

**Board Policy BBI: Board-Staff Relations**

**Status:** DRAFT

**Original Adopted Date:** 03/21/2012 | **Last Revised Date:** 08/20/2024 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 11/03/2014

Clean Version

The DeKalb County Board of Education wishes to maintain open channels of communication with district staff, including district employees, contractors, and vendors. The primary line of communication, however, will be through the superintendent, and official business of the district will not be carried on between staff and board members except as directed by the superintendent.

A. **Staff Communications to the Board**

This procedure does not deny the right of any employee to appeal to the board from administrative decisions on important matters, provided that the superintendent has been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the board's policy on complaints and grievances. Staff are encouraged to report concerns to employee relations department handling employee grievances and concerns or through the whistleblower hotline 1.888.475.0482 at the Audit & Compliance department. If the complaint or concern is with Audit & Compliance department, then staff is encouraged to report to the Chief Legal Officer. If there are complaints or concerns about the superintendent, those should be reported directly to the Board Chair who will consult with the General Counsel.

Staff members are also reminded that board meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to observe firsthand the board's deliberations on problems of staff concern.

B. **Board Communications to Staff**

If a board member brings to the superintendent a request or concern regarding board governance or otherwise requiring full board consensus, the request or concern will be referred to the board chair. Any responses by the superintendent should be made through the chair based on agreed communication channels to ensure that the response is shared with the full board.

C. **Guidelines for Board Member Visits to Schools**

The ultimate responsibility for a school's operation lies with the superintendent. There are advantages to obtaining knowledge about a school's operation by individual board members visiting the school.

Board members are encouraged to visit schools during open houses and other times specially arranged for the general public. In addition, board members are encouraged to visit the schools to speak with, listen to, and observe the operations and procedures of the school to gain knowledge for policy-making decisions in the areas of finance, personnel, curriculum, facilities and transportation.

The following guidelines apply when board members visit schools:

1. There should be no interruption of classes or other activities.
2. Class visitation or observation should be done only with the approval of the principal.
3. Review of evaluation information of any teacher or employee should be done only in executive session of a board meeting.
4. The board member should not act or speak independently in making decisions or commitments of a course of action of the board.

Board members must recognize that their presence in the schools could be subject to a variety of interpretations by school employees and the public. Such visits will be regarded as informal expressions of interest in school affairs and not as “inspections” or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes.

E. **Enforcement**

This policy will be enforced in the manner set out in the Board Member Code of Ethics Policy BH.

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