

**GALION CITY SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
BOARD MEMBER HANDBOOK**

**AN INFORMATIONAL GUIDE
FOR GALION CITY SCHOOL
BOARD OF EDUCATION
MEMBERS**

The Board of Education of Galion City School District
Galion Administrative Building
470 Portland Way N.
Galion, Ohio 44833
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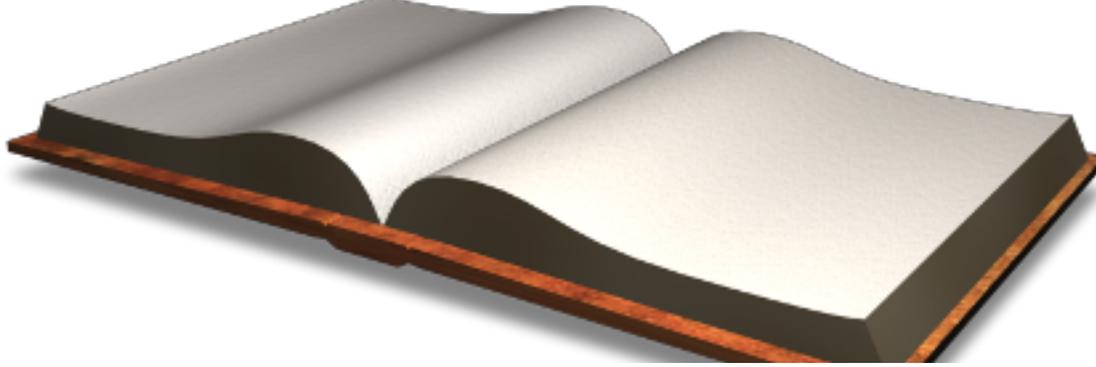
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WHAT THIS HANDBOOK IS

This Board Member Handbook is intended to serve as a quick and easy-to-use reference guide for Members of the Galion Board of Education as they discharge their duties governing the Galion City School District. Those duties are broad and significant. Under Ohio law, the Board of Education serves as the taxing authority, contracting body, and policy maker for the school District, and ensures that all other general laws of the State of Ohio are followed in the administration of the District.

The Handbook contains some of the most salient laws, rules, regulations and policies applicable to the Board and to the School District. The Handbook is designed to assist Board Members in understanding the educational system they govern, answer some basic questions about their role in that system, and point Board Members in the right direction to obtain additional information.

WHAT THIS HANDBOOK IS NOT

In a "Wikipedia" world where an overwhelming amount of information on every conceivable subject is only a click away, this Handbook cannot possibly cover all laws, policies, and rules applicable to Board service. A tremendous source of information about the District, its operations and the role of the Board Members is contained in the Board's Policy Manual, which is a compilation of the formal policies adopted by the Board. After this Handbook, the Policy Manual should be the next resource Board Members check for information about the District. An Appendix to this Handbook lists the categories of Board Policies found in the Policy Manual, from Section A, "Foundations and Basic Commitments " to Section L, "Education-Agency Relations".





Galion City Schools Mission, Purpose , & Commitments

Exercising its general authority to set policy for the District, the Board of Education has adopted a Mission Statement, a Purpose Statement and a set of Core Commitments.

MISSION

Galion City Schools ' mission is to produce competitive college and career ready graduates through a rigorous curriculum across all grade levels by implementing Ohio's New Learning Standards with fidelity.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

Empowering Students to Successfully Transform Our Community

CORE COMMITMENTS

Galion City Schools has adopted a set of "Core Commitments", which are:

- GCS will be Student-Centered - District-wide decisions and operations will be built around the best interest of students.
- GCS will use Accountability-Based Management - Maintain an accountability system that will have a direct impact on student growth.
- GCS will Build Stronger Relationships - Continue to strengthen and broaden the relationships GCS has with all stakeholders and local organizations while working to establish full community inclusion.
- GCS will be Technology Oriented - Maintain a technology-based environment that meets the needs of the new digital age, which consists of current and future students.
- GCS will maintain a Rigorous Curriculum - Continue to research best practices and offer relevant professional development that aligns with 21st century national state standards, thus ensuring students gain the competitive skills required to succeed in a global economy.
- GCS will develop a Culture of High Expectations - Establish a district-wide climate and belief system that all students, staff, and schools have the ability to achieve **EXCELLENCE**.



HISTORY OF GALION AND GALION CITY SCHOOLS

No one is sure of the origins of the name "Galion" but everyone seems to agree that it wasn't the first choice. Most of the early names suggested were rejected by the postal service because they conflicted with other Ohio communities. Whatever the source, the name Galion became official in 1831 when the town was laid out with 35 plots by Michael and Jacob Ruhl.

The town grew slowly over the next half century until 1900 when the Big Four Depot became the division headquarters for the Cleveland, Chicago, Cincinnati and St. Louis Railroad. Galion became a railroad town and in time a 2nd depot was built to handle the rail traffic.

A number of 20th Century presidential politicians stopped in Galion to convince the citizens they deserved their vote. In 1932 Franklin Roosevelt stopped in town long enough to give a speech from the back of the train at the Big Four Depot and returned again in 1936. After the war, Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon stopped in town in 1952.

Galion City School District (the "School District") is organized under Article VI, sections 2 and 3 of the Constitution of the State of Ohio. The School District operates under a locally-elected Board form of government consisting of five members elected at-large for staggered four year terms. The School Board District provides educational services as authorized by state and federal guidelines.

