Role and Responsibility of Individual Board Members

Statement of Integrity

The long-term health of a representative democracy requires that citizenship and leadership act upon what is right, rather than what is popular. The goal of Board of Education members is to improve the education of all Torrington’s children and to advocate for them and their best interest. Board members must be working effectively together and with others in the community to successfully reach this goal. A Board of Education that operates with integrity will be a more effective Board. Integrity is, first, discerning what is right and what is wrong; second, acting upon what you have discerned even at personal cost; and third, saying openly that you are acting on your understanding of right from wrong. It requires that students, colleagues, constituents, and others in the community be considered in every decision. A Board of Education with a sense of integrity will consider what is right and what is wrong. This takes discipline and an awareness of one’s environment.

To this end as a Board of Education with integrity, each Board members will:

1. Understand that their first and greatest concern is the educational welfare of all the students and that all decisions must be based on this understanding;

2. Render all decisions based solely on the Board’s judgment of the available facts and not surrender that judgement to individuals, special interests, or their own personal agendas;

3. Attend all Board meetings, and committee meetings of which they are members, insofar as possible, and be prepared to discuss and/or act upon all agenda items;

4. Be responsible for becoming informed on any and all issues coming before the Board;

5. Seek to facilitate ongoing communication between the Board and students, staff, parents and all elements of the community;

6. Conduct their meetings and foster an environment where all elements of the community can express their ideas;

7. Declare a conflict of interest where it arises and excuse themselves from related discussion and action on that issue;

8. Refrain from using their position on the Board for personal or partisan gain;

9. Insist on regular and impartial evaluation of all staff, conduct a yearly self-evaluation, and set annual goals;

10. Fairly assess all non-instructional aspects of the school operation;

11. Recognizing that within a school system that are diverse issues, strengths, and weaknesses, the overriding philosophy is to coalesce the positive energies of all involved personnel into a strong unit working together. There always is to be the opportunity for the alternative or divergent opinion to be considered and expressed in any decision-making process. When a final decision is made, however, there is the expectation that everyone will work in concert with the intent of that decision. To do otherwise would be counter-productive to the system’s ability to progress.

12. Support all decisions by the Board to the community once a decision has been reached.
The Torrington Board of Education is committed to the highest legal and ethical standards essential in governing the school system. It endeavors to encourage growth and support both established and innovative educational objectives.
Board Officers

Chairperson
The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Torrington Board of Education and shall perform other duties as directed by law, State Department of Education regulations, and by this Board. In carrying out these responsibilities, the Chairperson shall:

1. Sign the instruments, acts and orders necessary to carry out state requirements and the will of the Board;
2. Meet with the other Board officers (Vice-chairperson and Secretary) and consult with the Superintendent in the planning of the Board's agendas, and communicate proceedings of these meetings to other Board members in a timely fashion;
3. Appoint a Board member to preside at a Board meeting in the event that Chairperson or Officers of the Board are not available;
4. Confer with the Superintendent on crucial matters which may arise between Board meetings and communicate such matters to the other Board members in a timely fashion;
5. Appoint Board committees and liaisons as assigned to schools who will report to the full Board at each monthly meeting, subject to Board approval;
6. Call special meetings of the Board as necessary, or if requested by three (3) or more members;
7. Be public spokesperson for the Board at all times except as this responsibility is specifically delegated to others;
8. Be responsible for the orderly conduct of all Board meetings;
9. Accept such other duties as prescribed or authorized by the Board;
10. Appoint a clerk of the Board;

As presiding officer at all meetings of the Board, the Chairperson shall:

1. Call meetings to order at the appointed time;
2. Announce the business to come before the Board in its proper order, asking for changes or additions to the agenda;
3. Enforce the Board's policies relating to the order of business and the conduct of the meetings;
4. Give recognition for persons to speak, and protect the speaker who has the floor from disturbance or interference;
5. Explain the effect of a motion if it is not clear to every member;
6. Restrict discussion to the question when a motion is before the Board;
7. Answer all parliamentary inquiries, referring questions of legality to the Board attorney if necessary;
8. Put motions to a vote, stating definitively and clearly the vote and result thereof.
Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson will:

