

TALBOT COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Talbot County Board of Education Handbook

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BOARD OF EDUCATION OF TALBOT COUNTY

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Candace N. Henry

April L. Motovidlak

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STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS:

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Zoe Pochron - EHS

Dr. Kelly L. Griffith - Secretary/Treasurer
Superintendent of Schools
(Updated December, 2020)

DISCLAIMER

This Handbook is a collection of information pertaining to the function of the Talbot County Board of Education and should not be construed as a policy of the Board of Education.

The Policy Review Committee wishes to acknowledge those local Boards of Education whose handbooks helped guide those who reviewed and revised this document.

Anne Arundel County (Maryland) Board of Education – www.aacps.org/aacps

Frederick County (Maryland) Board of Education – www.fcps.org

Wicomico County (Maryland) Board of Education -www.wcboe.org

Baltimore County (Maryland) Board of Education -www.bcps.org

CHAPTER I **MISSION, ETHICS, RESPONSIBILITIES**

Section I

Mission, School Improvement Beliefs, and Goals

The MISSION of Talbot County Public Schools is to leverage innovation, compassion and inspiration to empower students to realize their full intellectual potential. College and career preparedness is at the heart of everything we do.

The VISION of the Board of Education is for all students to graduate from high school as lifetime learners, caring human beings, and productive/responsible citizens in a changing society.

The Board of Education believes:

- exemplary student achievement is the first priority of Talbot County Public Schools (TCPS); we affirm that high expectations result in higher quality individual student performance.
- every child deserves an equal opportunity and a safe, respectful, and caring learning environment.
- a passionate commitment to lifelong learning assists staff and students to thrive in a changing society.
- strong partnerships between the home, school, and community with open and honest communication are essential to high quality learning.
- diverse, dedicated, highly qualified teachers make an important difference in the lives of students.
- although children may learn at different rates and in different ways, all children can achieve extraordinary results.
- decisions about educational programs for students must be guided by valid, reliable data, professional judgment, and informed stakeholder involvement.

The Master Plan for student achievement articulates the comprehensive approach TCPS uses to further its mission that “each student will learn, grow, and succeed”. The plan is predicated on the goals and strategies contained in the Bridge to Excellence Master Plan adopted by the Board of Education (BOE) on December, 2003. This is further detailed in the 2020 Vision Strategic Plan 2015-2020 adopted by the Board of Education on 07/22/2015

Bridge to Excellence Goals/2020 Vision Goals

Goal One: Academic Excellence: Provide every student with equitable access to high quality and culturally relevant instruction, curriculum, support and other educational resources to insure college and career readiness for all students.

Refer to 2020 Vision Strategic Plan 2015-2020 for specific Goals and Outcomes

Goal Two: Partnerships: Effectively communicate with diverse constituencies to identify and facilitate ways for the community to partner with the school system.

Refer to 2020 Vision Strategic Plan 2015-2020 for specific Goals and Outcomes

Goal Three: Organizational Resources: Maximize organizational efficiency and effectiveness in order to provide a 21st century education in equitable, safe, well-maintained environments.

Refer to 2020 Vision Strategic Plan 2015-2020 for specific Goals and Outcomes

Section II Ethics of Members

An effective member of the Board of Education will:

1. Render all decisions based on the available facts and their independent judgment, and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups.
2. Refuse to use membership on the Board of Education for political, personal, or business advancement.
3. Hold confidential information as a trust, including information disclosed during Closed Sessions of the Board of Education.
4. Maintain harmonious relations with other members of the Board of Education.
5. Support publicly all adopted and approved official actions of the Board of Education.
6. Refuse to exercise authority unilaterally on school matters when the Board of Education is not in session and is not sitting as a Board.
7. Present personal criticism of school employees only to the Superintendent of Schools.
8. Refer, as appropriate, all complaints and requests to the Superintendent of Schools.
9. Comply with all provisions of the School Board Ethics Policy (Board Policy 2.3).

Each member of the Board of Education, while acting for the good of better education, must assume that the motives of the other members of the Board of Education are likewise based on an honest desire to provide the best possible public education.

A member of the Board of Education of Talbot County shall not make application for appointment to TCPS for a position of employment for which compensation is paid by TCPS until his/her resignation has been submitted and accepted or until after his/her term of office expires.

