

Joaquin  
Independent School  
District



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
CODE OF CONDUCT  
AND  
OPERATING GUIDELINES  
ADOPTED 12/13/2010**

**Joaquin Independent School District  
Board of Trustees Code of Conduct**

1. **We will deal with issues, never in personalities.**
2. **I will not make negative comments about another board member, either publicly or privately.**
3. **I will make a good faith effort to understand and accommodate the views of other board members.**
4. **I will seek to inform and include all board members in my discussion of issues.**

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**1. DEVELOPING BOARD MEETING AGENDAS**

A. Who can place items on agenda and guidelines for doing so

1. Tentative agendas are created by administration.
2. Board member must request to Board President, in advance, any item they wish to have considered for placement on the agenda.
3. In accordance with Texas open meeting laws, no member can place an item on the agenda less than 72 hours in advance of meeting, except in an emergency as per Texas Education Code.

B. Items that cannot be heard in open session

1. All personnel issues must be conducted in executive session unless specifically required by Texas Open Meeting Act.
2. Anything that violates an individual's right to privacy cannot be placed on the agenda.

C. Use of Consent Agenda

Routine Items

Over \$500 tax refunds

Annual renewals of Region VII and TEA items

Minutes of regular and special Board meetings

Routine personnel items

Financial information

Updates of Board policy

Routine bid recommendations

## 2. MEMBER CONDUCT DURING BOARD MEETINGS

Any time four or more Board members are gathered, it is considered a meeting.

- A. Board response to patrons addressing the Board
  - 1. Board members can hear comments.
  - 2. Board President should direct administration to investigate item(s)
  - 3. Board members cannot enter into discussions with patrons except to make factual statement(s) or quote policy.
  - 4. Board President designates a five minute time limit for patrons unless extended by majority consent of Board of Trustees.
  
- B. Discussion of employee performance (Board/audience)
  - 1. The Board will not entertain comments on individual personnel in public session.
  - 2. The Board will not entertain comments on individual students in public session.
  
- C. Hearing and Open Forums
  - 1. During hearings and/or open forums, the Board is assembled to gather input only.
  - 2. The Board will not answer questions or enter into two-way dialogue except with their attorney in the case of an employee hearing.
  - 3. Rules for the open forum will be strictly adhered to.
    - a. Board will limit response to five minutes per testifier.
    - b. Board will accept written and/or oral testimony.
    - c. Board will not allow duplicate testimony.
    - d. Board President and/or their attorney is sole judge.
    - e. Board will not allow any derogatory comments directed at staff members.
  
- D. Board shall observe the parliamentary guidelines in Robert's Rules Of Order or Established Practice. A copy of Robert's Rules of Order will be available to the Board.
  
- E. Discussion of Motions
  - 1. All discussion shall be directed solely to the business currently under deliberation.
  - 2. The Board President has the responsibility to keep the discussion to the motion at hand and shall halt discussion that does not apply to the business before the Board.
  
- F. The Board President has the authority to recognize a Board member prior to giving their comments.

3. **VOTING**

- A. The Board President will vote on all action items.
- B. In case of a tie vote, the item is tabled and returned on next agenda as an action item.

4. **INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER REQUEST FOR INFORMATION OR REPORT**

- A. Board members shall request information and/or reports through the Board President to the Superintendent. If the Board President questions the request, the request goes to the full Board for a majority vote.
- B. The Superintendent will gather the information and/or report or disseminate it in a timely manner to the entire Board.

5. **CITIZEN REQUEST/COMPLAINT TO INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER**

- A. The Board members should hear the citizen problem and then:
  - 1. Issue chain of command to citizen.
  - 2. Remind the citizen of due process and that the Board member must remain impartial in case situation goes before the Board.
- B. Refer citizen to appropriate person/chain of command. Citizen **MUST GO THROUGH CHAIN OF COMMAND.**
- C. Board member must inform Superintendent or designee of the complaint within 24 hours.
- D. The Superintendent will respond to citizen in a timely fashion following the chain of command.

6. **EMPLOYEE REQUEST/COMPLAINT TO INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER**

- A. The Board will hear employee's problem and then:
  - 1. Issue chain of command to employee.
  - 2. Remind employee of the due process procedure and remain impartial.
- B. Refer employee to appropriate person/chain of command. Employee **MUST GO THROUGH COMMAND CHAIN.**

- C. Board member must inform the Superintendent or designee complaint within 24 hours relaying communication.
- D. The employee will receive a response from the Superintendent in a timely manner

**7. BOARD MEMBER VISIT TO SCHOOL CAMPUS**

- A. Board members are encouraged to attend as many school events as their time permits.
- B. Board members are not to go into teacher’s classrooms or individual buildings for the purposes of evaluation.
- C. Board members should notify the Superintendent or building principal before their official visits.

**8. COMMUNICATIONS**

- A. Superintendent will communicate with all Board members on an “as needed” basis.
- B. Superintendent will communicate with Board President periodically to discuss issues of the district.
- C. Superintendent will communicate information in a timely fashion to all Board members.
- D. Requests to Superintendent from Board President will be distributed to all Board members.
- E. Board and Superintendent will keep each other informed via telephone, fax, etc.
- F. Board will communicate with the community through public hearings, regular Board meetings, and regular publications.
- G. Individual Board members cannot speak in an official capacity outside the Board room.