1. Act in place of the Chairperson when necessary and preside at meetings when the Chairperson is temporarily absent. The Vice-chairperson cannot fill vacancies required to be filled by the Chairperson and does not serve as an ex-officio member of committees;
2. Work with the Chairperson and Superintendent to become generally informed of Board business and work with the other Board officers and the Superintendent to plan the Board's agenda;
3. In the absence of the Chairperson, act as a resource to the Superintendent on decisions which may require further input between Board meetings;
4. In case of illness, resignation or death of the Chairperson, will become Chairperson. The Board will meet to elect a new chairperson within 90 days of the date the chairmanship is vacated.

The Vice-chairperson's signature shall be an alternative signature on all legal documents requiring the signature of the Secretary.

Secretary

A member of the Torrington Board of Education will be elected Secretary by the members of the Board and shall perform the duties assigned by law and the Board.

The Secretary will:

1. Act in the place of the Chairperson when necessary and preside at meetings when the Chairperson and Vice-Chair are temporarily absent. The Secretary cannot fill vacancies required to be filled by the Chairperson and does not serve as an ex-officio member of committees;
2. As stated in the Connecticut Education Laws, Section 10-224, keep a record of all the Board's proceedings in a book which such Secretary shall provide for that purpose at the expense of the town at its annual meetings a report of the doings of the Board;
3. Act as a resource (within the responsibilities of the office) to the Superintendent on decisions which may require further input between Board meetings;
4. Work with the other Board officers and the Superintendent to plan the Board's agenda;
5. Endorse/sign all legal documents requiring the signature of the Secretary.
Standing Committees

The Torrington Board of Education shall have standing committees to address the operations of the Board which shall include committees on:

1. Budget
2. Facilities and Technology
3. Policy
4. School Improvement & Community Relations
5. Grievance
6. Expulsion

Other Committees

1. Negotiations (one each for Certified, Non-certified, and Administrators bargaining units)

Standing committees shall meet as required to consider matters coming within their jurisdiction or as referred to them by the Board or the Superintendent and shall submit a report at the next regular meeting of the Board. (The Negotiating committees' reports may by necessity be very brief and general.)

A majority of committee members shall constitute a quorum for committee meetings.

No action of any standing committee shall be binding on the Board unless such committee has been previously so empowered by the Board.

Ad-hoc or special committees may be appointed by the Board and shall have duties as outlined at the time of their appointment. These committees will be dissolved upon submission of their report unless otherwise specified by the Board.

The Board Chairperson may name board members as liaisons to other committees or organizations, or as members to other district committees, as warranted.
By-Laws of the Board of Education

Standing Committee Membership

1. The Chairperson of the Board shall appoint no more than four members to a standing committee so no committee meeting, including the Board chair as ex-officio member, can constitute a quorum of the Board; The Board chair as ex-officio member has no vote.

2. Ad hoc and liaison assignments are not considered to be standing committees;

3. Any member of the Board who is interested in serving on a standing committee shall notify the Chairperson of the Board promptly concerning their interest;

4. Each Board member must serve on at least two (2) standing committees;

5. No Board member may serve on more than three (3) standing committees, in addition to Negotiations;

6. No Board member may chair more than one (1) standing committee, with the exception that a member may chair one standing committee and one negotiating committee or expulsion committee concurrently;

7. The membership of a standing committee shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the Board, subject to Board approval;

8. The Chairperson of the Board of Education shall appoint a committee Chairperson of each standing committee from among its members;

9. The Chairperson of the Board will serve as an ex-officio on all standing committees;

10. Any member of the Board may attend meetings of a standing committee of which he or she is not a member; however, that member will be unable to vote except when a committee consists of four (4) members being three (3) regular members and one (1) alternate; with the alternate only voting when one regular member is absent.

