

# BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## BYLAWS OF THE BOARD

## SERIES 9000

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## BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### BYLAWS OF THE BOARD

### SERIES 9000

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## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Role of the Board and Members**

The board of education is an agent of the State and is the governing body of the school district. It derives its power and exists under the Constitution and General Statutes of the State of Connecticut and the procedures of the Connecticut State Board of Education.

As such, the board of education shall:

1. Employ an able and qualified Superintendent of Schools.
2. Adopt policies to govern the operation of the school system.
3. Communicate the educational program to the people of the community.
4. Keep abreast of educational needs of the town.
5. Adopt an annual budget.
6. Take such specific actions as are required by law.

In carrying out these mandates, the board of education shall act as a legislative and appraisal body, delegating executive functions to the superintendent of schools and his/her staff. The board shall concern itself with issues, matters and questions involving education policies and provide an effective framework to ensure ongoing monitoring. The board shall act as a committee of the whole, and individual members shall make no commitments for the board, except when executing an assignment requested by the board.

Legal Reference:        Connecticut General Statutes  
                                 1-18a Definitions.  
                                 10-186 Duties of local and regional boards of education.  
                                 10-220 Duties of boards of education.  
                                 10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules.  
                                 10-240 Control of schools.  
                                 10-241 Powers of school districts.  
                                 Special Act 97-4 An Act Concerning the Bridgeport Public Schools.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Limits of Authority**

The Bridgeport Board of Education is the unit of authority. Apart from their function as part of the unit, board members have no individual authority. Individually, a board member may not commit the district to any policy, act or expenditure. The board member acts for the community as whole.

No individual member of the board, by virtue of holding office, shall exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the schools, nor as an individual command the services of any school employee.

## Bylaws of the Board

### Powers, Purposes, and Duties

The board of education shall be responsible for the maintenance and operation of the public schools as required by law. The board shall be responsible for carrying out the following duties:

- Interpret the needs of the community and the desired educational requirements to its professional organization.
- Appoint the superintendent of schools, and approve the appointment of principals and anyone above the rank of principal – as well as those other individual positions specified by the Board.
- Evaluate, analyze and work with the superintendent in approving annual operating, federal, state, other grants and capital budgets proposed by the superintendent. Approve and initiate financial operational and grant compliance audits as the board of education may deem appropriate.
- Provide the City Council with statements of the need for additional school facilities, including proposed additions to or extensions of existing school buildings, and set forth such information as the board may deem appropriate.
- Approve preliminary and final plans for education and specifications for all new buildings and additions.
- Periodically evaluate the total program of the schools in Bridgeport and appraise the efficiency of executive personnel.
- Keep the Bridgeport community and its residents intelligently informed of purposes, values, conditions and need of public education in Bridgeport.
- Consider any other specific actions recommended by the superintendent of schools.
- Take any other actions required by law.
- Establish any other policies to ensure efficient use of resources.

Legal Reference:      Connecticut General Statutes  
                                  10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules  
                                  10-240 Control of schools  
                                  10-241 Powers of school districts

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Public Statements**

The Bridgeport Board of Education recognizes that communication is a continuous two-way process. The board believes that it is important to keep the public informed about educational programs, and, in turn, that the community should have the opportunity to provide input.

Communication will be a concurrent responsibility of the board of education and the superintendent. The superintendent will work with the members of the board of education to conduct an active and comprehensive program throughout the school district and community for the prompt dissemination of information through releases to the press and brief summaries of board meeting actions and other matters relating to the school district. Press releases from the board of education shall be released only by the board chairperson or the delegated agent of the board and only as authorized by the Board.

(cf. 1120 -Board of Education Meetings)

**Bylaws of the Board****Public Statements****Advocacy**

The board of education believes that advocacy is a critical part of its activity and an important responsibility of school board members. Advocacy is engagement in the political process at local, state and national levels to influence the public policies that affect boards of education and school children.

In fulfilling its advocacy responsibilities, the board of education will collaborate with parent groups, other educators, special interest groups, business and service organizations, other school boards, and community members to achieve favorable legislation on education issues. Coalition building is critical to effective advocacy.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Commitment to Democratic Principles in Relation to Community, Staff, Students**

#### **Board-Staff Communications**

The Bridgeport Board of Education recognizes the need to maintain open communication between itself and the staff. Communications with staff may often fall into three general areas: administration, policy, and philosophy. While the board recognizes the necessity for board-staff communications, it also recognizes that administrative matters must be dealt with through its chief administrator. Hence, the primary line of communication for administrative matters shall be through the superintendent.

#### **1. Staff Communications to the Board**

All formal reports to the board or any board committee from administrators, supervisors, teachers or other staff members shall be submitted through the superintendent. (cf. 4118.111/4218.111- Grievances)

Board meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide the community an excellent opportunity to observe and participate first hand the board's deliberations on problems of staff concern.

#### **2. Board Communication to Staff**

All official communications, policies and directives of staff interest and concern will be, whenever possible, communicated to staff members through the superintendent, and the superintendent will employ all such media as are appropriate to keep staff fully informed of the board's problems, concerns and actions. (cf. 9020 - Public Statements)

Any board member may speak with or contact staff to obtain pertinent information to assist them in their decision making with due notice to the superintendent stating the purpose of the contact.

