



**Nicolet School Board Charter  
Established 2019**



## **Preamble**

Citizen oversight of local government is the cornerstone of democracy in the United States. School board members are locally elected public officials entrusted with governing a community's public schools. The role of the school board is to ensure that school districts are responsive to the values, beliefs, and priorities of their communities. Boards fulfill this role by performing five major responsibilities:

- Providing community leadership as advocates for children, the school district, and public schools
- Setting direction
- Establishing an effective and efficient structure of governance
- Providing support
- Ensuring accountability

These five responsibilities represent core functions that are so fundamental to a school system's accountability to the public that they can only be performed by an elected governing body. Authority is granted to the board as a whole, not each member individually. Therefore, board members fulfill these responsibilities by working together as a governance team with the superintendent to make decisions that will best serve all the students in the district. The Board Charter establishes the foundational understandings to create a high performing and cohesive team. This Charter details the Nicolet School Board agreements and shared responsibilities.

## **Operating Principles**

### **Honest Communication**

We believe that we will get more out of our joint experience if we use honest communication. We also believe that trust is a key element in honest communication.

Therefore, we will be open and honest with each other to increase clarity and focus.

### **Use of Time**

The time of each member is a valued resource. We are committed to being efficient and productive in our use of time.

We believe that time is a critical component of our success, good use of time keeps us focused with no needless digression and that time is a non-renewable resource so we must use it wisely

Therefore, we commit to:

- Start on time and end on time.
- Assure that purposes for our meetings and interactions are clear with a timeframe in mind
- Structure our meetings effectively to ensure that we stay on track
- Allocate our time to reflect the goals of our BOE and Administration Team.

### **Respect**

Each participant brings a unique background, set of experiences, expertise and perspective. Our effectiveness as team members depends on our ability to access and leverage our diversity.

Therefore, we will actively solicit others' ideas/perspectives and listen to each other with the intent of understanding, learning and making sound decisions.

### **Intentional Focus on Student Outcomes and Continuous Improvement**

We will maintain an intentional focus on student achievement. We will focus on and leverage the positives (assets) while being mindful of the need for continuous improvement.

Therefore, we agree to:

- be honest and direct about issues that impact student outcomes
- use data to inform decision making
- leverage what is working
- focus on solutions
- celebrate accomplishment
- critique with a focus on continuous improvement

### **Responsibility for Self**

Each member comes to the table with valuable and varied prior experiences. Past stories, interpretations, and relationships potentially interfere with our present effectiveness.

Therefore we agree to:

- Check our alliances, disagreements, unhelpful stories and any assumptions at the door
- Assume a positive predisposition towards one another
- Be open to providing and receiving constructive feedback within the meeting
- Commit to our own preparation, participation and objectivity

### **Confidentiality**

We believe that confidentiality builds trust over time and will be an important element in our success.

Therefore, as a team we agree to respect confidentiality. As a team we will clarify when confidentiality is required.

Overall, as a Board we will work toward effectively living out these operating principles. When we have the inevitable breakdowns we will use them as a learning opportunity to grow our effectiveness as a team.

## **Board Direction**

### **School Board Mission**

Our purpose is to provide dedicated and informed leadership for the Nicolet school district. We are committed to an unwavering focus on equal access to best practices in secondary education leading to successful learning outcomes for all.

### **School Board Vision for Excellent Performance**

The Nicolet School Board provides exemplary leadership characterized by an unwavering focus on excellent educational opportunities provided to all Nicolet students. The Board engages in collaborative and transparent relationships to ensure stakeholder accountability for the success and well-being of all students. The board will support the acceleration of all students' growth.

### **School Board Goals**

1. Maintain the focus on teaching, learning, and student outcomes:
  - ensure the use of research based best practices and innovations in learning that elevate outcomes for all students;
  - address achievement gaps;
  - support professional learning; and
  - consider other initiatives that come to the board
2. Actively support fundraising efforts for completion of the athletic complex by fall of 2021.
3. Engage in strategic planning for 2020-2025 (to include financial goals with community input about allocation of resources)

### **School Board Intended Outcomes (Evidence)**

1. Successful fundraising campaign of 7.5 million dollars by January 2021.
2. Financial sustainability with a successful referendum passed by November of 2020.
3. Majority of time spent in board meetings is aligned with Board Mission, Vision, and Goals as determined by a time study of board meetings.

4. Consistently achieve a “significantly exceeds expectations” on the WI State Report Card.
5. Faculty and staff indicate that the BOE is informed about and supportive of their efforts in teaching and learning through formal and informal feedback.

### **Structures for an Effective Planning Process**

Our process to make decisions will be aligned with District and Board goals. The Board President and Superintendent work in collaboration to set the Board of Education meeting agendas.

1. Board members can provide input into the agenda through board comments or input to the Board President.

With three or more members’ agreement, the Board President and Superintendent will discuss a future agenda item and provide a feedback loop to all Board members about whether, if, when and how the potential agenda item will be discussed.

