



Board of Trustees FAQ

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL BOARD DO?

The Cascade School District is governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of six (6) members. The Board of Trustees of Cascade School District # 3 and B is the governmental entity established by the state of Montana to plan and direct all aspects of the District's operations, to the end that students shall have ample opportunity to achieve their individual and collective learning potentials. (Policy 1000)

Policies of the Board define its organization and the manner of conducting its official business. The operating policies of the Board are those that it adopts from time to time to facilitate the performance of its responsibilities. (Policy 1310)

Its legal powers, duties and responsibilities are derived from the Montana Constitution and state statutes and regulations. Sources such as the school laws of Montana, and the administrative rules of the Board of Public Education and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction delineate the legal powers, duties and responsibilities of the Board. (Policy 1100)

The Board hires, evaluates, and seeks the recommendations of the Superintendent as the District chief executive officer. The Board adopts policies necessary to provide the general direction for the District and to encourage achievement of District goals. The Superintendent develops plans, programs, and procedures needed to implement the policies and directs the District's day-to-day operations. (Policy 1521)

Board member service and governance focuses on:

- Student Achievement
- Hire & evaluate the superintendent and delegate administrative duties
- Set educational goals based on state laws and community values
- Adopt & evaluate policies
- Approve the school's budget, set local levies and bond amounts
- Communicate with the community
- Committees (Policy, Facilities, Negotiations, Transportation, Finance)
- School Board training workshops

WHEN ARE BOARD MEETINGS HELD?

Regular School Board meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 6:00 p.m. The meetings are held in the school conference room (Rm 123) across from the Superintendent's office. See the school website and postings for occasional Special Meetings.

WHERE ARE SCHOOL BOARD AGENDAS POSTED?

- Cascade Post Office
- Wedsworth Library/Cascade Town Hall
- Stockmen's Bank
- Outside display boards on the north and east sides of school building
- Interior school bulletin board outside Supt office
- Cascade School website under School Board (www.cascade.k12.mt.us)

WHEN IS THE AGENDA AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC?

At least 48 hours before a meeting, but usually the Friday before.

NOTE: Montana law dictates that agendas are posted in 3 public places, 48 hours in advance. CPS posts the agenda in 7 different places, 5 days in advance.

MAY I SPEAK AT A BOARD MEETING?

Members of the community are given opportunity to make brief comments to the Board on any matters not included in the agenda. When you arrive at the meeting, please write your name on the sign-in sheet and the agenda item you wish to address. This will allow the chairperson to recognize you at the appropriate time and to guarantee you the opportunity to be heard. This request is a procedural propriety and is not intended to prevent additional participation and timely expression of views through attendance at Board meetings. Individuals will be granted up to three minutes to speak to an agenda item. Only items listed on the agenda, properly posted, can be discussed at a board meeting in order for the Board to be compliant with open meeting laws. It is important for all participants to be mindful that Board meetings are business meetings of the Board. Although meetings are held in public, they are not public meetings. Members of the public shall be recognized and allowed input during the meeting, at the discretion of the Chair. (Policy 1441 Public Participation at Board Meetings)

By law the Board cannot deliberate, debate or take any action on any matter presented during Public Comment. Comments about any staff, student, or member of the public are not allowed due to rights of privacy laws. Public Comment on Action agenda items is to be addressed when the item is being considered on the agenda.

The Board asks guests to observe the rules of courtesy and respect the rights of others, including not mentioning specific names due to rights of privacy. The Board Chair may terminate the right of any speaker who violates these requests. Loud and boisterous conduct at Board meetings will not be tolerated.

Members of the public are always welcome to comment on non-agenda items during the Public Comment portion of the meeting. Keep in mind that due to open meeting laws, the Board can only hear brief comments and are unable to discuss, deliberate, or debate any matter not on the agenda. Comments regarding any agenda item may be addressed during the public comment portion of that specific item. (Policy 1400, 1700)

HOW DO I ADDRESS A COMPLAINT?

The Board recognizes that concerns may arise with parents or other community members. Such concerns are best dealt with through communications with appropriate staff members. The following due process procedures should be followed to resolve concerns or answer questions.

1. Unsettled matters involving students should be directed to the teacher or staff member involved. Most complaints are resolved at this first level.
2. If the unsettled matter described in step one cannot be resolved satisfactorily or is a concern relating to an individual school district employee, the matter should be directed to the building principal.
3. If the matter described in step two cannot be resolved satisfactorily or is a concern about district operations, the concern should be directed to the superintendent.
4. Once all steps have been followed regarding a complaint, and it is still unresolved, it will be at the discretion of the Superintendent and/or Board Chair to place the item on the agenda. Due to privacy laws, complaints against District employees cannot be addressed at a public Board meeting.

Any member of the public is welcome to visit with Board members regarding issues, however, it is important to remember that individual board members cannot personally or legally resolve issues or complaints and individually have no authority over school affairs.

(Policy 1240 Duties of Individual Trustees and 1700 Uniform Complaint Procedure)

WHERE CAN I FIND SCHOOL BOARD POLICY?

The policies adopted by the School Board are available to the public on the school's website under School Board, Policies. (www.cascade.k12.mt.us/District/1144-Policies.html)

WHO WRITES SCHOOL BOARD POLICY?

All policies are written by the legal team at MTSBA per state and federal laws. The School Board's policy manual of approximately 350 policies was initially adopted by the Board in 2001, with revisions and additions ongoing. Newly required, recommended or revised policies are received by the superintendent's office from MTSBA. Those policies are reviewed and recommended policies are then forwarded to the Board for a first and second reading before adoption.

HOW DO I REACH A BOARD MEMBER?

Trustee contact information is posted on the school's website under School Board. To maximize transparency, note that any email or communications sent to trustees may become public documents pursuant to MCA 2-6-102.