



What Every New School Board Member Needs To Know Guide

Tips for new board members on how to use this guide:

- Schedule your orientation in multiple sessions to make it more manageable.
- Connect each item to your board service. Keep asking why this information is important for board members to know.
- Review the board's policies before using this guide. Many initial questions posed by new board members are already addressed in their board's policies.

Tips for experienced board members and district administrators on how to use this guide as a part of your board orientation process:

- Make the process your own. Adapt this framework to meet the needs of your district. Add additional questions and resources.
- Consider involving the whole board and use this exercise as a way to improve board governance.
- Ensure that your new board members know how to access your board policies and other pertinent resources.

Potential Orientation Documents:

Available from the local board policy manual or board president:

- Board mission/vision statements and district belief/vision statements.
- Board processes, including expense reimbursement, types of board meetings, board meeting procedure, agenda preparation (how to get a topic added to the meeting agenda), and policy development.
- Communication processes, including use of email, who speaks for the board, and communicating with the media.
- Code of Conduct for members of the board and conflicts of interest criteria.
- District intergovernmental agreements.
- District organizational chart.
- Standing advisory committees and members.
- District administrator evaluation and goals.
- Status of board policies currently under review.

Available from the district administrator or local district website:

- Board meeting minutes from the previous year. ([website](#))
- Current district budget.
- Most recent fiscal audit.
- Most recent monthly financial report to the board. ([website](#))
- District Strategic Plan.
- District Improvement Plans and School Improvement Plan(s).
- District Communication Plan.
- Brief summary of priority staff development initiatives.
- Contracts, including any collective bargaining agreements between the district and teachers and non-certified personnel, and district administrator's contract.
- Important calendars, including regular board meetings, budget and district calendars.
- Handbooks, including employee and student handbooks. ([website](#))

- Summary of legislative items currently of interest to the district and any recent communications with state and/or federal legislators.
- Summary of pending litigation involving the district.
- Special reports such as facility assessments, curriculum studies, results of recent community surveys, and enrollment trends.
- Status of current or upcoming facility projects.
- Overview of school safety plan and data on safety-related issues.

Available from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction website:

- District and School Report Cards.
- State Academic Standards.
- Statewide K-12 data.
- School finance data.
- In-depth background information on K-12 initiatives (e.g. accountability reform and educator effectiveness).

Available from the Wisconsin Association of School Boards

- In-depth information on advocacy, school law (including open meeting and public record laws), policies, and governance topics via WASB staff, the WASB website at WASB.org, publications, programs and trainings.
 - Some information on the WASB website - WASB.org - is member only and a log in is required. To log in for the first time, use the email address provided to the WASB by the district administrative assistant and use the “Forgot Password” link to set a new password.
 - WASB staff are available to answer basic questions as a part of member services. If a member requests extensive legal, policy or consulting services, additional fees may apply.
- Additional WASB services of particular relevance to new board members include:
 - Peer Mentoring Program.
 - Annual Board Development Tool Survey and School Board Meeting Self-Evaluation Tool.
 - Key Work of School Boards.

What Every New Board Member Needs To Know

– About District Operations –

1. **District Administrator:** Phone: Cell Phone: E-mail:
Wendell Quesinberry 453-5555 889-2798 quesinberryw@myhatchets.org

2. **District Administrative Asst.:** Phone: E-mail:
Coleen Frisch 771-9409 frischc@myhatchets.org

3. **Communities served by the district:**
Bradley, Birch, Skanawan, Tomahawk, Rock Falls
City of Tomahawk
King and Harrison
Nokomis, Wilson and Little Rice

4. **Number of students enrolled:**
Total: 1,196
3/4-Year Old K 78 Elementary school: 472
Middle school: 278 High school: 367
Alternative school(s): n/a

5. **Student Population:**
Ethnic Groups by Percentage: .2% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander & White, 1.1% Black or African American & White, 1.3% Black or African American, .2% Asian & White, .3% Asian, .2% Hispanic/Latino & White, .08% Hispanic/Latino & Black or African American, .17% Hispanic/Latino & Asian, .67% Hispanic/Latino
Percentage of English language learners: .0025 %
Primary languages spoken at home other than English: Spanish
Percentage of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch: 39%
Percentage of children with disabilities: 16%