The School District was established in 1847. The School District serves an area of approximately thirty-two square miles and is located in Crawford, Morrow, and Richland Counties. It is currently staffed by sixty-seven classified employees, one hundred sixteen certified teaching personnel, and fifteen administrative employees who provide services to approximately 1850 students and other community members. The School District is currently operates four buildings - Primary (Grades Pre-K - 2), Intermediate (Grades 3-5), Middle (Grades 6-8), and High (Grades 9-12).

OHIO PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM STATE LAWS AND AGENCIES

Article VI, section 2 of the Ohio Constitution requires the General Assembly to make provision for "a thorough and efficient system of common schools throughout the State." Although the Ohio Supreme Court found Ohio's school funding system to be unconstitutional for failing to provide such a system in the 1997 case of *DeRolph v. State*, the Supreme Court eventually took itself out of the school funding debate, and refused to issue any further orders to the General Assembly to reform the funding system.



Article VI, section 4 of the Ohio Constitution provides for a State Board of Education and a State

Superintendent of Public Instruction appointed by the State Board. Also, the Constitution directs the General Assembly to make provision for the organization, administration, and control of a public school system of the state. The General Assembly has done that in Revised Code 3301.07, vesting the State Board of Education with "general supervision of the system of public education in the State." The State Board has the power to establish educational standards for all schools in Ohio, both public and private. In addition, the State Board provides for a system of financial reporting which is used by each public school district. The State Board administers and supervises the allocation and distribution of all State and Federal funds for Ohio's public schools. The State Board can require every public school district to make such reports to it as the State Board deems "necessary and desirable".

In accordance with statutory procedures, the State Board classifies and charters school districts and may revoke charters and dissolve school districts, as well as approve the transfer of territory between districts. In cases of financial distress, the State Board is authorized to monitor and even take control of local school districts.

The State Department of Education consists of the State Board of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction and other personnel necessary to perform the duties and required functions of the Department.



School Districts

GENERALLY

To provide and administer the public education system under the general supervision of the State Board of Education, the State is divided geographically into various districts. These are designated as city, local, joint vocational school districts and educational service centers (previously known as county school boards). Exempted village school districts may no longer be created as such, although many such districts continue to exist. In 1997, the General Assembly provided for municipal school districts with specific criteria designed to fit the Cleveland Public Schools. Members of Municipal School Boards are appointed, not elected.

To date Cleveland is the State's only municipal school district. School district boundaries are independent of the boundaries of other political subdivisions, such as cities and townships. School district boundaries may contain areas lying within any other political subdivision and cross those boundaries. Like counties, municipalities and townships, school districts are considered political subdivisions under Ohio law.

CITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

City school districts exist within Ohio's cities (though as noted, school district boundaries are not necessarily co-terminus with municipal boundaries), and a "city" is defined as a municipal corporation with a population of 5,000 or more. If a city school district's population declines to under 5,000, it becomes a local school district. Because Galion is a city school district, the correct proper name for the Board of Education is "the Board of Education of the Galion City School District", but using the common name "Galion City Schools" or "GCS" is acceptable in most circumstances.

City school districts with a population of more than 150,000 have Boards containing no less than 5 and no more than 7 Members. There is a statutory process whereby the electors of the District can change the number of Members. The process calls for a petition process and the formation of a commission to recommend plans of organization. R.C. 3313.04.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Community schools, also known as charter schools, are independently governed public schools formed within an existing school district under Chapter 3314 of the Ohio Revised Code. Community schools operate without many of the statutory mandates of traditional public schools. They have no authority to impose local property taxes, but derive their funding by a transfer of dollars from traditional public schools based upon enrollment.



GENERALLY

Although the State Board of Education has plenary authority in the supervision of the public school system generally, the actual job of establishing and maintaining public schools is vested in the several school districts and their Boards of Education. Each Board of Education is charged with the responsibility of organizing, administering and controlling the public education system within its boundaries. Boards of Education are sometimes referred to as administrative, quasi-legislative and quasi-judicial agencies with responsibility to manage and control the affairs of the school district. City school districts with a population of more than 150,000 are required to have no less than 5 and no more than 7 members, all elected and serving at-large. R.C. 3313.02. City School Board candidates run in non-partisan elections held in odd numbered years. To be certified to the ballot, the candidate must submit a petition signed by at least 300 electors.

BOARD MEMBERS - TERM & OATH OF OFFICE

TERM

Terms of office of elected members of each Board of Education begin on January 1 after their election, and each member's term is for four years, expiring on December 31.

OATH OF OFFICE

Before taking up the duties of office, a member is required to take an oath to support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of Ohio and to perform faithfully the duties of the office. This oath may be administered by, among others, the Treasurer or any Board Member. Oath of Office and the Oath are included in Board Policy as 0142.1.

The Oath of Office is as follows:

Do you solemnly swear (or affirm) that you will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the state of Ohio; and that you will faithfully and impartially discharge your duties as members of the board of education of the Galion City School District, Crawford County, Ohio, to the best of your ability, and in accordance with the laws now in effect and hereafter to be enacted, during your continuance in said office, and until your successor is elected and qualified?



VACANCY



PRESIDENT

VACANCY

Unexpired term fulfillment or board vacancy is included in Board Policy 0145.

A Board vacancy may be caused by:

- Death
- Non-residence
- Resignation
- Removal from office
- Failure of a person to qualify within ten days after organization of the board or after the person's appointment or election
- Removal from the district
- Acceptance by a board member of an office the duties of which are incompatible with those of a board member, or
- Absence from board meetings for a period of ninety days if the absence is caused by a reason declared insufficient by a two-thirds vote of the remaining board members.

