



**RIVERSIDE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD of EDUCATION
HANDBOOK**

BOARD APPROVED
DECEMBER 15, 2022

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Introduction

Board service is both a tremendous challenge and a rewarding commitment. Being elected by a community to act as one of its representatives to the local school district board of education is an opportunity that should not be taken lightly. The board's leadership is crucial to the overall function of the district and its students' achievement.

Purpose of this handbook

This handbook serves as a ready reference for the members of the Riverside Local School District Board of Education to reinforce the board's work and provide a common understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each board member. It is imperative that all members fully understand their role and work as a cohesive team to effectively govern the district.

It is important to note that this handbook is not intended to replace the board's policy manual. All board members should be well acquainted with the board-adopted comprehensive policy manual. This can be found at:

<http://go.boarddocs.com/oh/rlsd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=CAJPWP65030E>

The District

Strategic Plan

A link to the district's current strategic plan may be found here:

<https://www.riversidelocalschools.com/protected/ArticleView.aspx?iid=6YYYP02&dasi=3U30>

Vision and Mission Statement

The district's Vision statement is "One Community. Pursuing Greatness. Getting Better Every Day"

The district's Mission statement is "Through a culture of excellence, immerse students in educational opportunities and empower them to excel in an interconnected world."

District Goals

The strategic plan focuses all district work within four broad and diverse areas: teaching and learning; fiscal sensibility; safety, climate and wellness; and advocacy, partnership and engagement.

About the District

The 65 square miles that encompass the Riverside Local School District are located in Lake County and serve nearly 4,300 students residing in Painesville Township, Concord, Leroy, Grand River, and a small section of northern Chardon. Riverside prides itself in offering an excellent education program to its students at great value to district taxpayers.

School Facilities

The Riverside Campus is home to students grades 8-12, while LaMuth Middle School serves students in grades 6-7. Buckeye Elementary, Melridge Elementary, Parkside Elementary, and Riverview Elementary, all serve grades kindergarten – 5th grade. Riverside also has a preschool and a virtual academy.

The Riverside Campus houses students in grades 8-12 and offers a variety of high-quality experiences for its students. Many students have earned an associate degree from Lakeland Community College before earning their high school diploma. Riverside Campus students have embraced the Credit Flexibility provision with students applying to receive high school credit for activities outside the traditional classroom setting.

Riverside High School joins an elite group of high schools being recognized by U.S. News & World Report as a “Best High Schools Bronze Award Recipient.” LaMuth Middle School is a 6-7 building that has won numerous awards from the Ohio Middle Level Association (formally Ohio Middle School Association) in the areas of teaming, scheduling, and interdisciplinary curriculum. The four elementary schools (K-5) are working together to provide common educational experiences and assessments across the vast district.

Average Daily Membership and Demographics

4,300 students across the district, which covers Concord, Leroy and Painesville Townships as well as Grand River and a small portion of Painesville City and Chardon.

Demographics:

White: 81.3%

Hispanic: 9.6%

Multiracial: 5.4%

African American: 2.9%

Asian/Pacific Islander: 0.8%

Key Administrative Contacts

Dr. Christopher J. Rateno, Superintendent,
Christopher.Rateno@riversideschools.net

Gary A. Platko, CPA, Treasurer/CFO,
Gary.Platko@riversideschools.net

Charles Schlick, Assistant Superintendent,
Charles.Schlick@riversideschools.net

Dr. Melissa Mlakar, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction,
Melissa.Mlakar@riversideschools.net

Cheryl Lanning, Executive Director of Pupil Services,
Cheryl.Lanning@riversideschools.net

Nick Carrabine, Marketing and Communications Director,
Nick.Carrabine@riversideschools.net

Mallory Aliff, Director of Human Resources,
Mallory.Aliff@riversideschools.net

Michael Patrizi, Assistant Treasurer,
Michael.Patrizi@riversideschools.net

Board Members (2022)

Lori Krenisky, Board President, Lori.Krenisky@riversideschools.net

Thomas Hach, Vice President, Thomas.Hach@riversideschools.net

Scott Fishel, Board Member, Scott.Fishel@riversideschools.net

Belinda Grassi, Board Member, Belinda.Grassi@riversideschools.net

Jennifer Harden, Board Member, Jennifer.Harden@riversideschools.net

Organizational Chart

A full district organizational chart can be found in the policy manual and is referenced below. Board members are responsible for the hiring, guidance and evaluation of the superintendent and treasurer. All other administrators and staff in the district are selected, managed and evaluated by these two educational administrators.

The Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA) regularly refers to the board, superintendent and treasurer as the district's leadership team.

Reference Board Policy:

[District Organization, po1100](#)

Budget and Financial Information

It's important that board members have a general understanding of the district's budget and are able to speak to community members and others about the financial position, needs and outlook.

