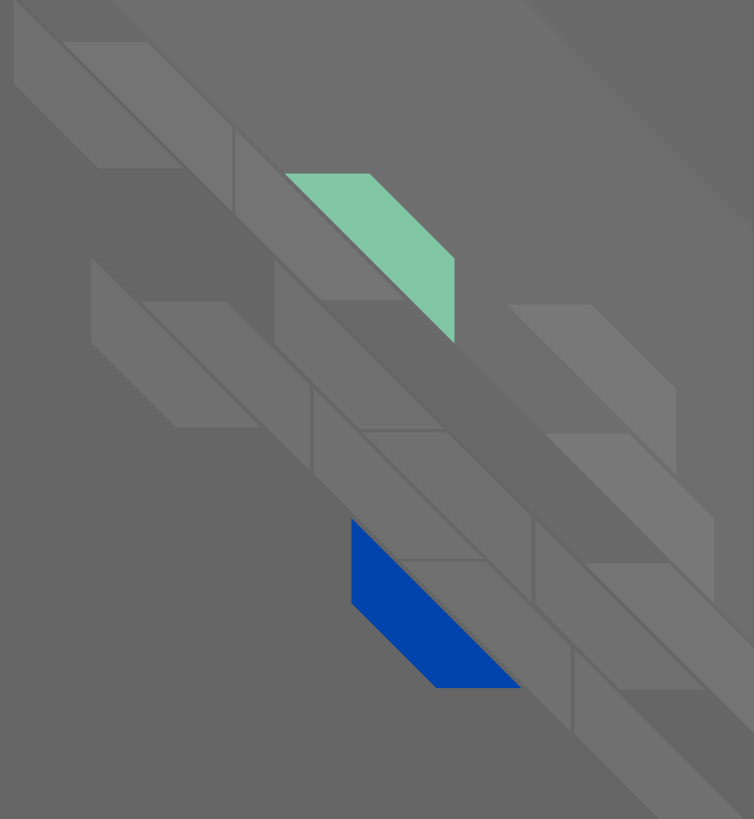




# The Role of School Board Presidents

Amy L. De Kok  
NDSBA Legal Counsel  
May 2022 “Lunch” & Learn

# Role and Responsibilities of the School Board President





# Appointing a Board President

- NDCC 15.1-09-27: “At the annual meeting, school board members shall elect from among themselves a president to serve for one year.”
- NDCC 15.1-09-28: “A vice president may be elected by the board to serve in the absence of the president at any meeting.”

# Statutory Duties of Board President

- ❑ Preside at all meetings of the board
- ❑ Appoint committees subject to board approval
- ❑ Authorize issuance of negotiable instruments for payment of bills
- ❑ Perform all other acts as required by law






# Additional Duties Established by Board Policy....

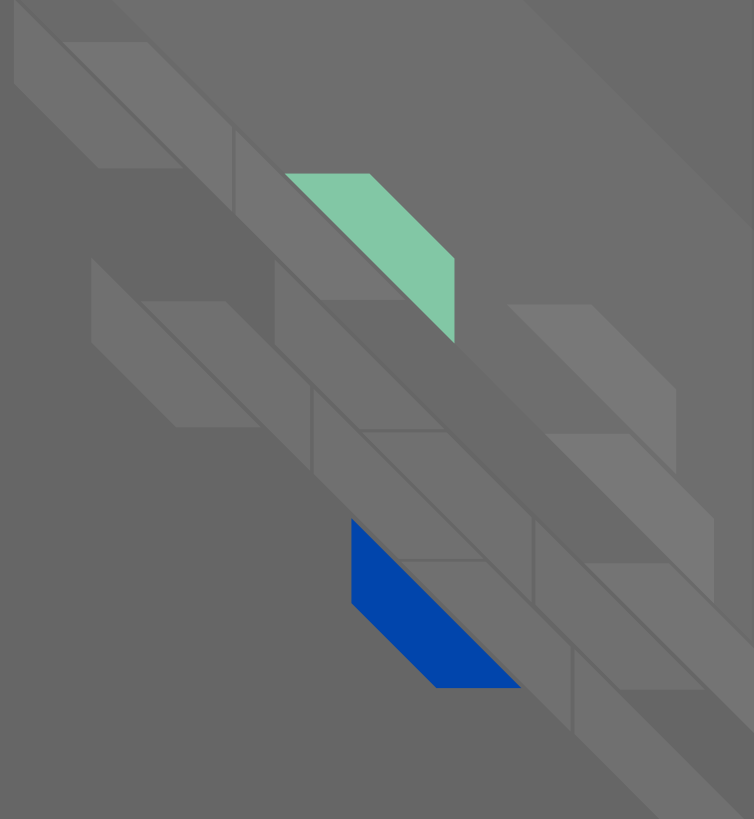
## → Policy BBBA (Officers of the Board)

- ✓ Prepare an agenda in advance of each meeting in accordance with policy.
- ✓ Serve as official spokesperson for the Board or appoint another member to speak for the Board in communications with the media.
- ✓ When the Board is not in session, act on any emergency matter that may arise and report action taken at the next meeting.
- ✓ Establish liaison with other governmental agencies to assist in cooperative action.
- ✓ Provide the necessary leadership to help the Board act as a cohesive whole.
- ✓ Be available for counsel to the district administrator.