A majority vote of all the remaining Members is necessary to fill a vacancy. After the vote, the Treasurer must give written notice to the responsible board of elections that a vacancy has been filled and the name of the person appointed.

If the Board fails to fill a board vacancy within thirty days after the vacancy occurs, the probate court is required to appoint an individual to fill the vacancy as soon as possible.

Each person selected to fill a board vacancy holds office until the completion of the unexpired term, or until January 1st immediately following the next regular Board election more than ninety days after the person is selected, whichever period is shorter. A special election to fill the vacancy must be held unless the unexpired term ends on or before January 1st immediately following the regular Board of Education election. The term of a person chosen at a special election begins on January 1st immediately following the election.

PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

By law (R.C. 33 13.14), the Board elects at its annual organizational meeting a President and Vice President who serve one-year terms. Board Policy 0151 sets forth the procedures the Board will follow in electing its officers and policy 0152 addresses Board Officers.

Board Resolutions

The Board takes formal action by adopting written resolutions, although there are matters that can be handled by way of motions without an accompanying resolution, such as when the Board authorizes the administration to enter into negotiations over contracts and real estate matters. All of those actions are captured in the Board's minutes, which constitute the official record of Board action.

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS DUTIES

In addition to participating in committees and at regular and special Board meetings, Board Members in the Galion City School system traditionally discharge a variety of other duties, including providing remarks at high school graduation ceremonies, representing the District at school and community conferences, banquets, and other ceremonies for the District's academic and athletic programs. Board Members frequently are guests on public affairs television and radio programs.

COMPENSATION OF BOARD MEMBERS; INSURANCE

Each member of a Board of Education may be paid compensation as the Board provides by resolution, not exceeding \$125 per meeting attended. The Board may provide by resolution for compensation to board members for attendance at an approved training program. Such compensation may not exceed \$60 per day for attendance at a training program three hours or fewer in length, and \$125 per day for attendance at a training program longer than three hours.

The Board's current approved meeting compensation rate is \$125 per meeting attended, for a maximum of 12 meetings per year. No compensation is paid for attendance at committee meetings.

Board Members and their dependent family members may elect coverage under insurance benefit plans adopted by the district. Coverage must be elected in writing and announced at a public meeting and entered into the board minutes. The Board Member must pay for the cost of such coverage. Board Members may authorize the deduction from their compensation of the cost of group insurance payable by them under RC 3313.202.

A Board may vote to increase the compensation of its Members to the maximum permitted by RC 3313.12, but any such increase may not become effective with respect to a particular board member during that member's current term.

A Board Member may elect to become a member of the School Employees Retirement System (SERS) by filing an election with the board treasurer within 90 days of taking office.

REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

The Board established a "service fund" to pay expenses actually incurred by Board members or members-elect in their official duties. This fund is used at the Board's discretion to provide for members' participation (not compensation) in workshops and conferences, for new Board member orientation and training and for other expenses in connection with assigned duties as permitted by law, including those made for a public purpose as defined below.

The amount that may be set aside in a service fund to be used in paying expenses of Board Members incurred in the performance of their duties, or of Members-elect, is \$2 per pupil or \$20,000, whichever is greater. No school district may appropriate or spend more than \$60,000 from such a service fund in any one school year.

Board Members or Members-elect who incur expenses in carrying out their authorized duties will be reimbursed by the District upon submission of a properly filled out and approved voucher with supporting receipts required by administrative regulations. The voucher should be submitted to the Treasurer.

The following expenses actually incurred by Board members in the performance of their official duties, and not reimbursed by any other sources, are deemed approved expenses and appropriate for reimbursement:

1. All commercial transportation that is less expensive than first class airfare. Ground transportation during conferences will not exceed the:
 - a. cab fare from hotel of residence to the meeting and return (receipts required) and/or
 - b. cab or limousine fare from the airport to the hotel of residence and return (receipts required) .
2. Mileage incurred by Board members in the performance of their duties, including mileage to and from Board meetings, at the rate approved for Board employees, except that mileage and parking outside of Ohio is not to exceed the equivalent of "less expensive than first class airfare" plus taxi or limousine at distant location.
3. All hotel, motel or other overnight accommodations at the single occupancy rate plus tax and telephone surcharge . (Paid bill must be attached to the expense voucher.)
4. Registration fees (receipt must be attached to the expense voucher unless prepaid by the Treasurer).
5. Cost of meals consumed by the Board member, not to exceed \$50 per day (receipts required). Reimbursement for customary gratuities (usually 15%) is appropriate. Reimbursement for alcoholic beverages is prohibited.



REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES (CONT.)

6. Telephone calls for official business or for the reservation of rooms, meals or transportation.
7. Miscellaneous expenses (receipts required) such as baggage handling, turnpike tolls or postage (limited to business matters only).

Unauthorized expenses include, but are not limited to, alcohol, movies, supplemental insurance on rental cars, fines for traffic violations, and the entertainment /meals /lodging of spouses or guests. Board Member compensation and expenses are covered in Board Policy BHD and BHD-R.

REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

A Board Member, like all other elected officials in Ohio, is subject to removal from office for misconduct through a court proceeding pursuant to Revised Code 3.07 to 3.10. Grounds for removal include willfully and flagrantly exercising authority or power not authorized by law, refusing or neglecting to perform any official duty, gross neglect of duty, gross immorality, drunkenness, misfeasance, malfeasance, or nonfeasance.

