



**SCHOOL BOARD
of the
CITY OF RICHMOND**

Strategic Governance Manual

**Equity, Engagement, and
Excellence**

School Board Mission Statement:

The School Board of the City of Richmond through Richmond Public Schools will prepare our students to become successful, contributing members of society through innovative and compassionate learning communities.

PREFACE

The State of Virginia has empowered and directed School Boards (in Title 22.1, Chapter 7 of the Code of Virginia) to do the following:

See that the school laws are properly explained, enforced, and observed; ensure that public schools are conducted according to law and with the utmost efficiency; care for, manage, and control the property of the school division; provide for the consolidation of schools or redistricting of school boundaries or adopt pupil assignment plans to contribute to the efficiency of the school division; operate and maintain the public schools in the school division and determine the length of the school term, the studies to be pursued, the methods of teaching, and the government to be employed in the schools, consistent with state statutes and regulations of the Board of Education; and perform other duties as prescribed by the Board of Education or as are imposed by law.

State law further states that a school board may adopt bylaws and regulations, not inconsistent with state statutes and regulations of the Board of Education, for its own government, for the management of its official business and for the supervision of schools.

The School Board of the City of Richmond (the "School Board" or "Board") takes its charge seriously and has developed this Strategic Governance manual as a plan to conduct our responsibilities as stewards of this school system in a professional manner that addresses goal-setting, monitoring compliance, and a focus on continuous improvement. The Board works in partnership with the Superintendent, who has been delegated authority for the day-to-day operations of the system in accordance with the Code of Virginia.

OUR TOP 10 GOALS FOR THE NEXT 5 YEARS

<p><u>ACCREDITATION</u></p> <p>Achieve 100% full accreditation.</p>	<p><u>SATISFACTION</u></p> <p>Increase student satisfaction (for example, with school culture, building cleanliness, and engagement level of classes); family satisfaction (for example, with school safety, academic rigor, and timeliness of transportation); and staff satisfaction (for example, with level of support, freedom to offer feedback, and availability of resources) – overall and for each subgroup</p>
<p><u>GRADUATION</u></p> <p>Increase the graduation rate as well as the percentage of graduates attending a 4-year or 2-year college, entering the workforce in a living wage job, or participating in national service – overall and for each subgroup (race, economic status, IEP status, and ELL status).</p>	<p><u>ENROLLMENT</u></p> <p>Increase student enrollment – overall and for each subgroup.</p>
<p><u>ACADEMICS</u></p> <p>Increase the proficiency and advanced rates in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies – overall and for each subgroup.</p>	<p><u>ATTENDANCE</u></p> <p>Decrease chronic absenteeism – overall and for each subgroup.</p>
<p><u>TEACHER RETENTION</u></p> <p>Increase teacher retention – overall and for each subgroup.</p>	<p><u>RESTORATIVE JUSTICE</u></p> <p>Decrease suspensions – overall and for each subgroup.</p>
<p><u>EQUITY</u></p>	<p><u>FUNDING</u></p> <p>Increase funding from local, state, federal, and philanthropic sources.</p>

Decrease the gaps in proficiency and advanced rates – by race, economic status, ELL status, and IEP status.	
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Five strategic priorities: 1) Exciting and Rigorous Teaching and Learning; 2) Skilled and Supported Staff; 3) Safe and Loving School Cultures; 4) Deep Partnership with Families and Community; and 5) Modern Systems and Infrastructure.

Standards of Governance

Code of Conduct

Board members will abide by the following VSBA Code of Conduct:

As a member of my local school board, I will strive to be an advocate for students and to improve public education and to that end:

1. I will have integrity in all matters and support the full development of all children and the welfare of the community, Commonwealth and Nation.
2. I will attend scheduled board meetings.
3. I will come to board meetings informed concerning the issues under consideration.
4. I will make policy decisions based on the available facts and appropriate public input.
5. I will delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the superintendent, and establish a process for accountability of administrators.
6. I will encourage individual board member expression of opinion and establish an open, two-way communication process with all segments of the community.
7. I will communicate, in accordance with board policies, public reaction and opinion regarding board policies and school programs to the full board and superintendent.
8. I will bring about desired changes through legal and ethical procedures, upholding and enforcing all laws, state regulations, and court orders pertaining to schools.
9. I will refrain from using the board position for personal or partisan gain and avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of impropriety.