#### **3. Visits to Schools**

Individual board members interested in visiting schools or classrooms will make arrangements for visitations through the administrators of the various schools where appropriate.

## Bylaws of the Board

### Commitment to Democratic Principles in Relation to Community, Staff, Students

(continued)

#### 4. Social Interaction

Staff and board members share an interest in the schools and in education generally, and it is to be expected that when they meet at social affairs and other functions, they may informally discuss such matters as educational trends, issues, and innovations and general school district problems. Individual board members have no special authority excepting when they are convened at a legal meeting of the board or vested with special authority by board action whenever (wherever) possible. Board members are expected to avoid discussion of:

- A. Matters that are, or have the potential of becoming, the subject of an executive session;
- B. Confidential information and data contained in personnel records;

(cf. 2220 - Representative and Deliberative Groups)

(cf. 9133 - Special/Advisory Committee)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes  
10-220 Duties of boards of education.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Board-Related Responsibilities**

In order to assure that its operations support the schools in providing all students with a high quality education, each year, the board of education will establish a set of goals to achieve during the year. These goals will be determined in consultation with the superintendent and will be consistent with the objectives of the Bridgeport Public School System and with the Connecticut General Statutes.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Officers\***

The officers of the board of education shall be president, vice president, and secretary. Whenever there is a vacancy in any of the foregoing the board shall elect a new officer to fill the vacancy during the unexpired term of office.

### **Method of Election\***

Election of officers shall be the first item of business following public comments at the board's annual organizational meeting.

The Mayor calls the meeting to order and shall preside until the election of a president.

Election of officers shall be by ballot which shall be publicly announced at the election. A majority vote of those present shall be necessary for election to office.

Each voting board member shall cast his/her vote for the election of officers. Unless waived by the Board, the vote of each member shall be in a signed ballot and shall be made available for public inspection within forty-eight hours, excluding Saturday, Sunday and legal holidays via the district website. The results of the election shall also be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and the minutes shall be available for public inspection at all reasonable times as well as posted electronically. If such officers are not chosen after one month because of a tie vote of the members, a chairperson shall be chosen in conformity with state statutes.

(cf. 9221 - Filling Vacancies)

(cf. 9222 - Resignation/Removal from Office/Censure)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes  
10-218 Officers, Meetings

## Bylaws of the Board

### President

The president shall preside at all meetings, regular and special, of the board of education and shall perform other duties as directed by law, State Department of Education regulations, and by this board. In carrying out these responsibilities, the president shall:

1. Sign the instruments, acts, and orders necessary to carry out state requirements and the will of the board.
2. Establish the board's agendas in consultation with the Superintendent.
3. Confer with the superintendent on crucial matters which may occur between board meetings.
4. Appoint committee members and chairpersons.
5. Call special meetings of the board as necessary or as required by Robert's Rules of Order.
6. Serve as public spokesperson for the board at all times except as this responsibility is specifically delegated to others, which shall not act as an infringement upon the right of free speech of other members.
7. Be responsible for the orderly conduct of all regular and special board meetings.

As presiding officer at all meetings of the board, the president shall:

1. Call the meeting to order at the appointed time.
2. Announce the business to come before the board in its proper order.
3. Enforce the board's policies relating to the order of business and the conduct of the meetings.
4. Recognize persons who desire to speak, and protect the speaker who has the floor from disturbance or interference.
5. Explain what the effect of a motion would be if it is not clear to every member.
6. Restrict discussion to the question when a motion is before the board.
7. Answer all parliamentary inquiries, referring questions of legality to the board attorney.
8. Put motions to a vote, stating definitely and clearly the vote and result thereof.

**Bylaws of the Board**

**President** (continued)

The president shall have the right, as other board members have, to offer resolutions, discuss questions, and to vote.

(cf. 9020 - Public Statements)

(cf. 9325 - Meeting Conduct)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes  
10-218 Officers, Meetings.

## **Bylaws**

### **Office of the Vice-President**

The Vice-President will:

1. Act in place of the President when necessary and preside at meetings when the President is temporarily absent. The Vice-President cannot fill vacancies required to be filled by the President and does not serve as an ex-officio member of committees.
2. Work with the President and Superintendent to become generally informed of Board business.
3. In the absence of the President, act as a resource to the Superintendent on decisions which may require further input between Board meetings.

The Vice-President's signature shall be an alternative signature on all legal documents requiring the signature of the Secretary.

## **Bylaws**

### **Office of the Secretary**

In absence of the President and Vice-President, the Secretary shall have the powers and duties of the President.

1. Call the roll call of Board members at the opening of each Board meeting.
2. Receives and reports to the Board all correspondence to the Board.
3. Any other duties prescribed by the Board.

Legal Reference:      Connecticut General Statutes  
                                 10-218 Officers, Meetings.  
                                 10-224 Duties of secretary.  
                                 10-225 Salaries of secretary and attendance officers.  
                                 10-323 Resitrictions on employment of members of board of education.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Support Staff**

The Superintendent's office shall be responsible to the board and will provide support to the board for conducting necessary business.