Proceedings for removal are commenced by filing a complaint in the form of a recall petition signed by at least 15 percent of the electors who cast a ballot for governor within the District at the last gubernatorial election stating the charges alleged against the Member. If that threshold is met, the court conducts a trial on the charges and, if the charges properly allege misconduct and are proven, the Board Member is removed from office.

BOARD & BOARD MEMBER AUTHORITY; BOARD OFFICERS

The individual members of the Board have no authority to act for or bind the District in a legal sense; binding actions are taken by the Board as a whole at its meetings. The law does, however, vest the Board President with certain responsibilities that are exercised on behalf of the Board, including executing contracts and certain state certifications.



BOARD ROLE IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF OTHER PERSONNEL

While the Board directly hires, through an interview process, the Superintendent and the Treasurer, the Board hires all other personnel through the recommendation of the Superintendent. No teacher or administrator may be hired unless nominated by the Superintendent, but a teacher or administrator may be re-employed contrary to the Superintendent's recommendation with a three-fourth's vote of the Board. Once the Board has acted to grant an employee a contract, the law provides that the fact that the parties may not formally sign the contract is irrelevant and the person is still regarded as having a contract.



BOARD ROLE IN THE TERMINATION OF EMPLOYEES

Just as no person can be hired in the District without the Board taking official action, so too the Board must take formal action to terminate an employee or non-renew the individual's contract of employment. The law sets up a process whereby the contract of employment for school employees is deemed automatically renewed for the next year unless formal notice of non-renewal is given to the employee by a specific statutory date. The law also grants to all school employees the right to continue in their employment for the contract period unless there is good cause to terminate the contract. An employee who is alleged to have engaged in conduct warranting termination of employment is entitled to a hearing process and ultimately to an appeal to the Common Pleas Court where the issue of good cause for termination is reviewed.



ETHICS LAWS AND BOARD POLICIES

OHIO'S ETHICS LAWS

Ohio law requires all public officials and employees to comply with certain ethics laws, which are generally designed to ensure that those who conduct the public's business do so honestly and without improper personal interests playing a role in their decision-making.

Ohio's ethics laws generally prohibit public officials and employees from misusing their official positions for their own personal benefit or the benefit of their family members or business associates.

The Ohio Ethics Laws applicable to Board Members are set forth at Revised Code Chapter 102 and Revised Code Section 2923.41. The Ohio Ethics Commission has the power to investigate and enforce these ethics laws.

GENERAL PROHIBITIONS

The ethics statutes prohibit a Board Member from:

- being employed for compensation by the Board;
- having, directly or indirectly, any pecuniary interest in any contract with the Board;
- voting on an individual contract to employ a person as a teacher or instructor if the Board Member is related to that person as spouse, father, mother, brother or sister (This prohibition does not restrict a Board Member from voting on collective bargaining agreements.)
- authorizing, or employing the authority or influence of his or her office to secure authorization of any public contract in which the Board Member, a member of the Board Member's family or the Board Member's business associates have an interest;
- having an interest in the profits or benefits of a public contract entered into by, or for the use of, the District (even if the Board Member abstains);
- occupying any position of profit during his or her term of office or within one year thereafter in the prosecution of a public contract authorized by the Board while he or she was a member at the time of authorization of that contract;
- holding certain other offices that are deemed to be incompatible with service on the Board, such as an assistant city or county prosecutor or a member of a city council;



- and accepting an honorarium, which is a payment made in consideration for any speech given, article published, or attendance at any public or private conference, convention, meeting, social event, meal, or similar gathering. An honorarium does not include ceremonial gifts or awards that have insignificant monetary value; unsolicited gifts of nominal value or trivial items of informational value; or earned income from any person, other than a legislative agent, for personal services that are customarily provided in connection with the practice of a bona fide business, if that business initially began before the public official or employee conducting that business was elected or appointed to the public official's or employee's office or position of employment.

GIFTS

A common question for public officials is whether they can accept gifts. While public officials may accept gifts, they cannot solicit, accept, or use the authority of their public position to secure anything of value, including a gift, meal, or entertainment, which could have a substantial and improper influence upon them in the performance of their duties. To know whether you can accept a gift, meal, or entertainment, you need to determine both the value and source of the item.

If a gift is substantial in value and is from a prohibited source - someone doing or seeking to do business with the Board, regulated by the Board, or interested in matters before the Board - you cannot accept the gift.

Gifts of substantial value include meals at expensive or up scale restaurants; golf outings; season tickets to games of a sports team; the combination of travel, meal, and lodging expenses; jewelry; discounts on furniture and major appliances; and expensive tickets or an event that include s expensive tickets (such as a sporting event, concert, or theater performance.)

You can accept a gift of nominal value from any giver. Gifts of nominal value include small gifts, such as a book or a meal at a family or inexpensive restaurant; an inexpensive entertainment activity; invitations to an open house, and promotional items (e.g., at- shirt, mouse pad, or coffee mug.)

You may accept a gift of substantial value so long as the giver is not from a prohibited source. For example, you can accept a gift of substantial value that is motivated by the giver 's family relationship or personal friendship with you, rather than by your public position. Finally, you may have to disclose the source of certain gifts you receive on your financial disclosure form, as discussed below.



FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

A financial disclosure statement (FDS) is an annual report filed by many public officials and employees. In a FDS, the filer reports sources of income, investments, real estate holdings, and other financial interests. The purpose of the FDS is to remind public officials of those financial interests that might impair their judgment on behalf of the public, inform the public of those interests, and assist in instilling confidence in the actions of public officials.