2. Publishing the agenda

Every attempt will be made to develop and publish the Agenda two business days preceding Board meetings to ensure stakeholders have greater access to and awareness of School Board business.

3. Agenda packets will include:

- Public: Handouts, public information, copies of previous discussion items, Board Policy, summary of Board Policy, completed presentations
- Administrative: WECAN applications, letters of intent with salary offers, presentations, presentation notes, shared documents for Administration and the Board.
- Executive: Legal documents, personnel documents, land sale contracts, CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

4. Items on the agenda:

- The agenda must represent what actions will be taken within the agenda. Action items are the only place in the agenda where votes can occur.
- Discussion items don’t necessarily lead to future agenda items but could be elevated to the importance of full board deliberation if deemed appropriate.
- Board comments are a means to provide input, feedback, and acknowledgement on board matters. Comments cannot lead to a vote at the same meeting.
- Public comments will be welcomed at Board meetings and directed to the Board President. The Board President may redirect comments if appropriate.
- The Superintendent will use discretion when responding to a question during Public Comments, and respond when appropriate.
- The Board can engage with the public during comments as long as the topic is related to the agenda. The Board can also state that they will take the input under advisement.
- The minutes will reflect the general topic of the comment and the community of residence.

5. Follow up from Board meeting:

- Minutes will capture the actions taken at the board meeting.
- Meeting minutes will be posted in draft form as soon as possible following a meeting. The minutes will become official once approved at the next Board meeting.

## 6. Workshops

Will be run as a committee of the whole with public welcome to observe the conversation. At the end of the workshop topic, public comment may be taken.

## **Board Roles**

### **All members**

All members share the following responsibilities to ensure that all students achieve at high levels through excellence in governance by:

- Providing community leadership as advocates for children, the school district and public schools.
- Setting vision
- Establishing policy
- Providing accountability
- Establishing an effective Board-Superintendent relationship
- Establishing an effective and efficient structure

### **Board President responsibilities are:**

- Act as chairperson at meetings of the Board and ensure that the minutes of meetings are properly recorded, approved, and signed;
- Countersign all checks, share drafts, or other drafts for disbursement of District funds;
- Defend on behalf of the District all actions brought against it;
- Prosecute, when authorized by an annual meeting of the School Board, actions brought by the District and an action for the recovery of any forfeiture incurred under Chapters 115 and 121 in which the District has an interest;
- Perform other duties appropriate to the office of the President under 120.15 Wis. Stats.;
- Set the agenda in collaboration with the Superintendent and Board requests; and
- Serve as the spokesperson for the Board.

### **Board Vice President is responsibilities are:**

- Presiding at meetings of the Board when the President is not able to attend;
- Performing other duties appropriate to the office of Vice-President as the Board determines; and
- In case of a vacancy in the office of President, succeeding to the office of President for the balance of the unexpired term.

### **Board Clerk responsibilities are:**

- Act as the clerk and record the proceedings of all meetings of the Board;
- Enter the proceedings of the Board in proper record books;
- Enter in the record book copies of all Clerk's reports sent to municipal clerks;
- Draw and record orders on the Treasurer as directed by the Board;
- Be the chief election officer of the District with authority to report the name and

- post-office address of each Board member, within ten (10) days after his/her election or appointment, to the clerk and treasurer; and
- perform other duties as prescribed by law or the Board.

### **Board Treasurer responsibilities are:**

- Apply for, receive, and sue for all money appropriated to or collected for the District and disburse the same in accordance with the law;
- Enter in the account books all money received and disbursed and specify the source of the funds and the person to whom funds were paid and the object of the payment;
- Immediately upon receipt, deposit District funds in the District's name in a public depository designated by the Board;
- Present, at the annual meeting, a written statement of all money received and dispersed by the District in the proceeding year; and
- Perform other duties prescribe by statue or by the Board.

### **Relationship with the Superintendent**

Desired Relationship with the Superintendent - The School Board believes that a strong relationship with the Superintendent is essential to providing joint leadership for the Nicolet School District. As a result the School Board seeks open, honest and transparent communication with the superintendent.

- Provide school updates at school board meetings
- Maintain an open line of communication with school board members
- Provide communication on major events and decisions

Feedback and evaluation process for the superintendent. The School Board believes that feedback that is immediate, clear, and focused on continuous improvement will lead to a stronger relationship with the board and stronger performance on the part of the superintendent. This feedback runs two ways: from the Board to the Superintendent and from the Superintendent to the Board. Formal feedback will be provided through:

- Formative evaluation during first semester. (August - September).
- Formative mid-year evaluation (December- January).
- Annual summative evaluation utilizing the agreed upon superintendent evaluation tool. (End of March).

### **Boundaries and Scope**

Limitations outside the scope of Board responsibility:

- Day to day operations of the school;
- Administrative implementation of board policy;
- Intervening in communication, complaints between the public and the relevant school district employee; and
- Advising school employees on their job responsibilities.

