

BOARD MEMBER AUTHORITY

The Board of Education is a corporate body and can take action only as a body, pursuant to majority vote in a properly convened meeting. Individual members possess no authority outside of that delegated to them by the Board during such meeting. No member of the Board as an individual shall issue directives to the administration, nor can he/she commit the school district on any matter, or otherwise function independently of the Board.

The functioning of Board members outside of Board meetings shall be as follows:

1. Board members may freely discuss issues with the Superintendent of Schools and give to and receive information from the Superintendent.
2. In regard to with other administrators, Board members shall be free to ask for information. These personnel may be expected to be aware of the limited authority of individual Board members and when the nature of the information requested or the time involved appears to them to create a potential problem, they shall consult with the Superintendent. The Superintendent may then consult with the Board for appropriate action.
3. Other personnel may not be aware of the limited authority of Board members. Since even requests for information may be subject to misinterpretation, substantial discretion is urged upon each Board member. Any inference of the issuing of directions must be scrupulously avoided. The Board member may inform the Superintendent and/or the relevant Principal of significant contacts where administrative follow-up is required.
4. In creating standing committees, the intent of the Board is to encourage some of its members to become conversant in greater detail with selected areas than would be practical within the time limitations of Board meetings. The objective here is to develop greater competence or depth of information within the Board and not to delegate the decision-making power of the Board unless so specifically stated in the enabling or appointing resolution.
5. Members may become particularly interested and desire to become more fully informed on some aspect of the school program or operations. When this would involve more than minimal effort on the part of the school staff, or when in the judgment of the Superintendent or the Board sensitive issues or areas are involved, the Board may delegate one or several members as its representative for the purpose of gathering information and reporting back to the full Board. The Superintendent shall be kept informed of such studies.
6. Board members may contact the Superintendent for additional items to be place on the upcoming meeting agenda.

Ref: Education Law §1709; 1771; 1804(1); 2502; 2551
Matter of Bruno, 4 EDR 14 (1964)

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