

**VERIBEST INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Veribest Independent School District Board of Trustees have realized that to be the most effective advocate for the children of the Veribest ISD they must function as a team. To that end, they have pledged to adhere to the principles listed below. Should a board member, for whatever reason, fail to follow these guidelines, they will ask that their fellow board members call it to their attention. When that happens, each individual board member needs to pledge to accept the feedback in a constructive manner without anger or finger pointing, and will renew their efforts to follow this code of conduct.

1. Each board member will deal with issues and not personalities.
2. Each board member will respect the views of other board members.
3. Each board member reserves the right to disagree, but they will not be disagreeable.
4. Each board member will treat other board members and school employees in a professional manner.
5. Each board member will fully discuss in the proper forum and share information on board issues and will not blindside the administration or board.
6. Each board member will respect confidentiality of executive sessions and any privileged information shared by a board member or the superintendent.
7. Each board member will seek to inform and include all board members in any discussions of issues.
8. Each board member will always hold the interest of all students in Veribest ISD above those of individuals or special interest groups.
9. Each board member will not seek to align a majority vote of board members on an issue outside the regular board meeting.
10. Each board member will seek to continually improve their knowledge, skills, and abilities as a board member.
11. When a board member learns of an error they made, they will report it to the board.
12. Each board member will attend and be prepared for all board meetings.
13. Each board member will annually complete their school board member training hours.
14. Each board member will keep information contained in their school board packet confidential especially when it pertains to personnel, students, and information that is not to be released under the Texas Open Records Act and the Texas Government Code for closed sessions.

# VERIBEST INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Veribest ISD MISSION STATEMENT

The Veribest Independent School District, as a safe and enjoyable center of learning, will provide for each child an education to reach his/her full potential through the interactive involvement of students, parents, staff, and community members. A positive, innovative learning environment develops self-worth, self-discipline, and Godliness, which motivate our students to become productive citizens in an ever-changing society.

In support of this mission we believe:

Each individual has the right to be recognized and treated with respect.

Each individual is accountable for his or her actions.

Faith in God gives us strength and eternal hope.

Each individual has the potential to be successful.

The family is important for providing love, guidance, discipline, encouragement, and an environment of sharing and growing.

Knowledge is gained through education and experience.

Learning is a life-long process.

Friendships enable us to give and receive support.

Our community is an essential part of education.

The family is one of the strongest influences on learning.

High expectations for success must be the norm.

**Board of Trustees**

**STANDARD OPERATING  
PROCEDURES**

**Adopted: September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2005**

## I. DEVELOPING BOARD MEETING AGENDA

### A. Who can place items on agenda?

1. Agendas are created by the administration and presented to the Board.
2. Any member of the Board of Trustees may request that a subject be included on the agenda for one meeting. That request shall be forwarded to the Superintendent or President of the Board.
3. The Superintendent shall include on the agenda all trustee-requested items that have been timely submitted.

### B. When is the agenda finalized?

1. No item can be placed on the agenda less than noon of the fifth calendar day in advance of the meeting, unless delay in acting or discussing an added agenda item could seriously effect the operations of the District.
2. The deadline for submitting items for inclusion on the agenda is noon of the fifth calendar day before regular meetings and noon of the fifth calendar day before special meetings.
3. Any agenda item added to the agenda after the original posting shall be done so in accordance with state laws.

### C. When are Board members notified of a Board Meeting?

1. Board members shall be notified of a meeting:
  - a. At least 72 hours prior to a regular or special meeting.
  - b. At least 2 hours prior to an emergency meeting.
2. Board members will be advised through the superintendent's agenda analysis as to complex agenda items and the administration's recommendations.

### D. Items for Executive\Closed Session

1. All personnel issues must be conducted in an executive\closed session unless specifically required by the Texas Open Meeting Law, or
2. Anything that violates right to privacy, i.e., Texas Open Meeting Act, Texas Open Record Act, cannot be placed on the open agenda.

### E. Use of Agenda (All school board meetings are meetings held in public but **are not public meetings**. This means that the public's business is done in public but the public may participate only as allowed by law and policy. All governmental bodies must have agendas to drive their meetings.)