# So, When Choosing A Board President....

- Be a leader among leaders.
  - Be a capable facilitator, skillful negotiator and gracious listener.
  - Be comfortable with public speaking, including being recorded and quoted.
  - Possess good organizational and time management skills.
  - Understands open meetings requirements and board policies and procedures
- 

# Calling and Conducting Board Meetings





# Power to Call a Meeting

- **Annual Meeting** – held in July each year; board president picks a date
- **Regular Meetings** – must be held at least once per month after annual meeting
- **Special Meetings** – May be called by board president or any two board members






# Preparation of Agenda

- Board policy assigns responsibility to board president (policies BBBA and BCAA)
  - In consultation with superintendent
  - Seek input from other board members
  - Requests to be added to agenda (other board members and third-parties)
- What if there is a conflict between board president and superintendent?

# Other Pre-Meeting Procedures

- ❑ Make sure proper notice has been provided and other open meetings requirements are followed
  - ❑ Location is adequate for expected public attendance
  - ❑ Rescheduling of meetings
  - ❑ Make sure board members have information needed to prepare for meeting
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, semi-transparent grey rectangular shapes arranged in a diagonal pattern in the bottom-left corner of the slide.


# Board Meeting Procedures

1. Call meetings as prescribed by law
2. Along with the superintendent, prepare the agenda (See Section IV)
3. Review pertinent materials before meeting
4. Call meetings to order
5. Recognize members wishing to speak
6. Limit or extend the time of debate
7. Oversee debate (discussion) on motions
8. Clearly state items being considered or voted upon
9. Announce the results of all votes
10. See that agenda and procedural rules are followed
11. Rule when persons or procedures are out of order
12. Coordinate authorized public discussion
13. Control general tone and direction of meeting
14. Recess the meeting if necessary
15. Appoint committees with approval of board
16. Authorize payment of bills
17. Declare the meeting adjourned when appropriate
18. Review draft of minutes with business manager

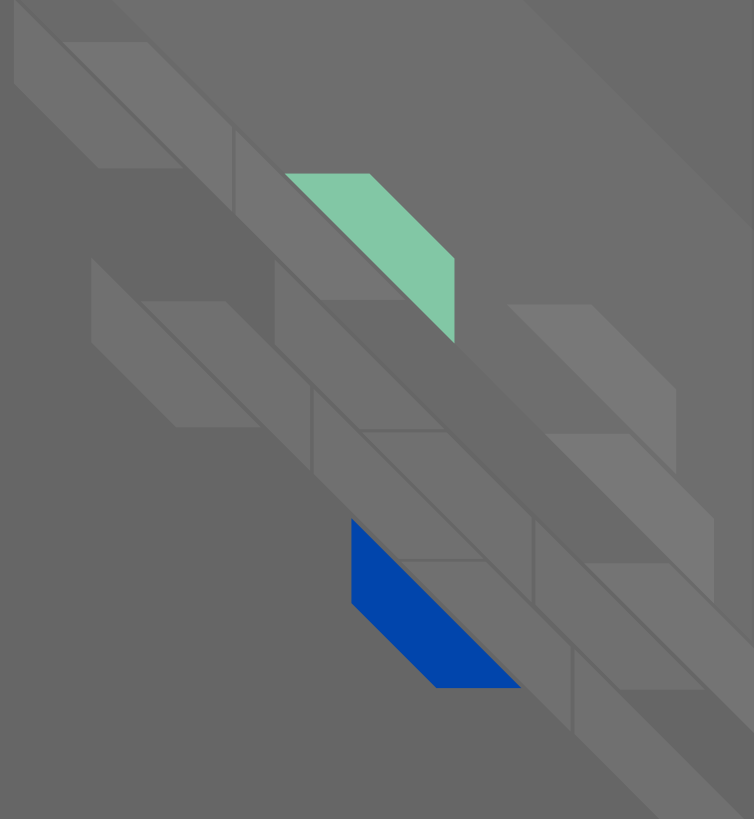
# Board Meeting Procedures

- Board president responsible to ensure meetings are conducted **professionally, orderly and productively**.
- Robert's Rules of Order *as a guide* (policy BCAB)
- Board president shall vote on all motions unless a conflict exists
- Motions and seconds?
- Guide and facilitate discussion without undue influence or monopolizing discussion
- Executive sessions

# Maintaining Order

- Adopt and follow policy on public participation (and follow it!)
  - Keep discussion focused on the agenda (facilitate discussion and steer back when off topic)
  - Build consensus among board members
  - Use parliamentary procedures as needed (without allowing it to become more important than meeting itself!)
- 

