

1. Board of Education FAQs

- What is the Board of Education?

The District 96 Board of Education is a seven-member team of District 96 residents elected in a state authorized election to serve four-year terms. Board members serve without pay.

The Board President and Vice-President are members of the board and elected by its members. The Secretary of the District 96 board is an employee of the district. Treasurer duties are performed by the Proviso Township Treasurer's Office.

A school board is a governmental body and can take action only by majority vote at a public meeting. The individual board member has no authority other than the right to cast a vote at such a meeting. A board member who attempts to speak for the total board, direct members of the staff, or make other individual decisions is acting outside the law.

- What is the role of the Board of Education of District 96?

The role of the Board of Education is to:

- define the Mission, Vision and Beliefs for District 96,
- determine long and short term goals that will move the District towards its Mission and Vision,
- monitor and evaluate the District and its progress in relation to its Mission, Vision and Goals,
- develop policies that set the parameters for Board governance and staff operations,
- employ the Superintendent and evaluate his/her performance,
- provide stewardship of the fiscal resources of the district in relation to its Mission,
- maintain avenues for effective communication with all stakeholders,
- advocate for students and quality public education,
- abide by all laws, rules and regulations.

- What is the role of an individual board member?

Members of the board are elected "at large." This means that each member represents the entire school district and not a particular school. Board members have no school-related authority as individuals.

- What is the role of the Superintendent?

The Superintendent of schools is the chief executive officer of the Board of Education and is responsible for managing the school district in accordance with Board of Education policies and directives, and state and federal law.

The role of the Superintendent is to:

- provide leadership to move the District toward its Mission and Vision by achieving established long and short term goals,

- manage the District within the parameters of established policy,
 - provide educational expertise and leadership,
 - create an effective administrative team, delegate appropriately and hold individuals accountable,
 - prepare a fiscally responsible budget,
 - effectively and efficiently manage the District's programs and buildings,
 - provide the Board of Education with appropriate information to facilitate its deliberations and informed decision making,
 - be the spokesperson for the District,
 - establish and/or maintain avenues for effective communication with all stakeholders,
 - comply with all laws, rules, regulations and policies; and model ethical behavior at all times.
- What are the types of board meetings and when are they held?

The Open Meetings Act requires meetings of school boards to occur in public, except in some circumstances ("Closed Session"), and with appropriate public notice (minimum of 48 hours). It also requires that all meetings be held at times and places convenient to the public.

Regular meetings of the District 96 board are usually held monthly, on the third Tuesday of the month, at 7:30 PM. Meeting locations rotate at each of the district schools through the school year. The regular business meeting includes school-related information, and reports and updates on a variety of issues ranging from instruction to finance to policy. Action items (those items requiring a vote) are considered during these meetings.

Occasionally, a **special meeting** may be scheduled to conduct board business in a timely manner.

A **closed meeting** ("closed session") may be held for consideration of certain items, including student discipline, personnel, leasing of property, security issues, real estate transactions, and pending litigation.

In addition, committees of the board meet periodically. There are currently three District 96 Board Committees: Finance, Education and Building. Committee meetings rotate and are usually scheduled the same evening as regular meetings. No official board action is taken at a committee meeting; they are held to examine subjects in greater depth than is possible during regular meetings.

The public is welcome and encouraged to attend all meetings of the board except closed sessions. Meetings notices and agendas are posted 48 hours in advance at the district office, on the website, and at the main entry of each school building.

- Who sets the meeting agenda?

The Superintendent and Board President work together to set the Board agenda for the regular business meeting.

- What is a consent agenda?

The consent agenda is a grouping of items that do not usually require Board discussion. Minutes of previous meetings, approval of bills for payment, monthly payroll, contract approvals for new employees are typically included in the consent agenda. An item can be removed from the consent agenda at the request of any board member.

- Can the public participate in School Board meetings?

According to board policy, time for public input is set aside at the beginning of each meeting, and members of the community and staff are welcome to address the board at that time. During the period for comments, the board will not hear statements involving cases under litigation, issues that have been scheduled for a public hearing, or complaints regarding individual employees or students. Board members may ask for clarification, but are not obliged to respond to public comments. The board may refer an item to the administration, attorney or a board committee for discussion at a future meeting. Participants and citizens should understand that board meetings are conducted *in* public, but are not a meeting *with* the public.

- When should I bring concerns about my child to the board?

It is not appropriate to bring a specific concern related to your child to an open board meeting.

If you have a specific concern related to your child, the best place to begin resolution is with the person most directly involved. That would be the teacher when a student-related problem is involved, or the principal where a school regulation or practice is of concern. If you cannot resolve the problem with the child's teacher or principal, you can contact the superintendent's office, and, if necessary, a meeting with the superintendent can be arranged.

- Where can I get more information regarding how the board operates?

The District 96 Board Policy is available on the district website. In addition, general school board information can be found at the website for the Illinois Association of School Boards www.iasb.com.

- How can I learn more about becoming a board member?

School board elections are held every two years in April. Individuals must be District 96 residents and must gather fifty supporting signatures before registering as a candidate for the District 96 Board of Education. Specifics about running for the board are available from the Cook County Clerk, or you may call the board secretary at 708-447-5007 for more information.