MSD: Individual Board Member Authority and Communications

Because the powers of the Board lie in its actions as a corporate and political body, individual Board members exercise authority over District affairs only as they vote to take official action at a legal meeting of the Board or when the Board has lawfully delegated specific authority to the member.

Individual Board members hold an office of shared authority and responsibility. The Board is not bound by any action or statement of an individual Board member unless the statement or action is made consistent with specific Board instructions or delegated authority.

Individual Board members may communicate with District employees to ask questions, but administrative concerns shall be addressed to the Superintendent or to the Board. Individual Board members shall not give orders to subordinates of the Superintendent, either publicly or privately, but may bring appropriate suggestions and recommendations to the Superintendent.

Board members are obligated to represent the best interests of all children and all schools in the District. Board members may suggest problems or concerns for Board consideration, inform themselves about school matters, participate in Board deliberations, arrive at well-reasoned opinions independently, and vote as they choose.

Formal requests for information, particularly information contained in private student or personnel records, shall be directed to the Superintendent.

When dealing with public issues or District policy outside official Board meetings, Board members should represent the Board and District in a circumspect and diplomatic manner. If questioned about a matter on which District policy has been clearly defined, an individual Board member should answer based on policy. If questioned about a matter on which the Board has no established policy, the member should not commit the Board to a position or promise other than to discuss the matter with the Superintendent or present it to the entire Board for consideration.

Individual Board members are not precluded from voicing minority viewpoints during or outside official Board meetings, but should indicate that such viewpoints are personal and not Board opinions.

Source: MSD Policy 1000, approved 2020.