

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

No. 004

SECTION: Board Bylaws

TITLE: Membership

ADOPTED: August 16, 2018¹

REVISED: October 19, 2023

004 MEMBERSHIP

Purpose

This policy sets forth the composition of the Board of Education (“Board”) for The School District of Philadelphia (“District”) including the number of Board Members, qualifications and expectations, appointment processes, the role of Student Board Representatives, vacancies, term limits, and removal.

Authority

Membership of the Board is prescribed by the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter. [1][2][3]

Number of Board Members

The Board shall consist of nine members. There shall also be two (2) non-voting Student Representatives of the Board appointed and installed by the Board from among the students enrolled in the Philadelphia public schools and an identified alternate. The Superintendent shall have a seat on the Board and the right to speak on all matters, but not the right to vote. [2][4][5]

Board Member Qualifications

Members of the Board shall be residents of the City of Philadelphia. No person shall be eligible to be appointed for more than three (3) full terms. [3]

Board Members shall be of good moral character, at least 18 years of age [6], and reflect the diversity of backgrounds, experience and training that is representative of the City, including but not limited to: being the parent(s) of a current or former public school student(s); having training or experience in the areas of business, finance, education, public housing, or community affairs; or, having any other such training or expertise relevant and beneficial to the operations and management of the public school system. [3]

The authority of individual Board Members is limited to participating in actions taken by the Board as a collective body. Board Members shall have authority only when acting as the collective body unless otherwise permitted by law or Board policy.

¹ This policy was originally adopted as Policy 003: Membership

Board Member Expectations

Each Board Member shall:

1. File a Statement of Financial Interests form before taking the oath of office or entering upon their duties and annually by May 1.
2. Take and subscribe to the oath or affirmation prescribed by statute before entering the duties of the office. [7]
3. Not have been removed from any office of trust under federal, state or local laws for any malfeasance in such office. [8][9]
4. Adhere to all applicable Board policies including signing an acknowledgement of the Board's Ethics and Goals and Guardrails policies. [10][11][12]
5. Complete and maintain all mandatory clearances required of volunteers by Child Protective Services Law including the below: [13][14]
 - Department of Human Services Child Abuse History Clearance
 - Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal History Records Check
 - Federal Criminal History Record Information (CHRI)
6. Be prepared for and attend all business meetings of the Board in compliance with established norms and policies including Policy 009. [15][16][17]

Board Member Appointments

Board Members shall be appointed by the Mayor from lists of names submitted to them by the Educational Nominating Panel, and approved by resolution by members of City Council, and in accordance with law. [2][18][19]

Non-Voting Student Representatives

Appointment of the two (2) non-voting Student Representatives and alternate shall be approved by a majority vote of Board Members.

To facilitate effective communication and to enhance the opportunity for students to participate in District governance, the Board shall adopt a policy to set forth the duties and responsibilities of the Student Representatives. [5]

Board Member Vacancies

Vacancies in the office of Member of the Board shall be filled as provided by law. A vacancy in the office of Member of the Board shall be filled for the balance of the unexpired term. [20]

Board Member Term

The term of office of each Board Member shall be four years, commencing on May 1 of the year a Mayor's term of office begins. [21]

No person shall be eligible to be appointed or elected to more than three (3) full terms. [3]

Removal

Members of the Board shall serve at the pleasure of the Mayor. [8]

Core Requirements

Orientation and Training

The Board believes that the preparation of each Board Member for the performance of their duties is essential to the effectiveness of the Board's functioning. In order to contribute to productive and thoughtful governing, Board Members are expected to:

1. Understand state and federal mandates that guide policymaking;
2. Familiarize themselves with the language and implications of the District's collective bargaining agreements;
3. Familiarize themselves with Board policies;
4. Understand revenue streams, current budget allocations, and key District-wide investments; and
5. Understand the Board's role as authorizer of charter schools in Philadelphia.

All newly appointed Board Members and reappointed Board Members shall be required to complete the state- and legally-mandated orientation and training as outlined in the Board Operating Guidelines.

The Office of the Board of Education shall establish and implement a program to execute and manage necessary training and orientations for Board Members.

Expenses

Board Members serve without compensation; however, District funds may be used to pay for or reimburse Board Members for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the furtherance of their duties. [22]

The Board President or their designee must preauthorize the expense or the reimbursement before a Board Member incurs any expenses. Expenses incurred prior to authorization are subject to denial and will be approved only at the discretion of the Board President. Reimbursements shall only be approved for necessary expenses incurred while conducting official Board business. The Board Vice-President shall review and preauthorize expenses and reimbursements for the Board President. [22]

These expense authorizations may include relevant membership in professional associations and attendance at relevant conferences. When attending professional associations and/or conferences paid for by the Board, Board Members shall participate in their official capacity as Board Members and not in a personal capacity or any other role. [23][24]

Expenses of spouses or other persons who have no official Board responsibilities or duties but are accompanying Board Members during a Board Member's Board-related activities shall not be reimbursed.

Legal References:

1. [Home Rule Charter](#) §12-200
2. [Home Rule Charter](#) §12-201
3. [Home Rule Charter](#) §12-202
4. [24 P.S.](#) §10-1081
5. [Policy](#) 004.1 - Non-Voting Student Board Representatives
6. [24 P.S.](#) §3-322
7. [24 P.S.](#) §3-321
8. [Home Rule Charter](#) §12-204
9. [24 P.S.](#) §3-323
10. [Policy](#) 300 - Employee Code of Ethics
11. [Policy](#) 008 - Ethics Policy
12. [Policy](#) 003.1 - Goals and Guardrails
13. [Policy](#) 916 - Volunteers
14. [23 Pa. C.S.](#) §6344 et seq
15. [Policy](#) 009 - Principles of Governance and Leadership
16. [Policy](#) 006 - Meetings
17. [Policy](#) 005 - Organization
18. [Home Rule Charter](#) §12-206
19. [Home Rule Charter](#) §12-207
20. [Home Rule Charter](#) §12-205
21. [Home Rule Charter](#) §12-203
22. [Policy](#) 331 - Expense Reimbursement
23. [24 P.S.](#) §5-516
24. [24 P.S.](#) §5-516.1

Related Information:

1. 004 Membership Board Operating Guidelines