

Board Member Authority

No. 161
(A) 3-8-10
(R) 10-14-13

Section One:

The effective operation of the Board of Education requires an understanding of the roles and responsibilities associated with the position of Board Director by each member, and by Administrators, staff and the public. This policy will address Board member roles and responsibilities in order to facilitate a common understanding, to encourage mutual respect, and to define appropriate expectations.

Board Members are elected to represent the interests of the community by providing leadership, direction and goal setting for the District and evaluation of the District Administrator. Each member is expected to discharge their duties through participation in, contribution to, and support of Board proceedings and actions.

Section Two – Board Member Authority

- a) Individual members have no authority to carry out any Board function or action or make any decision or conduct any negotiations on behalf of the Board, Board committees or other components of the Board without express permission of the Board pursuant to a majority vote at a properly held meeting of the Board of Education, or as expressly provided for in policy and the by-laws of the Board of Education.
- b) Individual members have no authority to direct or supervise Administrators or staff in their duties, except as expressly provided for in Board policy or by-laws. Members are expected to bring matters of concern to the Board or appropriate Board committee for action. In cases requiring immediate attention, the Board President may take appropriate action. In such cases, the President shall report actions taken to the Board at the next regular or special meeting.
- c) Individual members are not constrained from passing along information or observations to staff or Administrators based on their own experience or the observations of others; however, supplying informal information shall not be accompanied by an expectation of a particular action or outcome report. If a member wants a particular action or outcome report, the member must initiate formal Board action.

Section Three– Communications

Members will encounter situations in which community members, staff, the media or others will inquire about Board activities. Members are entitled to voice their opinion and discuss items of public concern; however, other than when referencing Board of Education action already taken, members are cautioned to make clear they are speaking as one member of a seven member group, are not speaking for the group and do not have any authority outside of group action. Members are also likely to encounter situations in which community members, staff, the media or others will request an

action be taken on their behalf. The member is cautioned to respond by explaining the limitations on individual member action while providing guidance for action in response to the request.

Examples of appropriate responses are:

- a) The member may suggest that the information or request be taken by the (requestor, informant) to the appropriate staff member or Administrator.
- b) The member may take the information or request to the administration, the appropriate committee, or the full Board.

Members should refrain from offering to "take care of it" for the complainant due to the limitations on individual Board member actions.

Members are reminded that the official spokespersons for the Board of Education and the School District of Lodi are the Board President and the District Administrator unless otherwise designated by Board action or the Board President.

Section Four - Expectations

- a) Members are expected to participate in the District Administrator Evaluation process.
- b) Members are expected to attend Board and committee meetings on a regular basis.
- c) Members are expected to be prepared for meetings by reviewing available materials prior
- d) Members are expected to treat fellow members with courtesy and professional respect in order to create an atmosphere conducive to open expression of ideas and opinions.
- e) Members are expected to avoid conflicts of interest, both pecuniary and non-pecuniary. (See Policy No. 165.1)
- f) Members are expected to take a leadership role in matters related to their committee and other assignments. This is especially important for committee chairs.
- g) Members are expected to honor closed session confidentiality. Appropriate agenda items for closed session are specifically delineated in state statute. Divulging confidential information and the discussion surrounding such items can cause serious privacy issues for the Board or individuals involved or could jeopardize ongoing contract negotiations.

Section Five

Members acting outside of the expectations and authority described in this policy may be disciplined by the Board with public censure or with legal action when appropriate. The items listed in this policy shall not be assumed to be all inclusive. The Board reserves the right to take disciplinary

action as needed to further its interest in the proper conduct of members as they carry out their membership responsibilities.