6. Number of square miles the district covers: 424.4

7. Transportation: District operated? no Contracted? Yes, Tomahawk Bus Company

8. District Office Department Heads:

Name	Title
Dean Alderton	District IT Coordinator
Trina Armstrong	District Nurse
Jackie Dorion	Personnel
Sandy Holquist	Bookkeeper
Paula Norman	LMC Director
Thersea Burzynski	Director of Teaching and Learning
Scott Parsons	Activities and Recreation Director
Wendy Simonis	Director of Special Education and Pupil Services
Arland Wingate	Director of Building and Grounds

9. Number of employees in district: Certificated 102 Classified _____

10. What unions are in place? TEA President Jon Marin

(if applicable) _____ President _____

_____ President _____

11. District social media presence:

Social Media Platform	Site or Keyword(s) to search
Facebook	School District of Tomahawk
Twitter	School District of Tomahawk
Instagram	School District of Tomahawk
Other	
YouTube	School District of Tomahawk School Board Meetings
YouTube	TomahawkSchDis

12. District Schools

Name of School	Type of School	Grade Levels	Number of Students
Tomahawk High School	High School	9-12	367
Tomahawk Middle School	Middle School	6-8	278
Tomahawk Elementary School	Elementary School	PK - 5	550

13. Other school-owned properties and services

Property (i.e. school forest)/ Service (i.e. recreation department)	Purpose
School Forest(s)	
Climbing Wall	
Ropes Course	

What Every New Board Member Needs To Know

– About Board of Education Operations –

1. How to access board documents and policies:

School District of Tomahawk Website, District/Meetings, District/Policies

2. Order of items on the board meeting agenda:

1. Call to Order	7. Consent Agenda Items
2. Pledge of Allegiance	8. Staff Reports
3. Roll Call	9. Finance Report
4. Declaration of a Quorum	10. Board Referrals
5. Adoption of Agenda	11. Closed Session (optional)
6. Public Comment	12. Adjourn

3. Board Committees:

Committee name	Purpose
Policy Committee	Twice a year when Neola sends out the release. And anytime when necessary.
Executive Committee	As needed
Operations & Finance	Quarterly
Personnel	As needed

4. Advisory Committees:

Committee name	Purpose
Champions of Tomahawk School District	Advocate, inform, and educate the community about the referendum.

5. Governance Protocols -

How we do business:

Board meeting agenda developed and reviewed by:	District Administrator, reviewed by Board President
Placing items on the board meeting agenda:	District Administrator, Administration, Board Members through Board Referrals. Person or Groups may submit their requests to DA no later than (7) days prior to the meeting. (po0167.3)
Board meeting packet delivered when:	District Secretary, Agenda is posted on BoardBook for Board Members to access. Email sent to notify members when it is posted.
Obtaining additional information about board meeting agenda items before the meeting:	Contact District Office or Board President.

<p>Obtaining answers to questions about board meeting agenda items before the meeting:</p>	<p>Contact District Administrator or Board President.</p>
<p>Alerting the board president of the desire to speak on a particular agenda item:</p>	<p>Opportunity for discussion is provided before voting on every agenda item.</p>
<p>Introducing new ideas for the board's consideration:</p>	<p>Option 1: Present the proposal to the board president prior to the meeting posting deadline. (24 hours prior to the meeting)</p> <p>Option 2: Bring the topic forth during Board Referrals portion of the regular meeting.</p>
<p>Parliamentary procedure used during the meetings:</p>	<p>Robert's Rules of Order</p>
<p>Purpose and structure of the public comment section of the board meeting:</p>	<p>Policy 0167.3 Public Comment at Board Meetings. Those who register get priority for speaking order. 3 minute limit, 15 minutes total for PC.</p>
<p>What is the decision-making capability of the committees and how do they make recommendations to the board:</p>	<p>Committees will bring recommendations to the full board for consideration and vote. The committee chairs will develop the agenda with the DA. Through vote, when necessary, committees will decide whether items escalate from committee to the full board for consideration.</p>
<p>Purpose of closed meetings and legalities of maintaining confidentiality:</p>	<p>When the nature of an issue is not compatible with conducting such business in open session. The intent of legal Closed Sessions is to keep the information, discussion, and votes made in Closed Session from public dissemination. Those in attendance should keep such information confidential.</p>