This office shall be responsible for keeping accurate records of the proceedings of the board; and for the preservation of reports of committees and communications addressed to the board, reports of the chairperson, and reports from the superintendent.

Legal Reference:       Connecticut General Statutes  
                              10-218 Officers.  
                              10-224 Duties of secretary.  
                              10-225 Salaries of secretary and attendance officers.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **City Attorney**

Unless otherwise determined by the Board, the Bridgeport City Attorney shall be the legal advisor of the board of education and its officers in questions relating to their official duties. The primary function of the attorney assigned by the City Attorney is to provide professional legal counsel and representation for the board and superintendent.

City Attorney shall, unless otherwise determined by the Board:

1. Represent the board of education in legal proceedings.
2. Give his/her written opinion on all legal questions referred to him/her by the board of education or the superintendent.
3. Attend all board of education meetings, conferences and other meetings as requested by the board or the superintendent.
4. Fulfill such other legal duties as the board of education may assign.

## Bylaws of the Board

### Committees

The President of the board of education shall appoint the committees, chairs and members, by filing a list thereof with the superintendent's office as soon as possible following the organizational meeting. The President's designation shall be made public at the first board meeting subsequent to its filing.

The Standing Committees are:

- City Building
- Curriculum Development
- Facilities/Maintenance
- Finance
- Parental Participation
- Personnel
- Policies/Procedures
- Security/Safety
- Arts

Each committee shall have, as near as can be, the same number of members, provided that each member of the board shall serve on at least two (2) committees.

The duties of each committee shall be determined as the committee is formed.

Each committee chair, with the assistance of the superintendent, will establish a schedule of committee meetings.

The agenda for each committee shall include any matter referred to that committee as well as any item submitted to the chair and superintendent by any member of the committee at least 72 hours in advance of the committee meeting.

Committee reports shall be prepared at the direction of the committee chair and shall faithfully reflect the discussion and the votes taken. A written report of committee actions may be made at each meeting. The recorder will be either a paid person or a committee member.

No committee shall have power other than to recommend to the board unless specially authorized.

All committees of the board shall follow the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act as required by statute.

Committees shall make decisions based on Roberts Rules of Order.

(cf. 9133 - Special/Advisory Committees)

Legal Reference:           Connecticut General Statutes  
                                   1-7 through 1-21k Freedom of Information Act.  
                                   1-18a Definitions.  
                                   1-21a Meetings of government agencies to be public.

**Bylaws of the Board**

**Committee of the Whole**

The board of education shall act as a committee of the whole in final consideration of all matters.

Legal Reference:      Connecticut General Statutes  
                                 1-18a Definitions.  
                                 1-21 Meetings of government agencies to be public.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Special Committees/Ad Hoc Committees**

#### **Ad Hoc Committees**

Ad hoc committees may be created by the President or the board.

The duties of the committee shall be outlined at the time of appointment, and the committee shall be considered dissolved when its final report has been made to the board of education.

All committees of the board of education shall follow the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act as required by statute.

#### **Advisory Committees**

Advisory committees may be created by the board for special purposes.

The composition of advisory committees shall be broadly representative and shall take into consideration the specific tasks assigned to the committee. Members of the professional staff may be appointed to the committee as members or consultants, as found desirable by the Board.

Appointments to such committees shall be made by the board. Appointment of staff members to such committees shall be made by the board upon the recommendation of the superintendent.

Each committee shall be clearly instructed as to :

1. The service the board wishes the committee to render;
2. The extent and limitations ' of its responsibilities;
3. The resources the board will provide;
4. The approximate dates on which the board wishes to receive major reports;
5. Board policy governing advisory committees;
6. Responsibilities for the release of information to the press.

Recommendations of citizens committees shall be based on research and fact. Their recommendations shall be channeled to the board through the staff member designated as the committee coordinator and through the superintendent.

The board possesses certain legal powers and prerogatives which cannot be delegated or surrendered to others. Therefore, all recommendations of a district advisory committee shall be submitted to the board for action.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Advisory Committees** (continued)

The board shall have the sole power by majority vote to dissolve any of its advisory committees and shall reserve the right to exercise this power at any time during the life of any committee.

If the advisory committee is required by state or federal law, its composition and appointment shall meet all the guidelines established for that particular type of committee.

### **Record Keeping**

All committees shall keep minutes of business conducted at meetings. The minutes will be kept on file in the board office and available at all times to the board of education members.

Legal Reference:      Connecticut General Statutes  
                                 1-7 through 1-21k Freedom of Information Act.  
                                 1-18a Definitions.  
                                 1-21 Meetings of government agencies to be public.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Student Representatives to the Board of Education**

The Bridgeport Board of Education recognizes the importance of maintaining open communication with the student body. Being cognizant of student interest in the affairs of the board and also of the board's interest in knowing the opinions of those under its charge, it is vitally necessary that the lines of communication between the two groups be as open and effective as possible.

Each high school shall select one student and an alternate to represent that school to the board. These student members may attend and sit in on all public session regular and special meetings of the board.