Monthly financial reports are available at this link:

<https://www.riversidelocalschools.com/TreasurerCFO.aspx>

The board relies on the district's 5-year Forecast to make decisions and to predict how best to govern the district. The forecast changes on a regular basis and is discussed with the board members by the treasurer at November and May board meetings. Details on the current Forecast are available here:

<https://www.riversidelocalschools.com/TreasurerCFO.aspx>

Reference Board Policy:

[Budget Planning, po6210](#)

[Financial Report, po6820](#)

District Calendar

The Board shall determine annually the total number of hours when the schools will be in session for instructional purposes with students in attendance - including scheduled classes, supervised activities and approved education options. More information about the district and school calendar is detailed in the district's policy manual.

Reference Board Policy:

[School Calendar, po8210](#)

Board of Education Calendar

Board meetings are held monthly and are determined and approved for the year at the Organizational Meeting in January. A full list of board meetings, including additional or special meetings added during the course of the year, is available on the district website:

<https://www.riversidelocalschools.com/BoardofEducation.aspx>

Boards of Education

Board Member Authority and Duties

The role and function the board and its members are often misinterpreted by the public and in some instances by board members themselves.

The Ohio legislature has essentially delegated the organization, administration and control of the public schools to boards of education. While boards of education have very broad powers, their authority isn't unlimited. The courts have held that the board has only such authority as is expressly given by statute or necessarily implied. The courts have generally supported the sound judgment of boards when they act in good faith, are not arbitrary or unreasonable, and are not in clear violation of the law.

A board's primary function is that of policy making. A board should have clear and concise policies to do the job it was elected to do and effect the orderly administration of the district's schools. The task of understanding and approving the policies within the district's policy manual falls directly on the board. Once policies are adopted and administrative procedures are established, the board should depend on its superintendent and treasurer for implementation.

Helping new board members become familiar quickly is another important role for veteran board members. OSBA offers Five Fast Facts about new board member orientation here:

<https://www.ohioschoolboards.org/sites/default/files/FastFacts-NBMtransition.pdf>

Riverside Local Schools' policy manual may be found here:

<http://go.boarddocs.com/oh/rlsd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=CAJPWP65030E>

Boards are not administrators. The function of hiring and evaluating staff is not within the direct authority of the board or its individual members with exception of the superintendent and treasurer. It's important for the board to ensure that a sound administrative process is in place for the evaluation of all staff and to hold the superintendent and treasurer accountable for the administration of adopted procedures.

The board is responsible for adopting an evaluation procedure and administering the evaluations of the superintendent ([RC 3319.01](#)) and the treasurer ([RC 3313.22](#)) in accordance with the adopted procedure. Both of these school administrators should be evaluated each year.

Riverside's policies related to Superintendent and Treasurer employment and evaluation may be found by:

Reference Board Policy:

[Employment of the Superintendent, po1220](#)

[Evaluation of the Superintendent, po 1240](#)

[Employment of the Treasurer. po1310](#)

[Evaluation of the Treasurer, po1330](#)

An important function of the board is to be accountable to the community and advise the superintendent on the climate of the community. Board members

should be very careful to distinguish between listening to community stakeholders and to intercede as individuals in matters that pertain to the entire board or the administrative team. Individual board members only have legal authority when the board is convened in public session.

Board Member Code of Ethics

Ohio laws set minimum ethical standards for public officials, including school board members, school district employees and members of school district financial planning and supervision commissions. The ethics law is found in [RC Chapter 102](#). Additionally, there are two ethics restrictions found in the criminal code ([RC 2921.42](#) and [RC 2921.43](#)) and two statutes, ([RC 3319.21](#) and [RC 3313.33](#)), that apply specifically to school board members. It is important to read and understand these statutes.

The Ohio School Boards Association offers the guidelines for good board member behavior as a Code of Ethics. It may be found at: <https://www.ohioschoolboards.org/code-ethics> but includes the following:

- Remember that my first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of all students attending the public schools;
- Obey the laws of Ohio and the United States;
- Respect the confidentiality of privileged information;
- Recognize that as an individual board member I have no authority to speak or act for the board;
- Work with other members to establish effective board policies;
- Delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the superintendent, treasurer and other staff;
- Encourage ongoing communications among board members, staff and the community;
- Render all decisions based on the available facts and my independent judgment rather than succumbing to the influence of individuals or special interest groups;
- Make every effort to attend all board meetings;
- Become informed concerning the issues to be considered at each meeting;
- Improve my boardmanship by studying educational issues and by participating in professional development programs;
- Support the employment of staff members based on qualifications and not as a result of influence;
- Cooperate with other board members and administrators to establish a system of regular and impartial evaluations of all staff;
- Avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof;
- Refrain from using my board position for the benefit of myself, family members or business associates;

- Express my personal opinions but, once the board has acted, accept the will of the majority.