Section III

Duties (Annotated Code of Maryland Section 4-108)

Each county Board shall:

- (1) To the best of its ability carry out the applicable provisions of this article and the bylaws, rules, regulations, and policies of the State Board;
- (2) Maintain throughout its county a reasonably uniform system of public schools that is designed to provide quality education and equal educational opportunity for all children;
- (3) Subject to this article and to the applicable bylaws, rules, and regulations of the State Board, determine, with the advice of the county superintendent, the educational policies of the county school system; and
- (4) Adopt, codify, and make available to the public bylaws, rules, and regulations not inconsistent with State law, for the conduct and management of the county public schools. (Section 4-108 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland)

A. Board of Education's Responsibilities

The Board is responsible for determining the mission and vision for the school system, and adopting goals to help achieve that vision. (See

http://www.tcps.k12.md.us/application/files/7714/8720/0238/Strategic_Plan_Brochure_FINAL-web.pdf)

The Board will adopt policies consistent with these goals and will regularly review such policies and the progress towards attainment of these goals. The board will also advocate for adequate funding for the school system and will direct the expenditure of resources to best fulfill the goals.

B. Responsibility of Board Members

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. They are divided among executive, legislative, and quasi-judicial responsibilities, as follows:

1. Executive

- a. Selecting and appointing the Superintendent of Schools
- b. Appointing personnel, including school-based administrators
- c. Appointing Board counsel
- d. Making a continuous appraisal of the educational and administrative management of the school system, through the evaluation of the Superintendent
- e. Periodically adopting a multi-year strategic plan
- f. Communicating and meeting with community members, staff, and students as to Board views on educational issues
- g. Ratifying collective bargaining agreements

2. Legislative

- a. Adopting and interpreting policies
- b. Adopting operating and capital budgets
- c. Establishing curriculum guides and courses of study
- d. Establishing school boundaries
- e. Advancing a legislative agenda
- f. Making decisions on facility, procurement, and financial matters
- g. Authorizing legal settlements

3. Quasi-Judicial

- a. Deciding appeals of the Superintendent's administrative decisions
- b. Deciding appeals of long-term student suspensions and expulsions
- c. Considering recommendations of the Superintendent to suspend or dismiss a certificated employee

The National School Boards Association lists as characteristics of effective school Boards:

1. They commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision.
2. They make sure these goals remain their district's top priorities and that nothing detracts from them.
3. They have strong-shared beliefs and values that meld the limitless possibilities for student learning with an unshakeable confidence in the district's ability to teach all children at high levels.
4. They are accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies that improve student achievement. High-performing Boards establish a clear and precise vision supported by policies that target student achievement.
5. They have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish strong communications structures. Those efforts inform and engage both internal and external
6. They are data savvy. They embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.
7. They align and sustain resources, including staff professional development, to meet district goals.
8. They and their superintendents lead as a united team, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.
9. They take part in team development and training, joining with the superintendent to build shared knowledge, values, and commitment for improvement efforts.

These bedrock principles must continue to serve as the foundation of school Board leadership. Effective Boards embody key characteristic, and use them in a visionary manner.

Board Member General Information

Association Affiliations

The Board of Education is a member of two professional associations:

- Eastern Shore of Maryland Education Coalition (ESMEC) – Comprised of the nine Boards of Education on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, ESMEC provides services and information pertinent to the school systems on the Eastern Shore. ESMEC’s Board is comprised of the nine shore superintendents, representing their respective Boards. ESMEC conducts one retreat per year for Board members and superintendents.
- Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) – Comprised of the 24 Boards of Education in Maryland, and the Maryland State Board of Education, MABE provides support to local Boards through professional development, advocacy, and member services. Their Board is comprised of local Board members from around the state. MABE conducts 1-2 conferences per year for Board members and superintendents.

MABE has several committees that are comprised of members from local Boards. Talbot Board members traditionally participate in MABE committees for the purpose of contributing in the decision-making process and representing the interests of Talbot County.

The Board President receives MABE’s annual request for committee members, and brings it to the attention of the full Board.

Electronic Devices

Each Board member is issued a PIN protected electronic device (iPad) to use for Board business. Members may take their issued devices home and bring them to Board meetings to use with Granicus, a program that facilitates paperless Board meetings. Electronic devices are owned by TCPS and must be returned at the end of the Board member’s term. TCPS’s Technology Department provides technical support to Board members. Electronic devices must be used in accordance with Board policy regarding acceptable use of computer systems.