10. I will respect the confidentiality of privileged information and make no individual decisions or commitments that might compromise the board or administration.

11. I will be informed about current educational issues through individual study and participation in appropriate programs, such as those sponsored by my state and national school boards associations.

12. I will always remember that the foremost concern of the board is to improve and enhance the teaching and learning experience for all students in the public schools of Virginia.

Therefore, I will always strive to demonstrate appropriate behavior/conduct as a public-school board member.

References

**VSBA Code of Conduct for School Board Members
Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended, Section 2.2-3100 et seq. State and
Local Government Conflict of Interests Act**

Standards of Governance

Disclosure by School Board Members

The Board acknowledges its continuing duty to conform to all laws regulating conflicts of interest. Members of the Board will be alert to situations, which have the appearance of a conflict of interest and avoid actions that might embarrass themselves or the Board.

Board members are prohibited from using their official position for personal or private gain. To this end, board members are authorized to use School Board stationery and logo, and their status as school board members only in his or her official capacity as a member of the School Board.

Board members are subject to the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act (Code of Virginia, Section 2.2-3100 et seq. State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act) This state law governs board member conduct with reference to certain contracts, transactions, personnel decisions and disclosures, all as particularly set forth in the law.

Filing of Statement of Economic Interest

As a condition of assuming office, members of the school board must file a statement of their personal interests and other information as required by Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3115 Disclosure by local government officers and employees. This disclosure shall be made using the Statement of Economic Interests forms provided by the Virginia conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council.

Board members shall file such statements annually on or before February 1. Statements shall be filed with the clerk of the board.

References

Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended, Section 2.2-3100 et seq. State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act

Standards of Governance

Board Powers and Responsibilities

As a body created under law by the Commonwealth of Virginia, the School Board has full authority, within the limitations of federal and state laws and regulations of the State Board of Education, to establish and maintain a system of public schools for the City of Richmond. In all cases where laws or the regulations of the State Board of Education do not provide, permit or prohibit, the board will consider itself the agent responsible for establishing policies to support the operations, supervising and educational activities of Richmond Public Schools.

Board members have no authority over school affairs and individuals. They have authority only when acting as a body duly called into session.

The School Board will delegate to the superintendent the function of specifying required actions and designing the detailed arrangements under which the schools will be operated. Such detailed arrangements will constitute the administrative directives governing the schools. The administrative directives must be in every respect consistent with the policies adopted by the School Board.

The School Board, after considering recommendations submitted by the superintendent, will exercise the following powers:

- to provide for the operation and maintenance of effective public schools in the division;
- to secure, by visitation or otherwise, as full information as possible about the conduct of the schools and take care that they are conducted according to law and with the utmost efficiency;
- to establish policies for the school division;
- to present to governing bodies an estimate of money deemed to be needed during the next fiscal year for the support of the public schools of the school division;
- to encourage private as well as public support for the school system;
- to manage and control funds appropriated for public education, including approval of the budget, awarding contracts, fixing salary schedules, and overseeing business transactions;
- to employ teachers and other personnel, to appoint their duties, and to address all related personnel problems;
- to receive reports from the superintendent concerning the status and needs of the schools;

- to approve vision, mission, and goals;
- to adopt academic standards;
- to ensure compliance with the Standards of Quality and other state and federal mandates;
- to maintain two-way communication with the public and elected and appointed officials concerning progress and needs of the schools;
- to hear personnel matters as defined by the Code of Virginia;
- to act as a “court of appeals” for teachers, other employees, and laymen who have grievances that have already been heard by the proper administrative official without satisfactory resolution;
- to manage and control the property of the school division;
- to adopt pupil assignment plans for the school division as provided by law;
- to establish the length of the school term;
- to determine the amount of instructional time;
- to participate in continuing and professional development of board members; and to approve long-range capital improvement plans.

References

Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended, Section 22.1-79, Powers and Duties.

Standards of Governance

Transitioning New Members

As soon as election results are confirmed for Richmond City, and School Board representatives are officially announced by the City of Richmond, the administration will begin transitioning new school board members into the position. The administration and School Board will perform the minimum following actions by providing the new member with:

- An orientation that provides an overview of the division and introduces the member to key staff.
- A copy of the Strategic Governance Manual.
- A copy of the latest version of Robert’s Rules of Order and other documentation that may assist in the parliamentary procedures of the board.