Board Members, the Superintendent, the Treasurer, and the Business Manager are required to file an annual FDS with the Ohio Ethics Commission. The financial disclosure statement form can be found on the Ohio Ethics Commission Website: www.ethics.ohio.gov/forms/index.shtml In the FDS, filers must disclose:

- Sources of income of over \$500;
- Sources of gifts over \$500 (excluding most family members);
- Investments, debtors, and creditors over \$1000; and
- Most ownership and leasehold interests in real property.

For Board Members, the FDS forms are public record and copies provided to the public free of charge. For the Superintendent, Treasurer, and Business Manager, the FDS forms are confidential, but reviewed by the Ohio Ethics Commission for possible conflicts of interest. Only portions of the FDS showing possible conflicts are public.

Board Members, the Superintendent, the Treasurer, and the Business Manager must file FDS forms must be filed by April 15 of each year. Candidates (including incumbents who are candidates) must file an FDS 30 days prior to first election at which candidacy will be voted upon.

- ▶ Failure to file is a Fourth-degree misdemeanor with a maximum 30-day sentence and \$250 fine.
- ▶ False filing is a First-degree misdemeanor with a maximum six-month sentence and \$1000 fine.
- ▶ Fees up to \$250 can be assessed for late filing.

BOARD POLICIES REGARDING ETHICS

The Board of Education believes quality public education and good Board service should be conducted in an ethical manner with traditional principles such as honesty, trust, fairness, and integrity. Each Board member should conform his/her conduct to Ohio law, the code of ethics recommended by the Ohio School Boards Association and the code of conduct set forth below as adopted from the National School Boards Association publication **Becoming a Better Board Member**.

While serving as a member of the Board of Education, each member is expected to agree to abide by the following code of ethics promulgated by the Ohio School Boards Association:

1. remember that my first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of all students attending the public schools;
2. obey the laws of Ohio and the United States;
3. respect the confidentiality of privileged information;
4. recognize that as an individual Board member I have no authority to speak or act for the Board;
5. work with other members to establish effective Board policies;
6. delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the Superintendent and staff;
7. encourage ongoing communications among Board members, the Board, students, staff, and the community;
8. render all decisions based on the available facts and my independent judgment rather than succumbing to the influence of individuals or special interest groups;
9. make every effort to attend all Board meetings;
10. become informed concerning the issues to be considered at each meeting;
11. improve my boardmanship by studying educational issues and by participating in in-service programs;
12. support the employment of staff members based on qualifications and not as a result of influence;
13. cooperate with other Board members and administrators to establish a system of regular and impartial evaluations of all staff;
14. avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof;
15. refrain from using my Board position for benefit of myself, family members, or business associates;
16. express my personal opinions but, once the Board has acted, accept the will of the majority.

NOTE: This Code of Ethics has been adopted by the Ohio School Boards Association Delegate Assembly.





In addition, the Board of Education believes that each member should agree to work cooperatively and effectively with others and conform his/her behavior to the following code of conduct by collectively and individually agreeing to:

1. abide by the code of ethics promulgated by the Ohio School Boards Association;
2. act as an advocate for the Schools and for children;
3. set high expectations for the work of the Board;
4. keep the Board's primary focus on the best interests of students;
5. strive sincerely to build better relationships with one another and the Superintendent;
6. set clear goals for the Superintendent;
7. support the Superintendent and help him/her to be as effective as possible;
8. prepare carefully before each meeting so that when each Board member has the floor, s/he can make comments that are concise, organized, and clear;
9. vote his/her individual convictions based on the available facts and his/her independent judgment and refrain from surrendering his/her judgment to particular individuals or groups;
10. devote sufficient time, thought, and study to proposed actions;
11. become well versed in parliamentary procedure;
12. listen carefully and with courtesy when other people have the floor and are speaking during Board meetings;
13. refuse to become involved with micromanagement;
14. emphasize planning, policymaking, and public relations rather than becoming involved in management of the schools;
15. establish clear goals for the District and ensure that the community is aware of these goals;
16. keep abreast of current educational issues within the District, throughout the State, and across the nation;
17. establish fair and equitable terms and conditions of employment and evaluation of all staff; and
18. select sound instructional strategies and materials and submit them to regular and impartial evaluations.



Chapter 5

Galion City Schools, like nearly all public school districts in Ohio, relies upon local property taxes as a significant source of revenue. **IN FISCAL YEAR 2014, GCS ANTICIPATED RECEIVING APPROXIMATELY \$90 MILLION OPERATING FUNDS FROM LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES, REPRESENTING ABOUT 28% OF ITS OVERALL REVENUE OF \$319 MILLION. GCS PRESENTLY HAS IN PLACE 67.4 MILLS OF LOCAL PROPERTY TAXATION.**

The Board is responsible for adopting resolutions placing proposed property tax levies on the ballot for consideration by the electors of the District. While the District can provide educational information about the impact of the adoption or failure of a proposed levy, the District may not expend its resources advocating for the adoption of a levy. Levy campaigns in Galion are run by a committee known as The Committee for Schools which raises the campaign funds and directs the expenditure of those funds to promote passage of the levy. The Committee, like all political action committees, must report its revenues and expenditures on forms filed with the Crawford County Board of Elections.



