

Somerville School District
Board of Trustees Operating Protocol
2011-2012

Somerville Independent School District's seven school board members serve, without monetary compensation, to guide district improvement and policy development. This School Board together with the Superintendent, functioning as a "Team of Eight", strives to exemplify the finest in school district leadership and vision. For the purpose of enhancing teamwork among members of the school board, and between the board and the administration, we the members of the Somerville Independent School District Board do hereby publicly commit ourselves collectively and individually to the following operating protocol:

- 1) The board will represent the needs and interests of ALL the children in our district;
- 2) Surprises to the board or the superintendent will be the exception, not the rule. We agree to ask the board president or the superintendent to place an item on the agenda instead of bringing it up unexpectedly at the meeting;
- 3) Conduct at a board meeting is very important. We agree to avoid words and actions that create a negative impression on an individual, the board, or the district. While we encourage debate and differing points of view, we will do it with care and respect to avoid an escalation of negative impressions or incidents;
- 4) To be efficient and effective, long board meetings must be avoided. If a board member believes he/she doesn't have enough information or has questions, either the superintendent or board president is to be called before the meeting;
- 5) Board meetings are for decision-making, action, and votes, not endless discussion. We agree to "move the questions" when discussion is repetitive;
- 6) The board will not play to the audience. We agree to speak to the issues on the agenda and attend to our fellow board members. Facts and information needed from the administration will be referred to the superintendent;
- 7) Executive sessions will be held only when specific needs arise. Board members will be extremely sensitive to the legal ramifications of their meetings and comments. The guidelines of the Texas Open Meetings Act (TOMA) will be followed. Only those subjects provided for by the Texas Government Code of TOMA and the Education Code will be discussed in Executive (Closed) Session;
- 8) Communications between staff and the board are encouraged. However, board requests which will require time, action, or have political implications are to be directed to the superintendent or the full board;
- 9) All personnel complaints and criticisms received by the board or its individual members will be directed to the superintendent;

- 10) The last stop, not the first, will be to the board. We agree to follow the chain of command and insist that others do so;
- 11) Board members will come to the board meetings prepared and ready to do business;
- 12) The board will not be a "ball carrier" for others; but rather, will encourage others to present their own issues, problems, or proposals,
- 13) The board will emphasize planning, policy-making, and public relations rather than becoming involved in the management of the schools;
- 14) The board will address its behavior by yearly self evaluation each year and by addressing itself to any individual problems, such as poor meeting attendance, tardiness or leaks of confidential information;
- 15) The board will set clear goals for themselves, the superintendent, and the school district each school year;
- 16) The superintendent is the chief executive officer and should recommend/propose/suggest on most matters before the board;
- 17) Individual board members do not have authority and we agree to not take individual action. Only the board as a whole has authority. The board president, or designee, will be the board's spokesperson and will communicate to the media the position(s) of the board. (When board members serve on various school committees, their role shall be defined by the board as silent observer or active participant.)

Somerville Independent School District

Date Approved: June 7, 2011



Superintendent, Charles Camarillo



Board Vice President, Jared Kotch



Board Treasurer, James Douglas



Board Member, Melissa Tharp



Board President, Bryan Crook



Board Secretary, Linda Pinkerton



Board Member, Chris Arredondo



Board Member, Jason Urbanosky