11. All members present at Grievance and Expulsion Committee meetings are able to vote.

12. Standing Committee Chairpersons and members on standing committees shall serve for the same term as a Board Chairperson as prescribed by Connecticut General Statutes.

Record Keeping

All committees shall keep minutes of business conducted at meetings. The minutes will be kept on file in the Superintendent's office and available at all times to the Board of Education members.
TORRINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BY-LAWS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Standing Committees - Duties and Responsibilities

Budget

1. Will consist of a committee chair and three (3) other board members and one (1) alternate. The alternate will straw poll on items to be moved to the full board only in the absence of one (1) of the committee members or to break a tie.

2. Will consult with the Superintendent and with other committees as required in preparing a budget for the ensuing fiscal year and shall recommend a tentative budget to the entire Board for approval, with or without modifications, consistent with city charter;

Policy

1. Will consist of a committee chair and two (2) other board members and one (1) alternate with the alternate to vote on items to be moved to the full board only in the absence of one (1) of the committee members.

2. Formulate policies to be presented to the entire Board for action;

3. Suggest amendments/revisions of existing policies;

4. Be knowledgeable of policies adopted and why;

5. Conduct annual reviews of policies;

6. Monitor implementation of policies in schools.

School Improvement & Community Relations

1. Will consist of a committee chair and two (2) other board members and one (1) alternate with the alternate to vote on items to be moved to the full board only in the absence of one (1) of the committee members.

2. Will consult with the Superintendent on significant program improvements, modifications, and Board Goals;

3. Will promote good community relations which support the educational program, program improvements, and Board Goals;

4. Will consult with the Superintendent to monitor progress on NEASC recommendations at least annually;

5. Will identify and recognize an exemplary graduate of the TPS educational program through the annual Alumnus Award to be presented at THS Awards Night.

Facilities & Technology Committee

1. Will consist of a committee chair and two (2) other board members and one (1) alternate with the alternate to vote on items to be moved to the full board only in the absence of one (1) of the committee members.

By-Laws of the Board of Education
2. Will consult with the Superintendent and with other committees as required in doing an analysis of our facilities.

3. Will consult with the Superintendent and with other committees as required in doing an analysis of our technology. This will cover infrastructure and devices.
Grievance Hearing

1. Be knowledgeable of all union contracts;
2. Will provide an impartial hearing to aggrieved personnel as described in the union contracts;
3. Will render binding decisions on grievances heard.
4. Any three Board members constitutes a quorum at an expulsion/grievance hearing. All Board members may participate in any expulsion hearing and have full voting privileges.

Expulsion Hearing

1. Will provide an impartial hearing for all parties;
2. Any three Board members constitutes a quorum at an expulsion/grievance hearing. All Board members may participate in any expulsion hearing and have full voting privileges.

Other Committees - Duties and Responsibilities

Negotiations

1. There will be three (3) negotiating communities, one each to represent the Board with regards to negotiations with the non-certified, administrative, and certified personnel bargaining units;
2. Each negotiating committee will consist of a committee chair and two (2) other Board members;
3. Each negotiating committee will negotiate with a positive, honest and sincere attitude towards reaching a fair and equitable agreement;
4. Confidentiality will be maintained while negotiations are ongoing unless both negotiating parties have agreed to waive confidentiality ground rules;
5. Follow clear directions and parameters for negotiations from the full Board;
6. Keep the Board apprised of the negotiation process;
7. Select a primary spokesperson and Secretary who keeps all official meeting minutes;
8. Present a final package of negotiated items for the Board's approval
Board Meetings

The Torrington Board of Education will hold general meetings once a month, generally on the third Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m.; frequency dates and times of meetings, as well as agendas, maybe changed by majority vote;

1. Recommended agenda for each meeting is as follows:
   Visitor Recognition
   Adoption of Agenda
   Approval of Minutes
   Reports: Students, Superintendent Consent
   Discussion/Action Committee Reports
   Comments for the Good of the Order