1. Routine items
2. Annual renewals of ESC Region 15 and TEA items (grant applications,

etc.)

3. Budget amendments
4. Tax refunds from the county appraisal district
5. Financial information
6. Minutes of regular and special Board meetings
7. Updates of Board policy
8. Personnel items
9. Routine bid recommendations (anything already budgeted and less than \$25,000 for a single item purchase)
10. As recommended by the Superintendent
11. Invocation
12. Reports from maintenance and technology directors
13. Approval of agenda is an action item and the board may consolidate items on the agenda or may take agenda items in a different order than posted to expedite the Board meeting and/or for people in attendance at the Board meeting.
14. Approval of future board meetings is also an action item on the agenda for the Board at all regular Board meetings.
15. There is an Open Forum item on each monthly regular school board meeting agenda and it may be included on any special school board meeting agendas. An Open Forum agenda item will not be on emergency board meeting agendas nor on work session board meeting agendas.
16. Each agenda will include a superintendent's report agenda item.

## **II. CONDUCTING BOARD MEETINGS –** Anytime two or more Board members are gathered to discuss school district business, it is considered a meeting.

### **A. Persons addressing the Board.**

1. Any patron/citizen may address the Board at any regular monthly Board meeting at a time identified by the Board President.
2. If the patron's request to address the Board specifically identifies an agenda item, the Board President shall ensure that the patron's comments are heard prior to action on the specific agenda item.
3. A patron must sign up on the form provided for that purpose prior to the beginning of the meeting. The topic described on the form shall be complete and in sufficient detail as to determine appropriateness of topic prior to addressing the Board.
4. Patron comments may be on items listed on the agenda or other areas of school district operations, but shall not include complaints/comments about employees or officials of the district nor about students.
5. Each patron will be limited to five minutes, with the total time allocation for audience participation limited to thirty minutes (unless the time is increased or decreased by majority vote of the Board present).

6. If three (3) or more persons sign up to address the Board on a single item, a spokesperson will be selected to speak for the group. In any event, no more than fifteen minutes shall be allotted for a single topic.

**B. Board response to patrons addressing the Board.**

1. Board members will listen attentively to comments.
2. Board President may ask Superintendent to clarify an item.
3. Board members will not respond or enter into discussion with the audience during the meeting as:
  - a. Items on agenda will be discussed as appropriate and scheduled on the agenda.
  - b. Items not on the agenda do not permit Board members to respond or discuss.

**C. Non-allowable comments (Board/audience).**

1. The Board will **not** entertain comments on individual personnel by name or position or officials in public session (employees or Board members).
2. The Board will **not** entertain comments on individual students in public session. (It is extremely important that each board member know that they must be the triers of the facts once any issue has followed Board policy by seeking administrative remedy and the issue is brought before the full board.)

**D. Hearings**

1. During public hearings the Board is assembled only to gather input.
2. The Board will not answer questions or enter into dialogue except with their attorney in the case of an employee hearing or a student discipline hearing.
3. At the conclusion of the hearing or at a subsequent meeting the Board will determine the results of the hearing by being the triers of the facts.
4. Rules for the hearing will be strictly adhered to:
  - a. The Board will limit response to 5 minutes per testifier (or as assigned/modified by Board President, as allowed by Board Policy).
  - b. Testimony is to be presented orally or in writing, as detailed in Board Policy.
  - c. The Board will not allow duplicate testimony.
  - d. The Board will not allow derogatory comments.
  - e. Board members will ask questions only as required for clarification since they are acting as a tribunal.
  - f. The Board President will act as presiding officer, and conduct the hearing. The Board President may set appropriate time limitations, may exclude witnesses from the hearing, and make other procedural rulings if appropriate.
5. Hearings held in executive session follow essentially the same

procedures, but public audience is prohibited.

- E.** The Board shall be guided by parliamentary procedure as detailed in Robert's Rules of Order or as spelled out in Board Policy.
  - 1. All discussion shall relate to the business currently under deliberation.
  - 2. The Board President shall halt inappropriate discussion
  - 3. The Board President shall:
    - a. Recognize members prior to them giving their comments.
    - b. Be responsible for acting as presiding officer during hearings.
  
