



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BOARD OF EDUCATION HANDBOOK

*A guide for Members of the Board of Education,
PGCPS staff, students, and the community-at-large
regarding the manner by which the Board typically operates
and carries out the authority delegated to it by law.*



www.pgcps.org

REVISED NOVEMBER 2017



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide guidance for Members of the Board of Education (the “Board”), the Prince George’s County Public School (PGCPS) staff, students and the community-at-large regarding the manner by which the Board typically operates and carries out the authority delegated to it by law. This Handbook is not intended to mandate any process that is binding upon the Board unless that process is otherwise required by law or policy. References to legal authority and/or Board Policies, which apply to specific subjects, are included as appropriate.





RESOLUTION ADOPTING HANDBOOK

WHEREAS, a clear understanding of the roles, responsibilities and duties of the Board of Education is critical to a well functioning school system; and

WHEREAS, each Board Member is responsible for understanding and properly executing the duties of the office consistent with the Board’s Mission, Vision and Core Values; and

WHEREAS, an informed and well functioning Board is essential to effective school district governance, consistency, continuous student achievement, and closing the achievement gap; and

WHEREAS, the Board is accountable to the public, must operate in a transparent manner and must hold itself accountable; and

WHEREAS, an effective Board requires a common and well understood framework for operations; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the attached *Handbook for the Board of Education of Prince George’s County*; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that Board staff is directed to post online and publish the Handbook in a convenient format to be made readily available, as soon as feasible, to Board Members, PGcps staff, Board candidates, and the community-at-large; and be it

FINALLY RESOLVED, that staff for the Board will, in a timely manner, update provisions of the Handbook as appropriate and publish such updates on the Board’s website at www.pgcps.org.





VISION

PGCPS will be a GREAT school system recognized for providing education services which ensure that every student in our diverse school district graduates ready for college and careers in a global society.

MISSION

To Provide a Great Education that Empowers All Students
and Contributes to Thriving Communities

SIX CORE VALUES

1. Students are our priority, and all students can achieve at high academic levels;
2. Families, students, and educators share the responsibility for student success;
3. High expectations inspire high performance;
4. All staff share the responsibility for a safe and supportive school environment contributing to excellence in education;
5. The support of everyone in our community is essential to the success of our schools and students, and this success enriches our community; and
6. Continuous improvement in teaching, leadership, and accountability is the key to our destiny.

Reference: Board Policy 0118, "Mission, Vision and Core Values"





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Authority and Responsibilities of the Board of Education	1
Authority of Individual Board Members	2
Composition of the Board and Board Member Qualifications	3
Student Board Member	4
Board Candidates and Members-Elect	5
New Board Member Orientation	6
Filling Vacancy of Board Member’s Unexpired Term	6
Duties of Board Officers	7
Ethics and Code of Conduct	8
Financial Disclosure	11
Removal of Board Members	11
Immunity for Board Members	12
Appointment of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Schools	12
Responsibilities and Duties of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Schools	13
Meetings of the Board of Education	14
Protocols for Absentee Participation	20
Conduct of Meeting	21
Record of Board Meetings	22
Public Participation	23
Board Advisory Councils/Committees	23
Public Hearings	24
Strategic Plan Development and Approval Process	25
Operating Budget Approval Process and Long-Range Educational Facilities/Capital Budget Process	26
Appeals to the Board of Education	27
Negotiations	28
Personnel Appointment Procedures	28
Staff to the Board of Education	29
Board of Education Correspondence Procedure	30
Maryland Public Information Act	30
Association Membership	31
Board Members Compensation and Expense Standards	31
School Visits	34
Commencements	35





Authority and Responsibilities of the Board of Education

The powers and mandatory duties of the Board of Education are defined in the *Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland* and Title 13A of the *Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR)*. The Board’s primary responsibilities, aligned to support the school system’s strategic plan *The Promise of PGCPs*, include but are not limited to the following:

1. Appointing the Chief Executive Officer of Schools, Educ. Art., §4-201.1.
2. Enacting, interpreting and implementing policies, (Board Policy 9340, “Policy Development”).
3. Adopting operating and capital budgets, Educ. Art., §5-101.
4. Making decisions on educational, budgetary, facility, and financial matters (including authorization of contracts and legal settlements), Educ. Art, §4-108.
5. Establishing curriculum guides and courses of study, Educ. Art., §4-111.
6. Appointing personnel, Educ. Art., §4-103 and §6-201.
7. Establishing school boundaries, Educ. Art. §4-109.
8. Communicating with residents, staff, and students.
9. Acting in a quasi-judicial capacity, in particular, deciding student and employee appeals, Educ. Art., §3-1006; §4-205(c); §6-202.
10. Advancing a legislative agenda.
11. Making a continuous appraisal of the educational and administrative management of the school system, Board Policy 0120, “System Oversight”.

In addition to those mandatory duties that are defined in law, the Board is committed to the Key Work of School Boards, developed by the National School Boards Association. The Key Work of School Boards encompasses the following five actions:





1. Establish clear vision with high expectations for quality teaching and learning that supports strong student outcomes.
2. Establish a strong accountability process that depends on open decision making, community engagement and support, and receptivity to new ideas and constructive criticism.
3. Establish a set of cohesive guidelines able to transform its vision into reality through its policy making authority.
4. Demonstrate community leadership through public advocacy and community engagement and build public support that is vital to implement the board's vision.
5. Lead as a united team with the CEO, each in their respective roles with strong collaboration and mutual trust.

Reference: Educ. Art., §§4-108, 4-109, 4-111, and 4-114

Authority of Individual Board Members

State law establishes that power belongs not to individual members of a Board of Education but only to the Board of Education itself. Board Members have authority only when acting as a Board of Education in a legally constituted session, with a quorum being present. The statement or action of an individual member or group of members of the Board of Education does not bind the Board of Education itself, except when that statement or action is authorized by an official act of the Board.

