



## CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEW BRITAIN

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### **By-Laws of the Board of Education of the Consolidated School District of New Britain**

Revised and approved on November 6, 2017

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#### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of the Board of Education is to ensure that the children of the City of New Britain shall receive the best education possible and to this end shall formulate the policies that govern the operation of the entire school system with a focus on the vision statement, mission, and the district improvement plan as adopted by the Board of Education. Further, the New Britain Board of Education desires to conduct its meetings in an atmosphere which encourages each member to fully consider all issues, to carefully review all evidence presented and to make wise decisions to resolve those issues. Therefore, the Board of Education has adopted these procedures.

#### **Chapter I - Membership**

The Board of Education shall be comprised of as many members as the charter of the City of New Britain shall designate. Members shall be elected in accordance with the provisions set forward in the charter of the City of New Britain. Any vacancies of the Board shall be filled in accordance with State Law and the charter of the City of New Britain.

#### **Chapter II - Meetings**

##### **Section 1 - Annual Meeting**

The annual meeting of the Board of Education shall be held at the beginning of its first regular meeting following the date of the November general elections each year. The sole purpose of this section of the meeting shall be to elect Officers of the Board.

##### **Section 2 - Regular Meetings**

The Board of Education shall hold regular meetings at least once per month on the date and time established by the Board's adopted calendar of meetings, as outlined in the Board Policy 9320.00. Board of Education meetings will not continue past 10:00 p.m. This rule may be suspended for a specific purpose and a meeting may be extended for no more than one hour by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at the meeting. The notices and minutes of all regular meetings and committee meetings shall be filed in accordance with Board Policy 9320.00.

##### **Section 3 - Special Meetings**

Special meetings of the Board of Education may be called by the President of said Board and/or at the request of any three (3) members of said Board, provided, however, notice is given at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the date of said special meeting along with the items to be addressed.

#### **Section 4 - Quorum**

A majority of the sitting members of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business and a majority vote shall govern.

#### **Section 5 - Order of Business**

- A. The Order of Business shall be at the discretion of the President and may include the following items:
  - a. Call to Order
  - b. Pledge of Allegiance
  - c. Meditation
  - d. Approval of Minutes
  - e. Public Participation
  - f. Superintendent's Report
  - g. Committee Report
  - h. Consent Agenda
  - i. Board Report
  - j. Student Report
  - k. Old Business
  - l. New Business
  - m. Information Items
  - n. Other Business as Permitted by Law
  - o. Adjournment
  
- B. The order of business at a regular meeting may be suspended at any time by a majority vote of the members present at a meeting.
  
- C. The Board may discuss items in Executive Session in accordance with the guidelines listed in Board Policy 9320.00.

### **Chapter III - Officers**

#### **Section 1 - Nomination of Officers**

Nominations for officers shall be made from the floor by any member of the Board at the annual meeting. Nominations require no second. Any member nominated may rise to decline the nomination. All nominations made in absentia shall be considered accepted. The President and Vice President of the Board shall not be nominated or elected from the same political party. The Secretary of the Board may be elected from any political party. Each office shall be opened for nomination, and then voted on in the order listed below.

#### **Section 2 - Election of Officers**

A majority vote of the membership of the Board shall elect the following officers at the annual meeting:

- A) President
- B) Vice President
- C) Secretary

Voting shall be by voice vote unless a written ballot is requested by a majority vote of the present members. Nominations shall be opened for each office and voted upon in the order listed above.

In the case of a voice vote, candidates shall be voted on in the order nominated until one candidate receives a majority vote of the full membership. In the case of a written ballot, the vote shall be held on all nominees at once, with each member casting a ballot for the nominee of their choice.

If no nominee receives a majority vote of the membership after 3 rounds of nominations and voting the election of that office may be postponed until the next regular meeting of the board.

All officers shall serve until a replacement is elected in accordance with these bylaws or applicable state statute.

### **Section 3 - Vacancy in a Board Office**

Any vacancy shall be filled at the next regular meeting of the Board, after such vacancy is created, by a majority vote of the membership of the Board in the same manner outlined in Section 2 - Election of Officers.

### **Section 4 - Duties of Officers**

#### **A. President**

The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Education and shall perform other duties as directed by law, State Department of Education regulations, and by this Board.

- a. In carrying out these responsibilities, the President shall:
  - i. Sign the instruments, acts, and orders necessary to carry out state requirements and the will of the Board.
  - ii. Consult with the Superintendent, Committee Chairs, and other Board members, as needed, in the planning of the Board's agendas.
  - iii. Confer with the Superintendent on crucial matters which may occur between Board meetings.
  - iv. Establish Board ad-hoc committees, subject to Board approval. Assign Board members to the committees and designate the chairperson.
  - v. Call special meetings of the Board as necessary.
  - vi. Be public spokesperson for the Board at all times except as this responsibility is specifically delegated to others.
  - vii. Supervise the clerk of the Board in the performance of their duties
- b. As presiding officer at all meetings of the Board, the President shall:
  - i. Call meetings to order and Chair meetings in accordance with the bylaws of the Board and Robert's Rules of Order

- ii. Answer all parliamentary inquiries, referring questions of legality to the Board attorney.
- iii. Put motions to a vote, stating definitely and clearly the vote and result thereof.
- c. The President shall have the right, as other Board members have, to offer resolutions, discuss questions, and to vote.