Agenda Management Software

The Board uses cloud based agenda management software (Granicus). The upcoming meeting agenda and documents for Board meetings are available to review the Friday before each meeting. With the exception of documents reviewed during the Closed Session, such as documents pertaining to personnel and legal matters, these documents are also available to the public via the TCPS website. This software also serves as an online archive for previous meetings.

Board Packet

When necessary, Board packets are delivered to individual Board member's homes. Packets contain documents not available on Granicus, mail received at the central office addressed to Board members, invitations, school newsletters, calendar items, and miscellaneous correspondence from the superintendent

Email

Board members are assigned individual school system email addresses. Board members are strongly encouraged to use their school system email rather than a personal email address when communicating as a Board member. Board members are also strongly encouraged to check their TCPS email daily. Emails related to the school system are subject to disclosure under the Public Information Act and subject to production if subpoenaed.

Identification Badges

As a part of school system security, the Department of Human Resources issues a picture identification badge to all Board members and school system employees. The expectation is that Board members will wear their badges when visiting schools during the school day. In addition, Board members and all other visitors are expected to sign the visitor log when entering a school.

Public Hearings

Public hearings are scheduled on issues the Board determines are of widespread interest and concern to the public, such as the annual budget. It is the intent of the Board in scheduling a public hearing to provide the opportunity for individuals and groups to express views and hear the views of others on the specific topic. It is also an opportunity to provide the public with information on a specific topic.

Board Retreat

Each summer, the Board conducts a 1-2 day retreat that is a combination of Open and Closed meeting, depending on the subject matter. An agenda is prepared in advance, and staff and consultants participate in the sessions as appropriate. Topics generally include an analysis of test scores, a Special Education update, organizational changes, goals for the school year, and other issues that pertain to the overall system. Topics may also include matters pertaining to Board operations such as the handbook, self-evaluation, and team building.

Appeal Hearings

The Board convenes as needed to hear appeals regarding employee or student complaints and employee or student discipline, or to hear appeals regarding decisions made by the Superintendent.

Other Meetings

The Board of Education periodically meets with the Talbot County Council to discuss areas of mutual interest, such as the school system budget.

Committees

While the Board does not have committees made up of Board members, there are several Board committees that advise and inform Board decisions.

Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) – Comprised of Talbot County citizens, the CAC is chaired by the assistant superintendent, and meets monthly throughout the school year to discuss matters such as the school calendar and various policies. Every other year, Board members are required to nominate a member of the CAC for a two-year term. On the alternating year, school principals nominate a member. Each year, the Board approves those nominated for the CAC.

Ad Hoc Committees – The Board and Superintendent occasionally find it necessary and helpful to assemble a staff and/or community committee to consider a specific topic and make recommendations to the Board.

Communication

Press/Community –The President of the Board speaks for the Board, and whenever possible, questions from the press should be referred to and handled by the President. Any statement to the press should be judicious and thoughtful and fully respect the final decision of the Board. At no time should information from a Closed Session of the Board be disclosed to the press or any third party without the consent of a majority of the Board. It is important that there should not be discussion with the press or the community regarding pending appeals and ligation except for information provided by the Board President.

Among Board and Superintendent - As a general rule, Board members must presume that any communication to any individual within the school system is a matter of public record. Thus, members should carefully consider the effect the communication can have on existing or proposed Board and school system positions and policies. This takes on additional significance where the possibility of legal action exists in regard to an issue before the Board or school

system. Board members should remain aware of these issues when composing or replying to emails.

Board members are strongly encouraged to request additional information not included in the Board packet or Granicus from staff prior to scheduled meetings. Board members are encouraged to submit additional resources that they have obtained to the president and superintendent as early as possible to allow all members to review before the scheduled meeting.

Legal Liability and the Board

As a general rule, Board members enjoy immunity for actions taken in the normal course and exercise of their duties of office. Federal and Maryland courts have been reluctant to impose personal liability on individual Board members in most instances. Board members must be aware, however, that the immunity is not without exception. The Supreme Court has found school Board members liable for actions that violate civil liberties under certain conditions. By using care in the exercise of Board member duties and seeking legal guidance in instances where there may be any question, Board members will be able to comfortably and in good conscience execute the responsibilities of office.