- An RPS email account and any other technological equipment (cell phone, computer equipment, etc.) which will be provided on the first official day of the new member's term of office.
- Instructions and assistance for any necessary actions to be sworn into office.

Standards of Governance

Advisory Committees to the Board

Establishment of Committees

Committees may be established by action of the School Board as deemed necessary or as mandated by law. Such committees may be permanent or ad hoc and are subject to the Freedom of Information Act. The composition and duration of advisory and/or ad hoc committees shall be determined by the Board in accordance with any applicable state or federal regulations.

Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended, § 22.1-86, Meetings of people of school division; local committees

Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended, § 2.2-3700 et seq., Freedom of Information Act

Standards of Governance

Evaluation of the School Board

The School Board believes the efficiency of board operations directly affects the efficiency of division operations. Therefore, the Board will conduct a self-evaluation in December.

The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of the School Board in the discharge of its role, both individually and as a board.

The following conditions shall apply to the School Board self-evaluation process:

- School board members shall be involved in the development of an instrument by which they will evaluate themselves.
- The School Board evaluation will be completed by individual board members confidentially, and submitted to the School Board chair or designee, for compilation of individual results.
- The School Board shall meet, with a quorum of members present, to review and discuss the composite opinions and total results.
- Each judgment shall be supported with as much rationale and objective evidence as possible.

Upon completion of the annual process, the School Board will consider revisions to the School Board self-evaluation process.

Administration and Personnel

Board – Superintendent Relationships

The School Board is the corporate policy-making body for the school division and the superintendent and staff provide the leadership to cause board policies to be implemented.

The School Board delegates to the superintendent administrative authority over the schools and holds him/her responsible for the efficient direction and operation of the school division under the policies adopted by the School Board.

The division superintendent or, in his/her absence or inability to attend, a person designated by him/her and approved by the School Board will be present at all meetings of the School Board. On affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the board, attendance of the superintendent or his/her designee may be dispensed with at a special meeting of the Board.

The Board, as a whole, will:

- Give the superintendent full administrative authority for properly discharging his/her professional duties, holding him/her responsible for acceptable results.
- Act in all matters after receiving the recommendations of the superintendent.
- Except as specifically provided in this policy, hold all meetings of the Board in the presence of the superintendent; provided that when matters pertaining to the superintendent personally are under discussion at meetings, the superintendent may be excluded from the meeting but shall remain subject to the call of the School Board.

- Refer all complaints to the superintendent for appropriate investigation and action.
- Present personnel criticisms directly to the superintendent in a confidential setting.
- Given an “emergency,” the superintendent will make an immediate phone call to the board chair and vice-chair followed by communication to school board members. Text and/or email may follow in addition to the calls.
- In sharing information, the superintendent will do so with the board-as-a-whole as a matter of routine, unless the superintendent determines that there are overriding concerns of privacy, legal, ethical, or moral implications that may bring “harm” to an individual or individuals. In such cases, communication may be limited to the board chair and/or vice-chair.

Board Members' Communications with Parents and other Constituents

1. The board member will listen to the full comment/request/complaint, taking notes if desired (recognizing that notes are subject to the Freedom of Information Act.)
2. The board member will repeat the matter back to the community members for clarification.
3. The board member will explain the chain of communication to the community member.
4. The board member will request permission to share the information and to use the information. The information shall not be passed along anonymously. If permission is so granted, the board member will notify the superintendent about the matter.
5. The superintendent will notify the entire board, if appropriate, as to the issue, action, and resolution.
6. If the community member has pursued a matter through the administration, including the superintendent, and remains dissatisfied, he or she, or an individual board member, may request that the superintendent place the matter on the agenda for a meeting of the board, and the board, in its discretion, may decide whether it wishes to consider the matter.

Board duties also encompass adjudicative functions in which the Board must review administrative decisions, or make final determinations, concerning the rights and obligations of individual students or employees, including disciplinary or employment matters that will or may become the subject of a hearing before the board.

Such adjudicative matters may be addressed only to the Board as a whole by interested parties in the context of a board meeting convened to hear such matters.