2. For the purposes of this policy “Electronic equipment” means any technology that facilitates real-time public access to meetings, including, but not limited to, telephonic, video, or other conferencing platforms.
   For the purposes of this policy “Electronic transmission” means any form or process of communication not directly involving the physical transfer of paper or another tangible medium, which (A) is capable of being retained, retrieved and reproduced by the recipient, and (B) is retrievable in paper form by the recipient.
   a. If, in accordance with applicable law, the Board conducts a regular meeting by means of electronic equipment, the Board shall provide, at least forty-eight (48) hours before the meeting, direct notification in writing or by electronic transmission to each member of the Board and post a notice that the Board intends to conduct the meeting solely or in part by means of electronic equipment in the Administrative Offices of the Board, in the office of the Town Clerk, and on the Board’s Internet web site. Such notice shall include instructions for the public to attend and provide comment or otherwise participate in the meeting, by means of electronic equipment or in person, as applicable and permitted by law.
   b. If, in accordance with applicable law, the Board holds a public meeting that is accessible to the public by means of electronic equipment or by means of electronic equipment in conjunction with an in-person meeting, the agenda shall include instructions for the public to attend and provide comment or otherwise participate in the meeting by means of electronic equipment or in person, as applicable and permitted by law. Any such agenda shall be posted in accordance with the provisions of Connecticut General Statutes Section 1-225.
   c. If, in accordance with applicable law, the Board provides Board members the opportunity to participate in meetings by means of electronic equipment, the Board is not required to adjourn or postpone a meeting if a Board member loses the ability to participate because of an interruption, failure, or degradation of that member’s connection by electronic equipment, unless the member’s participation is necessary to form a quorum. If a quorum of the Board members attend a meeting, other than an executive session, by means of electronic equipment from the same physical location, members of the public must be permitted to attend such meeting in such physical location.
   d. If, in accordance with applicable law, the Board holds a meeting solely by means of electronic equipment, and if a quorum of Board members attend a meeting by means of electronic equipment from the same physical location, the Board shall permit members of the public to attend such meeting in such physical location.
   e. Any vote taken at a meeting during which a Board member participates by means of electronic equipment shall be taken by roll call, unless the vote is unanimous.
   f. Procedures for Board Member Participation By Means of Electronic Equipment
      i. The Board shall provide Board members the opportunity to participate in meetings by means of electronic equipment, except that the Board is not required to adjourn
or postpone a meeting if a Board member loses the ability to participate because of an interruption, failure, or degradation of that member’s connection by electronic equipment, unless the member’s participation is necessary to form a quorum.

Conditions for participation are as follows:

1. If a quorum of the Board members attend a meeting, other than an executive session, by means of electronic equipment from the same physical location, members of the public must be permitted to attend such meeting in such physical location.

2. Any physical or demonstrable material that is used in the course of the proceedings must be present in the physical location, if any, where the public is located.

3. All those in attendance at the meeting, at whatever location, must be able to hear and identify all participants in the proceeding, including their individual remarks and votes.

4. Any vote taken at a meeting during which a Board member participates by means of electronic equipment shall be taken by roll call, unless the vote is unanimous.

5. The minutes of the meeting shall record a list of Board members who attended the meeting in person and a list of Board members who attended the meeting by means of electronic equipment.

Any Board member who participates orally in a meeting conducted by means of electronic equipment shall make a good faith effort to state such member’s name and title, if applicable, at the outset of each occasion that such member participates orally during an uninterrupted dialogue or series of questions and answers.

g. When a Board member is participating in a meeting by means of electronic equipment, the Chairperson shall take the necessary steps to ensure that the conditions enumerated above are met. In addition, the Chairperson shall take the necessary steps to ensure that a Board member participating by means of electronic equipment has adequate opportunity for participation in Board discussion, including the opportunity to take the floor and make motions.