The Board retains legal counsel to provide advice and counsel to the Board and the Superintendent in legal proceedings. In appeal proceedings and when the Superintendent's contract of employment is negotiated, the Board and the Superintendent are represented by separate counsel.

The Board's counsel represents the interests of the corporate body of the Board and not individual Board members. Consequently, while Board members may occasionally have individual questions, requests for advice and assistance generally comes through the President or Superintendent to legal counsel. Counsel coordinates directly with the President and/or Superintendent regarding day-to-day matters. However, all Board members are involved in the development of legal strategies and are apprised of legal opinions and advice.

Negotiations

Maryland law provides all employees with the right to participate in collective bargaining. As a result, the Board is required to enter into negotiations with certified and non-certified employees. The Board also must develop a memorandum of understanding with administrators and supervisors.

The law requires negotiations on wages, hours and working conditions. Failure to negotiate in good faith can result in a charge of an unfair labor practice. The Superintendent is authorized to

meet with employee representatives to negotiate a contract. Failure to reach agreement may result in referral to the state Public Sector Labor Relations Board. Once the union and management agree to a contract, it is brought to the Board for approval at a regularly scheduled meeting. Board norms discourage communication with union representatives concerning contract issues during the negotiation process as the Board's Chief Negotiator is the spokesperson for the Board.

Professional Development

The Talbot County Board places a high value on members being continuous learners. As a consequence, the school system has benefitted from the governance provided by well-informed and well-trained Board members.

Professional development opportunities are primarily provided by the Maryland School Boards Association via yearly conferences and workshops provided throughout the year on various topics, and leadership programs. Board members periodically attend the National School Board Association's annual meeting, which provides extensive professional development opportunities. Board member professional development is provided for in the TCPS budget. Registration and associated fees are handled through the Superintendent's office.

School System and Community Event Attendance

One of the strengths of TCPS is the visibility of Board members and administration staff at school activities and functions. Board members are encouraged to attend school activities, not only to support and applaud the efforts of students, staff, and families, but also to become and remain familiar with the activities and events that are a part of life at each school.

As a general practice, Board members attend:

Start of School Year Events

- **New Teacher Gathering** – As much as possible, attended by all Board members with remarks made by the Board president.
- **First Day for All Staff** – As much as possible, morning meeting attended by all Board members with remarks made by the Board president.
- **Open House at Individual Schools** – As much as possible, the Board attempts to have at least one Board member present at each Open House. The Superintendent's office provides dates to help members coordinate attendance schedules.

Winter and Spring Band/Chorus Concerts – As much as possible, the Board attempts to have at least one Board member present at each concert. The Superintendent’s office provides dates to help members coordinate attendance schedules.

Graduations – It is expected that all Board members will attend both high school graduations. At both schools, Board members are asked to process in and be seated with school staff. The Superintendent and Board president will hand out diplomas.

Individual School and School System Functions and Events – Board members attend school functions throughout the year as they fit into Board members’ personal schedules and match their areas of interest. Some schools send invitations to events, but an invitation is not necessary or expected.

Community Functions and Events - Board members are often asked to attend community meetings and events. Depending on the event and the nature of the invitation, Board members may want to advise the Board president and/or Superintendent of the invitation and intention to attend.

School Visits

Board members should notify the Superintendent prior to visiting any school. When visiting a school, Board members are required to wear a TCPS identification badge and sign in at the school’s office. Board members are encouraged to remember that during visits, school is in session and their role in the school setting is always that of an observer. Usually, the Board member is accompanied by an administrator of the school. Board members should not visit schools during periods of testing.

Board members who wish to observe a specific program or classroom, and should schedule such visits through the Superintendent’s office.

Board members may wish to visit schools informally from time to time with no specific purpose in mind. While this is a welcome practice, Board members are cautioned that staff and student schedules may not accommodate unexpected visits, and that the normal business of the school day takes priority.