References: Educ. Art., §§3-1002 and 3-1004; Board Policy 9270, "Actions by Individual Board Members"





Composition of the Board and Board Member Qualifications

The Board is composed of fourteen (14) members: nine (9) elected district members, each of whom reside in a different school board district, four (4) appointed members, and one Student Member. Board Members must be registered voters of Prince George’s County. Elected members must reside in the school board district the candidate seeks to represent. A Board Member may not hold another office of profit in county government during a term. In addition, while serving on the Board, a Member may not be a candidate for public office other than a position on the Board.

The appointed members of the Board shall be appointed as follows:

1. Three (3) members must be appointed by the County Executive as follows:
 - a. One member shall possess a high level of knowledge and expertise in education;
 - b. One member shall possess a high level of business, finance, or higher education experience, and
 - c. One member shall possess a high level of knowledge and expertise concerning the successful administration of a large business, nonprofit, or governmental entity; and
2. The Prince George’s County Council shall appoint one member who is a parent of a student enrolled in the school system as of the appointment date.

An elected Member serves for a term of four (4) years. Board Members’ terms begin on the first Monday in December after the election and continue until successors are elected and qualify.





An appointed member serves for a term of four (4) years beginning on the date of appointment, may be reappointed and serves until a successor is appointed and qualifies.

The Student Member shall be an eleventh or twelfth grade student in the PGCPs during the student's term in office. The Student Member is elected for a one-year term each year by student representatives to the Prince George's County Regional Association of Student Governments (PGCRASG) enrolled in middle and high schools in PGCPs. The Student Member serves for a term of one year beginning in August.

References: Educ. Art., §3-1002; Board Policy 9110, "Number of Members and Terms of Office"

Student Board Member

The qualifications, election, and provisions relating to the Student Member of the Board are found in state law. The Student Member has the same rights and privileges of an elected adult member, except that the student member may not vote on matters related to capital and operating budgets, school closings, school re-openings, and school boundaries; collective bargaining decisions; student disciplinary matters; teacher and administrator disciplinary matters as provided under Educ. Art., §6-202; and, other personnel matters. Unless invited to attend by an affirmative majority vote of the thirteen elected and appointed Members of the Board, the Student Member may not attend an executive session that relates to the hearings on appeals of special education placements, hearings held under Educ. Art., §6-202 (a), or collective bargaining. During regular meetings, the Student Member may make motions or second motions made by others. However, his or her right to make or second motions or vote on such motions is predicated upon whether they concern a matter on which the student may vote.





A Student Member who completes a full term on the Board may be granted a scholarship of \$5,000 to be applied toward the student's higher education costs and provided by the Prince George's County Council. Upon completion of his/her tenure on the Board, the Student Member is awarded one (1) full credit in social studies and student service learning hours equivalent to hours devoted to being the Student Member of the Board.

The Student Member may participate in the distribution of diplomas and/or certificates at high school commencements but may not confer his or her own diploma.

Reference: Educ. Art., §§3-1002 and 4-107 (d)(2); Board Policy 9271, "Student Board Member"

Board Candidates and Members-Elect

Board candidates for election by the general public are required to file public financial disclosure statements for the preceding calendar year with the Prince George's County Board of Supervisors of Elections at the time they submit their certificate of candidacy. After the candidate's election to the Board of Education, a financial disclosure statement must be filed annually with the Board Office. Orientation sessions are usually held twice a year—in the fall just before the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) annual conference and in December after the general elections. The Board may also schedule other training for its Members as necessary. Materials, except items of a confidential nature for Board business meetings, are available to candidates and the general public on the school system's website. Board Members are prohibited from using school system resources for political campaign purposes. School system staff or equipment may not be employed for purposes of promoting any candidate for elected office.

Reference: Board Policy 0107, "Ethics Regulations"





New Board Member Orientation

Following the election of new Members, the Board of Education officers provide an orientation regarding the Board's operation and processes. Information is provided about the functions of the office of the Board of Education and the working relationships with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Schools and the staff of Prince George's County Public Schools. In addition, information is provided about the roles and responsibilities of Board Members as well as the role and responsibilities of the CEO of Schools. New Board Members are encouraged to also attend the orientation sessions sponsored by the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), and participate in other Board sanctioned training as agreed upon by the Board.

Filling Vacancy of Board Member's Unexpired Term

If a seat held by an elected member of the Board becomes vacant, the County Executive shall appoint a qualified individual to fill the seat for the remainder of the term. The County Council shall require a two-thirds vote of all members of the County Council to reject an appointment by the County Executive.

The Prince George's Regional Association of Student Governments may establish the election procedures and protocol to fill a vacancy for the Student Member, which are subject to the approval of the elected and appointed members of the Board.

Reference: Educ. Art., §3-1002





Duties of Board Officers

The Officers of the Board of Education are the Chair, Vice-Chair, and by law, the Chief Executive Officer as the Executive Officer, holding the positions of Secretary and Treasurer.

The Chair presides at all meetings, signs authorized or approved contracts and other documents on behalf of the Board, represents the views of the Board in all communications and correspondence, and performs other duties prescribed by law or by the Board. The Chair may designate another Board member to communicate with the media. Members shall refrain from representing the Board with the media unless so designated. The Chair may appoint standing and ad hoc committees of the Board and/or staff members to assist the Board with its work, study specific issues, or undertake Board projects. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair performs these duties.

If both the Chair and Vice-Chair are unable to officiate a Board meeting, the Chair at his/her discretion, may designate another Board Member to serve in this capacity. The Chair and Vice-Chair are appointed by the County Executive.

References: Educ. Art. §3-1004 (a); Board Policies 9100, "Officers"; 9210, "Chair"; 9220, "Vice-Chair"; 9230, "Secretary, Treasurer and Executive Officer"





Ethics and Code of Conduct for Board Members

The Board may, by majority vote, censure or reprimand a Member if the Member culpably fails to perform the duties of office or engages in other conduct that conflicts with the duties and responsibilities of office.