The student members may speak on any issue on the agenda or motion before the board and may also recommend resolutions and motions for the board's consideration as well as report on matters of interest. The students shall receive copies of all regular meeting agendas, minutes, and other pertinent publications that are supposed to be made available to them when so made available to board members.

The student members may not cast an official vote on any motion or resolution. Student members may not be allowed to attend executive sessions and negotiation session.

The student members shall communicate with their respective student bodies the essence of the pertinent issues before the board via their respective student councils.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Filling Vacancies\***

#### **Board Member Vacancies**

Any vacancy occurring on the board of education from whatever cause shall be filled by a vote of the remaining members of the board. The person appointed shall be of the same political party as his/her predecessor. Vacancies occurring shall be filled according to the Charter of the City of Bridgeport and in compliance with State Statutes.

The vacancy will be filled by majority vote of all members of the board of education at a regularly scheduled meeting, and the action shall be recorded in the minutes of that meeting.

The person appointed shall serve until the next regular municipal election for such seat, at which time a successor shall be elected or appointed for the unexpired portion of the term.

Legal Reference:      Connecticut General Statutes  
                                 9-204 Minority representation on boards of education.  
                                 10-219 Procedure for filling vacancy on board of  
                                 education.  
                                 10-156e Employees of boards of education permitted to  
                                 serve as elected officials; exception.  
                                 10-232 Restriction on employment of members of the  
                                 board of education.  
                                 Charter of the City of Bridgeport.

**Bylaws of the Board****Resignation/Removal from Office/Censure\*****Resignation**

If for reasons of health, change in domicile, or any other compelling reason a member does decide to terminate service, the board requires immediate written notification to the Board Secretary of intent to resign so that the board may plan appropriately.

When a member of a board of education shall cease to be a bona fide resident of the City of Bridgeport, membership in the board shall immediately cease.

**Notification**

The Superintendent notifies the City and Town Clerk of changes.

(cf. 9120 - Officers and Auxiliary Personnel)  
(cf. 9221 - Filling Vacancies)

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Orientation of Board Members**

The board of education and the administrative staff shall assist each new member-elect to understand the board of education's functions, policies and procedures and operation of the school district before the member takes office.

### **New Board Member Orientation**

After the general election in November, and prior to the new members officially assuming the position in December, the new members will be invited to meet with the superintendent and other administrative personnel to discuss services to be performed for the board, and to give them the opportunity to request any other information they may deem desirable. Each new member will also receive an orientation packet from the superintendent's office and will be notified of and given the opportunity to attend new board member orientation workshops.

The packet will include:

1. A copy of the board's policies, rules, and regulations.
2. A copy of the current school budget and the latest financial statement.
3. Any other materials relevant to duties and responsibilities as members of the Bridgeport Public Schools.

## Bylaws of the Board

### Board Member Development

The complexity of board of education membership makes opportunities for development, study and training for board members advisable. The board of education places a high priority on the importance of a planned and continuing program of in-service education for its members.

In order to develop leadership capabilities, become informed about current issues in education, and improve their skills as members of a policy-making body, board members may participate in opportunities for development that may include, but not be limited to, the following whenever possible:

- In-service activities planned by the board and by the administration for staff members, as appropriate;
- Participation in conferences, workshops and conventions held by state and national school boards associations and other educational organizations as appropriate;
- Subscriptions to publications addressing board member concerns.

Recognizing the need for continuing training and development of its members, the board of education encourages the participation of all members in appropriate conferences, conventions and workshops. To control both the investment of time and funds necessary to implement this policy, the board establishes these principles and procedures for its guidance:

- The superintendent will inform board members, in a timely manner, of upcoming conferences, conventions and workshops. The board will decide which meetings appear to be most likely to produce the greatest benefit to the board and the district;
- Funds for participation at such meetings may be budgeted. When funds are limited, the board will designate which members would be most appropriate to participate at a given meeting;
- If authorized to attend, and reimbursement is approved by the entire board, board members will be reimbursed, upon request, for reasonable and necessary expenses actually incurred;
- When a conference, convention or workshop is not attended by the full board, those who do participate will be requested to share, by means of written or oral reports, information, recommendations and materials acquired at the meeting.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Remuneration and Reimbursement**

Board members shall receive no compensation for their services.

In its annual budget, the board of education shall allocate funds to cover: expenses for the efficient functioning of the board and conduct of official meetings of the board and its committees; reimbursement for individual board members who incur expenses during the conduct of official business, according to the types of activities authorized by the board.

Board members shall be reimbursed, upon submitting vouchers and supporting documentation, for reasonable expenditures incurred in connection with the performance of their official duties. Such expenses shall include, but are not limited to:

1. Parking fees
2. Meals (when on board approved function)
3. Long distance telephone calls
4. Convention/conference expenses

Any expense exceeding \$25 shall be approved in advance by a majority of the board. Requests for reimbursement for any reason other than the above must also have prior approval of a majority of the board. It is expected that board members will exercise good judgment and prudence in the expenditures of funds.

Board members authorized to attend educational conferences out-of-state shall be reimbursed, upon submitting vouchers and supporting documentation, for reasonable expenditures, transportation costs to and from the destination and registration fees. Board members must have approval in advance from the board.