Section IV Superintendent’s Responsibilities

Responsibilities and Duties of the Superintendent of Schools

- The Superintendent is responsible for executing the Board's mission, vision and goals, and advising the Board on educational policies, managing the school system, and administering the budget, Board policies, and application education laws. As the executive officer of the board, the Superintendent will issue regulations and other directives regarding the management of the school system. The Superintendent will provide an annual analysis on the progress toward the attainment of the system goals.
- The Superintendent recommends contracts and other documents for Board approval. Contracts are not valid unless approved in writing by the superintendent.
- The Superintendent also recommends administrative reorganizations, including transfers of functions, establishment of positions and offices, and consolidations of positions and offices.
- The Superintendent proposes annual operating and capital budgets to the Board of Education.
- The Superintendent attends all meetings of the Board and its committees unless his/her tenure or salary or the administration of his/her office is under consideration or the board is considering appeals in its quasi-judicial role in closed session.
- By contract and policy, the Superintendent is evaluated annually (See Superintendent's job description and evaluation tool).
- The Superintendent as executive officer, secretary, and treasurer must attend and keep a record of the proceedings of each meeting of the Board and of all actions taken by the Board.
- If both the President and Vice president are absent from a Board meeting, the Superintendent of Schools presides until a President *pro tem* is elected by majority from the Board members present.
- The Superintendent recommends the appointment of administrative and supervisory personnel to the Board of Education for its approval. The Superintendent also recommends transfers of administrative and supervisory personnel to the Board of Education. In the personnel report, the Superintendent recommends approval of personnel appointments, requests for leave, terminations of personnel, and disciplinary actions.
- Administers disciplinary actions of the Talbot County Public Schools personnel and students.
- All TCPS employees report to the Superintendent or designee.

- In the absence of the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Assistant Superintendent of Support Services or designee fulfills these duties.
- Promotes an awareness of, and advocacy for, matters involving public education in Talbot County including reaching out to professional organizations, civic groups, and public officials of the national, state, and local levels.

State Law: Sections 4-102, 4-205 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland

CHAPTER II **ORGANIZATION**

Section I **The Public School Laws of Maryland**

The Board of Education of Talbot County, Maryland, is organized as prescribed by Section 3-12A-01 to 3-12-06 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

Section II **Duties and Responsibilities of Officers**

At the first meeting at the beginning of each calendar year, which is usually the regular January meeting each year, the members of the Board shall elect one of the members to serve as President and one of the members to serve as Vice-President of the Board for the year. On all questions before the Board, the President and Vice-President have and may exercise the vote to which each is entitled as a Board member. The Superintendent shall perform the function of Secretary/Treasurer to the Board.

The duties and responsibilities of the officers shall be as outlined:

I. President

The President of the Talbot County Board of Education shall:

- a. Provide supervisory leadership by maintaining regular communication with the Superintendent of Schools and planning the establishment of his/her annual goals with the Talbot County Board of Education and annual evaluation process.
- b. Serve as the presiding officer at Talbot County Board of Education meetings, which will be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.
- c. Maintain Board deliberations that are fair, open, thorough, efficient, timely, and orderly.
- d. Monitor Board behavior for consistency with its own rules and those imposed upon it by law.
- e. Confer with the Superintendent of Schools to construct an agenda for each meeting that is consistent with the Quarterly Agenda approved by the Board and provides an orderly method of conducting Board business. Individual Talbot County Board of Education members may ask the President or the Superintendent

of Schools to schedule an item on a Board agenda, or request direction from the full Board that an item be scheduled on a Board agenda.

- f. Serve as the spokesperson for Talbot County Board of Education.
- g. Fulfill or delegate other duties as needed.

II. Vice-President

The Talbot County Board of Education Vice-President shall assume such administrative and leadership tasks as designated by the President, in addition to any duties and responsibilities required by law. In the absence of the President, the Vice-President will assume the responsibilities of the President.

III. Secretary/Treasurer

As the non-voting executive officer, secretary and treasurer of the Talbot County Board of Education, the Superintendent of Schools shall:

- a. Attend all meetings of the Board, except when his/her tenure or salary is under consideration or the Board is considering appeals in its quasi-judicial role in closed session.
- b. See that accurate minutes are prepared within thirty (30) days of all proceedings for public records.
- c. Provide timely public notices of Board meetings and the publication of all legal notices related to Board business.
- d. Maintain accurate records of all hearings involving disputes and controversies, before the Superintendent of Schools.
- e. Act as custodian of all funds belonging to and under the control of the Talbot County Board of Education.
- f. Disburse funds as approved by the Talbot County Board of Education in the Operating and Capital Budgets and according to the provisions of the Annotated Code of Maryland.
- g. Provide regular reports and accounts of funds received and disbursed.