h. Procedures for Public Participation By Means of Electronic Equipment

The Board may hold a public meeting that is accessible to the public by means of electronic equipment or by means of electronic equipment in conjunction with an in-person meeting. If the Board allows for the public to participate by means of electronic equipment, it shall do so in accordance with the following procedures:

i. Not less than forty-eight (48) hours before the Board conducts a regular meeting by means of electronic equipment, the Board shall provide direct notification in writing or by electronic transmission to each member of the Board, and post a notice that the Board intends to conduct the meeting solely or in part by means of electronic equipment, (a) in the Board’s Administrative Offices; (b) in the office of the Town Clerk; and (c) on the Board’s Internet web site, if any.

ii. Not less than twenty-four (24) hours prior to any such meeting, the Board shall post the agenda for any such meeting in the same manner as the notice of the meeting as set forth in Section 5.A.

iii. Such notice and agenda shall include instructions for the public to attend and provide comment or otherwise participate in the meeting, by means of electronic equipment or in person, as applicable and permitted by law. Any such notice and agenda shall be posted in accordance with the provisions of Connecticut General Statutes § 1-225.

iv. If the Board holds a meeting, other than an executive session or special meeting, solely by means of electronic equipment:

1. The Board shall provide any member of the public

   a. upon a written request submitted not less than twenty-four (24) hours prior to such meeting, with a physical location and any electronic equipment necessary to attend such meeting in real-time, and

   b. the same opportunities to provide comment or testimony and otherwise
participate in such meeting that such member of the public would be accorded if such meeting were held in person, except that the Board is not required (i) to adjourn or postpone a meeting if a member of the public loses the ability to participate because of an interruption, failure or degradation of such person’s connection to the meeting by electronic equipment, or (ii) to offer members of the public who attend a meeting by means of electronic equipment the opportunity for public comment, testimony, or other participation if the provision of such opportunity is not required by law for members of the public who attend such meeting in person.

2. The Board shall not be required to adjourn or postpone the meeting if a member of the public loses the ability to participate because of an interruption, failure, or degradation of such person’s connection to the meeting by means of electronic equipment.

3. The Board shall ensure that such meeting is recorded or transcribed, excluding any portion of the meeting that is conducted in executive session. Such transcription or recording shall be posted on the Board’s Internet web site and made available to the public to view, listen to, and copy in the Board’s Administrative Offices not later than seven (7) days after the meeting and for not less than forty-five (45) days thereafter.

4. If a quorum of Board members attend a meeting by means of electronic equipment from the same physical location, the Board shall permit members of the public to attend such meeting in such physical location.

vi. Any member of the public who participates orally in a meeting conducted by means of electronic equipment shall make a good faith effort to state such member’s name and title, if applicable, at the outset of each occasion that such member participates orally during an uninterrupted dialogue or series of questions and answers.

vii. Whenever a meeting being conducted by means of electronic equipment is interrupted by the failure, disconnection or, in the Chairperson's determination, unacceptable degradation of the electronic means of conducting a meeting, or if a Board member necessary to form a quorum loses the ability to participate because of the interruption, failure or degradation of such member’s connection by electronic equipment, the Board may, not less than thirty (30) minutes and not more than two (2) hours from the time of the interruption or the Chairperson’s determination, resume the meeting (1) in person, if a quorum is present in person, or (2) if a quorum is restored by means of electronic equipment, solely or in part by such electronic equipment.

1. In each case of resumption of such meeting, electronic access shall be restored to the public if such capability has been restored.

2. The Board shall, if practicable, post a notification on its Internet web site and inform attendees by electronic transmission of the expected time of resumption or of the adjournment or postponement of the meeting, as applicable, and may announce at the beginning of any meeting what preplanned procedures are in place for resumption of a meeting in the event of an interruption.

viii. In the event that a Board meeting is interrupted by any person or group of persons so as to render the orderly conduct of such meeting unfeasible, and if such person or group of
persons is attending such meeting by means of electronic equipment, the Chairperson may terminate such person’s or group of persons’ attendance by electronic equipment until such time as such person or group of persons conforms to order or, if need be, until such meeting is closed.

i. If, in accordance with applicable law, the Board conducts a meeting in which one or more Board members attend by means of electronic equipment, the minutes of the meeting shall record a list of Board members that attended the meeting in person and a list of members that attended the meeting by means of electronic equipment.