**B. Vice-President**

The Vice-President shall:

- a. Perform the duties of the President at Board meetings in his/her absence.
- b. Chair the Board's Policy Committee.
- c. Assist the President in drafting the agenda for Board meetings

**C. Secretary**

The Secretary of the Board shall:

- a. Perform the duties of the President at Board meetings in the absence of the President and Vice-President.
- b. Review the minutes of the Board after each meeting and submit corrections to the Clerk before minutes are presented to the full Board for approval..
- c. Chair, at minimum, one standing committee or ad-hoc committee of the Board
- d. In the absence of the Board Clerk, record the minutes of all Board meetings.

## **Chapter IV - Duties and Responsibilities of Board Members**

Members of the Board of Education are expected to strive to improve public education, and to that end are expected to:

- A. Act as an active liaison to assigned schools. As a liaison Board members should establish a rapport with the building principal and the PTO/PTA/SGC;
- B. Remember always that the first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the student attending the public schools;
- C. Attend all regularly scheduled Board meetings insofar as possible, and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings;
- D. Endeavor to make policy decisions only after full discussion at publicly held Board meetings;
- E. Render all decisions based on the available facts and independent judgment, and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups;

- F. Encourage the free expression of opinion by all Board members, and seek systematic communications between the Board and students, staff and all segments of the community including state and local elected officials;
- G. Work with other Board members to establish effective Board policies and delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the superintendent;
- H. Communicate to other Board members and the Superintendent expressions of public reaction to Board policies and school programs;
- I. Learn about current educational issues by individual study through participation in programs providing needed information;
- J. Support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as school staff, and insist on a regular and impartial evaluation of all staff;
- K. Avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest, and refrain from using his/her Board position for personal or partisan gain; and
- L. Take no private action that will compromise the Board or administration, and respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law;
- M. Serve on committees of the Board;
- N. Participate in expulsion hearings and grievance hearings.

In addition, members of the Board are bound by the Code of Ethics of the City of New Britain as outlined in the City Charter. New Board members shall receive and sign for the Code of Ethics.

## **Chapter V - Miscellaneous**

### **Section 1 - Board Committees**

- A. The Board shall have the following standing committees:
  - a. Finance, Facilities and Transportation
  - b. Policy
  - c. Curriculum
  - d. Personnel
- B. Committees shall review matters referred to them either by the Board or by the administration and may refer matters to the full Board with or without a recommendation for action.
- C. Committee Chairs, and the committees they head, shall consult with the Board President and Superintendent in the process of drafting Board agendas.

- D. Except in the case of a committee charged with hearing and deciding expulsion cases and employee/union grievances, committees shall have no power to bind the Board, but may make recommendations to the Board for possible action.
- E. Committee assignments will be made by the Board president. The Board President will designate committee chairs.
- F. Ad hoc committees will exist only to the extent required to accomplish their assignments unless otherwise determined by the Board.
- G. A schedule of all regular meetings of standing committees shall be submitted to the Town Clerk and Secretary of State no later than January 31st of each year in accordance with State Law as outlined in Board Policy 9320.00.

## **Section 2 - Amendments**

These bylaws may be amended or altered by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of the Board present and voting, after notice of such amendment or alteration is given at the meeting previous to that in which the vote is taken.

## **Section 3 - Board Indemnity**

It is the policy of the Board of Education to fully comply with its obligation to protect members of the Board of Education from financial loss and expense, including attorney fees and costs as required under the provisions of Section 10-235 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

In the event a claim, demand or suit is brought against the Board of Education or any member(s) thereof, notice of such claim, demand or suit shall be sent forthwith to the Chairperson of the Board and to the Superintendent of Schools. The Board, through the Chairperson or the Superintendent, shall arrange for the engaging of an attorney(ies) to represent the Board or any member(s) thereof in connection with such action, at its expense, provided, however, in the event a judgment should be entered in a court of law against any member(s) for a malicious, wanton or willful act or *ultra vires* act on the part of such member(s), such member(s) shall reimburse the Board of Education for expenses it incurred in providing a defense in such action.

No member(s) shall unilaterally engage an attorney to represent him/her in connection with any claim, action or suit unless a request for representation has been denied. If a member should unilaterally engage an attorney to represent him/her in connection with any action and thereafter submits a demand for indemnification and/or reimbursement for costs of representation, such action to unilaterally engage an attorney shall be deemed to be *ultra vires* and the Board of Education shall not be obligated to reimburse and/or indemnify a member(s) for the costs of legal representation unless ordered to do so by a court of competent jurisdiction.

## **Section 4 - Orientation for New Board Members**

Between the election of new Board members and the first meeting of the Board of Education thereafter, an orientation session will be held by the President of the Board and the Superintendent. New Board members shall attend.

The orientation shall cover, but not be limited to, the following:

- Freedom of Information Laws
- Board of Education By-Laws

- All Board of Education Policies and Administrative Procedures
- Duties and Responsibilities
- Code of Ethics
- Instructional Overview
- CAFE Overview

In the event of a new member being appointed to fill a vacancy, every effort will be made to hold an orientation session in a timely manner covering the same topics listed above.

#### **Chapter VI - Rules of Order**

The current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern the proceedings of the Board of Education except when not in conflict with these By-laws and Procedures.