CHAPTER III NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Section I Orientation of New Members

The responsibility of governing public education requires continuous training and multiple resources. In order to facilitate individual and group developments the Board shall:

- Provide a mentor for each new Talbot County Board of Education member and the primary contact person for guidance regarding routine matters. In addition, support for participation in the New Board Member orientation sessions offered by MABE, professional association conferences, workshops and on-line training opportunities will be provided to the extent of budget restrictions.
- Make all Talbot County Board of Education policies available for review.
- Provide individual training in the use of Granicus.

Section II Oath of Office

Each new Board member shall appear before the Clerk of the Circuit Court for Talbot County prior to the commencement of their term to take the Oath. The Clerk of the Court shall be provided with documentation declaring the new Board member's eligibility in meeting qualifications before issuing the Oath.

Section III Seating New Board Member (s)

At the first meeting following the election or appointment and qualification of a new Board member(s), the new member(s) will attest to meeting all qualifications and to having been duly sworn to the Oath of Office by the Clerk of the Court. It shall then be recorded in the minutes of the meeting that the new member(s) have been properly seated as member(s) of the Board of Education of Talbot County, Maryland. An elected member will serve for a term of four (4) years beginning on December 1, after the member's election and until a successor is elected, qualifies, and takes the Oath. An elected member may serve three consecutive terms. A member appointed by the Governor to fill any vacancy will serve from the first meeting following the taking of the Oath until a successor is elected and qualifies at the next congressional election.

Section IV Student Representatives

By Board of Education Policy 2.1 - Student Representatives on the Board of Education – Involvement in Decision Making, the Board of Education of Talbot County has two non-voting student representatives, one from each public high school, who attends Board meetings and take part in agenda item discussions. These student representatives bring a student's outlook and opinion on Board agenda items and represents the student body of Easton High School and St. Michaels Middle/High School.

Each student representative to the Board of Education is selected under the procedures developed by the Talbot County Student Government Association for a one-year term from September through May of the following year. Each student representative will be seated and properly charged at the September business meeting. This handbook is also applicable to the student representatives.

The student representatives will receive agendas and backup materials, excluding items for Closed Session, for Board meetings.

The student representatives have the same speaking privileges as an elected member. The student representatives may not vote but may indicate a preference in a vote.

When recording unanimous voting in the official Board Minutes, the student representative's support is noted. If the student representative does not agree with the Board's unanimous vote, the student representative's opinion is indicated by "No: Student Representative." in the Board's official minutes. When Board votes are split, the student representative's opinion is listed in the official Board minutes after the "Yes" or "No," as appropriate.

If invited to do so by the Board president, the student representatives may attend Closed Sessions.

The Board supports the following training opportunities for the student representatives:

1. An appropriate and timely orientation prior to the September seating of the new student representatives.
2. Attendance at the MABE – Maryland Leadership Workshops if one is held.
3. Attendance at the National Association of Student Councils Conference.
4. Attendance at the MABE student representative Board member orientation each year that a scheduled workshop specifically designed for student representatives is held.

CHAPTER IV REGULATIONS FOR BOARD MEETINGS

Section I Date, Time, and Place of Meeting

Regular meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month unless notice is given at a previous regular meeting.

The time and place for such regular meetings will be announced at the previous regular meeting.

Special meetings are called by the President as needs arise; all Board members shall be duly notified.

Section II Attendance

Board members shall report to the President on such occasions when they find they must be absent from a meeting, and may participate virtually at the President's discretion.

Section III Agenda for Meetings

An agenda will be prepared for each meeting. The agenda will be developed by the Superintendent and approved by the President.

Agendas for regular meetings will be posted on the Talbot County Public Schools website and available to the news media, school principals, central office staff, PTA presidents and other concerned groups and citizens before the weekend preceding the regular meeting date.

Agendas and backup materials will be distributed to each member of the Board on Granicus before the weekend preceding the regular meeting.

Agendas for special meetings will be made known at the time the special meeting is called.