- F.** Town Meetings/Open Forums
  - 1. Procedures for town meetings/open forum shall be determined on a case-by-case basis.
  - 2. The Board President, Superintendent or designee shall lead discussions.
  
- G.** Discussion of motions
  - 1. The Board President has the responsibility to keep the discussion to the motion at hand and shall halt discussion that does not apply to the business before the Board.
  - 2. The Board President may make motions, second motions, and enter into debate.

### **III. VOTING**

- A.** The Board President will vote on all action items.
  
- B.** Except in a conflict of interest as defined by law, Board members shall vote. (All Board members shall vote their conscience and once the vote is taken, all board members shall support the vote no matter where their vote fell on the issue.)

### **IV. EMPLOYEE OR CITIZEN COMPLAINT TO INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER**

- A.** When a person complains to a Board member regarding school personnel, a student, or an administrative issue:
  - 1. Redirect the employee, citizen, or student through the system to seek administrative remedy by beginning with the teacher, coach, or sponsor.
  
  - 2. Remind the employee, citizen, or student of due process and that the Board member must remain impartial in case the situation goes before the board.
  
- B.** Refer employee, citizen, or student to appropriate person in the chain of command.  
ANY PERSON WHO HAS A COMPLAINT MUST GO THROUGH CHAIN OF

COMMAND.

- C. A Board member should advise the Superintendent of a substantive or significant complaint within 72 hours.
- D. Board members and administrators may be liable both individually and collectively.

**V. BOARD MEMBER VISIT TO SCHOOL CAMPUS**

- A. Board members are encouraged to attend any school event as their time permits and to support activities.
- B. Board members are not to go into teacher's classrooms or campuses for the purpose of investigation or evaluation.
- C. Board members shall make reasonable efforts to contact the appropriate administrator prior to their visits, when not attending a scheduled activity.
- D. Board members are given district passes which encourages them to attend all athletic events both at home and away as their time permits to support those activities.

**VI. COMMUNICATIONS**

- A. The President of the Board will meet with the Superintendent on a routine basis to discuss issues of the District as their time permits.
- B. Request for information of the Superintendent from a Board member will be communicated to all Board members.
- C. The Board will communicate through public hearings, Board meetings, and publications.
- D. Unless otherwise approved by the Board, individual Board members cannot speak in an official capacity or otherwise represent the views of the Board. Please remember everything you say and do is noticed.

**VII. EVALUATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

- A. The summative evaluation will generally be conducted in January.
- B. The Board President obtains input from all other members on the approved indicators which are based on State Law, Local Board Policy, and the Superintendent's job description.

- C. The evaluation will be conducted by consensus in executive session.
- D. The Superintendent's contract will generally be considered in January.

## **VIII. EVALUATION OF THE BOARD**

- A. Routine assessment of the status of Board/Superintendent team will generally be conducted in January.
- B. Evaluation is conducted in executive session on a schedule determined by the Board.
  - 1. Are we following our code of conduct?
  - 2. Are we following our operating procedures?
  - 3. Is the team of eight functioning?
  - 4. Were goals effective?

## **IX. ANONYMOUS PHONE CALLS/LETTERS**

- A. The Veribest Independent School District Board of Trustees encourages input; however, anonymous phone calls or letters will not receive the Board's attention, discussion, or response and will not be referred to the administration.

## **X. PETITIONS**

- A. The Veribest Independent School District Board of Trustees encourages input from all community members. Petitions will be received and reviewed by the board of trustees to determine if the petition complies with state statues. If petitions are being submitted as an avenue for a grievance, the petitioner will be encouraged to seek administrative remedy and follow the district's grievance policy. (See Section IV)

## **XI. REVIEWING BOARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

- A. Standard Board Operating Procedures will be reviewed and updated as needed.

## **XII. BOARD SPOUSES**

- A. Due to this unique relationship, it is hoped that Board members' spouses are generally covered by the same operating procedures as the Board members.