The Board of Education, the Chief Executive Officer, and Prince George's County Public Schools employee organizations have adopted a compact of an organizational culture of respect. The compact is part of the school system's strategic plan, *The Promise of PGCPs*. With this compact, all parties commit to an organization that recognizes and values the role of all employees as contributors to a learning community that sets high standards of performance for school officials, staff and students.

In addition to the Board's Code of Ethics and related policies, which govern actions of its Members, school officials, and employees, the Board has also adopted the following Code of Ethics, as recommended by the National School Boards Association and amended as needed:

“As a member of the Prince George's County Board of Education, I am committed to improving public education and, to that end, I will—

- Remember always that my first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the public schools;
- Attend all regularly scheduled Board meetings insofar as possible and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings;
- Recognize that I should endeavor to make policy decisions only after full discussion at publicly held Board meetings;
- Render all decisions based on the pertinent facts, Board policies, Administrative Procedures, and my independent judgment, and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups;
- Encourage the free expression of opinion by all Board Members, and seek systematic communications between the Board and students, staff, school officials and all elements of the community;





- Work with other Board Members to establish effective Board policies and to delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the CEO of Schools;
- Communicate to other Board Members and the CEO expressions of public reaction to Board policies, Board decisions and school programs;
- Inform myself about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs, meetings, and other relevant experiences providing needed information, such as those sponsored by my state, national school boards associations, and local Board sanctioned activities;
- Support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as school staff, and school officials and insist on a regular and impartial evaluation of all staff;
- Avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest, and refrain from using my Board position for personal or partisan gain;
- Safeguard and be held accountable for all school system issued equipment, complying with the proper use of such equipment as required by all school system personnel pursuant to board policies and administrative procedures;
- Take no action using my position as a Board Member to circumvent established policies and procedures for securing the use of school system resources or facilities for my own, or for another individual or groups benefit;
- Take no private action that will compromise the Board or administration, and respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law; and
- Be bound by PGCPs policies and procedures.





Core Beliefs, Values and Commitments

Board Members adhere to the following principles, which reflect their core beliefs and values and their commitment to work together as a Board in the best interest of the school system:

- Respect individual differences and opinions and being open-minded;
- Be prepared to do the work of the Board;
- Support decisions of the Board and not work against those decisions;
- Continually reassess the way the Board does business until a decision is made;
- Disagree on issues without making it personal;
- Keep confidential issues and executive session items within the confines of the Board;
- Be candid in expressing opinions;
- Improve communications among all Board Members;
- Maintain professional decorum during Board meetings; and
- Ensure all information is shared with Board members.

Members shall maintain the confidentiality appropriate to sensitive issues and information that otherwise may tend to compromise the integrity or legal positions of the Board or the school system, especially those matters discussed in Executive Session.

If, for any reason, a Board Member prefers not to participate in a confidential discussion that is authorized or has a conflict of interest with the subject under discussion, he or she should leave the meeting before it begins or that particular subject is discussed. (See the *Executive Session* section of this handbook for additional information).

During its Spring Board Retreat, the Board should review and re-affirm all the principles concerning the Code of Conduct and the compact concerning the





organizational culture of respect. Given that the Board is committed to faithful compliance with the provisions of these documents and the Board’s policies, the Board may take appropriate action in the event of a Member’s willful and continuing violation, including but not limited to, admonishing the Member, referral of the matter to the Ethics Panel for review and/or referral to the state for consideration of removal from office.

Financial Disclosure

Each Board Member is required to complete an annual financial disclosure statement for the preceding calendar year. The Board’s Ethics Panel is responsible for reviewing all financial disclosure statements for completeness of form and for determination of any existing or potential conflicts of interest. The Student Member of the Board does not complete a financial disclosure form.

These statements will be made available during normal office hours for examination and copying by the public, subject to the established administrative procedures for disclosure and copying of public records.

Reference: Board Policy 0107, “Ethics Regulation”; Board Policy 0108, “Code of Conduct”; Board Policy 9270, “Actions by Individual Board Members”, Robert’s Rules of Order

Removal of Board Members

With the approval of the Governor, the State Board may remove a Member of the Board for immorality, misconduct in office, incompetence, or willful neglect of duty. Before removing a Member, the State Board shall send the Member a copy of the charges pending and give the Member an opportunity within ten (10) days of receipt of the charges to request a hearing. If the Member requests a hearing within the ten (10) day period, the Member shall have an opportunity to be heard publicly before the State Board in the Member’s own defense, in person or by counsel. A Member removed has the right to judicial review of the removal by the Circuit Court for Prince George’s County.

Reference: Educ. Art. §3-1002





Immunity for Board Members

A Board Member, acting within the scope of the Member's authority, without malice or gross negligence, is not personally liable for damages resulting from a tortious act or omission. A Board Member is also immune as an individual from civil liability for any act or omission so long as the Member acts within the scope of the Member's authority, without malice and in a discretionary capacity. A judgment in tort for damages against a Board Member acting within the scope of the Member's authority shall be levied against the Board of Education only and may not be executed against the Board Member personally.

The Board may pay all or part of the counsel fees for the defense of a Board Member involved in litigation because of service and official capacity on the Board. These payments are a valid educational expense.

References: Educ. Art., §§4-104 (c) and 4-106; Courts and Judicial Proceedings Art., §5-518

Appointment of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Maryland state law governs the selection, appointment, term, qualifications, vacancy, and suspension of the Chief Executive Officer.

In the year in which a term begins, the County Executive shall select a CEO between February 1 and June 1, and the Board shall complete the appointment on or before June 30. The County Executive selects the CEO from a list of three nominees recommended by a search committee that is comprised of: (1) one member of the State Board, appointed by the State Superintendent; and (2) two residents of Prince George's County, appointed by the Governor. The search committee shall be chaired by a member selected by the State Superintendent. Following the County Executive's selection, the Board appoints the CEO after agreement on contract terms negotiated by the Board Chair. If the Board is unable to appoint a CEO by July 1 of the year a term





begins, the County Executive shall select and the Board appoint an interim CEO.

