

BOARD OF EDUCATION ADVOCACY

One of the Board of Education's important functions is to serve as an advocate for the District and all of its students, and, more generally, as an advocate for public education and educational excellence and equity. The Board of Education's advocacy role encompasses intra-district and local community responsibilities, and it also extends beyond the District to include regional, state, and even national concerns.

Advocacy activities are attempts to engage and communicate effectively with others. Advocacy activities have varied purposes and include activities that aim to collaborate, promote, influence, persuade, listen, problem-solve, or simply inform.

The Board of Education intends to work with the District Administrator on identifying and implementing advocacy initiatives that foster:

- Student engagement
- Parent engagement
- Staff engagement
- Community engagement
- Institutional engagement (e.g., businesses, other schools, institutions of higher education, etc.)
- Legislative/public policy engagement (e.g., connecting with elected representatives, the Department of Public Instruction, relevant state and federal agencies, other units of local government, etc.)

Notwithstanding that the Board of Education and District will pursue many formal and planned advocacy activities, the Board of Education also recognizes that opportunities for effective advocacy and engagement are presented in many day-to-day interactions and communications. The Board of Education will rely on its individual members and expects all District employees to use both formal activities and informal interactions to build positive and collaborative relationships with the District's various stakeholder groups.

The Board of Education authorizes and encourages the District Administrator and Board President to structure portions of Board of Education meetings as advocacy opportunities, including by showcasing particular student accomplishments, District programs, and District partnerships and by using meeting time to identify and address legislative and other advocacy opportunities. The Board of Education will also consider the extent to which standing or ad hoc committees might be utilized to further the Board of Education's advocacy and engagement

goals. For example, the Board of Education may build such goals into a specific charge that is given to one or more committees.

On matters of common concern, the Board of Education will leverage the resources and activities of interest-based collaborations and of regional and statewide associations that are pursuing shared interests and objectives.

In the performance of their duties and regardless of their personal views, those individuals who are authorized to act as spokespersons for the express purpose of advocating District interests and Board of Education positions to lawmakers, agency personnel, and other government officials shall convey such interests and positions in a manner that is consistent with any specific or general direction that has been given by the Board of Education. The authorized spokespersons shall likewise adhere to any limitations on their authority as may be specified by the Board of Education.

In pursuing the Board of Education's legislative and public policy advocacy goals, neither the Board of Education nor any District employee or authorized agent of the Board of Education, while acting in their official District capacity, may (1) campaign for or against any particular candidate(s) in an election; (2) use District funds to make contributions to any candidate or political committee; or (3) use any public resources for any other political purpose that is prohibited by law.

Role of Appointed Legislative Liaison

In terms of legislative and public policy issues, the Board of Education seeks to both proactively and reactively engage and advocate on behalf of the District and its students with lawmakers, agency personnel, and other government officials.

Provided that a Board of Education member is willing to accept the responsibilities, the Board of Education may also appoint a Board of Education member to serve as a legislative liaison. If appointed by the Board of Education, the legislative liaison is authorized to do all of the following:

1. Work with the District Administrator and the District's collaborative partners and associations to identify opportunities for legislative and public policy advocacy and to bring the relevant issues, opportunities, and available resources to the attention of the Board of Education;
2. Work with the District Administrator and their designee(s) to prepare resolutions or position statements to present to the Board of Education for possible adoption and/or further direction;
3. Serve as a spokesperson for the Board of Education and the District with legislators, agency personnel, and other government officials for the purpose of communicating information, ideas, needs, and positions that the Board of Education or an authorized

agent of the Board of Education has determined are in the best interest of the District; and

4. Work with the District Administrator and their designee(s) to plan and implement specific engagement activities, including extending invitations to state and community leaders to participate in meetings, visit District facilities, or attend and observe District activities.

Authorized Spokespersons Engaging in Legislative and Public Policy Advocacy

The District Administrator, the Board President, and a member of the Board of Education Policy and Legislative Advocacy Committee are appointed to serve as a legislative liaison and are authorized to act as spokespersons for the Board of Education and District on legislative/public policy advocacy communications that are intended to inform and influence lawmakers, agency personnel, and other government officials. The District Administrator may also designate other District employees to serve as authorized spokespersons to communicate specific messages on behalf of the Board of Education or District or to attend particular meetings or advocacy functions if such designees are given clear direction regarding their role and the relevant Board of Education/District positions.

To the extent reasonable and practical, the Board of Education's authorized spokespersons are expected to seek direction from the Board of Education regarding positions taken and communicated on behalf of the Board of Education and District. Further, such advocacy-related communications in their official capacity shall be consistent with any specific or general direction that the Board of Education has provided through official action taken at a Board of Education meeting. Where the Board of Education has not provided any such direction, or where circumstances have materially changed since the Board of Education provided such direction, the spokespersons are expected to use their best judgment to determine if it would be reasonable and practical to seek further direction from the Board of Education prior to communicating a District position on a particular issue. If impractical, the spokespersons may consider communicating (1) specific data and reasonable projections as to how a given issue would be likely to affect the District, and (2) if believed to be necessary, a position that they determine is consistent with the Board of Education's policies and any applicable Board-approved goals and that otherwise reflects the best interests of the District, while also expressly clarifying that the Board of Education itself has not yet been able to meet to consider the adoption of a specific position. Further, such spokespersons shall keep the full Board of Education informed of issue-based positions that they communicate in their official capacity to legislators, government agencies, and other government officials. At its discretion, the Board of Education may direct the submission of clarifying communications.

Legal Ref: WSS Section 13.61 to 13.65; Section 120.13

Cross Ref:

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