Individual board members should strictly avoid involvement in any discussion concerning such adjudicative matters, regardless of whether such discussions are with persons who have a direct interest in the outcome of such matters, and regardless of whether such discussion is sought before, during or after board adjudication.

References Legal: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, Section 22.1-78 Bylaws and Regulations

Advocacy

Board members are encouraged to participate in advocacy: Board member should state that he/she are advocating on his/her behalf and not the school board.

- Nationally in cooperation with NSBA
- State advocacy in cooperation with VSBA
- Local advocacy after adoption of the CIP and Operating Budget requests
- School Board Members may receive advocacy through other organizations not mentioned here

Review of Standard Operating Procedures This document will be reviewed and approved at least annually.

Standards of Governance

Richmond City School Board

Governance Norms & Protocols

We agree to employ the following norms in all our interactions:

- **We will hear each opinion, but ultimately act as one. We will speak candidly and courteously to each other and listen to dissenting or different viewpoints with an open mind. We will help each other to depersonalize disagreements. Once we reach a decision or compromise as a board, we will each support the will of the board in word**
- **We will be mindful of the different roles and responsibilities throughout the school system and maintain a focus on policy and governance.**
- **We will be aware of the different roles that we play as individuals (board member, community member, parent, etc.).**
- **We will be focused on our work as a board and not interfere with the day-to-day operations of the school system, which is the responsibility of the superintendent.**
- **We will maintain open communication with each other, the Superintendent, and the community-at-large. Information shared with one board member will be shared with all members if it potentially requires school board action.**

We agree to follow the following protocols:

Adopted on June 24th 2021

Developing the board agenda	The chair, vice-chair and the superintendent will meet weekly to develop the agenda. The vice chair will send a draft agenda/brief summary after each meeting to the full board.
Placing items on the board meeting agenda	<p>The board member will contact the superintendent, chair and vice-chair and cc the entire board with items to be placed on the agenda. If an item is not added for any reason, the chair will communicate with the requesting board member on when the item will be added to a future agenda or why it was not included. The deadline for requesting to add items to the agenda is within 72 hours of the meeting.</p> <p>School Board members must understand that adding items to the agenda on the night of a school board meeting may and can delay the administration providing information for all board members. If a school board member wishes to add an item to the SB agenda they have the option to add it to New Business.</p>
Obtaining information about board meeting agenda items before the meeting	The school board member should contact the superintendent and cc the Chief of Staff with any questions on agenda items prior to the board meeting. The chair and vice-chair should be copied on the request. The superintendent or designee will send the response to the entire board.

<p>Responding to staff or community comments at board meetings</p>	<p>School board members should not respond to staff or community comments at board meetings. The chair will communicate that board members will not respond to public comment during the introduction to the public comment portion of the agenda. If the comment requires a response, the chair will ask the superintendent to respond. The board will be updated on any follow up by staff.</p> <p>While virtual meetings are taking place, the superintendent or designee will reach out for follow up on constituent concerns or needs.</p>
<p>Board Meeting Discussion Procedure</p>	<p>School board members should ask the chair to be recognized to speak. Once recognized, board members will give their comments. Each board member will have the opportunity to speak on the issue prior to any board member speaking for a second time. <i>Board members will speak to the topic at hand and will be limited to 6 minutes total. The board chair and vice chair will keep board members accountable to these expectations. If a board member has stated a point, it does not need to be restated.</i></p> <p>While virtual meetings are taking place, school board members should use the chat to be recognized. The vice-chair will keep track of the requests to be recognized in the order in which they appear.</p>
<p>Responding to staff or community comments outside of board meetings</p>	<p>School board members should direct the staff or community member through the proper chain of communication. If it is a building level issue, board members should direct the constituent to the Principal. If it is a division-level issue, board members should contact the superintendent and chief of staff.</p> <p>When an email is sent to the entire board with a concern, school board members can acknowledge emails if they would like but should not speak on behalf of the board. School board members can</p>