<p>Process for updating policies:</p>	<p>Twice a year Neola issues a release with updates and revisions. The Policy Committee meets, and changes are made and sent to the full Board in batches for approval. Revisions and deletions require (1) reading, new policies require (2) readings.</p>
<p>Board goals – when are they reviewed:</p>	<p>Annually at the Board of Education Retreat Board Goals will be reviewed at the January and July regular meetings and changes will be made as needed.</p>
<p>How does the board ensure that board policies align with handbooks and staff practice:</p>	<p>The Policy Committee will review policies and changes as they are recommended by NEOLA. Handbooks are reviewed and approved each year in August by the full Board during the regular meeting.</p>
<p>When and how is data presented to the board:</p>	<p>Data is presented to the board in accordance with the Strategic Planning Calendar as outlined in the Tomahawk Strategic Planning Framework.</p>
<p>How does the board evaluate programs:</p>	<p>Programs are measured against the Board goals that are developed annually. These programs are also measured as part of the Strategic Planning Framework that was approved by the board and provides routine updates with regard to student academic data and goal progress.</p>
<p>When and how does the board receive progress reports on efforts to improve instruction and student learning:</p>	<p>Once a month each building principal and the directors of Teaching and Learning, Pupil Services, Building & Grounds, and Activities may present to the Board.</p>
<p>Process and time line for budget deliberations</p>	<p>Quarterly finance reports are provided to the Finance Committee and ultimately to the full Board. Expenditures are provided to the full Board monthly on the Friday before the regular meeting. All questions can be submitted and will be answered prior to the regular meeting. Preliminary budget is presented to the board at the August regular meeting. The budget is also presented at the annual meeting each September. The final budget is completed and presented for approval during a special meeting in October when the tax levy will be certified.</p>

<p>District's current financial condition:</p>	<p>The District currently faces a budget deficit and requires the passage of a non-recurring referendum to maintain current services.</p>
<p>Anticipated budget or financial issues the board will need to address:</p>	<p>Referendum planning</p>
<p>Responding to staff or community complaints or concerns at board meetings:</p>	<p>Policy 0167.3 Public Comment at Board Meetings. Those who register get priority for speaking order. 3 minute limit, 15 minutes total for PC.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Referral to the Board President and/or District Administrator</p>
<p>Communications between and among the board, board members and the superintendent:</p>	<p>Open meeting laws apply to all communication between members of the Board.</p> <p>Communication between members of the Board and the District Administrator will be governed by the Board President.</p>
<p>Communications between the board and other staff:</p>	<p>Communication between members of the Board of Education and School District Staff is outlined in Board Policy # 3112.</p>
<p>Responding to community or staff complaints or concerns outside of board meetings (chain of command):</p>	<p>Members of the Board will refer complaints and concerns to the District Administrator. The District Administrator will provide regular updates and memos to the Board with regard to these situations.</p>
<p>Individual board member requests for information from staff:</p>	<p>These requests will be submitted through the Board President to the District Administrator.</p>

<p>When does the board seek legal advice?</p>	<p>Legal advice will be sought through the board president and/or the District Administrator to the District approved Attorney.</p>
<p>When and how the board conducts a self-evaluation:</p>	<p>The Board will conduct a self evaluation at its annual board retreat and during the review of Board Goals during the January and July regular meetings.</p>
<p>When and how does the board evaluate the superintendent? What is the time line?</p>	<p>The District Administrator evaluation process will be developed as a collaborative effort between the personal committee, District Administrator, and full board.</p>
<p>How are media requests handled?</p>	<p>All media request will be referred to the Board President and/or District Administrator.</p>
<p>How and when are legislators contacted?</p>	<p>Official communication to legislators will be submitted through the Board President and/or District Administrator.</p>
<p>How, when and whom to notify about visiting school sites or participating in district activities:</p>	<p>Requests will be submitted through the Board President to the District Administrator.</p>
<p>Board member participation on district committees and in district activities:</p>	<p>Committee assignments will be appointed by the Board President.</p>

<p>What is the expectation for participating in community events:</p>	<p>Members of the Board are encouraged to participate in community events.</p>
<p>What is the board member stipend (if applicable):</p>	<p>Board members will be paid for participation in each meeting they attend.</p>
<p>Opportunities for professional development:</p>	<p>WASB, CESA 9</p>
<p>Attending conferences / educational meetings / community events:</p>	<p>Attendance at professional conferences at the District's expense will be granted at the discretion of the Board President.</p> <p>Full Board Approval is required for attendance at all National or out-of-state conferences.</p>
<p>Making reservations for conferences / workshops / district business trips:</p>	<p>All reservations will be made through the District Office.</p>
<p>Travel expenses and reimbursements:</p>	<p>All reimbursements will be submitted to the District Office</p>

