

Douglas County School District

Board of Education

Communications and Community Relations

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BOARD MEETINGS

The board meetings are the board's primary time to have communication with each other and the community. The board will work with district staff to make sure that meeting videos, meeting minutes, and board meeting recap videos/ printed materials are available to the public in a timely manner.

Public Notice & Outreach

- Agendas for all board meetings and work sessions will be posted the Friday prior.
- Agendas are always subject to change.
- Put a punch list of board meeting topics out on social media (Instagram and Facebook)
- Announcements of additional meetings, such as listening sessions and events, will be posted at least a week in advance.
- Upcoming meetings and link to agendas will be posted on the Board of Education webpage
- Additional Outreach will include:
 - Community Calendars
 - Posted in Administration Building
 - School Emails/Communications & Calendar
 - Facebook Events

Respectful Discourse

It is imperative that we are respectful to one another, the administration, staff, and the public always, particularly when we disagree.

Best practices

- Use 'I' statements to avoid the appearance of speaking for the entire board when expressing your own opinions or concerns.
- Operate meetings to ensure each board member can ask questions and be heard on a given topic before moving forward.
- Avoid shaming or discrediting the opinions of others.
- Guidelines for Public Input at meetings

All board members review current guidelines for public comment and form and update as necessary.

All guidelines regarding public input should be posted on our webpage in both English and Spanish and be included in outreach regarding meetings when possible.

At the beginning of the public input section of the meeting the Board President will reiterate the guidelines for public input and let it be known we will hold to them. IT staff will keep track of time and the Board President will strictly enforce the 3-minute limit per person, letting anyone cut off know they can submit additional information or thoughts via email. If the stated guidelines are violated the public speaking time for that individual will end.

Process for Public Comment at a Board Meeting

1. Review the guidelines below.

2. Complete the form online or in person at the Administration Building 24 hours before the meeting that you wish to address the board. The online form opens the Friday before the regular board meeting.
3. You must fill in the name, address, phone number, and topic.
4. Attend the meeting and make your comments when your name is called.

Ideally comments should include:

- Greeting: State your name and address for the record.
- State the topic of your message
- Give details: Offer 1 to 3 points about the issue you are addressing.
- Offer solutions: Offer 1 to 3 ideas for resolving the issue.
- Summarize: Concisely summarize your concern and your proposed solutions.

Guidelines for Public Comment at a Board Meeting

- The Board of Education welcomes public comments during the Public Participation section of the agenda at Regular School Board Meetings, generally the 4th Tuesday of the month.
- 60-75 minutes is typically allotted at each regular meeting, this can be increased if the board anticipates an agenda item that may bring in larger numbers of public commenters
- Each person is typically allotted a maximum of 3 minutes, time may be reduced when a larger than typical number of public commenters sign up
- All public comments should be appropriate for a K-12 audience
- We ask that you do not repeat the same message as an earlier speaker. Simply state that you agree with a previous speaker.
- We encourage you to first contact the teacher, principal, or district department that can best handle individual, specific problems.
- As a policy-making body we ask you to reference policy when possible. Policies can be found here. <http://www.boarddocs.com/co/dsd/Board.nsf/Public>
- Personnel matters will not be discussed.
- We request that the audience not applaud individual speakers.
- The board will listen with respect and ask those who address the board to do the same.
- The matter may be referred to the superintendent for further study or action, or it may be deferred to a future board meeting for response, discussion, or action.
- The board will not entertain slander, name calling, or public defamation of any individual. Please focus on issues, not individuals.
- This is a formal business meeting, and we require formal, respectful discourse.
- Other ways to communicate with the Board include emailing response to community/family surveys, participation in board committees, and participation in community forums
- Follow Up:

The Board Secretary will follow up on board matters. The Superintendent will follow up on operational matters.

COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUPS

Douglas County School District Board of Education represents all the citizens of the district to act in their best interests to ensure an educational foundation that allows each student to reach his or her individual potential. As stated in Policy KB: Parent and Family Engagement, the “DCSD Board of Education recognizes the importance, shared responsibility, and partnership between family, schools, and community. [This] involvement in the education of students contributes greatly to achievement and to the positive school environment and experience.”

Format

- Conduct focus groups as outlined in the DCSD Community Connections Plan
- Board members will call on attendees to share and make sure that everyone has the opportunity to speak.
- Board members will encourage positive and constructive feedback.

Target audience include (full target audience outlined in Community Engagement Plan):

- Staff
- Parents
- Students
- Charter Schools
- Business Groups and leaders
- Senior Citizens

Time/ Place Description:

- Focus groups are scheduled at the discretion of the board.

Advertising

- Board meetings
- Social media
- Board update
- Website

COMMITTEES

The board recognizes that connecting with stakeholder groups is essential to the work of the board. Board members will be representatives on district and community committees as the board chooses. Board members will review committee assignments annually during October/November.

Committee Communication

Board members will use the Friday memo to submit summaries of all committee meetings that they have attended. Board members should submit summaries within two weeks of the meeting. This will ensure that all board members have the same information and understand the board's position on each committee. When board members offer perspective in committee

meetings, members need to be clear that they are sharing one perspective and that the board ultimately speaks as one voice.