It is expected that:

1. Board members will make the most economical arrangements possible when attending out-of-state conventions and conferences.
2. The Superintendent's Office and individual board members shall share information about upcoming conventions and conferences of interest to allow for the establishment of a calendar of such events.

**Bylaws of the Board****Remuneration and Reimbursement** (continued)

3. Any board member whose term of office is expiring in December who has chosen not to run for reelection or who has been defeated in his/her bid for reelection will not be authorized to attend any out-of-state convention or conference at Board expense.
4. Travel arrangements for out-of-state conventions and conferences will be made by the Superintendent's Office.

**Documentation of Expenditures**

Board members will follow recommended standard accounting procedures regarding all requests for reimbursement and in accounting for expenditure of advances, including submission of receipts. Unexpended money from travel advances will be returned to the Superintendent's Office within seven days following return.

Legal Reference:      Connecticut General Statutes  
                                 10-225 Salaries of secretary and attendance officers.  
                                 10-232 Restrictions on employment of members of board  
                                 of education.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Board Member Protection**

The Bridgeport Public Schools shall maintain adequate insurance to protect the district and its Board of Education against loss because of fire, damage to school property, loss to other property, or general liability resulting as a responsibility of the school district, and save harmless its Board and staff while acting in behalf of the school district.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-235 Indemnification of teachers, board members and employees in damage suits; expenses of litigation.

10-236 Liability insurance.

10-236a Indemnification of educational personnel assaulted in the line of duty.

## Bylaws of the Board

### Conflict of Interest

The Board desires its members not only to adhere to all laws regarding conflict of interest, but to be continually aware of situations which have the appearance of conflict of interest and to avoid actions that might embarrass themselves or the Board.

Without limiting the above, areas of Board operations must be guarded with particular care in order that there be no real or seeming conflict of interest. These are purchasing and hiring of new personnel. Therefore:

1. No member of the Board shall have any direct pecuniary interest in a contract with the school district, nor shall he/she furnish directly any labor, equipment, or supplies to the district. It is not the intent of this bylaw to prevent the district from contracting with corporations or businesses because a Board member is an employee of the firm. However, in such instances the member may be expected to declare his/her association with the firm and will refrain from debating or voting on the question.
2. If a member of the immediate family of a Board member--specifically parent/guardian, spouse, child or grandchild -- is being considered for employment, that member shall disqualify him/herself from participation in discussion or vote.
3. The Board shall not give preferential treatment to companies in which city officials or paid city employees, have a major financial interest or to companies by which they are employed.
4. No Board member shall use his or her position to influence an employment or contractual decision other than those routinely made by the Board itself.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

7-479 Conflicts of Interest.

10-156e Employees of boards of education permitted to serve as elected officials; exception.

10-232 Restrictions on employment of members of the board of education.

## Bylaws of the Board

### Code of Ethics

The success of every school system depends on an effective working relationship between the Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools. This code incorporates those standards and responsibilities most critical to productive Board and Superintendent relations.

- Boards members and Superintendent ensure the opportunity for high quality education for every student and make the well being of students the **fundamental goal** of all decision-making and actions.
- Board members and Superintendent are **staunch advocates** of high quality free public education for **all** Connecticut children.
- Board members and Superintendent **obey all** national, state and local laws and regulations pertaining to education and public agencies.
- Board members and Superintendent recognize that **clear** and **appropriate communications** are key to the successful operation of the school district.
- Board members and Superintendent will always carry out their respective roles with the highest levels of **professionalism, honesty** and **integrity**.
- Board members recognize that they represent the **entire** community and that they must ensure that **the** community remains fully informed on school-related matters.
- Superintendent and Board members recognize that the Superintendent serves as the Board of Education's **agent** and will, in that role, **faithfully apply** the policies and contracts adopted by the Board.
- Board members adhere to the principle that they shall confine the Board's role to **policy-making, planning** and **appraisal** while the Superintendent shall **implement** the Board's policies.
- Board members and Superintendent both recognize that they serve as a part of an educational team with **mutual respect, trust, civility** and **regard** for each other's respective roles and responsibilities.
- Board members are committed to the concept that the strength of the Superintendent is in being the **educational leader** of the school district.
- Board members and Superintendent practice and promote **ethical behavior** in the **Boardroom** as a **model** for all district employees.
- Board members and Superintendent consider and decide all issues **fairly** and **without bias**.

(cf. 2000.1 - Board-Superintendent Relationship)  
 (cf. 2300 - Statement of Ethics for Administrators)

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Code of Conduct on Data Use**

As a guide to the appropriate use of data in the decision-making process, Board members should:

1. Request information and data gathered by District staff that helps the Board members make better-informed decisions about policies affecting student achievement district-wide.
2. Request data as a Board, not as an individual, unless the information is reasonably available and will not redirect staff time.
3. Use data to represent all of the Board member's constituents honestly and equally.
4. Avoid using the Board position, and the information data supplies as a result of Board membership, for personal gain.
5. Recognize that decisions can be made only by a majority vote at a Board meeting after everyone on the Board has had adequate time to review all the data and information.
6. Respect the confidentiality of privileged information.
7. Abide by majority decisions of the Board, while retaining the right to seek changes through ethical and constructive channels.