The term of the CEO is four (4) years, beginning on July 1. The CEO serves until a successor is appointed and qualifies. By February 1 of the year in which a term ends, the CEO must notify the Board whether or not he/she is a candidate for reappointment. If the County Executive decides to select the incumbent CEO, the Board shall complete reappointment no later than March 1 of that year.

The appointment of the CEO is not valid unless approved in writing by the State Superintendent of Schools. If there is a vacancy in the office, the County Executive shall select and the Board shall appoint an interim CEO to serve until July 1 after his/her appointment.

Reference: Educ. Art., §4-201.1

Responsibilities and Duties of the Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the administration of the school system and carries out the laws, bylaws, and policies of the Maryland State Board of Education as well as the rules, regulations, and policies of the Prince George’s County Board of Education. The CEO, selected by the County Executive and appointed by the Board, is hired pursuant to a contract of employment that establishes the CEO’s duties and responsibilities.

The CEO or his designee:

- Advises the Board of Education on educational policies of the school system, school attendance areas, curriculum guides and courses of study, and any question under consideration by the Board;
- Recommends contracts, to the extent required by law, and other documents for Board approval;
- Informs the Board in advance of administrative reorganizations, including transfers of functions, establishment of positions and offices, and consolidations of positions and offices;





- Proposes annual operating and capital budgets to the Board of Education;
- Attends all meetings, work sessions and public hearings of the Board, as well as committee meetings as requested, except when the Board is considering appeals in its quasi-judicial role in closed session, or when the CEO's tenure, salary, or the administration of his/her office is under consideration;
- Informs the Board of any and all matters of student safety where at least one staff member is involved;
- Advises the Board on any question under consideration at the meetings that he/she is permitted to attend but may not vote;
- Recommends the appointment and/or transfer of administrative and supervisory personnel to the Board for its approval, whether by discrete personnel actions or by way of a weekly personnel report approved by the Board; and,
- Administers disciplinary actions of PGCPs personnel and students.

In the absence of the CEO, the Deputy Superintendent of Schools or designee fulfills these duties. In accordance with the terms of the contract of employment, the Board of Education regularly evaluates the CEO on the achievement of mutually agreed-upon priorities and objectives.

References: Educ. Art., §§4-205 and 6-201; Board Policies 0113, "School Boundaries – Attendance Areas"; 0120, "System Oversight"; 4112, "Appointment of Personnel", 6180.1, "Evaluation and Selection of Classroom Material"; 7100 "Capital Improvement Program"

Meetings of the Board of Education

All meetings of the Board of Education are public meetings, except for closed meetings (Executive Session) and as otherwise permitted under state law. The Board of Education shall, at its meetings, promote equity in educational





achievement by means of ethical, legal and fiduciary standards that focus on improving student achievement and implementation of educational reform initiatives.

The Board conducts two meetings per month, except for May, July when the Board is in recess, August (opening of PGCPSS), November and December (holiday season).

Emergency meetings shall be designated by the Chair of the Board of Education or at the written request of five (5) Board Members. Electronic notice shall be posted at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Said notice shall cite the purpose of the meeting and the business to be considered.

Changes to regularly scheduled Board meetings to accommodate holidays, special events or other circumstances, such as inclement weather, may be presented by the Board Chair upon notification to Board Members. All meetings of the Board are considered regular meetings, unless specifically designated as a closed meeting, special meeting, oversight meeting, work session, retreat, award or recognition ceremony, committee meeting or public hearing. The Board may during any of these identified meetings adjourn to convene in Executive Session.

Special meetings of the Board may be called by the Chair or at the written request of five (5) Board Members, by notice of the meeting at least 72 hours in advance of the hour of the meeting. Said notice shall cite the purpose of the meeting and the business to be considered. No business shall be transacted at said meeting except that for which the meeting is called.

Reference: Board Policies 9360, "Meetings of the Board"; 9361 "Time and Place of Meetings"

Agenda Setting for Board Meetings

The Board of Education has control over educational matters that affect Prince George's County and promotes the interests of schools under its jurisdiction. The Board of Education adopts a strategic plan to guide the school system in developing, implementing, and improving educational programs for its





students. With recommendations from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Board of Education establishes priorities together with specific objectives for the attainment of these priorities.

Following the establishment of priorities, the CEO and Board Members recommend agenda items for Board meetings based on these priorities and by adhering to the following process:

1. The Board staff schedules regular agenda-setting meetings with Board Officers, the CEO and/or his/her designee. Board Members are notified of such meetings and may attend if desired. The following items are discussed at the agenda-setting meetings:
 - a. Agenda for future Board meetings: The CEO or designee advises the Board Officers of time requirements for agenda items, the status of major items to be discussed at Board meetings, and the availability of staff to be present for Board discussions.
 - b. List of topics for Board Work Sessions: The CEO or his/her designee works with Board Officers to identify the status of items to be scheduled and suggests dates for their presentation. The Board office maintains a continuous listing of future agenda items.
 - c. Calendar for future Board meetings: The CEO or designee and Board Officers review a calendar of future Board meetings (regular and special), executive sessions, public hearings, and work sessions.
2. After the agenda setting meeting, copies of materials agreed upon are sent to Board Members and executive staff, and posted to the Board's website via BoardDocs. Board Members are encouraged to share their interest regarding scheduled items and submit questions in advance of staff presentations.
3. Prior to a Board meeting, with as much advance notice as possible, Board Members who need information or desire staff members to be available to answer questions at the table about an issue should alert Board staff to request that the CEO answer those questions and/or provide the information needed.





4. After Board meetings and public hearings, the Board and CEO's staff discuss items raised during the Board meeting, assign responsibilities for follow-up items, and review draft agendas and calendars for future Board meetings.

Preparation of Meeting Materials

Before every business meeting, Board agenda materials are prepared for Board Members and identified staff. Board agenda materials are normally available four (4) business days prior to regular Board meetings in BoardDocs. Complex items, which require extensive study, should be distributed to Board Members in advance of the regular distribution of Board materials to allow sufficient time for review and Board consideration.