Board Officers

In accordance with Ohio statute [RC 3313.14](#), the board elects a President and Vice President at its organizational meeting in January to serve a term of one year. Any member may be voted into either position by a simple majority vote of the members present.

Role of the President

The president presides over all board meetings and carries out other important leadership responsibilities, such as:

- Maintain the orderly conduct of all board meetings;
- Sign all approved meeting proceedings after the signature of the treasurer;
- Act as the board's representative when signing contracts, memoranda of understanding, [5705.412](#) (.412) certificates and other official board documents;
- Ensure that the community has a voice at meetings (within board policy);
- Call special meetings of the board as necessary;
- Facilitate good communication among the board members and administration.

Role of Vice President

The vice president is authorized to fulfill all responsibilities and duties held by the president, in the event of that person's absence.

Role of the Treasurer Pro Tempore

If the treasurer is absent for any meeting(s), the **board is required to elect a treasurer pro tempore from its membership**. The treasurer pro tempore is responsible for keeping record of the meeting's procedures, including meeting start and end times, taking roll call, keeping record of motions and votes and certifying the contents of the official minutes of the meeting.

Reference Board Policy:

[Officers, po0152](#)

[Board Officers, po0173](#)

[Incapacity of Treasurer, po1350](#)

Operating Protocol

Board/Superintendent Relationship

One of the board's greatest responsibilities is the selection and employment of a competent superintendent. The only positions reporting directly to the board are the superintendent and treasurer. The success of the school system depends to a great extent on the working relationship between the board and its superintendent. The most important element of this relationship is trust. Each member of the board needs to understand the role of the board and the role of the superintendent and respect those roles.

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) defines the role of the superintendent as the district's chief educational leader with direct responsibility for the administration and operation of the school district. The superintendent is charged with implementing board-approved policies and presenting recommendations for board consideration and approval. Communication is crucial to allow the board to function in its role of governance oversight and accountability.

Reference Board Policy:

[Board/Superintendent Communication, po1210](#)

Board/Treasurer Relationship

The treasurer reports directly to the board and is responsible for the accounting of all money received and spent by the district. The treasurer maintains the official financial records and must keep the board well informed of all financial forecasts. Riverside's Current Five-Year Forecast is available on this webpage: <https://www.riversidelocalschools.com/TreasurerCFO.aspx>

In addition to the treasurer's financial duties, he or she acts as the board's secretary. The secretary is responsible for maintaining the official minutes of all board meetings including the date, time, location, board member roll, and record of all actions taken and approved by the board.

Reference Board Policy:

[Duties of the Treasurer, po1320](#)

Evaluation of the Superintendent and Treasurer

The board is required to adopt procedures for the evaluation of its superintendent ([RC 3319.01](#)) and treasurer ([RC 3313.22](#)). The board must consider the evaluation when deciding to renew or not to renew the superintendent or treasurer. However, the evaluation does not imply continued employment.

Board Committees

The board may authorize the establishment of committees from among its membership as it deems necessary for operation of the district. It is typically the responsibility of the board president to assign board members to board committees. This is done at or shortly after the organizational meeting in January. Ideally this is done in consultation with each member to best align with his or her area of expertise and interest.

Currently, Riverside utilizes four board committees: a Policy Committee, a Curriculum and Programming Committee, a Buildings & Grounds/Operations Committee and a Finance/Audit and Personnel Committee.

Copies of past board committee meeting minutes are on file with the Treasurer.

Board's Role in Employment of School Personnel

Other than the superintendent and treasurer, the board acts on the hiring of all other school employees ([RC 3319.07](#)) but does not recommend which employees to hire or serve on hiring committees.

No teacher may be initially hired by the district unless such person is first nominated by the superintendent ([RC 3319.07](#)). The board may designate someone other than the superintendent to nominate a teacher for employment if the superintendent's nomination would create a conflict of interest in a public contract ([RC 3319.07](#)).

Board's Role in Termination of School Personnel

As with hiring, no employee may be terminated or non-renewed without official board action.