KEEP CALM AND USE YOUR BEST JUDGEMENT

BOARD MEMBER AND SCHOOL DISTRICT LEGAL LIABILITY

BOARD MEMBERS

While we live in a litigious society, Board Members and other public officials are generally protected against any personal liability for their decisions and actions by the legal doctrine of "immunity". Immunity means that even if the party who sued has suffered some damage or loss, the public official will not be held personally responsible for that loss so long as the person was not acting in bad faith or with a malicious intent. The public policy that justifies the doctrine of immunity is that we want our public officials to be free to exercise their best judgment about what actions to take on behalf of the public without fear that they will be held personally, financially liable for a wrong or erroneous decision.

Ohio provides for immunity for public officials in a statute, Revised Code 2744, while federal law has a similar doctrine, known as qualified immunity that applies to claims for violations of federal rights.

SCHOOL DISTRICT

In Ohio for many decades before the 1980s, a similar immunity doctrine, known as sovereign immunity, applied to school districts and other political subdivisions to protect them from liability for personal injuries and property damage. The justification for barring suits against the government even when an innocent party suffered a loss at the hands of negligent government officials was sometimes described as growing out of the English rule that "you cannot sue the King".

In the 1980s, however, the Ohio Supreme Court abrogated that doctrine and the General Assembly responded by enacting Revised Code Chapter 2744, which permits, some suits against the government for personal injuries and property

OPEN MEETING LAW AND PUBLIC RECORDS

Like all public bodies in Ohio, the Board of Education must conduct its meetings in compliance with the law governing open meetings, Revised Code 121.22. A related statute, Revised Code 149.43, covers the subject of public records. Together, these statutes protect the public's right to know and observe the business being conducted by their representatives. The open meeting law is often referred to as "the Sunshine Law." Sometimes one sees references to the "FOIA" law, which is the federal Freedom of Information Act, however, that law applies to federal agencies only. Finally, the School District must comply with a federal law known as "FERPA", which is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act", which generally prohibits the release of student educational records, with certain exceptions.

OPEN MEETING LAW

GENERALLY

Revised Code 121.22 requires all public bodies to conduct their meetings only after providing proper notice to the public that a meeting will occur, and then to conduct that meeting in public. The term "public body" includes committees and sub-committees of the main public body. The term "meeting" is defined as "any prearranged discussion of the public business of the public body by a majority of its members." There are certain exceptions to the open meeting requirement permitting the body to hold a closed-door executive session to discuss certain sensitive subjects. The failure to comply with the Open Meeting Law renders actions taken at the improperly held meetings void. The minutes of a meeting of any public body must be promptly prepared, filed, and maintained and be open to public inspection. The minutes need only reflect the general subject matter of discussions in executive sessions.



Board Meeting

TYPES OF BOARD MEETINGS

Officially, there are only two types of meetings: regular and special. For the sake of clarity however, the Galion Board of Education assigns names to some of its regularly scheduled meetings.

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

The Board is required to hold an organizational meeting no later than January 15 of each year. The primary purpose of this meeting is to elect members to serve as president and vice president. The Dayton Board of Education also uses this meeting to establish regular meeting dates for year, approve membership in the Ohio School Boards Association, establish the service fund (the Board's budget), and to approve a resolution for the advance payment of taxes (as needed). Ohio Revised Code sets the service fund for a public school district at a rate of "two dollars for each child enrolled in the district, or twenty thousand dollars." Regardless of enrollment, the service fund cannot exceed sixty thousand dollars. (ORC 3315.15)

SPECIAL MEETING

A meeting is labeled a "special meeting" if it is called after the meetings for the year have been established and publicized at the Organizational Meeting. "A special meeting...may be called by the president or treasurer thereof or by any two members, by serving a written notice of the time and place of such meeting upon each member of the board at least two days prior to the date of such meeting. Such notice must be signed by the official or members calling the meeting." (ORC 3313.16) The media must be given notice 24 hours prior to holding any special meeting, with the exception of emergency meetings in which case notice must be provided as soon as possible

EMERGENCY MEETING

Emergency meetings are called when a matter of urgent necessity must be decided and there is not enough time to allow for the 48- hour notice to members, or the 24-hour notice to the media. An example of a reason to hold an emergency meeting would be if a boiler were to suddenly break down in a school building and need replacing. The board could then call an emergency meeting to authorize payment.

executive session

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ohio Sunshine Laws 2014: An Open Government Resource Manual specifies nine specific reasons that a public body may meet privately, or in executive session. Six of the reasons apply to school boards. They are:

REASONS FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION:

1. Consideration of the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of an employee, student, or school official, and/or to investigate charges of complaints against any such person, unless the person in question requests a public hearing (when an executive session is held under this provision, the motion and vote must state which one or more of these purposes is involved but need not state the name of any person to be considered);
2. Consideration of the purchase of property for public purposes, or sale of property at competitive bidding, but only if premature disclosure of information would give an unfair competitive or bargaining advantage to a person whose personal, private interest is adverse to the general public interest;
3. Conferences with an attorney involving pending or imminent court action;
4. Preparing for, conducting, or reviewing negotiations with employees regarding their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment;
5. Matters required to be kept confidential by state or federal law and/or;
6. Specialized to details of security arrangements.

During Executive Session

The Board is not permitted to take any official action (vote) during executive session. Likewise, minutes are not to be taken.

PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE OPEN MEETING LAW

Any person may bring an action alleging that a public body failed to comply with the Open Meeting Law and seek an injunction to require the public body to comply with the law. The statute also permits the party who successfully brings such an action to be awarded statutory penalties of up to \$500 per day,

COMMITTEES

BOARD COMMITTEES

Board members shall, when specifically charged to do so by the Board, conduct studies, make recommendations to the Board, and act in an advisory capacity, but shall not take action on behalf of the Board. Whenever a majority of a committee and/or sub-committee meets for any pre-arranged discussion of public business of that committee or sub-committee, it shall abide by the Open Meeting Law (R.C. 121.22). The law requires that the committee or sub-committee give public notice of each meeting as well as prepare, file, and maintain minutes of the proceedings. Such minutes shall also be available for inspection by the public. A committee may meet in executive session in accordance with the provisions of Bylaw 0166 - Executive Session.

Committees shall consist of no more than two (2) members.

A member may request (or refuse) appointment to a committee.

Each Board committee shall be convened by a chairperson who shall report for the committee.

Ad hoc committees may be created and charged at any time by the President or a majority of the members present at any meeting at which the need for a committee becomes evident.

COMMITTEES

Legislative Liaison

- Member districts are asked to appoint one board member to serve as the legislative liaison to OSBA. The role of this member, appointed by the president, has four main objectives: 1) to share with fellow board members legislative information received from OSBA, 2) to encourage other members to contact their representatives in congress regarding pending legislation related to educational issues, 3) to maintain active relationships with their legislators, and 4) to participate in OSBA's Kids PAC. (www.ohioschoolboards.org/legislative-liaisons-5)
- OSBA hosts a statewide legislative conference in Columbus, OH each year. In addition, each region holds its own legislative conference to address issues directly affecting their districts and constituencies.

Delegate and Alternative to the Ohio School Boards Association Annual Conference

- The Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA) is a State level professional organization that provides services to Boards of Education such as professional development /training, legislative representation, legal support and other services. OSBA hosts a Capital Conference the second week in November each year.

Student Achievement Liaison

- As with the Legislative Liaison, member districts are asked to appoint one board member to serve as its representative to SALT. The primary objectives of the SALT representative are: 1) to share information with fellow members about ways to improve student achievement, 2) encourage members to focus on student achievement, 3) maintain relationships with booster groups, 4) participate in SALT activities.
(www.ohioschoolboards.org/student-achievement-liaison-jobdescription)

Galion Area Betterment Commission

- The Galion Betterment Commission focus is to promote efforts to enhance the quality of life for Galion City residents and visitors, business owners, and institutions by providing support to community organizations, events, and other activities.

Pioneer Career Technical Center School Board

- As a participating district of the Pioneer Joint Vocational School District ("JVSD"), the Board of Education is entitled to representation on the Pioneer JVSD Board of Education in accordance with the most recent plan for the Pioneer JVSD on file with the Ohio Department of Education.

GEA Labor Relations Committee

- To investigate, study and discuss possible solutions to mutual problems affecting labor-management relations between the district and Galion Educational Association (GEA).

OAPSE Labor Relation Committee

- To investigate, study and discuss possible solutions to mutual problems affecting labor-management relations between the district and Ohio Association of Public School Employees

Audit Committee and Policy Committee

- The Audit Committee is established through board resolution to monitor and provide feedback on the District's financial audit. The Board is represented on the Audit Committee by the Chair of the Finance Committee.
- The Board Policy Committee reviews Policies at regular intervals to recommend changes to the Board when Policies have become outdated or no longer reflect actual practices in accordance with all state and federal laws. This includes but is not limited to policies for Human Resources, Business, Curriculum, Communication, Governance and Operations, Fiscal Management, Support Services and Students.



Public Records

THE PUBLIC RECORDS LAW

The Public Records Law works hand-in-hand with the Open Meeting Law, requiring all public offices to keep and make available for inspection and copying "public records". Like the Open Meeting Law, there are also exceptions to the rule permitting in some cases and requiring in others that the requested record remain confidential, such as an employee's medical records or social security number. Unlike the private sector, however, where personnel records are generally regarded as confidential, the personnel records pertaining to public employees, including performance reviews, are generally not confidential and are open for public inspection.

Under RC. 149.011 "records" or "public records" includes "any document, device, or item, regardless of physical form or characteristic, including an electronic record as defined in R.C. 1306.01, created or received by or coming under the jurisdiction of any public office of the state or its political subdivisions, which serves to document the organization, functions policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the office. "Email and text messages can constitute public records if they meet the above definition.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies. Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to certain other federal or state agencies for proper purposes and on the condition that those agencies not further disseminate the information. Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them.

FERPA
Family Educational
Rights and Privacy Act

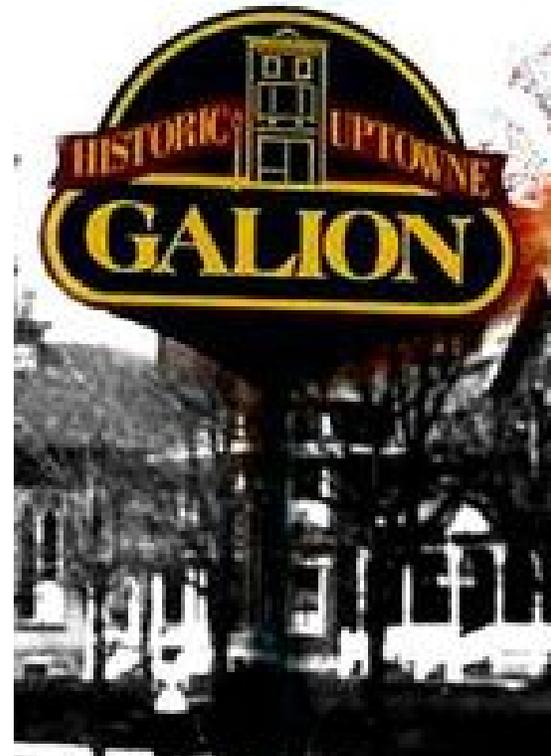


THE BOARD'S POLICY MANUAL

The Board has adopted a comprehensive Policy Manual that describes the District's operations and establishes formal policies for the District. The Policy Manual is found on the Board's website in the Bylaws and Policies section. The Policy Manual is organized into two parts as follows: "Bylaws and Policies" and Administrative Guidelines.