	<p>respond to emails that are sent directly to them and cc'ed to others.</p>
<p>Communications between and among board members</p>	<p>School board members are encouraged to communicate with one another, following the rule of no more than two members at a time. Board members should not reply all or BCC on emails.</p> <p><i>Board members may also add a disclosure at the bottom of emails to remind that recipients should not reply all.</i></p>
<p>Communications between board members and the superintendent</p>	<p>School board members are encouraged to email, text, and call the superintendent.</p>
<p>Communications between board members and staff (including requests for information)</p>	<p>School board members should make all requests for information directly to the Superintendent and copy the Chief of Staff, <i>as well as the board chair and vice-chair. If the request is coming from the chair or vice-chair all board members should be notified.</i></p> <p><i>The Superintendent or Chief of Staff will provide an estimate in writing on when the data/information will be available.</i></p>
<p>Assignment of committee members</p>	<p>The chair will assign committee members on a volunteer basis.</p> <p><i>***School Boards are required to have two advisory committees—one for special education and one for career and technical. Boards are not required to have any committees of the board itself (such as a discipline committee). At times there is confusion about the difference between advisory boards and committees of the board and especially when there are committees created to advise the superintendent, rather than the Board.</i></p>

<p>Committee reporting expectations</p>	<p>Board members should prepare a written report to be submitted for the Board Book regarding the work of the committee, if applicable. Committee representatives should be prepared if other board members have questions regarding the report.</p>
<p>Responding to media inquiries</p>	<p>The chair is the official spokesperson for the school board. If a specific school board member's response is requested, the reporter should be directed to the comment that was given prior to taking the vote. <i>Board members, when giving comments individually, should clearly state they are speaking as an individual representing one board member's opinion, not on behalf of the board.</i></p> <p>The superintendent or designee will be the spokesperson on day to day operational questions.</p>
<p>Use of social media</p>	<p>School board members can utilize social media to push out information about the school division. School board members should recognize that anything that they post can be construed as the opinion of the school board. <i>A school board member should not be on social media during meetings of the board.</i> Reference policy if available Policy # 1-1.5</p>
<p>How, when and whom to notify about visiting school sites</p>	<p>School board members should contact the superintendent prior to visiting school sites. Board members must check in the office upon arrival.</p>
<p>How, when and whom to notify about attending school events (concerts, sporting events, etc.)</p>	<p>School board members are encouraged to attend school events.</p>
<p>Expectations for participation in professional development</p>	<p>School board members are encouraged to participate in professional development. The school board will work towards being a board of distinction. Board members when participating in professional development should upload notes to be shared with fellow board members.</p>

Expectations for participation in meetings	School board members are expected to attend school board meetings.
When and how the board evaluates the superintendent	The school board evaluates the superintendent annually unless other specifications are required per contract.
When and how the board conducts a self-evaluation	The school board will evaluate itself once per year.
When and how the board monitors and updates the school board's strategic plan	The strategic plan is updated every three years. The board receives an update on the strategic plan at least quarterly. Each agenda item on the school board agenda should be tied to a strategic plan goal.
Memorandum of Understanding	The school board will review and discuss the MOU at least twice per year.

Violation of these norms and protocols will result in the following actions:

VIOLATION 1

The board chair or designee will have a one-on-one conversation with the violating board member. If the chair is the violating board member, the vice-chair or designee will discuss the violation with the chair.

VIOLATION 2

The entire board will discuss the violation with the violating board member.

VIOLATION 3

The violating board member will be removed from all committees, if relevant.

**outline a policy for how violations are reported- fair process

APPENDIX

LEGAL REFERENCES

Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended, Section 2.2-3100 et seq., State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act01,

Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended, Section 2.2-3700 et seq., Virginia Freedom of Information Act

Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended, Section 22.1-78, Bylaws and Regulations

**Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended, Section 22.1-79, Powers and Duties
22.1-86, Meetings of people of school divisions; local committees**

BYLAWS and POLICIES

1-1.3 Duties and Powers

1-1.5 School Board Procedures and Standard of Conduct

1-2.4 Orientation/In Service and Professional Development

1-2.5 Compensation and Expenses

1-3.1 School Board Organizational Meeting

1.3.2 School Board Chair and Vice-Chair

1-4.2 School Visitations

1-5.1 School Board Committees

1-5.2 Board Staff Communications

1-6.1 School Board Meetings

1-6.2 Agenda Preparation and Dissemination

1-6.3 Quorum and Rules of Order

1-6.7 Public Participation at Meetings