Open Public Meetings and Notice

Meetings of the Board of Education, including its standing and ad-hoc committees are open to the public, except when meetings may be held in closed session under the Maryland Open Meetings Act. The public must be provided with notice that provides information concerning the time and location of meetings and the matters that will be deliberated by the Board. When a meeting is held in open session, the general public is entitled to attend. Under state law, the Board of Education has the authority to adopt and enforce reasonable rules regarding the conduct of persons attending its meetings, as well as the videotaping, televising, photographing, broadcasting or recording of its meetings.

If the presiding officer determines that the behavior of an individual is disrupting an open session, the Board may have an individual removed. Unless the Board of Education, its members, or its agents acted maliciously, they are not liable for having an individual removed from the meeting.

References: General Provisions Article, §§3-201, et seq.; Board Policy 9360, "Meetings of the Board"





Regular Board Meetings

Unless otherwise noted, at Regular Board meetings the Board will consider and vote on business action items recommended by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO shall also provide information to the public regarding Student Achievement at these meetings. These meetings will occur in the Board Room of the Board of Education’s Administration Building. Two weeks public notice must be given if the date, time or place of the meeting is to be changed unless there is an emergency situation warranting change in scheduling of a meeting, as determined and declared by the Board or Board Chair.

Reference: Board Policy 9360, “Meetings of the Board”

Board Work Sessions

The purpose of Board Work Sessions is to review key information related to the major areas of the strategic plan, *The Promise of PGCPs*. Areas intended for discussion typically include *Human Resources, Safety & Security Services, Customer Service and School Culture, Rigorous Literacy Instruction, Early Learning Readiness, and Communications*. These meetings will occur in the Board Room of the Board of Education’s Administration Building.

References: Board Policies 0120, “System Oversight”; 9360, “Meetings of the Board”

CIP Meetings

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) meetings will be scheduled at least twice a year unless otherwise noted. The purpose of the CIP meeting is to provide Board members and the community updates about capital improvement projects within the school system. The meeting schedule will be included in the Board Meeting Calendar.

Reference: Board Policy 9360, “Meetings of the Board”





Executive Session (Closed Meetings)

The Board may conduct Executive Sessions in accordance with the law. The Board may meet in Executive Session to carry out administrative functions and quasi-judicial functions, as defined in state law, which include the following:

1. Discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals;
2. Protect the privacy or reputation of individuals with respect to a matter that is not related to public business;
3. Consider land and site acquisitions and directly related matters;
4. Consider the investment of public funds;
5. Consider the marketing of public securities;
6. Consult with counsel to obtain legal advice;
7. Consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation; and
8. Discuss collective bargaining negotiations or consider matters that relate to the negotiations;
9. Discuss public security, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to the public or to public security, including:
 - a. The deployment of fire and police services and staff; and
 - b. The development and implementation of emergency plans;
10. Conduct or discuss an investigative proceeding on actual or possible criminal conduct;
11. Comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter; and





12. Before a contract is awarded or bids are opened, discuss a matter directly related to a negotiating strategy or the contents of a bid or proposal, if public discussion or disclosure would adversely impact the ability of the public body to participate in the competitive bidding or proposal process.

References: Educ. Art., §4-107(d) (2); Open Meetings Act, §§3-305, et seq.

Protocols for Absentee Participation

Board members may participate electronically in Executive Session meetings no more than four (4) times during the fiscal year. Board Staff shall use proper electronic methods in order to ensure confidentiality of the remote connection. Board Members participating electronically will count towards the establishment of a quorum.

One or more Members of the Board may participate in any committee meeting of the Board provided that at least a quorum of the Board is physically present at a meeting that is otherwise lawfully convened and assembled. In the event a Member is unable to physically attend the meeting and wishes to participate by electronic means, such as telephone with a speaker phone connection, or similar means that would allow remote participation, that Member must make a request to the Committee Chair to participate remotely at least three (3) days prior to the time the meeting is scheduled, so that the necessary arrangements can be made for such participation.

In the event one of more Members of the Board participates in a meeting without being physically present, the following conditions must exist:

1. The meeting may not be chaired by a person not physically present at the meeting; if the Chair is participating remotely, the Vice Chair shall chair the meeting.





2. The electronic means utilized must permit each person participating in the meeting to hear and be heard by all other participants in the meeting.
3. All provisions of the Maryland Open Meetings Act must be followed.
4. In the event that the electronic means utilized becomes a distraction to the meeting or if the Member is unable to hear or communicate through that electronic means at any time, the Board or Chair, may, at his or her discretion, terminate the use of such electronic means and end the participation by the Board Member who is not physically present.
5. The Minutes for the meeting shall reflect the name of any Board Member who participated in the meeting remotely.

Board Policy 9364, "Participation in Meetings Electronically"

Conduct of Meeting

The Board of Education observes *Robert's Rules of Order*, most recent edition, in conducting its meetings, except as provided otherwise either in this handbook or Board policy. Moreover, the Board is guided by its own rules, state statutes, and COMAR, which establish the following:

1. A motion is adopted with the approval of a minimum of eight Members, with the exception of those matters on which the Student Member is not entitled to vote, in which instance the motion requires the approval of seven members. A $\frac{2}{3}$ vote is required to over-turn action of CEO.
2. The Board adopts its agenda at the beginning of a business meeting. Unless changed by the Board, the order in which items appear on an agenda will be followed. Any changes in the agenda prior to adoption are made by majority vote.
3. A quorum consisting of a majority of the full Board shall be present to convene a meeting. Thereafter, the quorum required to approve an agenda item will vary, depending upon whether the Student Member's vote counts.





4. Unless a new business item is an emergency or a Consent item, it shall be treated as a first reader until the next business meeting.

The rules and regulations governing the operations of the Board (except those required by statute and governing special meetings and policy issues) may be amended by a majority vote of the Board at any meeting, provided that each Member shall have been furnished a copy of the proposed amendment at least one week in advance.