Bylaws and Policies

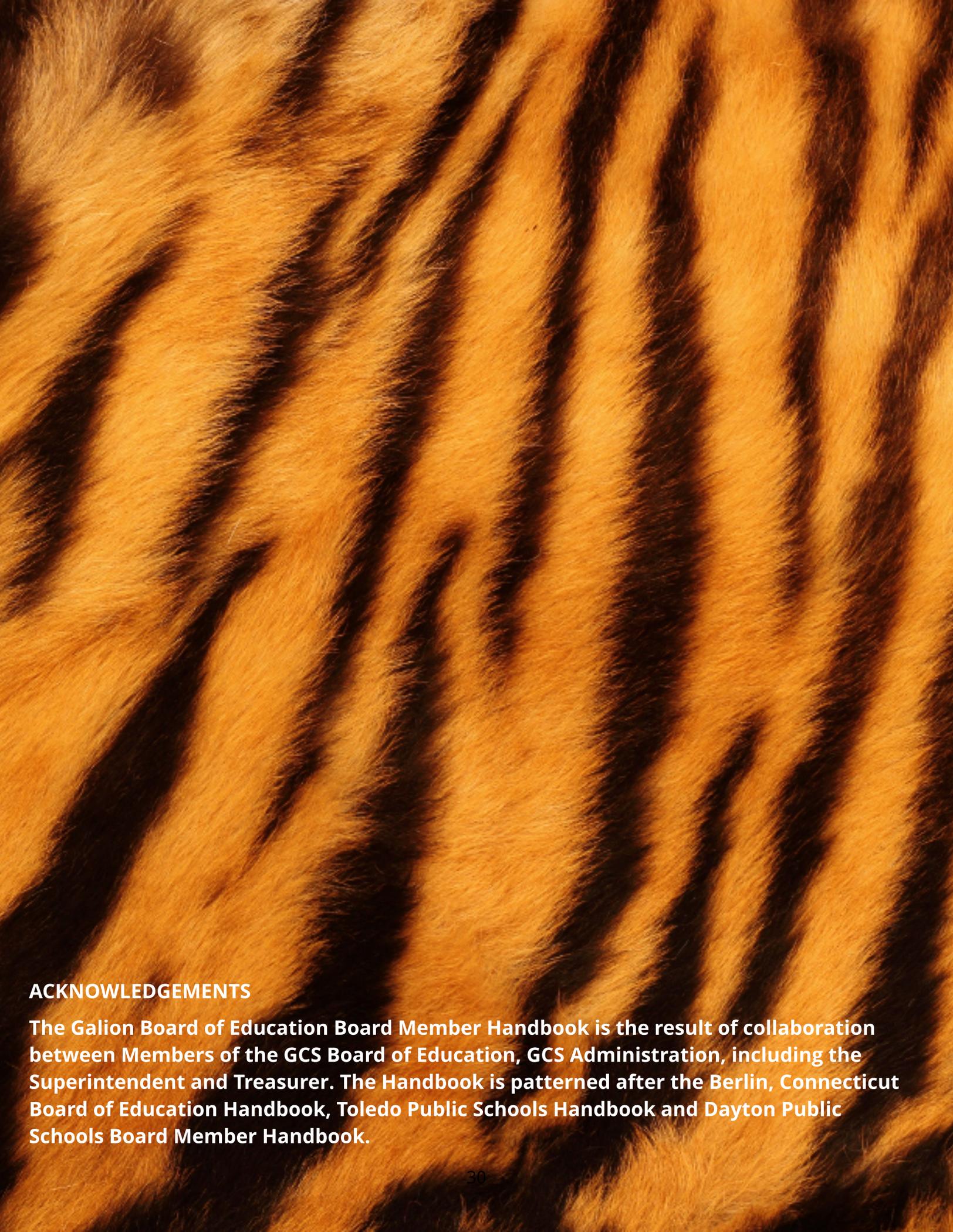
- 0000 Bylaws
- 1000 Administration
- 2000 Program
- 3000 Professional Staff
- 4000 Classified Staff
- 5000 Students
- 6000 Finances
- 7000 Property
- 8000 Operations
- 9000 Relations



Administrative Guidelines

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1000 Administration | 6000 Finances |
| 2000 Program | 7000 Property |
| 3000 Professional Staff | 8000 Operations |
| 4000 Classified Staff | 9000 Relations |
| 5000 Students | |

As noted, the Policy Manual is an excellent source of information about the District's operations (available at: <http://www.galionschools.org/district/board-of-education/bylaws-and-policies>). The Board's Policy Committee reviews the Policies at regular intervals to recommend changes to the Board when Policies have become outdated or no longer reflect actual practices.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Galion Board of Education Board Member Handbook is the result of collaboration between Members of the GCS Board of Education, GCS Administration, including the Superintendent and Treasurer. The Handbook is patterned after the Berlin, Connecticut Board of Education Handbook, Toledo Public Schools Handbook and Dayton Public Schools Board Member Handbook.