

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## OPERATING PRINCIPLES



**MISSION:** Learning today for the possibilities of tomorrow.

**VISION:** The Pocatello/Chubbuck School District is a community of children, parents, educators and patrons working collectively toward a common purpose to graduate learners with the skills to be successful contributors in a changing, diverse world.

For the purpose of promoting, maintaining and enhancing teamwork and collaboration among the members of the Board of Trustees and between the Board and administration, we the members of the Pocatello/Chubbuck School District No. 25 Board of Trustees publicly commit ourselves collectively and individually to an adopted set of Operating Principles. We also believe that the manner in which we conduct our business sets a professional example and a standard for staff, learners, parents and the community. Thus, we commit to model the practices outlined in the Operating Principles:

1. The Board of Trustees will represent the needs and interests of ALL learners in our district. Their educational welfare is the Board's greatest concern;
2. The Board will represent the needs and interests of ALL patrons in our district and will be a good steward of tax dollars;
3. The Board values the public's right to be informed about board decisions and school operations;
4. The Superintendent is the Chief Executive Officer of the district. He/she is to advise the Board, provide recommendations, and propose options on matters pending before the Board. The Superintendent shall be present at all meetings;
5. The Board will establish the vision, adopt and revise policy, and assume accountability. The Superintendent will administer board policy and manage the schools. In doing so, the Board will demonstrate its understanding of its role and responsibilities;
6. The Board, with input of the Superintendent, will set clear goals for the district;
7. The Board Chair or designee is the Board's spokesperson;
8. The Board Chair and Superintendent jointly set meeting agendas;
9. Full participation is expected for all board members at meetings. Less than full participation of board members impacts the ability of the Board to function effectively and efficiently;
10. Board members will do their homework, be informed, be on time, present a professional appearance, attend all regularly scheduled sessions and committee meetings, give notice if members have a need to be absent, and participate in all local and State School Board training opportunities;
11. In preparation for board meetings, board members shall ask questions of the administration in advance of meetings;
12. Board members understand that there are many other time commitments beyond the regular work session and meeting schedules. Thus, board members agree that all are responsible to commit to additional obligations but do so by sharing these responsibilities;
13. Board members will keep abreast of educational trends, research, and best practices through individual study, and participate in programs which provide educational information;
14. Board members understand that individual members do not have authority. Only the Board as a whole has authority, and only in a publicly noticed, convened meeting. We agree that individual board members cannot take unilateral action;
15. The Board will conduct its business in accordance with the Open Meeting Law and will deliberate on various agenda items inclusive of the election of officers. It is preferred that board members be physically present at meetings so as to be highly visible to the public;

16. The Board recognizes that decisions are made by a majority vote. Once a decision is made, all board members will support that decision;
17. The Board will conduct a yearly self-evaluation and promptly address individual problems which limit teamwork, thus being in conflict with the Operating Principles;
18. Board members will respect the staff, support the employment of those best qualified, and expect that all staff are evaluated fairly and regularly;
19. The Board will lead by example. We agree to avoid words and actions that impact people negatively and personally. Prior to making decisions, we expect to debate and have a full discussion of differing points of view in a safe, open, honest and respectful environment;
20. Communication between staff and the Board is encouraged. However, requests made of individual board members or of the Board as a whole that require extensive study or may have political implications are to be directed to the Superintendent;
21. All staff and student personnel complaints and criticisms received by the Board, as a whole or the individual members, will be directed to the Superintendent;
22. The Board will follow the chain of command referring others to present their issues, problems, or proposals to the person who can properly and expeditiously address the issues;
23. Board members will refrain from communications which create conditions of bias should a problem or complaint become the subject matter of a hearing before the Board;
24. The Board will consider available facts, research, best practices, cost implications, input from administration, staff and the public, and individual judgment in its decision making process;
25. Prior to making a decision that the Board identifies as having major impact on students, staff and/or patrons, the Board will use a public hearing process to gather input;
26. Board members are to refrain from using their position on the Board for personal or family gain or prestige. We agree that any board member having a conflict of interest with an agenda item must declare that conflict prior to Board action;
27. When board members are assigned to serve on various district committees, their role shall be defined by the Board as a whole, as either a silent observer or an active participant;
28. Surprises to the Board or the Superintendent will be the exception, not the rule. Board members agree to ask the Board Chair or the Superintendent to place an item on a future agenda rather than bringing an item up unexpectedly at a meeting. Board members having personal criticism of district operations are to present that criticism to the Superintendent at a time other than a board meeting;
29. To be efficient and effective as a Board, long board meetings shall be avoided. If a board member needs more information, either the Superintendent or Board Chair is to be contacted prior to the meeting. Public comment will be encouraged as a component of board meetings under public comment. Appropriate protocol for public comment will be consistently practiced;
30. The Board will debate or speak only to the issues noticed on the agenda. Facts and information needed from the administration will be referred to the Superintendent;
31. Executive sessions will be held only when specific needs arise. Board members must adhere to confidentiality in regard to executive sessions realizing the legal ramifications of outside communication from these sessions;
32. Work sessions will be scheduled for in-depth discussion on one or more topics.
33. The Board will affirm these Operating Principles annually.

**Affirmed:** October 16, 2018

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Jackie Cranor, Chair  
Dave Mattson, Vice Chair  
Jacob Gertsch, Asst. Clerk  
Paul Vitale, Asst. Treasurer  
Janie Gebhardt, Member

**SUPERINTENDENT**

Dr. Douglas Howell