The Board's Legal Counsel or Executive Director serves as parliamentarian to the Board of Education during all meetings.

References: Education Article § 4-403, COMAR 13A.02.01.00, et seq.; Board Policy 9366, "Order of Business: Parliamentary Procedure"

Record of Board Meetings

The Board of Education maintains records of meetings consisting of the following:

1. Records of the Board's business meetings and hearings are retained in the Board Office and posted online. All Board business meetings are televised on Channel PGCPSTV 96 (Comcast)/38 (Verizon) and are available online via webcast.
2. The minutes of all public meetings contain actions taken by the Board and a brief summary of the Board's discussion. Upon request and according to set guidelines, Board staff will provide the minutes and/or recording of a business or committee meeting.
3. Minutes of closed sessions include, but it is not limited to, a list of each item considered, the action taken, and each recorded vote, and
4. Recordings and minutes of meetings open to the public are available as a matter of public record on the Board's website, as well as in the Board Office.





Public Participation

The Members of the Board of Education desire to hear the views from interested residents. To help ensure effective public participation in the decision-making process, the Board does the following:

1. Advertises the agenda and supporting documents on the school system's website no later than four (4) business days before the business meeting. Furthermore, copies of agenda materials are available to the public on the day of the regular and special meetings.
2. Involves residents and students on advisory councils and/or committees.
3. Holds public hearings on boundary changes, the operating and capital budgets, and other issues of public interest.
4. Provides time at its business meetings for the public to comment on agenda and non-agenda items.
5. Encourages individuals to communicate with Board Members by publishing public telephone numbers, fax numbers, mailing addresses, and e-mail addresses, and
6. Posts proposed policies for comment.

References: Board Policy 8345, "Public Comment"

Board Advisory Councils/Committees

The Board of Education is empowered by state law to create citizen advisory councils and/or committees to advise the Board, facilitate activities and programs in the school system, and recommend possible changes in board policy. This input guides and informs decisions made by the Board.

Committees may be ongoing or created for special purposes on a short-term basis. Committees appointed by the Board are subject to the Open Meetings Act. Moreover, pursuant to law and policy, the Board of Education has appointed an Ethics Panel, which interprets the Board's ethics policy, reviews financial disclosure statements, and advises persons subject to the policy as to its application.





In addition, there are advisory councils/committees that report to the Chief Executive Officer of Schools. As provided by their charges, the Board and CEO's advisory councils/committees present their annual reports to the Board of Education at the last Board meeting of each school year.

References: Educ. Art., §4-112; Board Policy 9140, "Organization - Citizens Advisory Committees"

Public Hearings

The Board of Education may schedule public hearings on issues it determines to be of widespread interest and concern. A quorum of the Board is not required to be present for a hearing to be conducted because no action is taken by the Board at public hearings.

In addition to special public hearings, the Board holds hearings on its annual operating budget, proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and changes in attendance boundaries.

Recognizing that certain contemplated actions of the Board of Education (e.g., boundary changes, proposed capital projects, etc.) have extraordinary public impact or are of widespread public concern, the Board of Education may designate certain dates and locations for the purpose of conducting Public Hearings on such announced topics.

The Board will allow individuals who desire to address the Board to register on-site the day of the Public Hearing. Public testimony shall also be provided to the Board via email or written correspondence to the Board's Executive Director.

Board staff shall obtain the register of individuals listed to speak during the hearing and track the time limitations for speakers at a Public Hearing. Recognizing that Public Hearings are for the purpose of hearing the opinion of citizens, not for the Board to debate with the public, Board Members shall be limited in their comments. Board Members will be recognized by the Chair only for the following reasons:





1. To correct misinformation presented in testimony, and
2. To add information so that citizen comment may be heard in context.
Board Members will not be recognized to question or debate citizens or to express their support or opposition to testimony presented on the issue being considered.
3. The Chair may ask a staff member to meet with a person presenting testimony, if appropriate.

Strategic Plan Development and Approval Process

The strategic plan for PGCPs, *The Promise of PGCPs*, is designed to guide the work of schools and offices for achieving the visionary goals approved by the Board of Education. The Board of Education allows for a process for public involvement in the development of its strategic plan and operating budget. The Board's goals and objectives include greater public involvement in the development phase of the strategic plan and operating budget.

The Board works with staff to review and recommend changes to the strategic plan. In addition, community forums are held in which participants are asked to address principal questions to assist the Board in developing/modifying the strategic plan. Substantial feedback on a wide range of issues involving the strategic plan has been received at the forums and summaries of the comments made at the forums are posted on the PGCPs website.

Reference: Educ. Art., §5-401





Operating Budget Approval Process and Long-Range Educational Facilities/ Capital Budget Process

Two major issues that come before the Board of Education each year are the operating budget and the long-range educational facilities plan, which includes action on the capital budget.

The operating budget includes salaries, contractual services, supplies and materials, furniture and equipment, and other funds necessary for the daily operation of the school system. The operating budget is developed under the direction of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Schools, who receives a wide range of input from staff, local and state government leadership and members of the community. The CEO of Schools recommends the budget's adoption to the Members of the Board. The Board holds work sessions and public hearings prior to adoption of the budget to secure additional information on the recommendations of the CEO of Schools.

The date for submission of the operating budget to the County Council is established by law. The budget must be submitted to the County by March 1 of each year and adopted by the County Council by June 1. In June, the Board makes adjustments to the budget to conform to Council action and to reflect the final judgment of the Board on expenditure priorities prior to the July 1 deadline for submitting the school system's final operating budget to the County Council.

Each spring the CEO reviews all Board of Education facilities decisions and capital budget requests. The capital budget includes construction and planning funds for new facilities, modernizations and renovations, furniture and equipment associated with these projects, and countywide maintenance efforts. Facilities issues include building utilization, educational program capacity, enrollment projections, boundary changes, and school closings/consolidation. During the spring, cluster, school and community representatives meet to discuss feasible school program and facility alternatives and, by June 1, cluster representatives send the CEO proposed solutions, priorities, or concerns the cluster has identified for its schools.