**9. EVALUATION OF SUPERINTENDENT**

- A. Board members receive training annually on locally developed process for superintendent performance evaluation.
- B. Board approves Superintendent Appraisal Document (including domain on district performance focused on the annual district performance report.)
- C. Board President obtains input from all other board members on Board approved indicators.
- D. Evaluation is conducted in executive session by consensus.
- E. Board votes publicly to adopt superintendent performance appraisal (Specific motion language keeps appraisal confidential.).
- F. Evaluation is conducted every December.
- G. Evaluation is conducted every December.

**10. CRITERIA AND PROCESS FOR SELECTING BOARD OFFICERS**

- A. No board member can hold office without one year minimum Board experience.
- B. Election is held in May of each year.
- C. Elections of Office will be specific to the positions of President, Vice President, and Secretary and will be taken in that order.

**11. ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF BOARD MEMBER AND/OR BOARD OFFICERS  
(Set down by State statute)**

- A. No Board member of officer has authority outside the Board meeting.
- B. No Board member can direct employees in regard to performance of their duties.
- C. President.
  - 1. Shall preside at all Board meetings,
  - 2. Appoint committees,
  - 3. Shall call special meetings and
  - 4. Sign all legal documents required by law.
- D. Vice President
  - 1. Shall act in capacity of president in absence of president.
- E. Secretary
  - 1. Keep accurate record of Board meetings
  - 2. Acting in absence of President and Vice President, the Secretary shall call meeting and election for president Pro Tem.
- F. Office Vacancy
  - 1. A vacancy among officers of the Board other than the president shall be filled by majority action of the Board.
  - 2. A vacancy in the Presidency shall be filled by the Vice President

**12. ROLE OF BOARD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- A. Board can only discuss those items listed on the executive session agenda as limited by law.
- B. Board must vote in public session.
- C. Information during executive session must remain confidential.

### **13. MEDIA INQUIRIES TO THE BOARD**

- A. The Board President shall be the official spokesperson for the Board to the media on issues of media attention.
  - 1. All Board members who receive calls from the media should direct them to the Board's spokesperson and notify the Board President and Superintendent of the call.

### **14. MEDIA INQUIRIES TO INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS**

- A. Board members retain the right to speak to the media as individuals.
  - 1. Board members should make a distinction between speaking as an individual and as the Board of Trustees. When speaking as an individual, it is important for the media representative(s) to be reminded of the position or action of the Board of Trustees as a body.

### **15. PHONE CALLS/LETTERS**

- A. The JISD Board of Trustees encourages input; however, anonymous calls or letters will not receive Board attention, discussion or response and will not result in directives to the administration.

### **16. RESPONSE TO LETTERS**

- A. The JISD Board of Trustees encourages input. A signed letter will be forwarded to the Superintendent and a response using standard format will be sent to the originator of the letter. The Superintendent will respond and send a copy to full board.

### **17. REQUIRED BOARD MEMBER TRAINING**

- A. Board of Trustee members are required to complete training as specified in Ed. Code 11.159 and Policy BBD.
  - 1. At least **10** hours plus local district orientation in first year.
  - 2. At least **5** hours plus Texas Education Code update each year following the first year.

### **18. ADDRESSING ISSUES INVOLVING YOUR OWN CHILDREN**

- A. While members of the Board of Trustees have no authority as individuals, it is sometimes difficult for staff members to see them as ordinary parents; therefore—
  - 1. Board members should make it clear they are acting as a parent.
  - 2. Board members should not request or accept extraordinary consideration for the student.

**19. REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES**

- A. Board members shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenses for—
  1. Carrying out the business of the Board at Board request
  2. Attending meetings and conventions as official representatives of the Board
  3. Reimbursable expenses including mileage, commercial transportation, parking, lodging, meals and other incidental expenses.

**20. REVIEWING BOARD OPERATING GUIDELINES**

A. Standard Board Operating Guidelines will be reviewed and updated as needed at the September Board meeting.

BAA (Legal)	BBD (Legal)	BBE (Legal)
DH (Exhibit)	DC (Local)	BBF (Local)

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**A School Board Member’s Creed**

As a member of a Board of Trustees, I hold a great public trust. I am responsible for providing the means whereby our American way of life is to be improved and to endure. I am responsible for the education of our people and particularly youth, that each person may become intellectually and spiritually competent, economically and socially successful and happy; that he becomes a responsible citizen, home member, learner, and worker. I freely give the necessary time to this great service, but most important, and knowing the responsibilities vested in me, I give and use my best judgment in considering and deciding the welfare of the schools.

As a lay citizen, representing the people, I do not know nor do I need to know, the complex details of education or administration. I am not expected to do this work, but, I am responsible for seeing that the work is done. My work as a Board Member consists of choosing competent personnel to do the work, deciding within the provisions of the law, what is to be done, and appraising the work to see that it is done competently and economically. I believe in lay control...professionally competent teaching and administration.

My foremost specific responsibility, as a Board Member, is to choose a competent executive officer and make him/her generally responsible for the entire school system. I look to him/her for leadership. I expect him/her to keep me informed as to the needs and accomplishments of the schools, based upon the based upon the facts in the case. I must make my own decisions.

I do not assume authority not granted by the Board such as offering a position, asking for a resignation, or promising a contract to anyone. I abide by majority decisions of the Board. I carefully consider petitions, resolutions, and complaints, and I dispose of them in the best interest of the schools. I do not criticize school employees publicly. I desire to provide such conditions as will increase and reward competent service to the school. I desire that the people of the community shall have an education that is as complete and adequate as it is possible to provide.

With dignity and honor I serve the people; with humility and to the best of my ability, I discharge my great public trust.