Filling Board Member Vacancies

A vacancy on any board can occur for various reasons, including but not limited to:

- Death of the sitting member
- Move to a residence outside the district
- Resignation
- Removal from office
- Failure of a person elected to office to qualify within 10 days after the organizational meeting or of his or her appointment or election
- Accepting a public office that is incompatible with the office of board of education

OSBA maintains a fact sheet on board vacancies that can be found here:
<https://www.ohioschoolboards.org/sites/default/files/OSBABoardVacanciesFactSheet.pdf>

Removal from Office

All elected officials in Ohio are subject to removal from office for misconduct through a court proceeding pursuant to [RC 3.07](#) and [RC 3.08](#). Grounds for removing a board member may include:

- Willfully and flagrantly exercising authority or power not authorized by the State of Ohio
- Refusing or neglecting to perform any official duty
- Gross neglect of duty
- Gross immorality
- Drunkenness
- Misfeasance, malfeasance, or nonfeasance

To initiate proceedings for removal, a recall petition must be signed by at least 15% of the total vote cast for governor at the most recent election for office of governor. The petition must state the charges alleged against the said board member. The law directs that a hearing on the removal be conducted within 30 days. At the hearing, the judge, or if requested, a jury, may order the removal of a board member.

Reference Board Policy

[Resignation or Removal, po0146](#)

Compensation of Board Members

Board members may be compensated for their service (see Ohio Revised Code Section (RC) [3313.12](#), [3311.19](#)).

The Ohio Constitution prohibits increases or decreases in compensation for public officials during a term of office ([Oh. Const. Art. II, Sec. 20](#)).

A board may pass a resolution or change board policy to change board compensation amounts at any time, but those changes will apply only to board members beginning new terms or for those appointed to a vacancy after the change is made.

OSBA maintains a fact sheet on Board Member Compensation which may be found here:
<https://www.ohioschoolboards.org/sites/default/files/OSBABoardCompensationFactSheet.pdf>

Professional Development

Board members are expected to seek opportunities for continued professional growth while serving in office.

Reference Board Policy

[School Board Conferences, Conventions and Workshops, po0175.1](#)

Reimbursement of Expenses

[RC 3315.15](#) permits districts to create a “service fund” which can be used to pay those expenses actually incurred by board members in the performance of their official duties. This fund may not exceed the equivalent of \$2 per student enrolled in the district, or \$20,000, whichever is greater. It also may be used to pay the expenses actually incurred by board members-to-be for training and orientation occurring between the date of election or appointment and the date of administration of the oath of office.

Board Meetings

Board meetings are crucial to the work of the school board. As public officials, the law requires that the board conduct its business in public. No vote is valid unless it is recorded in a public session. The way in which the board conducts its business in public reflects on the quality of the work of the entire district.

Attendance at Board Meetings

A quorum of members is required for a board meeting to be considered official. At Riverside Local, this is three of our five sitting board members. As a member of the board, your attendance is crucial to the board’s ability to conduct its business. This includes all regular and special meetings, committee meetings, emergency meetings, workshops and trainings, etc.

Types of Board Meetings

A “meeting” is defined as any prearranged discussion of the public business of a board of education, committee or subcommittee by a majority of its members. There are two basic types of board meetings: regular and special. Under those two overarching headings, there are several variations of meetings formats.

Organizational Meeting

City, local, exempted village and JVS boards are required to hold a regular “Organizational Meeting” no later than Jan.15 each year. An ESC board has until the end of the month to hold its organizational meeting. At this meeting, the board must elect a president and vice president, each to serve a one-year term. Other items typically included in the organizational meeting agenda are:

- Oath of office for new members
- Establishing dates, times and locations for the year’s regular meetings
- Approving membership in the Ohio School Boards Association
- Appointments to the JVS board
- Adoption of the district’s tax budget per [RC 5705.28](#)
- Board committee appointments

Board Work Sessions/Retreats

These meetings usually refer to meetings at which the board will discuss matters but take no action. If scheduled at the organizational meeting, work sessions are considered regular meetings. If the work session or training was not set by the board in January at the organizational meeting, it’s a special meeting. Although no votes are typically taken at these meetings, the work session will likely meet the definition of a “meeting” and the Open Meetings Act will apply, including the requirement to properly notice the meeting, make it open to the public, and take minutes.

Emergency Meetings

Boards may hold an emergency meeting to discuss matters of exceptional urgency that require immediate board action. In the event of an emergency, the standard rule of 24-hour notice to the media and 48-hour notice to board members is replaced with a requirement to provide notice as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Executive Session

Executive session is only to be used for specific reasons, which are clearly indicated in the Sunshine Law. It is vitally important for all board members to observe 100% confidentiality of any items or issues that are discussed. Any discussion of executive session content outside of the session is a serious breach of trust and a sign of poor boardmanship, and should be avoided under all circumstances.

Specific legal boundaries for executive sessions are covered in the Sunshine Law and Public Records section.

Meeting Agendas

Meeting agendas and related meeting materials are distributed to each board member prior to the meeting. As a board member, you are expected to understand the agenda and become familiar with the packet contents before arriving at the meeting. Questions about the agenda and meeting materials should be directed to the board president or superintendent prior to the meeting.