On or about October 1, the CEO publishes a proposed six-year Capital Improvements Program or amendments thereto. During September and October, the Board holds public hearings on facilities and boundary proposals, respectively, with decisions scheduled prior to the end of November. The Board may opt to defer until a later time (usually March) selected boundaries and facilities decisions.

References: Educ. Art. §5-101, Board Policy 3130, “Fiscal Responsibility and Control – Annual Operating Budget”

Appeals to the Board of Education

There are generally three categories of appeals under various sections of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland: disputes involving rules and regulations of the Board; suspensions or dismissals of professional or certificated personnel and non-certificated personnel; and, student matters including suspensions of more than 10 days or expulsions and transfers.

Once an appeal is initiated, it is not appropriate for Board Members to discuss the issue with the appellant, the public, or staff. Once the appeal is properly filed, unless the appeal is subsequently withdrawn by the appellant or the CEO has granted the requested relief, only the Board can dismiss the appeal.

It is expected that Board Members will maintain the confidentiality of documents related to an appeal and not discuss these materials with those who should not be privy to such information. Additionally, individual Board Members should not initiate research or attempt to supplement information included in the appeal. Generally, matters related to special education and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are not subject to review by the Board of Education. Furthermore, complaints concerning the conduct of PGCPs personnel should be directed to the CEO.

References: Educ. Art., §§ 4-205 (c), 6-202 (a) and 7-305 (c); Board Policies 5115, “Student Appeals of Long-Term Suspensions and Expulsions”; 5116, “Appeal Process of Student Transfer Requests”





Negotiations

The Board of Education designates the CEO as its representative in contract negotiations with the Association of Supervisory and Administrative School Personnel (ASASP), the Prince George’s County Education Association (PGCEA), and the Association of Classified Public Employees and American Federation of County Municipal Employees (ACE-AFSCME/Local 2250) and Service Employees International Union (SEIU/ Local 400). By law, the Board of Education is permitted to meet in closed session to discuss issues related to contract negotiations with the employee organizations.

Board Members will maintain the confidentiality of issues discussed during closed sessions.

References: Educ. Art., §§6-408 and 6-510

Personnel Appointment Procedures

Under state law, it is the responsibility of the CEO to recommend the appointment of personnel to administrative and supervisory positions. These appointments are discussed by the Board of Education and approved in closed session.

The CEO notifies the Board in advance of the transfers of personnel to administrative and supervisory positions and any personnel to serve in such position(s) in an acting capacity.

The Board of Education also receives and reviews a monthly personnel report in closed session. The report contains appointments of administrative and supervisory personnel, teachers and supporting services personnel, terminations for all personnel, and notice of teacher transfers, suspension and dismissal actions.

Reference: Board Policy 4112, “Appointment of Personnel”





Staff to the Board of Education

Acting under the supervision of the Board, the Board of Education staff, which includes the Board's Executive Director, legal counsel, administrative support, internal audit, and consultants, shall provide general support to the Board of Education and its members to facilitate the discharge of their statutory responsibilities and coordinate with the CEO. Specifically, the Board staff:

- Responds to requests from Members of the Board of Education, the CEO, staff, public, and other governmental agencies for information on past or pending Board business;
- Provides research assistance and analysis to Members of the Board of Education;
- Keeps official records of Board of Education business and attends all Board of Education meetings as needed;
- Provides staff support, minutes, and follow-ups to Board of Education committees;
- Coordinates the process of recruitment of nominations for appointment to Board of Education advisory councils/committees;
- Directs all appeal matters before the Board of Education, in consultation with legal counsel to the Board;
- Carries out the responsibility of the administration of the office of the Members of the Board of Education, which includes various logistical and administrative functions such as those related to correspondence, scheduling, general staff support, ethics panel matters, financial disclosure process, travel expenses, use of technology, and Board Member orientation;
- Provides timely reports on meetings attended by Board staff and reports and analysis on Board functions such as ombudsman activities, ethics work, legislative work and development of a legislative platform, and appeals;
- Serves as an ombudsman; and
- Attends meetings of public committees and other school-community organizations at the direction of the Board.





Board of Education Correspondence Procedure

The Board office maintains logs of all incoming and outgoing correspondence to/from the Board.

1. All incoming correspondence is date-stamped and distributed to all Members of the Board of Education and the CEO. Board Office staff determines whether correspondence requires a response and, if a response is required, assigns a due date for the preparation of the reply and directs the correspondence to the appropriate staff member. Staff prepares responses for the signature of the Board Chair or, in special cases, the Board Chair responds personally. Copies are provided to Members of the Board.
2. Individual Board Members have the option of responding directly to correspondence addressed to the Board or the individual member; however, that correspondence must clearly reflect that the views expressed therein are those of the individual member and not necessarily those of the entire Board of Education.
3. All incoming and outgoing memoranda to the Board are distributed to all Board Members, the CEO, and appropriate staff. The CEO assigns the responsibility of preparing replies to Board memoranda and follows up to make sure a timely response is prepared. Exceptions are confidential memoranda, which may have expressly limited distribution. Board Members and staff are expected to maintain the confidentiality of confidential information.

Maryland Public Information Act

All Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) requests received by any employee or Member of the Board of Education will be referred to Legal Counsel for the Board of Education and the General Counsel's office. All referrals will include:





1. A copy of the MPIA request with the date of receipt;
2. A copy of the requested material unless it is too voluminous or has not yet been compiled;
3. A summary of costs incurred to compile (including employee time) or, if not compiled, an estimate of the time and cost to compile; and,
4. A recommendation from the legal counsel as to the appropriateness of disclosing the requested information.

Legal Counsel for the Board of Education will make the final determination as to whether the requested information will be disclosed.