Board Committee Commitments

- Fiscal Oversight Committee

The role of the Fiscal Oversight Committee (FOC) is to assist the Board of Education in fulfilling its fiscal oversight responsibilities. The FOC does not assume the ultimate fiscal responsibilities of the Board of Education. The Board and the Superintendent retain the ultimate responsibility for the District's financial condition and for decision-making in all matters of policy and operation.

The scope of the FOC's responsibilities includes information gathering, fact-finding, and making recommendations in the areas of:

- Budget (Operating and Capital);
- Accounting, Audit, and Financial Reporting (Internal and External);
- Banking (Commercial and Investment); and
- Other fiscal matters as assigned by the Board. For example, the activities of the FOC may also include an assessment of federal and state legislation, policies, and regulations in respect of the fiscal operations of the District.

Date: One Thursday/month, varies

Time : 6pm

Location: Varies

- District Advisory Committee

The District Accountability Committee (DAC) helps to collect feedback from School Accountability Committees and then advises the Board of Education regarding spending priorities.

In Colorado, it is a statutory requirement for every school district to have a District Accountability Committee (DAC). The committee is made up of parents, teachers, DCSD staff, and community members and serves in an advisory capacity to the Douglas County School District Board of Education.

The District Accountability Committee (DAC) meets monthly throughout the year and makes recommendations to the Board regarding spending District money, charter school applications, improvement plans and parent engagement plans. The committee's members also make recommendations for areas and issues for study, as well as teacher and principal assessment tools.

Date: 3rd Thursday of the month

Time: 6:30pm

Location: Board Room at DCSD Admin Building

- Mill Oversight Committee

Oversite of taxpayer approved funding to support the Board in fulfilling its responsibility to provide transparency and assurance to the community.

Date: Typically, Wednesdays

Time: Varies

Location: Varies

- Long-range Planning Committee
The charge of the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) is to study school district sites, boundaries and capacity needs.
Date: First Wednesday of the month
Time: 6pm
Location: Legacy Campus
- Student Advisory Group
The Student Advisory Group (SAG) provides an opportunity for the Board and District personnel to have a focus group of high school students who express what they think is important regarding their education.
Date: 2nd and 4th Monday of the month
Time: 6pm
Location: eDCSD/Virtual
- Mill Bond Exploratory Ad Hoc Committee
The charge of the Mill Bond Exploratory Committee (MBEC) shall be to explore the needs of the district, both ongoing operational and capital needs, and to assess the feasibility of a successful Mill Levy Override (MLO) and/or Bond issue on future ballots
Date/Time/Location: determined when active
- CASB Delegate (Need Details)
Meeting in
Annual Conference in December
Annual Regional Meeting in October

Below are commitments for All Board Members*

- Monthly Board Meetings
2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 5:30 pm
- Community Focus Groups as determined.
As scheduled

LINKAGES-

In order to conduct more targeted, focused, and meaningful stakeholder engagement, as well as to make our board meetings more efficient, linkages with educational partners and community organizations both internal and external will occur during our work sessions. The purpose of the linkages

is to help the board understand our internal and external partnerships and discuss how we can better partner to reach our goals and vision. The board will outline the linkages for the school year on their annual work plan.

Format:

The groups will receive an invitation to speak to the board at least two weeks ahead of our work sessions. The group will be given 10 minutes to present to the board and we will have 5 minutes for questions.

Link with Youth-serving organizations, Boys and Girls Club, School Counselors, Local Pediatric Therapists, social workers (foster care), Higher Education Representatives, trade representatives, etc.. Have a guided conversation helping to inform the district's success and challenges in achieving results aligning with district policy. Examples of questions to ask: Are Students gaining essential life skills through their education? What does this look like post-graduation? Do our students have the life skills they need to work in the community and to be successful in higher education?

SURVEYS

The board sees surveys as a valuable tool to gain understanding of the staff, parents, students, and community members' perspectives. The board will help develop and review all survey questions for all surveys that the board conducts. The board will ensure that the survey availability is well communicated to stakeholders. The surveys will always be available in both English and Spanish. The board will make sure that an adequate window is available for folks to complete the survey.

Types of annual surveys

- The board will work with the District Accountability Committee to do an annual parent survey.
- The board will conduct a parent calendar survey each year before making the decision to approve the calendar for the academic year.
- The board will conduct surveys in decision making (e.g., policy) whenever stakeholder feedback is valuable in the decision making process.

EMAIL

Receiving Email

Each board member has a personal district email account. When receiving communications from the community where all board members are copied will be, at minimum, responded to by the board secretary. The board secretary will copy the board assistant secretary in response to ensure the email is included in weekly board communications.

Emails from the community that relate to operations will be forward to the superintendent if not already copied.

Weekly Board Correspondence

The board assistant secretary will share out a PDF of board correspondence for the week. To have an email included in this weekly correspondence, board members should copy the assistant board secretary in their reply.

