

Park Ridge-Niles School District 64
Board of Education Operating Principles
Reaffirmed July 30, 2011

Operating Principle 1: Positive Relationships

We recognize it is essential to remain positive in working together.

- We will look for and recognize the positive contributions of each individual and shall refrain from speaking negatively about others.
- We will seek ways to turn obstacles into opportunities.
- We will maintain a sense of hope, optimism and humor in working together.

Operating Principle 2: Open Communication

We are committed to communication that promotes openness and understanding.

- We believe the most effective communication requires high levels of trust.
- We will establish and maintain open channels of formal and informal communication.
- We will be honest and direct with each other.
- Information required by statute to be discussed in closed session and so discussed will remain confidential.
- Information pertinent to Board business should be shared with all Board members in a timely manner.

Operating Principle 3: Quality Interaction

We are responsible for quality interaction with each other as team members. Conflict is a natural and inevitable feature of working together. The management of conflict is an opportunity to improve the quality of our interactions and relationships.

- We are each accountable to the team for our own actions.
- We will encourage and remain receptive to divergent views of other members.
- When conflict occurs, the focus will be on the issue, not the person.
- We will work to influence one another directly and in supportive ways.
- Should concerns about another team member arise, the person with the concern will share privately his/her views with the individual.

Operating Principle 4: Collaborative Decision-Making

The team is committed to using a collaborative decision-making process.

- We will define the objective, i.e., what is being decided.
- We will provide opportunity for input from persons affected by the decision.
- We will gather all pertinent facts concerning the situation.
- We will allow time for reflection throughout the process.
- We will organize and analyze the collected data.
- We will encourage the consideration of multiple solutions and their implications.
- We will encourage compromise and seek consensus.
- We will make a timely decision.
- We will provide a plan to implement the decision.
- We will communicate the decision to those affected.
- We will support the decision and its effective implementation.
- We will evaluate the decision in terms of its effectiveness.

Operating Principle 5: Handling Public Concerns

We – as a Board and as individual Board members – will handle public concerns of both individuals and groups in tactful, orderly and effective ways.

- We will listen to the concern, and, if appropriate, ask questions or summarize the concern to check and confirm understanding.
- We will ask if the issue has been discussed with the person immediately responsible or the immediate supervisor.
- We will express appreciation to the individual for presenting the concern.
- We will affirm the desire to reach a satisfactory solution through the appropriate channels.
- We will ask the person to report back on the progress or resolution of the concern when appropriate.
- We will outline the next step(s) that the Board or Board member will take and assure the person that someone will contact him or her to address the concern.
- We will inform the Superintendent of the concern when appropriate.

Operating Principle 6: Board and Committee Meetings

We choose to conduct our meetings in an open and orderly fashion and in a manner consistent with our operating principles.

- Board meeting agendas are developed cooperatively between the Board President, Vice President and Superintendent with input from other administrators and Board members as appropriate. (Committee meeting agendas are similarly developed between the committee members and the respective administrators.)
- Board and committee agendas and support materials/ documents (including minutes of past meetings) are distributed in advance to encourage informed discussion.
- Surprises at meetings from Board members and/or administrators are counterproductive.
- Any changes in the prepared agenda for Board meetings will be mutually determined by the Board President and Superintendent prior to the meeting. (All Board members and/or committee members shall have an opportunity to accept or reject those changes.)
- The Board values citizen input and will provide a forum for such input at each meeting.
- At the end of the discussion, the Board will summarize issues and articulate next steps as well as clarify understandings of the discussion.

Operating Principle 7: Continuous Improvement

We are committed to an ethic of continuous improvement.

- We will regularly examine our progress towards meeting established goals.
- We will biennially review, evaluate and establish new goals.

Operating Principle 8: Accountability

The Board recognizes that it is accountable to the community and other stakeholders.

- We will communicate the State of the District on an annual basis.
- We will conduct open, transparent and frequent communications with the community.
- We will encourage public engagement.