Individual board members who wish to add items to the meeting agenda should provide detail and a request to the board president or directly to the superintendent. Other board members may/should also be consulted about whether such item requests merit addition.

During the meeting itself, discussion should be contained and limited to agenda items once motions have been made and seconded. Board members should endeavor to contribute meaningful discussion to these items and to ask related questions if warranted. Conversation and discussion unrelated to the agenda approved at the beginning of the meeting is not recommended.

Amendments to the Agenda

Amendments may be made to the agenda prior to its adoption during the meeting. A majority vote adopts an agenda. After it's adopted, only a 2/3 vote or unanimous consent may change the agenda.

Meeting Protocol

Meetings follow the guidelines set forth in "Robert's Rules of Order." The treasurer acts as the official record keeper and is responsible for keeping the minutes of the meeting's proceedings. In the event that the treasurer is absent or unable to perform his or her duties, the board must elect a Treasurer Pro Tempore from its membership to serve in the treasurer's capacity as the meeting record-keeper.

Role of the Board President

The board president has a crucial role as the meeting's parliamentarian. He or she is responsible for maintaining proper meeting decorum. It's important that the president be comfortable with meeting procedures. The president should be willing to take control of the meeting if the proceedings become disorderly and ensure that all have a fair and equal voice.

Motions

Superintendent recommendations and other agenda items before the board must be put in the form of a motion (so moved by a member of the board) and seconded by another member before they may be discussed and brought to a vote. The point of a motion is to ensure that only one idea at a time is before the board for discussion. This maintains an orderly progression for the meeting. Once a vote is taken, that motion may not be reconsidered in the same session.

Public Participation

An important consideration for every board meeting is allowing time for members of the public to address the board. This should not be a time of public debate. All members of the board and public should be aware of and abide by the board's public participation policy.

Reference Board Policy

[Public Participation at Board Meetings, po0169.1](#)

Voting

It is important for every board member to be familiar with the legal rules relating to voting. In most cases, a simple majority is sufficient to carry a motion provided a legal quorum is in attendance, but in some instances, that is not sufficient. [RC 3313.18](#) specifies that the following items require a majority vote of ALL members for passage:

- to adopt a resolution authorizing the purchase or sale of real or personal property;
- to employ a superintendent, treasurer, teacher or other employee;
- to elect or appoint an officer;
- to pay any debt or claim; and
- to adopt any textbook.

It is the professional responsibility of each member to vote. However, in some instances, abstention, or the removal of oneself from the voting, may be required by law. For instance, a board member may not vote or participate in the making of a contract of a public school teacher or instructor where the board member is related to the individual under consideration as father, brother, mother, or sister ([RC 3319.21](#)). Members are also forbidden under [RC 2921.42](#) to secure approval of an individual contract with his or her spouse. [RC 3313.33](#) prohibits a board member from having any pecuniary interest either directly or indirectly in any contract of the board.

There are exceptions to these general rules. In cases where there are questions about voting, OSBA or the board's attorney may be contacted.

Reference Board Policy

[Voting, po0167](#)

OSBA maintains the *Voting Makes a Difference* fact sheet at:
<https://www.ohioschoolboards.org/sites/default/files/OSBABoardVotingFactSheet.pdf>

Respecting the Will of the Majority

Once a motion has been made and seconded and any discussion requested and considered, the board president will ask the treasurer to “call the roll” and each board member will cast their vote with an “aye/yes” or a “nay/no”. Once the vote has been taken, and a motion passed or failed, the board has “spoken”. Opinions should be voiced during the discussion phase of the motion. The product of the vote is a board – not individual – outcome. It is recommended that members of the community or media who request an individual board member’s perspective should be directed to the meeting’s official video and minutes.

Sunshine Law and Public Records

Ohio’s Sunshine Law

Ohio's Sunshine Law (RC 121.22) requires that all acts and most deliberations of boards of education and other public bodies, as well as their committees and subcommittees, be conducted in public. The board must provide notice of when those meetings will occur and keep minutes of the proceedings.

What Board Members Need to Know

As a board member, it is important to remember that if a majority of the board (3 or more of a five-member board) meet formally or informally to discuss district business, that could be construed as a board meeting and is subject to the Sunshine Law. The law allows for a majority of board members to be present at any given meeting as long as they are observers and not engaging in any board-related discussion.

Please see OSBA’s updated fact sheet on Ohio Sunshine Law at:
<https://www.ohioschoolboards.org/sites/default/files/OSBASunshineLawFactSheet.pdf>

Executive Sessions

The rules of executive session are clearly stated in the Sunshine Law. For the Riverside board to enter executive session, there must be a motion, second and roll call vote. The purpose or purposes of the session must be stated in the motion and while in session those are to be the only topics of discussion. No official action or vote may be taken in executive session. Each board member is expected to observe strict confidentiality regarding executive session discussion.