Costs incurred in complying with MPIA requests will be reimbursed, pursuant to the provisions of the MPIA. Outstanding costs must be paid in full before new requests will be considered.

Association Membership

The Board of Education maintains membership in state and national school board associations, as well as educational associations. The Board determines which, if any, state and/or national affiliations it wishes to add or maintain. Current organizational memberships include the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), the Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE), Council of School Attorney's (COSA), Center for Reform of School Systems (CRSS), and the National School Boards Association (NSBA).

Board Member Compensation and Expense Standards

Elected Members receive an annual compensation of \$18,000, and the Chair of the Board receives \$19,000 annually. All Members of the Board of Education are entitled to be reimbursed for expenses directly related to Board business, beyond compensation provided by law. In accordance with law,





Board Members may not be reimbursed more than \$7,000 in travel and other expenses incurred in a single fiscal year. The Student Member receives a scholarship and is reimbursed for expenses.

All Board Members traveling on official business must exercise due care and prudence in incurring expenses. The expenses directly related to Board business for which a Board Member may be reimbursed are as follows:

1. The standard automobile mileage allowance as published by the Internal Revenue Service to attend Executive Session, Board meetings, oral arguments, public hearings, special meetings, and other travel related to Board business or their responsibilities as Board Members from their home offices to specified destinations.
2. Parking, tolls, taxis, rail, bus, or airfare at a reasonable coach class rate.
3. Actual expenses for business-related meals for three meals per day when traveling on behalf of the Board of Education.
4. Telephone installation and monthly charges for an additional private line, fax line, Internet access, and telephone calls related directly to Board business.
5. Reimbursement for local newspapers and professional publications; supplies, postage, and other materials necessary to support Board Members in discharging their responsibilities as Board Members.
6. Participation in and support for education, school-related and community-related events and activities, including awards dinners, civic association functions and similar events.
7. Transportation, meals, registrations fees, and incidental expenses for non-local travel to meetings and conferences. All Board Members are encouraged to attend conferences sponsored by the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) and the National School Boards Association (NSBA) as part of their professional development. As part of its professional development efforts, the Board will cover the registration, transportation and housing costs for individual Board members to attend four (4) educationally-related conferences.





8. All expenditures must be clearly documented with an original itemized receipt. All restaurant receipts must be annotated with the names of the meeting participants and purpose of the meeting.
9. Board Members may not be reimbursed for the purchase of alcohol or cigarettes. Expenses related to the operation of the Board of Education as an entity shall be expended at the discretion of the Board Chair in consultation with the Board Vice-Chair.

Board Members are not provided office space at the Board of Education's Administration Building. As a result, Members must conduct the majority of their work in their home offices. All Board Members will be provided with computer equipment and equipment appropriate for a home office. If equipment is purchased by PGCPs for the use of a Board Member, that equipment is the property of PGCPs and reverts to PGCPs at the conclusion of the Member's term of office, unless purchased by the Board Member at a cost established by PGCPs. Board Members must follow the same policies and procedures for use and security of PGCPs equipment as established for PGCPs employees.

Once equipment funds budgeted for the Board of Education are expended, only the Board Chair and Vice-Chair may authorize additional purchases. Board Members will be provided with a monthly report on the status of individual Board member's expenditures.

Procedures for processing monthly expense accounts are as follows:

1. Expenditures are submitted to the Board office. The expenditures must be accompanied by original receipts or bills.
2. The appropriate designated person in the Board office shall process the reimbursement report, checking with the Internal Audit Office to ensure that sufficient funds exist in the Member's account and referring any discrepancies or questions about individual expenditures or account balances to the Chair. Should a question arise, the Chair may refer a disputed amount to the Board's Ethics Panel.
3. The expense form shall then be transmitted to the Office of the Chief Financial Officer for processing and payment.





In the case of referral of the expenditure request for review by the Board’s Ethics Panel, the Member shall be entitled to address the Panel and present evidence as to the nature of the challenged expense. Any decision of the Panel as to whether a charge is covered by these provisions may be appealed to the entire Board, provided that any decision of the Board to overrule a recommendation by the panel must be made by recorded vote.

References: Educ. Art., §3-1003; Board Policy 9354, “Board Members’ Vouchered Reimbursement of Expenses”

School Visits

Because the school board has comprehensive statutory responsibilities related to buildings, budget, personnel, students, curriculum and transportation, many Board members feel the need to visit the schools. It helps them become familiar with the operation of schools under their jurisdiction and enables them to make better decisions when the need arises. However, the sudden appearance of a board member in a school building usually causes considerable anxiety on the part of employees – particularly teachers and administrators.

When feasible, Board members, as a matter of courtesy will notify the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at least one business day in advance when a formal visit to an operational facility is planned. Once the CEO is notified, Board members should work with the facilities supervisory staff to ensure that the visit does not interfere with instructional or operational activities. This policy shall not apply to extracurricular activities by the operational facility in which the Board member has been invited. Board members shall also provide a courtesy notification of at least one business day to another Board member who represents the district of the facility being visited.

Reference: Board Policy 2700, “Operational Facility Visits”





Commencements

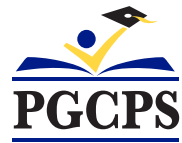
Board Members typically attend and officiate at a number of high school graduations, which are proportionate for each Member of the Board. The Board office staff works with the CEO to develop protocols that Principals follow during the Commencement ceremony. These protocols should be reviewed and distributed annually with the Commencement schedule. By tradition, adult elected Board Members certify the graduation of students from high school by the following statement:

By virtue of the authority vested in the Board of Education of Prince George's County under the laws of the state of Maryland, I do now award diplomas or certificates evidencing the satisfactory completion of prescribed courses of study to the students of _____ High School who are recommended for graduation by the faculty of this school. In receiving this diploma or certificate, each of you are entitled to all of the privileges and honors accorded graduates of a high school accredited by the Maryland State Department of Education and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.





BOARD OF EDUCATION



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
www.pgcps.org

HANDBOOK

REVISED NOVEMBER 2017