### **Sets Resources and Level of Authority**

Resources available to fuel our learning and growth as a Board

- Material resources (books, videos, subscriptions)
- Conference Attendance



Our authority level should follow board policy and is aligned with the 4 levels of authority below:

1. The Superintendent has complete authority to decide and act within the limits of law, board policy, propriety, and common sense. Examples are:
  - Purchases within the normal budget procedures
  - Evaluating and coaching teachers and administrators
  - Normal operation of the school
  - School rule changes
2. Superintendent has complete authority to act but must inform the board about decisions or actions. Examples are:
  - Disciplinary action for staff and administration(non-termination)
  - School closure for inclement weather
  - Activation of emergency action plans
3. Superintendent must obtain prior approval from the board before taking action. Examples are:
  - Creating new staff positions
  - Major purchases or consultants outside the normal scope of the school building operations
  - Establishing District Vision, Mission, Goals, and Strategic Plans
  - Add and remove courses or athletic programs
4. School board makes the final decision but may permit or require a recommendation from the superintendent. Examples are:
  - Hire or termination of ~~professional~~ staff or administrators
  - Formal legal action regarding the District
  - Student Expulsion
  - Spending of money through reserve funds
  - Graduation requirements

### **Establish and Maintain Effective Relationships with the School Community**

The charter can clarify key, strategic stakeholders and partnerships that are important to productive board relationships. Making clear which relationships are of utmost importance and envisioning how to develop and maintain them will lead to improved, sustainable affiliations over time. Board members will listen to community members and direct them to the appropriate staff or administrator for answers and solutions. Board members do not share new information that has not been previously discussed or decided on in a public meeting. The Board President is the spokesperson for the Board.

### **Community Engagement**

The Board understands that a strong relationship with an engaged community is necessary to the success of the School District in educating all students. As a result the Board intends to:

- Consider attending at least one municipal government meeting per semester;
- Consider membership in Glendale Chamber of Commerce;
- Consider board presence at public community events;

- Consider one parent listening session per semester;
- Consider one town hall at Nicolet per semester.

### **Resources and Tools for Board Communication and Public Engagement**

[http://www.pthsd.k12.nj.us/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_27012/File/BOE/Candidate/social\\_media\\_guidelines\\_bd\\_mem.pdf](http://www.pthsd.k12.nj.us/UserFiles/Servers/Server_27012/File/BOE/Candidate/social_media_guidelines_bd_mem.pdf)

<https://wasb.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Effective-Community-Engagement.pdf>



### **Partner School Engagement:**

The Board will facilitate collaboration with Partner Schools to ensure greater alignment of best practices in curriculum, instruction and assessment across partner schools. With such collaboration we intend to ensure greater success for incoming Freshmen to Nicolet. (Financial, Enrollment, Teaching and Learning)

- Consider attending one partner school board meeting per semester (Subject to advance Notification);
- Encourage partner school superintendent collaboration to ensure a successful transition to Nicolet for all students.
- Consider combined board meeting/dinner/presidents' meetings, WASB breakfast, informal social;
- Others

### **Internal Employee Engagement (administrators, faculty and staff):**

The Board acknowledges and supports the work of school district administrators, and staff as vital to the success of all students.

- Contact with administration and staff will be in collaboration with the Superintendent
- Consider getting schedule of staff events in order to have Board representation;
- Consult with the Superintendent prior to attending;
- Schedule school walk-through with Superintendent.

## Postscript

Taken together, the components of the charter lead to improved productivity and the likelihood of successful outcomes. The importance of a board chartering process can't be overstated. The form, format or template you use is less important than the time spent in conversation and dialogue to make sure that your document is realistic and relevant. This document is flexible and adaptable to individual board/team needs and context. Remember that you want to create something not as an exercise but as a living document for the board to use as a guide into the future.

When you invest the time to do a board charter, you will truly help the board as a whole be more successful. And you will also be providing a highly valued structure to help individual board members be less frustrated and more productive.

Finally, the board charter becomes an excellent board evaluation and growth tool from year to year as well as an effective orientation tool for new board members, ensuring a smooth transition as membership changes over time.

How we plan to use the charter moving forward to ensure alignment and accountability.

- Post Operating Principles visibly at Board meeting for board member ease of viewing.
- Periodically assess how our behavior are aligned with the operating principles and how continuous improvement can be achieved.
- Every Board meeting individual Board members will rate themselves on the Board Operating Principles [Board Assessment Tool](#).
- Every four months, or as needed, use Board Committee of the Whole meetings to review and assess Charter alignment.
- Annually the Board will complete the WASB Board Development Tool Survey.
- Utilize the Board Charter as an essential tool for new Board member orientation.
- Periodically meet with Superintendent to receive feedback and clarify alignment with District Mission and Goals.