Sharing executive session content outside of session is a sign of poor boardmanship and in some cases may cause legal liability.

There are seven acceptable topics for executive session that apply to boards of education. They are:

- The appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion or compensation of an employee or official, or the investigation of charges or complaints against an employee, official, licensee or student, unless the employee, official, licensee or student requests a public hearing.
- The purchase of property for public purposes, or the sale of property at competitive bidding, or the disposition of unneeded, obsolete or unfit-for-use school property.
- Conferences with the board's attorney to discuss matters which are the subject of pending or imminent court action.
- Preparing for, conducting, or reviewing negotiations or bargaining sessions with employees.
- Matters required to be kept confidential by federal law or rules or state statutes.
- Specialized details of security arrangements and emergency response protocols for a public body or a public office.
- To consider confidential information related to marketing plans, specific business strategy, production techniques, or personal financial statements of an applicant for economic development assistance or related to negotiations with other political subdivisions respecting requests for economic development assistance.

[RC 121.22](#) provides specific wording for each executive session topic, which should be used in the actual motion.

Penalties for Violation of the Sunshine Law

The Sunshine Law makes it clear that any board action is invalid if the board violated any of the notice provisions of the law. A court may issue an injunction compelling members of the board, committee or subcommittee to comply with the Sunshine Law.

Please see OSBA's updated fact sheet on Ohio Sunshine Law at:

<https://www.ohioschoolboards.org/sites/default/files/OSBASunshineLawFactSheet.pdf>

Public Records Law

Like the Open Meeting Law, the Public Records Law requires public offices to keep and make available for inspection and copying records pertaining to school

business. In most districts, the treasurer is responsible for keeping all records and complying with public record requests. Any member of the public may make a request but must follow the board's public records request policy.

It is important to remember that under [RC 1306.01](#), any document, device, or item, regardless of physical form or characteristic, including an electronic record which serves to document the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the office are deemed public records. This may include emails or text messages.

OSBA offers a "Five Fast Facts" board members should know about the Public Records Law: <https://www.ohioschoolboards.org/sites/default/files/FastFacts-PublicRecords.pdf>

Levies and Bond Issues

What is a tax levy?

Boards of education may propose additional local revenues in the form of a specific tax by a board resolution. School districts can place a levy on the ballot up to three times a year on specific election dates. If a majority of voters who vote on the issue approve the tax, county officials charge and collect the tax under the terms specified in the tax levy proposal. The funds collected are then disbursed to the district. When a levy is placed on the ballot, it must identify as its objective a legally defined school district purpose. Permissible uses for a tax levy depend on the type of levy, but may include:

- Operating expenses
- General ongoing improvements
- Specific permanent improvements
- Purchase of educational technology
- Debt service for bonds issued for school construction

Common Types of School Tax Levies

There are several types of levies, including General, Emergency, Dual Purpose, Incremental, Growth and Bond issues.

OSBA offers detailed information on Understanding Tax Levies here: <https://www.ohioschoolboards.org/sites/default/files/OSBAUnderstandingLeviesFactSheet.pdf>

What Is a Mill?

The unit of value for expressing the rate of property taxes in Ohio is the mill. A mill is defined as one-tenth of a percent or one-tenth of a cent (0.1 cents) in cash

terms. Millage is the factor applied to the assessed value of property to produce tax revenue.

Board of Education Involvement in Levy Campaigns

Ohio Revised Code [RC 3315.07](#) specifically prohibits boards of education from spending public money to support or oppose the passage of a levy or bond issue. [RC 9.03](#) allows boards to use public funds to publish and distribute communications, as long as the purpose behind the communication is to provide information about the school district and not to sway the recipient of the communication.

Under [RC 3313.77](#), a board of education may allow community groups to use its facilities for auxiliary, educational, recreational, cultural, civic, social, religious or other board-approved purposes that promote the welfare of the community.

Under the Equal Protection Clause and the First Amendment, a school district may not grant the use of its facilities to people whose views it finds acceptable, but deny use to those wishing to express less favored or more controversial views.

Appendices

Glossary of Educational Acronyms

Following are some of the many abbreviations commonly used among educators, but perhaps unfamiliar to board members.

AAA (American Arbitration Association) Aids in resolving disputes outside the court system.

AASA (American Association of School Administrators) Provides a number of services for school administrators, including conducting studies and surveys on educational issues.

AASPA (American Association of School Personnel Administrators) Works to establish acceptable school personnel standards, techniques and practices.

ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) Protects individual rights set forth in the U.S. Constitution.

ACT (American College Testing Program) Standardized test taken by high school students seeking admission to college.