**Bylaws of the Board**

**Development, Distribution and Maintenance of Manual of Policies, Regulations, Bylaws**

The board of education shall formulate and adopt general policies for the operation and improvement of the schools which shall be written into a school code.

Revisions of said code shall be made only after the second public reading of the proposed change and the board vote shall include the date when the new policy shall become effective.

**Bylaws of the Board****Development, Distribution and Maintenance of Manual of Policies, Regulations, Bylaws****Policy Dissemination**

The superintendent is directed to preserve to and make accessible the policies adopted by the Bridgeport Board of Education and the administrative rules and regulations needed to put them into effect.

All policy manuals distributed to anyone shall remain the property of the Bridgeport Board of Education and shall be considered as "on loan" to anyone, or any organization, in whose possession they might be at any time. Policy manuals shall also be maintained electronically. They are subject to recall at any time deemed necessary by the administrative head of the school district for purposes of updating.

**Manual Maintenance/Updating**

The board directs the superintendent to update all policy manuals during every two years in odd numbered years for purposes of administrative updating and board review and available on the district's website at the beginning of the school year.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Formulation, Adoption, Amendment of Bylaws**

Proposed new bylaws and suggested amendments to or revision of existing bylaws may be adopted by a majority vote of all members of the board of education.

Amendments shall be submitted in writing at any meeting and shall be adopted only by an affirmative vote at any succeeding meeting, but no later than the third succeeding regular meeting.

Reference: Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Formulation, Adoption, Amendment of Administrative Regulations**

The board of education does not adopt administrative regulations unless specifically required to do so by law, or unless requested to do so by the superintendent. Adoption and amendment of such board approved regulations shall be by the same procedure as that specified for policies in 9310.

The board of education reserves the right to review and direct revisions of administrative regulations should they, in the board's judgment, be inconsistent with the policies adopted by the board of education.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Suspension of Policies, Bylaws and Regulations**

Policies, bylaws and board approved regulations shall be subject to suspension for a specified purpose and limited time by majority vote of all members of the board of education at a meeting in the call for which the proposed suspension has been described in writing, or upon a two-thirds vote of all members of the board when no such written notice has been given.

Reference: Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Time, Place and Notification of Meetings**

Members of the board of education may act officially only at regular or special meetings of the board at which a quorum shall be present.

To comply with Connecticut General Statute 1-21, all meetings of the board of education shall be open to the public except that the board may, by a majority vote of those members present and voting, and stating the reasons therefor, go to executive session to conduct such appropriate business as authorized in the statute.

### **Regular Meetings**

The board of education shall file with the town clerk, not later than January 1st of each year, the proposed schedule of the regular meetings of the board of education.

### **Special Meetings**

Notice of each special meeting of the board of education shall be filed not less than twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting with the town clerk and be posted in the office of the clerk giving the time and place of the special meeting and the business to be transacted. No other business shall be considered by the board at that special meeting. Each member of the board of education shall be notified by the superintendent not less than 24 hours prior to the time of the special meeting and shall be advised of the time, place and business to be transacted, although any board member may waive the 24 hour notification in writing.

### **Work Sessions**

The board may schedule special meetings for the purpose of conducting work sessions to provide its members with opportunities for planning and thoughtful discussion. Topics for discussion and study will be announced publicly. Work sessions will be conducted in accordance with the state law on public meetings.

### **Annual Meeting\***

The annual organizational meeting of the board shall be held on the first meeting of December.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Time, Place and Notification of Meetings**

#### **Notice of Meetings**

Notice of meetings will be posted in accordance with state and local law, and may be mailed to persons filing a written request renewable in January of each year.

#### **Adjourned Meetings**

Any meeting of the board of education may be recessed to any succeeding day by a majority vote of the members in attendance at the meeting.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes  
1-21 Meetings of government agencies to be public.  
1-21c Mailing of notice of meetings to persons filing written request.  
1-21d Adjournment of meetings. Notice.  
1-21e continued hearings. Notice.  
1-21f Regular meetings to be held pursuant to regulation, ordinance or resolution.  
1-21i Denial of access to public records or meetings.  
10-218 Officers. Meetings

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Public and Executive Sessions**

#### **Public Meetings**

All meetings of the board of education shall be open to the public with the exception of executive sessions.

#### **Executive Sessions**

The public may be excluded from meetings of the board of education which are declared to be executive sessions. Executive sessions may be held upon a majority vote of the members present and voting taken at a public meeting for only those reasons permitted under Connecticut law.

1. Discussion concerning the appointment, employment, performance, evaluation, health or dismissal of a public officer or employee, provided that such individual may require that discussion be held at an open meeting.
2. Strategy and negotiations with respect to pending claims and litigation.
3. Matters concerning security strategy or the deployment of security personnel, or devices affecting public security.
4. Discussion of the selection of a site or the lease, sale or purchase of real estate by a political subdivision of the state when publicity regarding such site, lease, sale, purchase or construction would cause a likelihood of increased price until such time as all of the property has been acquired or all proceedings or transactions concerning same have been terminated or abandoned.
5. Discussion of any matter which would result in the disclosure of public records or the information contained therein described in subsection (b) of section 1-19 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

#### **Smoking**

Smoking will neither be permitted in any room in which a meeting of the board of education is being conducted nor during the time immediately prior to the meeting.