Section IV Format for Agendas

The following format will be a guideline for the preparation of regular agendas; the President may modify the sequence of items:

- A. Call to Order and Declaration of a Quorum
- B. Closed Session/Working Dinner
- C. Work Session
- D. Regular Meeting
 - 1. Pledge of Allegiance
 - 2. Approval of Agenda
 - 3. Approval of Minutes
 - 4. Recognition of the Public
 - 5. Student Report
 - 6. Board Committee Reports
 - 7. New Business
 - 8. Unfinished Business
 - 9. Personnel Report
 - 10. Superintendent's Report
 - 11. Board Members Reports/Remarks
 - 12. Adjournment

Section V Conduct of Meeting

Except as otherwise provided in Section VII, Closed Sessions, all final official action of the Board of Education of Talbot County will be taken at a public meeting, the minutes of which will likewise be public; therefore a quorum, consisting of four (4) members, must be established for each public meeting. No motion or resolution can be adopted or approved without the

affirmative vote of at least four (4) members of the Board of Education. The votes will be taken by a show of hands or roll call. Voting rights will be limited to members actually present in person or virtually at the public meeting at which the vote is taken except as provided herein.

Absentee voting by proxy or mail is authorized but limited to those occasions when a vote is being retaken and a member of the Board who was present at the first vote is unable to be present in person or virtually at the subsequent vote(s).

Except as otherwise provided, meetings will be held in accordance with the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

Section VI Citizen Participation

The President may elect to give any member of the audience an opportunity to speak to any item of the agenda, to express an opinion or to comment on any matter that relates to the Talbot County Public Schools. Such opinions or comments shall be limited to that time on the agenda identified as "Recognition of the Public." Citizen Participation is meant to be an opportunity for the Board to hear from the public. It is not a question and answer period.

Citizens are encouraged to pre-register in order to speak during Citizen Participation time on the agenda. During the meeting, the President will announce that those who have pre-registered will be allowed to speak first, followed by others wishing to speak as time will allow. When called upon to speak, that person will be asked to stand, give his/her name and address, and then proceed with comments. The public can speak about anything related to Talbot County Public Schools, except for comments about specific personnel, or anything slanderous or unlawful. Individuals may also submit written comments to be reviewed later by the Board.

The President may limit each speaker's time to not more than 3 minutes per speaker. If many citizens are in the audience, as many as possible will be given an opportunity to speak. The total time allotted for audience participation shall be at the President's discretion. Citizen Participation will be a regular item on the agenda for regular monthly meetings.

Section VII Closed Sessions

The Board of Education has the power to meet and deliberate in Closed Session for the purposes permitted under Section 10-508 of the State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland for reasons including the following:

1. To 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. To protect the privacy or reputation of individuals with respect to a matter that is not related to public business.
3. To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto.
4. To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.
5. To consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation.
6. To conduct collective bargaining negotiations or consider matters that relate to the negotiations.
7. To conduct or discuss an investigative proceeding on actual or possible criminal conduct.
8. To comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter.
9. Before a contract is awarded or bids are opened, to 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.

The President will decide who may be present at Closed Sessions other than members of the Board of Education. A quorum, consisting of four (4) members, must be established for each Closed Session meeting. No motion or resolution can be adopted or approved at a Closed Session meeting without the affirmative vote of at least four (4) members. Decisions shall be based upon a simple majority vote of those members present in person or virtually at the meeting.

CHAPTER V EXPENSES OF BOARD MEMBERS

Section I Memberships

The operating budget of the Board of Education shall contain funds for payment of membership to such organizations as the Board shall deem appropriate and approve for payment.

Section II Conferences and Conventions

Members of the Board of Education may elect to attend state and/or national conventions. Participation at such conventions shall involve prior advisement and be within budget authorization.

Expenses for such activity shall include travel, registration, food, and lodging.

A report of expenses incurred shall be submitted to the Secretary/Treasurer for transmittal to the Finance Department no later than the second regular meeting following the incurring of the expense.

Advances for expenses for attendance at approved conferences/conventions may be requested. When the expense account is submitted, any refund from the advance will be attached or a request for reimbursement of approved expenses will be submitted.

Section III Compensation

The compensation for the President and members of the Board of Education during any term of office that began after July 1, 2005 shall be \$3,600 annually for the President and \$3,200 annually for other members for the remainder of their terms of office.

Student Representatives are not compensated.

Section IV Other Expenses

Section 4-107 of the Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland entitles Board members to be reimbursed for traveling and other expenses incurred in performance of their duties. Therefore, the operating budget for the Board of Education shall contain funds for:

1. Personal mileage and other expenses incurred as a result of official business of the Board of Education.
2. Expenses for retirement banquets or other breakfast, luncheon, or dinner meetings when Board members are representatives of the Board of Education.
3. Expenses for flowers or other appropriate gifts in recognition of special achievements, occasions, or events to honor or express sympathy to Board employees or Board members.
4. Expenses for travel, lodging, meals and related expenditures to attend out-of-county meetings and conferences as a representative of the Board of Education.