ACTE (Association for Career and Technical Education) Promotes and improves vocational education in high school, postsecondary and adult education.

ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Federal law protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

ADM (average daily membership) The enrollment of students receiving services under the superintendent's supervision.

AERA (American Education Research Association) The major professional organization of educators involved in educational research.

AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor/Congress of Industrial Organizations) The largest federation of unions in the United States.

AFSA (American Federation of School Administrators) Union for school administrators.

AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) The largest public employee and health care workers' union in the country.

AFT (American Federation of Teachers) An integral part of the American labor movement and a member affiliate of the AFL-CIO.

AGO (Attorney General's Opinion) Interpretation of a legal question by the Ohio attorney general (OAG), usually at the request of a local or state government official.

AP (Advanced Placement) Test taken by high school students to earn college credit.

ASCA (American School Counselors Association) Promotes the rights and welfare of children and improves professional standards in school counseling.

ASBO (Association of School Business Officials International) Promotes improvement and advancement of school business officials, school board members and others interested in school business management.

ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) Supports educators as they develop, evaluate and improve curricula.

BASA (Buckeye Association of School Administrators) A professional association for Ohio's public school administrators.

BCI (Bureau of Criminal Investigation) Investigative arm of the Ohio attorney general's office.

BRF (Bond Retirement Fund) School district fund dedicated to the payment of debt service charges.

BWC (Bureau of Workers' Compensation) State agency that administers worker injury claims.

CBE (competency-based education) State testing program to assess student achievement in grades one through eight.

CCSSO (Council of Chief State School Officers) A nationwide organization of the 58 public school officials who head departments of public education in the U.S. states, territories, D.C., Department of Defense Education Activity, and Bureau of Indian Education.

CGCS (Council of the Great City Schools) Conducts studies of problems shared by urban schools.

CIP Continuous improvement plan.

COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986) Federal law that allows employees to continue to receive health insurance after they leave a school district.

DOE (U.S. Department of Education) Federal government agency.

ECS (Education Commission of the States) Collects information on laws and standards in education and about administrators, principals and teachers. Also researches state policy issues.

EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) Federal agency formed in 1964 to enforce federal laws, making it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or employee on the basis of on race, color, sex (including gender identity, pregnancy and sexual orientation), religion, national origin, age, disability or genetic information.

EL English learner.

ELA (Education Law Association) Works to improve education by promoting interest in and understanding of the legal framework of education and the rights of students, parents, school boards and school employees.

ERI (early retirement incentives) Programs that provide monetary incentives to school district employees who retire early.

ESC (Educational Service Center) Name given to Ohio county offices of education in 1995.

ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) The original federal education act enacted in 1965.

ESEA was updated in 2002 as the No Child Left Behind Act and reauthorized in 2015 as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) The most recent reauthorization of ESEA.

ETS (Educational Testing Service) Provides evaluative instruments, research, and services related to educational testing programs such as the PSAT, SAT, GRE and GMAT. Also conducts the National Assessment of Educational Programs (NAEP).

EV (exempted village school district) Name given to Ohio school districts centered in villages.

FAPE (free appropriate public education) Special education and related services that are provided at public expense without charge.

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) Federal law that addresses inspection and disclosure of student records.

FLSA (Fair Labor Standards Act) Federal law concerning wages and benefits for school district and other employees.

FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993) Federal law that authorizes unpaid leave for employees who are ill, become parents or who must care for sick relatives.

GED (General Education Development test) Test that allows students who did not graduate from high school to obtain an equivalent diploma.

GF (General Fund) School district fund receiving all moneys dedicated to the payment of current operating expenses.

GMAT (Graduate Management Admissions Test) Test taken by college students seeking admission to graduate school in business.

GRE (Graduate Record Examination) Test taken by college students interested in studying for advanced degrees in academic fields.

GRF (General Revenue Fund) Major fund of state government from which services are funded.

IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) Federal law passed in 1975 to provide for the education of children with disabilities.

IEL (Institute for Educational Leadership) Coordinates programs at national, state and local levels that are designed to support and enhance the capabilities of educators and policymakers.

IEP (individualized education program) Plan devised by a school district for the education of a child with disabilities.

JVSD (joint vocational school district) Name given to school districts providing career and technical training to public school students and adults.

LAF (OSBA Legal Assistance Fund) Provides supportive assistance to boards of education in cases or controversies of statewide significance, primarily at the appellate level.

LEP (limited English proficient) Students and families for whom English is not the primary language.

LPDC (local professional development committee) Local committee comprised of teachers and administrators which approves professional development plans of educators needed to obtain or retain licensure.

NABSE (National Alliance of Black School Educators) Promotes awareness, professional expertise and commitment among black educators.

NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) Authorized by Congress, NAEP determines the nation's progress in education.

NAESP (National Association of Elementary School Principals) Sponsors programs designed to teach principals about new curricula and technology, to clarify educational issues and trends, and to inform them of new educational research developments.

AIS (National Association of Independent Schools) Assists independent elementary and secondary schools to strengthen their programs and more effectively serve their students and families.

NAPE (National Association of Partners in Education) Promotes the value of school volunteer and partnership services.

NASBE (National Association of State Boards of Education) Improves the policymaking skills and leadership abilities of state boards of education.

NASSP (National Association of Secondary School Principals) Conducts activities and events to enhance the effectiveness of middle and high school principals.

NBPTS (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards) Seeks to strengthen the profession of elementary and secondary teaching and thereby raise the quality of education in the U.S.

NCES (National Center for Education Statistics) An agency of the U.S. Department of Education. Collects and disseminates statistics and other data related to education in the U.S.

NCLB (No Child Left Behind Act) 2002 reauthorization of ESEA.

NCSL (National Conference of State Legislators) Works to improve the quality and effectiveness of state legislators.

NEA (National Education Association) A national teacher's union.

NGA (National Governors' Association) Serves as a vehicle through which governors influence the development and implementation of national policy and apply creative leadership to state problems.

NSBA (National School Boards Association) An organization for state school board associations and local school boards. It seeks to improve the leadership and policymaking abilities of board members.

NSPRA (National School Public Relations Association) An association that promotes better public understanding of the objectives, accomplishments and needs of education.

OAC (Ohio Administrative Code) Publication containing rules and regulations of Ohio's executive agencies.

OACBDD (Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities) Ensures the availability of programs, services, and supports that assist eligible individuals with developmental disabilities.

OAESA (Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators) Promotes quality education and advances elementary school administration.

OAG (Ohio attorney general) Elected official charged with enforcing and administering Ohio's laws.

OAPE (Ohio Association of Professional Educators) Group dedicated to classroom teaching in a nonunion environment.

OAPSE (Ohio Association of Public School Employees) Represents nonteaching public school employees affiliated with AFL-CIO and AFSCME.

OASBO (Ohio Association of School Business Officials) Promotes professional growth and welfare of business officials in schools.

OASCD (Ohio Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) A statewide professional organization dedicated to improving instructional supervision and curriculum development.

OASSA (Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators) State association for administrators actively engaged in administration or supervision of secondary or middle school students.

OESCA (Ohio Educational Service Center Association) Group including Ohio's educational service centers, formerly known as county boards of education.

OCRC (Ohio Civil Rights Commission) State agency charged with enforcing anti-discrimination laws in employment and other venues.

OCSBA (Ohio Council of School Board Attorneys) An organization for attorneys who represent or have represented Ohio boards of education.

ODE (Ohio Department of Education) Ohio's state department of education.

OEA (Ohio Education Association) A state teacher's union that promotes the interests of teachers and the improvement of education in Ohio.

OFT (Ohio Federation of Teachers) Works to raise the standards of teaching by securing the conditions essential to the best professional service.

Ohio ACTE (Ohio Association for Career and Technical Education) Promotes and protects vocational education and vocational educators.

OHSAA (Ohio High School Athletic Association) Administers interscholastic sports programs.

OHSPRA (Ohio School Public Relations Association) The state chapter of the national association, OHSPRA members work to improve school public relations.

ORC (Ohio Revised Code) Also referred to as RC.

OSBA (Ohio School Boards Association) Serves Ohio public school board members and the diverse districts they represent through superior service, unwavering advocacy and creative solutions.

OFCC (Ohio Facilities Construction Commission) Provides funding, management oversight and technical assistance in construction and renovation of school facilities.

OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Act) Name given to both state and federal laws that promote workplace safety.

OWE (occupational/work experience programs) School district programs that prepare vocational education students for entry into the workplace.

PDK (Phi Delta Kappa) A professional honorary society for men and women in education.

PERS (Public Employees Retirement System) Provides retirement, disability and survivor benefits to public employees.

PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test) Test taken by high school students to prepare for taking the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

PTA (Ohio Parent-Teacher Association) Works to promote the health, education and welfare of children and youth.

RC (Revised Code) Also known as the Ohio Revised Code.

SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) Test taken by high school students seeking admission to colleges or universities.

SERB (State Employment Relations Board) Administers and enforces Ohio's public employee collective bargaining law.

SERS School Employees Retirement System.

SDIT (school district income tax) Tax imposed on income of residents by school districts after voter approval.

STRS State Teachers Retirement System.

ULP (unfair labor practice) Conduct by employers or employees defined as unfair under Ohio's collective bargaining law.

USC (United States Code) Multi-volume compilation of federal laws.