3. Executive Session, if needed
The public may be excluded from meetings of the Board of Education which are declared to be executive sessions. Executive session may be held upon an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting taken at a public meeting for purposes as defined by Connecticut General Statutes:
   1-200 Definitions;
   1-200 Executive Sessions;
   1-206 Denial of access to public records or meetings;
   1-210 Access to Public Records;
   1-225 Meetings of government agencies to be public;
   1-226 Recording, broadcasting or photographing meetings;
   10-238 Petition for hearings by Board of Education;

Board of Education members are urged to maintain the confidentiality of executive session after the session concludes due to the sensitive nature of the proceedings.

4. The Board will conduct its meetings following Robert's Rules of Order.

5. Meetings should conclude by 9:00 p.m. A majority vote of the Board is required to extend the meeting beyond 10:00 p.m.
1. The Board of Education will hold a special meeting annually to evaluate the Board's performance in relation to established goals, and to establish and clarify policies based upon the result of such evaluation; said meeting should precede the annual evaluation of the Superintendent and the onset of the Board's budget process. The School Improvement Committee will be responsible for duties associated with the evaluation and meeting, such as development of an evaluation instrument, format, venue, timing, outside facilitation, etc.

2. The Board of Education will conduct an annual formal evaluation of the superintendent of schools according to the following timeline:
   
a. Beginning of New Evaluation Year Meeting - July/September  
   i. Topic 1: Leadership Team Goal/Priority Setting  
   ii. Topic 2: Superintendent's Professional Goals and Objectives  

b. Mid-Year Evaluation Meeting – November/December (Meeting to be conducted in Executive Session)  
   i. Topic 1: Informed Leadership Team discussion regarding progress on goals and objectives.  
   ii. Topic 2: Targeted informal feedback provided to Superintendent regarding his/her performance.  

c. End of Year Evaluation Meeting - April/May (Meeting to be conducted in executive session)  
   i. Topic 1: Self-assessment of individual members of the Leadership Team including discussion about goal attainment and handling of unanticipated challenges.  
   ii. Superintendent presents "year in review" self-assessment to Board of Education regarding his/her performance.  

d. Board of Education Evaluation of the Superintendent - May/June (Meeting to be conducted in executive session)  
   i. Board of Education evaluates the Superintendent's job performance. A draft evaluation is developed during this meeting if a written evaluation of the Superintendent is provided.  

e. Meeting with the Superintendent Regarding Draft Evaluation - June (Meeting to be conducted in executive session)  
   i. Meeting between the Board of Education - as per Board of Education policy and the Superintendent to share and discuss the draft evaluation.  

f. Formal Evaluation of the Superintendent-June  
   i. Formal evaluation is completed and presented to the Superintendent of Schools by a representative(s) of the Board of Education as per policy. Note: Superintendent's evaluation is a public document subject to FOIA.
Amending of the By-Laws

Amendments to the by-laws of the Torrington Board of Education (additions, changes or deletions) require six (6) votes for acceptance;

1. Amendments are to be acted on in an open meeting, having been received at a previous meeting:
   - Adopted November 20, 2000
   - Revised April 18, 2002
   - Revised June 19, 2002
   - Revised August 20, 2003
   - Revised September 19, 2007
   - Revised January 23, 2008
   - Revised January 21, 2009
   - Revised August 19, 2009
   - Revised December 12, 2012
   - Revised November 6, 2013
   - Revised January 8, 2014
   - Revised August 19, 2015
   - Revised February 26, 2020
   - Revised November 18, 2020
   - Revised June 29, 2022