

Board Policy BBI: Board-Staff Relations

Status: DRAFT -
1st Reading

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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. Official district business will not be conducted 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 appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the board's policy on complaints and grievances which can be found at policies GAE-2 and GAE-3. Staff are encouraged to report concerns to the Employee Relations Department or through the whistleblower hotline 1-888-475-0482 at the Audit & Compliance department. If the complaint or concern is with the Audit & Compliance department, staff members are encouraged to report to the Chief Legal Officer. If there are complaints or concerns about the superintendent, those will be reported directly to the board chair who will consult with 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 Member Communications to the Superintendent

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 will 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 will be no interruption of classes or other activities. 2. Class visitation or observation will be done only with the approval of the principal. 3. There will be no evaluation of teachers or employees by board members during school visits. 4. The board member will 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.

E. **Enforcement**

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