(cf. 1331 - Smoking in School Facilities)

**Bylaws of the Board**

**Public and Executive Sessions (continued)**

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes  
1-18a Definitions.  
1- 19 Access to public records.  
1-21 Meetings of government agencies to be public.  
1-21 a Recording, broadcasting or photographing meetings.  
1-21b Smoking prohibited in certain places.  
1-21i Denial of access to public records or meetings.  
1-21g Executive sessions.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Agenda Preparation and Dissemination**

The Superintendent shall prepare all agendas for meetings of the Board. In doing so, the Superintendent shall consult with the Board President, who has final authority to set the agenda. The agenda shall also include any items requested in writing by one or more members of the Board, provided such request is received at least one (1) business day prior to the printing of the agenda.

The Board shall follow the order of business set up by the agenda. A majority vote of the members present may alter the agenda. If the Board by majority vote of the members present adds an item to New Business, and such item is deemed by the president to be related to a standing committee, that item may be referred to the committee for resolution and reported at the next regular Board meeting or at such meeting as shall be practical.

The agenda, together with supporting materials, shall be distributed to Board members at least four calendar days prior to the Board meeting. (For example, for a Monday Board meeting, the agenda and accompanying materials should be received by the Board members on Thursday before the Board meeting.) Board members are expected to read the information provided to them and contact the Superintendent to request additional information that may be deemed necessary to assist them in their decision-making responsibilities whenever possible. The agenda shall also be made available to the press and others upon request.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Board Meetings Preparation**

Before actions by the board are requested or recommended, board members are to be provided with adequate data and back-up information to assist them in reaching sound and objective decisions consistent with established goals.

Board members shall be expected to read the information provided them, and to contact the Board President, the Superintendent's Office, the responsible staff person/persons, or the Superintendent to request additional information necessary to assist them in their decision making responsibilities.

## Bylaws of the Board

### Meeting Conduct

Meetings of the board of education shall be conducted by the President in a manner consistent with the adopted bylaws of the board and Robert's Rules of Order, or such other body employed by the Board.

Unless otherwise specified and lawfully posed, all board meetings shall commence at 7:00 and shall be guided by an agenda which has been prepared and delivered in advance to all board members and other designated persons.

The conduct of meetings shall, to the fullest possible extent, enable members of the board to (1) consider problems to be solved, weigh evidence related thereto, and make wise decisions intended to solve the problems, and (2) receive, consider and take any needed action with respect to reports of accomplishment of students or of school system operations.

Provisions for permitting any individual or group to address the board concerning any subject that lies within its jurisdiction shall be as follows:

- Each member of the public wishing to speak may address the board at a regular meeting for a total of two minutes on any item or items on the agenda, provided that a maximum of thirty (30) minutes shall be allowed.
- While the board may not respond to comments made in public session, it may consider such comments in its policy deliberations and, where appropriate, may refer comments to Board of Education staff for their review as part of their administrative functions.
- No boisterous conduct shall be permitted at any board of education meeting. If such conduct continues the chairperson may suspend that individual's speaking privilege.
- It is official policy of the Board of Education that no individual or group of individuals be allowed to personally attack a Board member, staff member or member of the Board of Education personnel during the public speaking session. The Board will not permit disparaging remarks from any member of the public nor will the Board receive any demands for specific disciplinary actions to be taken against any individual or named personnel. Anyone who has a complaint or grievance regarding a specific employee of the Board of Education may take the matter up with the Superintendent, so the proper procedures may be followed. If anyone violates this policy, their privilege to address the Board of Education will be terminated.
- Public comment shall not be permitted at special meetings.

(cf. 1312 - Public Complaints)

The board may adjourn any regular or special meeting to a specified time and place. If there is less than a quorum, the presiding officer may adjourn the meeting. If all members of the board are absent, the clerk may adjourn the meeting. A copy of the notice of adjournment shall be conspicuously displayed near the meeting room door promptly following the adjournment.

## Bylaws of the Board

### Meeting Conduct

#### Actions by the Board

No action will be taken unless the subject acted upon was listed in the agenda published for that meeting, except as written in Bylaw 9325.2-Order of Business.

The board of education shall not adopt resolutions except where such adoption is required by law, or where the intent of the board is to publish a status position of the board, as in advising the General Assembly of the board's position on a proposed law, or commending staff members or other agencies for work well done.

All actions taken by the board shall be identified clearly in minutes of the board meeting as provided in Bylaw 9326-Minutes.