Section V
Request for Payment of Approved Expenses

The request for payment of approved expenses will be dated and signed by the Board member making the request in accordance with the authorization of the Bylaws. These will be submitted to the Secretary/Treasurer for transmittal to the Finance Department for payment.

Section VI
Conflict of Interest/Financial Disclosure

Board members and staff as specified must meet the requirements outlined in the School Board Ethics Policy BBFA.

The Superintendent and Board members must also comply with all other elements of § 5-111 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, which requires the Board to file reports as required by the Maryland State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Schools.

CHAPTER VI
EMPLOYMENT OF INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONALS

Section I
Legal Counsel

The Board of Education of Talbot County may employ the services of an attorney to represent it in legal matters affecting the Board of Education. The selection of an attorney shall be made after proper review of the services and charges of such independent firm.

Section II
Certified Public Accountant

The Board of Education of Talbot County shall employ the services of a Certified Public Accountant firm to provide that an annual audit of financial transactions and accounts of the Board of Education be made. The selection of an accounting firm for auditing purposes shall be made annually and prior to the close of the fiscal period after proper review of the services and charges of such independent firms for the previous year.

Section III
Payment of Legal Fees and Auditing Fees

The operating budget for the Board of Education shall contain a request for funds to pay for the services of legal counsel and the services of a certified public accountant firm.

CHAPTER VII
BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONAL FUNCTIONS

Section I
Financial and Business Functions

The Board of Education of Talbot County shall:

1. Approve an adequate system of records and accounts.
2. Prepare an Annual Budget based on the needs and assessments of the total county public school system, which shall be submitted to the County Council of Talbot County.
3. Recommend and approve a Capital Improvements Program for submission to the County Council of Talbot County and to the State Interagency Committee for Public School Construction; such a Capital Improvements Program will be one that is needed to adequately house the program of instruction now and in the foreseeable future.
4. Recommend and approve a Local Capital Improvements Program for submission to the County Council of Talbot County; such a Local Capital Improvement Program will be one that is needed to adequately house the program of instruction now and in the foreseeable future.
5. Approve the local Debt Service Program for inclusion in the School Construction Fund of the Board's Annual Budget for submission to the County Council of Talbot County, and
6. Review and approve the Audit of Financial Transactions and Accounts for the Board of Education of Talbot County.

Section II
Instructional Functions

The Board of Education of Talbot County shall:

1. Approve the appointment and promotion of the qualified professional assistants, principals, teachers and other certified personnel as recommended by the county Superintendent.
2. Review and approve the *Bridge to Excellence Master Plan* for the Talbot County Public School System.
3. Review and adopt school attendance boundary lines.
4. Appoint and approve membership to Citizen Advisory Committees and see that such committees are given an appropriate charge.

5. Establish priorities and goals that strive for equal educational opportunities in all schools of the county recognizing the uniqueness of each situation.
6. Establish accountability for funding of instructional programs.
7. Appoint the Talbot County Superintendent of Schools for a term of 4 years beginning on July 1. In addition, the Board of Education of Talbot shall:
 - a. Conduct an annual evaluation of the Superintendent's professional performance;
 - b. Share the findings of the evaluation with the Superintendent;
 - c. Develop goals and objectives for the superintendent if deemed necessary by the Board of Education; and
 - d. Set the compensation for the Superintendent and approve the contract of employment.
8. The Board of Education of Talbot County may appoint one of its members to serve on standing committees in an ex-officio capacity.

CHAPTER VIII MISCELLANEOUS

Section I Recognition of Service

At the conclusion of his/her tenure in office, a Board member shall be presented with a framed certificate of appreciation and an appropriately engraved plaque.

Section II Amendments to Policy 2.1

Any policy, rule or regulation of the Board of Education may be amended, repealed, or suspended at a regular meeting of the Board of Education of Talbot County, provided that notice of the proposed change shall have been given to each member of the Board at the previous month's meeting, and that the action is made by motion and seconded and carried by at least four (4) affirmative votes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I _____ have received the Board of Education Handbook, and I understand its contents and my obligations and responsibilities as a Member of the Board of Education of Talbot County.

Signature

Date

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