Board Email Correspondence

The board secretary has the duty to respond to community emails addressed to the entire board. The Board member assigned will log all emails and correspondence received. The Board member assigned will return each email within a week. The return response will include an acknowledgement of receipt, a timeline for when the correspondence will be discussed, and abide by suggested best practices. If the matter has already been discussed in an open meeting, the board member may reply with the board's response or action on the issue. The Board member assigned will decide if the email needs referral to a district employee. If the email is referred, the Board member will still enter it on the log as "referred" and will check back with the author within two weeks to make sure that the appropriate party has responded. The Board member responsible for monthly correspondence will keep the timeline for discussion of correspondence and get back to all emails and update the log.

Email Log Template for Google Sheets:

- Name
- Parent, Staff, Community
- Date
- Received Concern School?
- Response
- Y, N
- Response Date Comments

Suggested Best Practices for Emails

- Thank the author for their concern for our district/ staff/ students. Always begin and end with gratitude.
- Strive for a tone of gratitude toward a shared mission of achieving results for all kids.
- Avoid blaming or talking down to anyone
- Reiterate what we hear as their concerns.
- Refer the author to appropriate district/school staff if they have an operational issue.
- Explain what the Board has done or is planning to do (as applicable) with our reasoning, including how it impacts our mission of student results.
- As seen fit, invite the author to participate in other forms of communication with the board (Ex: public participation, communication circles, surveys, etc.)

TEXTING

Please note that professional texting is different from social texting and should be done with more care. Incoming texts are more difficult to control or ignore and can represent an intrusion into someone's time. Therefore, texts regarding board business should be done only when necessary.

Group Texts: Group texts between the board and/or staff are for emergency or time-sensitive information sharing only. Other information sharing should be done via group emails (see above). Remember not to respond to group texts because it could be a violation of open meeting laws.

Individual texts: Board members should not be texting staff unless under extenuating circumstances, such as during travel, events, or emergencies. Texting between individual board members should remain professional, direct, and concise. Please avoid daisy chain decisions or polling, and respect one another's communication preferences.

SOCIAL MEDIA

This is an essential communication tool we need to utilize.

How to use in context of the board:

- FOCUS ON RESULTS
- This can also be used to share the information for dates and times of board events and meetings.

Personal Social Media Accounts

Individual Board Members should only share board communications that have been officially put out and therefore approved by the board. For example, members can share public events, Press Releases, and other publicly published communications to help spread the word of official district and board news. Members should NOT comment on district or board news individually share unofficially commentary or board/district news.

BOARD/STAFF INTERACTION

The Superintendent is our sole employee, and it is his/her job to manage the staff. Please be respectful of that. While information gathering can be OK, Board members must be aware of our authority and not ever direct staff unless delegated to by the superintendent. If you need more information, it is best practice to schedule a meeting with the superintendent. Requests for information from staff should ideally be done through email to the superintendent.

MEDIA

The Board President is the spokesperson for the board unless delegated to another member.

Press Releases and PSAs are a good way to frame the story or prompt reporting on stories that might not otherwise get picked up. The Board will develop a list of media contacts for dissemination to include the newspaper, but also radio, TV, locally as well as regionally. This could help us get more positive coverage. We can also use free community calendars in newspapers and radio throughout the community to help advertise our public events.

Newspaper: The Board will appoint a board member to draft opinion columns or letters to the editor on board related matters to share information or board decisions on district topics. The board can also use this method of communication to highlight district results.

Radio: Local radio will read PSAs from non-profits and there are opportunities to get interviews as needed. Radio is also great free coverage of upcoming events through community calendars

Board MEMOS

There will be a board MEMO shared biweekly. Board members must submit their updates to the board assistant secretary by noon on Friday. Send any attachments you wish to submit as well. Board members should submit meeting reports, school visit summaries, and committee summaries within two weeks of attending those meetings

WEBPAGES

<https://www.dcsdk12.org/about/board-of-education>

The Board of Education landing page

- Guiding Statement – our statement from above synthesizing what we do (elevating community voice, vision/mission)
- Board Responsibilities
 - What we do through coherent governance (set and monitor policies on board culture, board and superintendent communication, Operational expectations, and Results policies)
 - Links to our policies
 - What we do as legal obligations (i.e. budgets, personnel, hiring and evaluating the superintendent, land and buildings, etc.)
- Board Organization
 - The Board of Education is made up of 7 board members from different districts serving 4 year terms.
 - Elections are held in odd years only (i.e. 2021, 2023) we serve without pay or benefits
 - Board roles, timing, and election etc.
 - Include a link to the district map page
 - Link to the Election Page

Board Elections

Page should always be kept up to date

Board Meetings

Meetings page (<https://douglaspublic.ic-board.com/>)

- When, where and purpose of our monthly public board meetings and work sessions
- When and where to find the agendas
- Informal and special meetings or study sessions occur as needed and where they will be posted
- Direct link to Meeting Agendas and Minutes with instructions if not a direct link

Public Participation page

A statement about how public feedback helps us do our job better. Why public feedback is important and guidelines about participation in public comment

Board Response to Extenuating Circumstances

The board responds collectively to extenuating circumstances through sympathy cards.

Board Recognition of Excellence

The board will have public recognition of students, staff, and the community

Recognition will occur:

- At board meetings
- BOE newsletter