(cf. 1120 - Board of Education Meetings re public participation)

(cf. 9321 - Time, Place, Notification of Meetings)

(cf. 9322 - Public and Executive Sessions)

(cf. 9323 - Construction/Posting of Agenda)

Legal Reference:        Connecticut General Statutes  
                               18a Definitions  
                               1- 19 Access to public records  
                               1-21 Meetings of government agencies to be public  
                               1-21a Recording, broadcasting or photographing meetings  
                               1-21b Smoking prohibited in certain places. Signed  
                               required. Penalty  
                               1-21g Executive sessions  
                               1-21h Conduct of meetings (re disturbances)  
                               1-21i Denial of access of public records or meetings.  
                               Notice. Appeal  
                               10-224 Duties of the Secretary

**Bylaws of the Board**

**Quorum**

A quorum for a regular or special meeting of the board shall be a majority of the board.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Order of Business**

Items for inclusion on the agenda shall be submitted to the board president by the superintendent or board members.

An agenda shall be furnished to each board member and the superintendent not later than four calendar days prior to any regular meeting.

Upon the affirmative vote of the majority of the members present, the board may consider and act upon business not included on the agenda.

The general order of business at each regular meeting of the board shall be as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
4. Minutes
5. Public Comment
6. Student Representatives' oral Reports
7. Committee Reports
8. Superintendent's Agenda
9. Old Business
10. New Business
11. Adjourn

The order of business may be rearranged by a majority vote of the members of the board.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Parliamentary Procedure**

Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the proceedings of the board, except when those rules are in conflict with the board's adopted bylaws.

**Bylaws-of the Board****Suspension of Rules of Order**

Amendments, alterations, corrections or repeal of the rules of order may be made, or their operation may be suspended for the meeting, at any regular or special meeting of this board, by a vote of a majority of all members of the board.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Voting Method**

Voting at all meetings of the board shall be by voice, except that the board shall use a ballot in electing officers. If a ballot is used it shall be publicly announced.

The votes of all members on all issues shall be recorded in the minutes.

Legal Reference:       Connecticut General Statutes  
                              1-21 Meetings of government agencies to be public.  
                              Recording of votes. Schedule and agenda of meetings to  
                              be filed. Notice of special meetings. Executive Sessions.  
                              10-218 Officers Meetings

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Minutes**

The minutes are the official record of all board actions and shall be the responsibility of the Board of Education office. They shall be stored in a safe place and shall be available for public inspection electronically and during office hours at the administration building.

Legal Reference:      Connecticut General Statutes.  
                                 10-218 Election of officers  
                                 10-224 Duties of the secretary  
                                 10-21 Meetings of government agencies

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Board/School District Records**

Any recorded data or information relating to the conduct of the public's business prepared, owned, used, received or retained by the board of education or the school district, whether handwritten, typed, tape-recorded, printed, photocopied, photographed, or recorded by any other method is by definition a "public record" and access thereto during normal hours of business shall be granted to any person.

### **Availability of Records**

Any person who applies in writing will receive a plain or certified copy of any public record, except those to which access is not permitted under law. A fee not to exceed twenty-five cents per page will be charged, as permitted by law. The district will require prepayment of the fee if the fee is estimated to be ten dollars or more. There will be no sales tax for this service. Exceptions to the fee may be granted by the superintendent based on need and applicable state statute.

An additional charge of one dollar for the first page and fifty cents for each additional page may be made for certification of any records or of any fact within the record.

The superintendent, on behalf of the board of education, shall notify an employee in writing when a request is made for disclosure of the employee's personnel, medical or similar files, if the superintendent reasonably believes disclosure would invade the employee's privacy.

Legal Reference:        Connecticut General Statutes  
                                  1-15 Application for copies of public records.  
                                  1-18a Definitions.  
                                  1-19 to 19(b) Access to public records.  
                                  1-19a Access to computer stored records.  
                                  1-20a Public contracts as part of public records.  
                                  1-21 to 1-21k Meetings of public agencies.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Public Hearings**

Public Hearings may be held before the board at such times and places as the board may determine. At least five days public notice shall be given as to the time, place and purpose of such hearings.

1. The board may schedule a public hearing at least once a quarter for a two hour period. While all board members are encouraged to attend, the President shall select three members of the board, on a rotating basis, as an ad-hoc committee for these hearings, and shall designate one person to chair the committee.
2. The president, superintendent and members of the ad-hoc committee will plan the agenda and execute the meeting.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Legislative Program**

The board of education, as an agent of the state, must operate within the bounds of the state and federal law affecting public education. If the board is to meet its responsibilities to the residents and students of the community, it must work for the passage of new laws designed to advance the cause of good schools and for the repeal or modification of existing laws that impede this cause.

To this end:

1. The board will develop a legislative program through conferences with representative groups and organizations.
2. When appropriate, the board will work for the achievement of common legislative objectives through these associations and with the other concerned groups.
3. The board will also seek both direct and indirect representation of its position on pending legislation with appropriate state and federal legislators and legislative committees.

## **Bylaws of the Board**

### **Monitoring Products and Processes**

#### **Policy Review and Evaluation**

The board shall follow through the policies it has formulated. It shall evaluate how the policies have been executed by the school staff, and shall weigh the results. The board shall rely on the school staff, students, and the community to provide evidence of the effect of the policies which it has adopted.

Legal Reference:       Connecticut General Statutes  
                              10-14m - 10-14r Education evaluation and remedial  
                              assistance.  
                              10-220 Duties of boards of education.