

We Welcome Your Participation

It is the Board of Education's belief that community involvement leads to better schools. After all, that is why we became Board members. We encourage an open discussion of topics relating to our schools. Each Board meeting begins with fifteen minutes of Open Session to allow for these discussions. However, there are some topics which cannot be discussed in public.

Open vs. Executive Session

Following the Open Session and transaction of regular business, the Board may enter into Executive Session. New York State Education Law and Board Policy prohibits public discussion of certain topics in an effort to protect individual privacy. These topics may only be discussed in Executive Session. You may be invited to speak at Executive Session, but this portion of the meeting is not open to the general public. As outlined in New York State Education Law, topics for Executive Session include:

- Matters which will imperil the public safety if disclosed.
- Any matter which may disclose the identity of a law enforcement agent or informer.
- Information relating to current or future investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense which would imperil effective law enforcement if disclosed.
- Discussions involving proposed, pending, or current litigation.
- Collective negotiations pursuant to article 14 of the Civil Service Law.
- The medical, financial, credit, or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal, or removal of a particular person or corporation.
- The preparation, grading, or administration of exams.
- The proposed acquisition, sale, or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition, sale, or exchange of securities, but only when publicity would substantially affect the value of these things.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How do I find out about decisions the Board has made?

A: Attending meetings is one way. In addition, all decisions made by the Board of Education are a matter of public record and may be reviewed upon request in the District Office.

Q: What is the "Chain of Command" and what purpose does it serve in resolving problems?

A: In an effort to resolve disputes prior to involving the Board, we ask that individuals address problems first with the staff member involved, then with the building principal. If the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved in a reasonable amount of time, it should be brought to the attention of the Superintendent of Schools. After all those avenues have been exhausted, it should be brought to the attention of the Board. If this procedure is not followed, the Board may not have enough information to act and a great deal of time and effort may be lost in collecting that information.

Q: Do I have to talk to the whole Board? Why can't one member just solve my problem?

A: The Board can only act in as a collective body and only if a majority of members are present. Individually, Board members are just that...individual citizens just like you.

Q: Why does the Board spend so much time on Policy? Don't they have more important things to do?

A: Like the Constitution which serves as the foundation of our country, the policies enacted by the Board of Education serve as valuable reference in insuring fair and honest treatment to everyone and in determining how best to guarantee the highest standards of education for all students in the district.

Q: What if I want to know more?

A: Again, regular attendance at Board meetings will give you a better idea of how decisions the Board is making affect the District. And each year, elections are held for positions on the Board. If you have a keen interest in shaping the future of the Sidney Central Schools, get involved and run for a seat on the Board of Education.

Sidney Central School District Board of Education Reference Guide



A brief Question and Answer guide to help you better understand the role of the Board of Education within our district and the responsibilities of those you elected to represent you on the Board.

Board of Education Overview

The Board of Education is a policy-making body. All actions of the Board are made within the confines of the laws of New York State, the federal government and the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

Actions taken by the Board include: approval of budget and expenditures, personnel appointments, and a variety of items related to the operations of the district and the determination of educational goals and standards. Action can only be taken when a majority of the Board members (quorum) is present. Official Board of Education minutes, once approved, are available in the District Office.

Q: How often does the Board meet?

A: Meeting schedules change from time to time and may occur on different nights from year to year. As a rule, the Board meets every other week at the same time. Special meetings may also be called as needed. To find out the current schedule of upcoming meetings, contact the Board Clerk in the District Office. The Clerk may be reached by phone at 563-2135, extension 4275.

Q: What happens at a Board Meeting?

A: No two meetings are alike, but the meetings always open with a pledge to the flag, followed by Open Session. This time is set aside for members of the audience to address the Board. (See request form on attached panel.) Official business is then conducted such as appointments or approvals on actions required. This is often followed by scheduled presentations from staff or students, updates on projects and so on. Reports from various Board Committees are also made at this time and if there is no other public business to be conducted, the Board goes into Executive Session.

Q: What happens in Executive Session?

A: As noted on the attached panel, in an effort to insure individual privacy, New York State Education Law requires that certain topics be kept confidential. In general these are matters relating to: public safety, identity, criminal investigations, litigation, contract negotiations, medical, financial or employment history, exams or district financial matters.

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Q: I don't understand why the Board made a particular decision.

A: Board members are elected to represent the interests of the *entire District* and all its constituencies, now and in the future. Sometimes that requires taking a longer term view which may be unpopular. Particularly in confidential matters, the public may not have all the information and the Board may not be in a position to discuss the details.

Request to Address the Board

In order to insure that adequate time is allowed for you to address the Board on a particular topic, we ask that you complete this brief form and submit it to the Board prior to the start of the meeting. This will enable us to insure that all requests can be accommodated. We would appreciate any contact information you wish to provide so that we may reach you with any questions.

Please Complete and Hand to the Board President or Clerk

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Party you are representing _____

Amount of Time Requested _____

Topic/Nature of Presentation _____
