.
6. Transportation, meals, registration fees, and incidental expenses for non-local travel to meetings and conferences. All Board Members are encouraged to attend conferences sponsored by the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) and the National School Boards Association (NSBA) as part of their professional development.

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7. All expenditures must be clearly documented with an original itemized receipt. All restaurant receipts must be annotated with the names of the meeting participants and purpose of the meeting.
  8. Board Members may not be reimbursed for the purchase of alcohol or cigarettes. No travel expenses will be paid or reimbursed for spouses and/or family members who accompany Board Members. Expenses related to the operation of the Board of Education as an entity shall be expended at the discretion of the Board Chair in consultation with the Board Vice-Chair.

Board Members are not provided office space at the Board of Education's Administration Building. As a result, Members must conduct the majority of their work in their home offices. All Board Members will be provided with computer equipment and equipment appropriate for a home office. If equipment is purchased by PGCPS for the use of a Board Member, that equipment is the property of PGCPS and reverts to PGCPS at the conclusion of the Member's term of office. Board members must follow the same policies and procedures for use and security of PGCPS equipment as established for PGCPS employees.

Once equipment funds budgeted for the Board of Education are expended, only the Board Chair and Vice-Chair may authorize additional purchases. Board Members will be provided with a quarterly report on the status of Board Office expenditures and individual Board Member's expenditures.

Procedures for processing monthly expense accounts are as follows:

1. Expenditures are submitted to the Board office. The expenditures must be accompanied by appropriate receipts or bills.
2. The appropriate designated person in the Board office shall process the reimbursement report, checking with the Budget Office Liaison to ensure that sufficient funds exist in the member's account and referring any discrepancies or questions about individual expenditures or account balances to the Chair. Should a question arise, the Chair may refer a disputed amount to the Board's Ethics Panel.



3. The expense form shall then be transmitted to the Office of the Chief Financial Officer for processing and payment.

In the case of referral of the expenditure request for review by the Board's Ethics Panel, the Member shall be entitled to address the Panel and present evidence as to the nature of the challenged expense. Any decision of the Panel as to whether a charge is covered by these provisions may be appealed to the entire Board, provided that any decision of the Board to overrule a recommendation by the panel must be made by recorded vote.

*References: Educ. Art., §3-1003; Board Policy 9354, "Board Members' Voucher Reimbursement of Expenses"*

## Commencements

Board Members typically attend and officiate at a number of high school graduations, which are proportionate for each Member of the Board. The Board office staff works with the Superintendent of Schools to develop protocols that principals follow during the Commencement ceremony. These protocols should be reviewed and distributed annually with the Commencement schedule. By tradition, adult Board Members certify the graduation of students from high school by the following statement:

By virtue of the authority vested in the Board of Education of Prince George's County under the laws of the state of Maryland, I do now award diplomas or certificates evidencing the satisfactory completion of prescribed courses of study to the students of \_\_\_\_\_ High School who are recommended for graduation by the faculty of this school. In receiving this diploma or certificate, each of you are entitled to all of the privileges and honors accorded graduates of a high school accredited by the Maryland State Department of Education and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

