

Policy BDE Board Committees

Issued 1/17

Purpose: To establish the purpose and function of board committees.

The board may create committees if they are deemed helpful to the board in the performance of its responsibilities. If committees are established, they will be used exclusively to support the work of the board and will never be created or used to assist the superintendent in any operational area, nor will they direct or oversee staff.

Committee of the Whole

Before each regular monthly board meeting, the board shall meet as a committee of the whole (COW) to study, discuss, and receive information about matters that require the board's attention. Except as otherwise permitted by policy or a decision of the board, no item will advance to the board unless approved by the COW, except matters advanced by the audit and finance committee, student and personnel hearings, charter school hearings, routine reports from the administration, and routine board business that does not directly affect the operation, administration, or direction of the school district. Occasionally, other exceptions may be made for unusual or time-sensitive matters.

The primary purpose of COW meetings is to review actions the board or administration must undertake to ensure the district is progressing toward accomplishment of the district's annual or longer-term goals. The committee may also address matters that may arise from time-to-time related to the board's role and responsibility in governing Charleston County public schools.

Agendas

In addition to routine items such as the appearance of visitors and adoption of minutes, the agenda for each meeting of the COW shall consist of four categories: policy and ~~personnel~~, strategic education, ~~operations~~, and other business.

The agenda shall show within each category the precise issue and matter for discussion. Whenever possible, backup material must accompany each agenda item and must be sufficient to notify board members and the public of the nature of the item and of the relevant details. If the person submitting an agenda item expects the item to be discussed in executive session and there are confidential documents or other materials associated with the item, in either hard copy, electronic, or other format, those materials must be available for discussion during executive session.

The committee may act as it deems appropriate on any item included on the agenda.

The superintendent shall prepare the agenda after conferring with the COW chairman. An item may also be added to the agenda by an individual board member with the

support of another board member, and the approval of the liaison for that category. The liaison may not be counted among the two sponsoring board members. The item must be submitted with appropriate backup material, on an official form prior to the deadline to submit agenda items. The agenda shall indicate the persons who submitted the item for consideration. If the superintendent determines that any item submitted will require more than one hour of staff time to prepare, he/she will place the item on the agenda as "pending staff action" with a projected response date.

The superintendent shall place each item submitted for the COW agenda in the category to which that item most closely relates and shall structure the agenda so that the committee uses its time efficiently, while still considering each agenda category separately. The board shall take up matters concerning the structure or operation of the board itself under the policy and personnel category.

The agenda will be closed at noon on the Monday preceding the COW meeting to allow time for the agenda to be prepared and delivered to members of the committee. The material must be delivered sufficiently in advance of the committee meeting to allow committee members to thoughtfully consider each item. The agenda will not be amended after it has been closed. Agenda items that receive the unanimous consent of the COW will be placed on the potential consent agenda for the upcoming board meeting. Members with questions may reach out to the points of contact (POC) indicated on the agenda cover sheet.

Chair and committee liaisons

At the first COW meeting following the election of board officers, the committee shall elect a COW chair by a majority vote. Within one week after the election of the COW chair, the new COW chair shall appoint, subject to board approval, board members to serve as agenda liaisons for policy ~~and personnel~~, and strategic education, ~~and operations~~. The current liaisons will continue to serve until the new liaisons are appointed. The superintendent, in conjunction with the COW chair, will assign items to the agenda category to which the item is most closely related. The agenda liaison for each category will work with the superintendent to develop the portion of the agenda dedicated to that category. Where possible, the agenda items will be supported by appropriate backup materials. The liaison shall chair that part of the COW meeting dedicated to their category. The COW chair shall chair those portions of the COW meeting not assigned to an agenda liaison and, in the absence of a liaison, may designate another member to chair that portion of the meeting ordinarily assigned to the absent liaison.

Schedule

The COW shall normally meet on the second Monday of each month.

Executive session

The COW may meet in executive session for any proper reason, as long as that matter is reflected on the agenda.

Audit and Finance Committee

Consistent with its revised charter, which was approved by the board on September 26, 2016, the audit and finance committee will stand alone and separate from the committee of the whole. Members of the committee are appointed by the chairman of the board and affirmed by a majority of the board. Audit and finance committee membership, as dictated by the committee charter, shall comprise at least six independent voting members, to include a minimum of two board members and an individual with information technology expertise. A board member will be appointed the committee's chair by the chairman of the board, subject to board approval. Citizens wishing to serve on the audit and finance committee will submit a letter of interest and a resume and/or application to the chief financial officer. The letter of interest must specify whether the applicant seeks the seat reserved for the individual with information technology expertise. All applications will be reviewed by the audit and finance committee, and the committee will submit its nominee to the board for approval. The vice chair will be elected by a majority vote from among the committee members and will assume the duties of the chair in his/her absence. Items approved by a quorum of the committee may be moved directly to the board. Items approved by unanimous consent and reviewed at a COW meeting will be moved to the potential consent agenda. Board members serving on the committee shall be appointed annually in November. The term of service for non-board members is two years.

Committee Authority

Neither the COW nor any other committee may commit the Board of Trustees of the Charleston County School District to any course of action, including, but not limited to, expending district funds, obligating the district financially, hiring consultants, or entering into contracts or agreements. The role of the COW is solely to make recommendations to the full board. No committee will act on any matter without first allowing the administration to study and comment on the matter.

***Ad hoc* Committees**

The board may create special and/or *ad hoc* committees, the members of which are appointed by the chairman. The function of such special committees shall be fact-finding, deliberative, and advisory, but never legislative or administrative. Such committees shall serve until they have accomplished their stated purpose and/or until they are discharged by the board. The chairman of the board may not serve on such committees.

A board committee's existence and charge come from the board, and its work is intended to support the board's work. The only board committees are those created by the board and addressed through this policy. The board may consider and act upon

reports of *ad hoc* committees, though such reports may not have been considered by the COW.

Committee Meetings

All committee meetings shall be open to the public. All committees shall give timely notice of their meetings in accordance with applicable provisions of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act, as amended.

During discussion, committee members shall have a maximum of two minutes each to address each agenda item including, but not limited to, questions asked and answers received, for a total debate time of 20 minutes on any one item. At the end of 10 minutes or when each member has had an opportunity to participate, the committee chairperson shall "call the question" and take the vote. If additional discussion is required, the committee chairperson shall require a two-thirds vote of the committee to continue the debate for a maximum of another ten minutes. Debate cannot be extended beyond a total of 20 minutes.

Two countdown timers shall be set up. One will monitor the full debate period of 10 minutes, and the other will monitor the two minutes allowed to each board member.

Adopted 12/8/75; Revised 12/8/86, 7/26/04, 11/9/15, 3/21/16, 1/23/17

Legal references:

S.C. code, 1976, as amended:

[Section 30-4-20\(a\)](#) - Defines public body.

[Section 30-4-60](#) - Meetings of public bodies shall be open.

[Section 30-4-70](#) - Meetings which may be closed.

[Section 59-19-110](#) - Board may designate members to investigate matters under its control.

Charleston County School District