

VERMONT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Meeting Norms - DRAFT
August 2024

Process Norms:

- The Board understands and respects the distinct role and responsibilities of the Board.
- The Board agenda is developed to ensure the meeting is run efficiently.
- The Board adheres to the topics of the agenda. Board discussion is for the business purpose of seeking clarity, furthering understanding and being prepared to act.
- The Board's treatment of all people is courteous, dignified and fair. There is a respectful atmosphere throughout the entire meeting.
- Make requests for information when necessary and applicable to the work of the board.
- Board transparency involves disclosing information about board activities, systems, and processes in a timely and accurate manner to stakeholders. The information should be understandable and acceptable to stakeholders, including legal and regulatory agencies.

Board Reflections:

- ~ Agenda to reflect statutory responsibilities and annual planning
- ~ Agenda needs to be available with adequate time
- ~ Section for correspondence on the agenda (need for SOP to address correspondences)
- ~ Responsiveness to public. We have a public responsibility. (Develop SOP for addressing public comment with time for intentional reflection.)
- ~ Respectful and responsive to the public. Clear, direct, transparency
- ~ Consistent follow up with clear next steps
- ~ Ground our work in "people first" - acknowledge what each Board member brings to the work, be supportive
- ~ Values add to the distinct norms
- ~ Student-first
- ~ Create a job description for Chair & delegation of duty

Preparation Norms:

- Board members come prepared and ready to engage. Read the agenda and supporting materials prior to the meeting.
- Board members will contact the Chair with agenda questions prior to the meeting. This will allow the time necessary to research the information. Additional questions may still be presented during the Board meeting as necessary.

Board Reflections:

~Members are informed on education topics generally

~SOP for how to request for agenda items

~Shared responsibility for agenda building (including Roles & Responsibilities)

~Reflective in our preparation and transparent

~Specific questions in advance to the extent possible (SOP needed)

~Add concerns after questions

Communication Norms:

- The Board presumes positive intent of Board members, Agency staff, and the public-at-large. Be cognizant of how questions are phrased.
- The Board Chair's role is to facilitate the meeting by monitoring the discussion. Based on the norms, the Board Chair will check in with Board members to invite any new comments or to move forward to the next item. The Board President will enforce the agreed upon norms.
- Board members are given an adequate opportunity to participate in discussion and decision making.
- Be mindful of how our actions on social media reflect on the whole board.
- Board members will state their position concisely and summarize. If another Board member has already captured the position on a subject, he/she will state that without repeating.
- On-going, transparent communication within the Board and with stakeholders.
- There are no side conversations or interruptions of other Board members during open and closed session meetings.

Board Reflections:

~Public comment is listening not engaging in dialogue

~We should be looking at other means of soliciting input

- ~Future meeting planning linked to public comment
 - ~Conduct work in public space – we want the public to feel that they have been heard
 - ~Aspirational: being concise, transparent communications
 - ~Be responsive, follow-up, invite others to be explicit about issues
 - ~Create a document to track topics for future meeting planning
 - ~Look for strategies in SOP's to formalize “how” we do this
- Presume positive intent with public comment and remain objective and open
- ~Make norms and SOP's public
 - ~Being mindful of how, whether we represent on behalf of the Board or not, on social media. We only have authority as a Board when we are as a group
 - ~Communications are public. Newsletter

Virtual Meeting Norms:

- Cameras are turned on. If you cannot turn your camera, notify the Board Chair of technical difficulties.
- Refrain from multi-tasking during the board meeting.
- Use the mute button on your computer to limit background sound.

Board Reflections:

- ~No interrupting
- If you have already spoken, then let others speak
- ~Rules aren't changed for a virtual platform
 - ~Be aware of background

Big Takeaways:

- 1) Need for annual workplan, based on statutory requirements, and vision for future of Vermont education (VIII)
- 2) Agenda planning (II)
 - with parking lot (III) with public access; connect public comment to FMP
- 3) Roles & Responsibilities/SOP's and Norms/Board governance & self-evaluation (III)

- 4) Communication: transparency, accountability, accessibility (III)
- create a correspondence plan to respond to public comment

Themes/Topics:

What we have:

- 1) Public comment outside of SBE
- 2) Meetings are recordings
- 3) Policies vs. Procedures
- vs. Norms -to what we are directed to do in statute
-Statute -how
- 4) Expectations for how we engage the public
- Agenda: who develops, what is on it, how is it communicated, when, where
- Parking lot: centralized responsibility, on the agenda, in meeting packet, tied to minutes, future meeting planning, public comment, comply with open meeting law
- 5) Annual Workplan
-What are the annual things the Board needs to do
-Regular, anticipated reporting
-Statutory requirements
-No more than 1 thing for meeting
-Capacity?
-Who's involved? How is it developed?
-General powers/duties - 2021
-Self-evaluation
-How do we build growth into our work?