# Communication with Administration

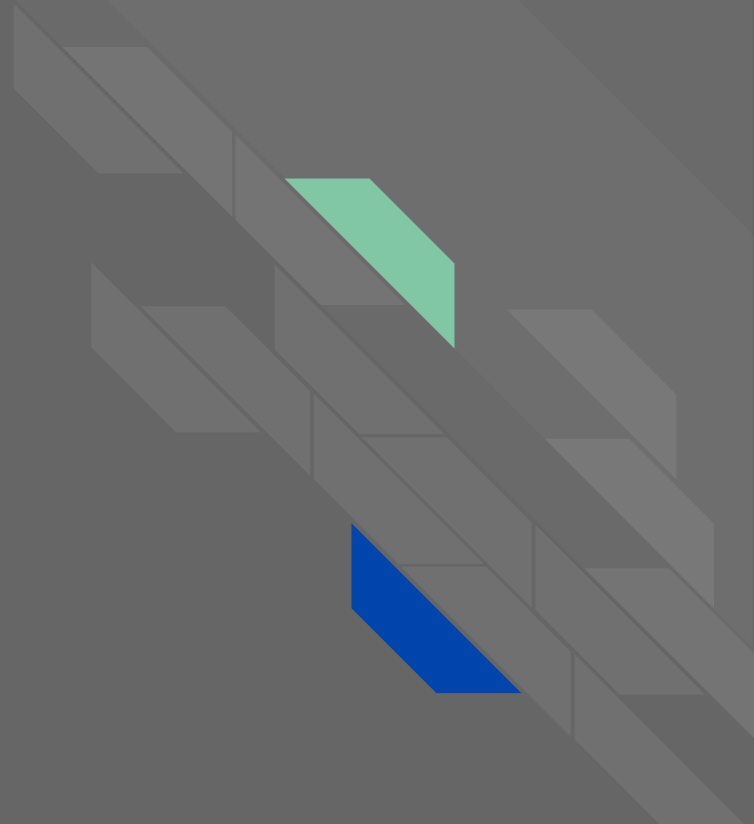




# Communication with Administration

- Liaison between board and administration (superintendent and business manager)
- Receive reports of day-to-day operations from superintendent as needed (sounding board)
- Meet prior to each meeting to prepare **and discuss** agenda
- Handle complaints against superintendent and business manager
- Coordinate and timely complete superintendent evaluation process

# Managing Conflict







# Managing Conflict

- Occurs naturally, not all conflict is bad
- Destructive conflict must be managed
- Don't ignore it
- Conflict among board
- Conflict among other parties (e.g., administration, patrons)



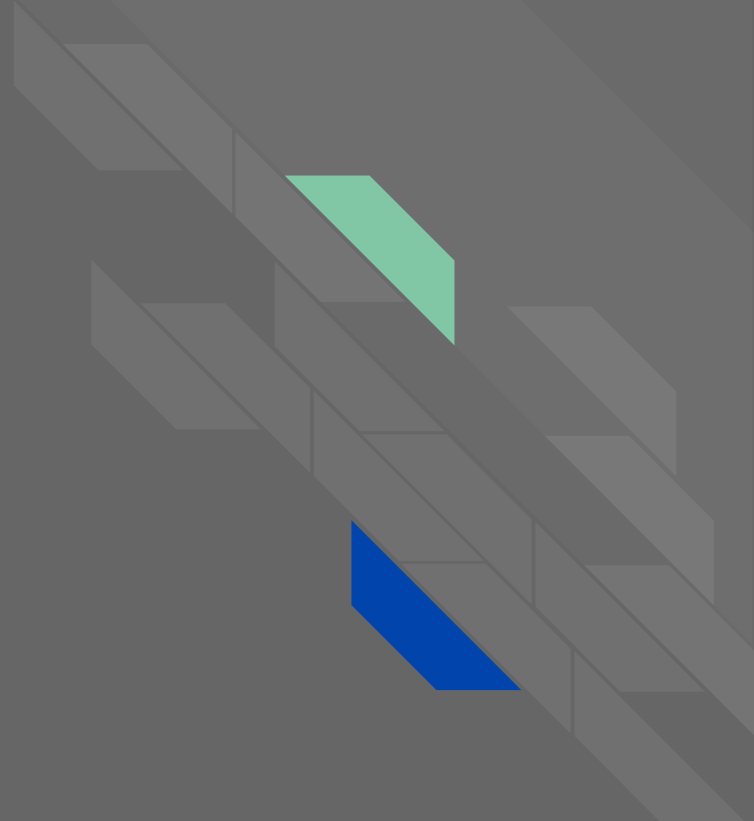
# Conflict Among Board

- Build consensus through:
  - sound data and information
  - Discussion and debate
  - ultimately, make most informed decision in best interests of district and students
- Don't ignore minority viewpoint – should be heard and considered
- Make sure all board members have opportunity to express opinions and be heard on issues before board

# Basic Steps to Managing Conflict

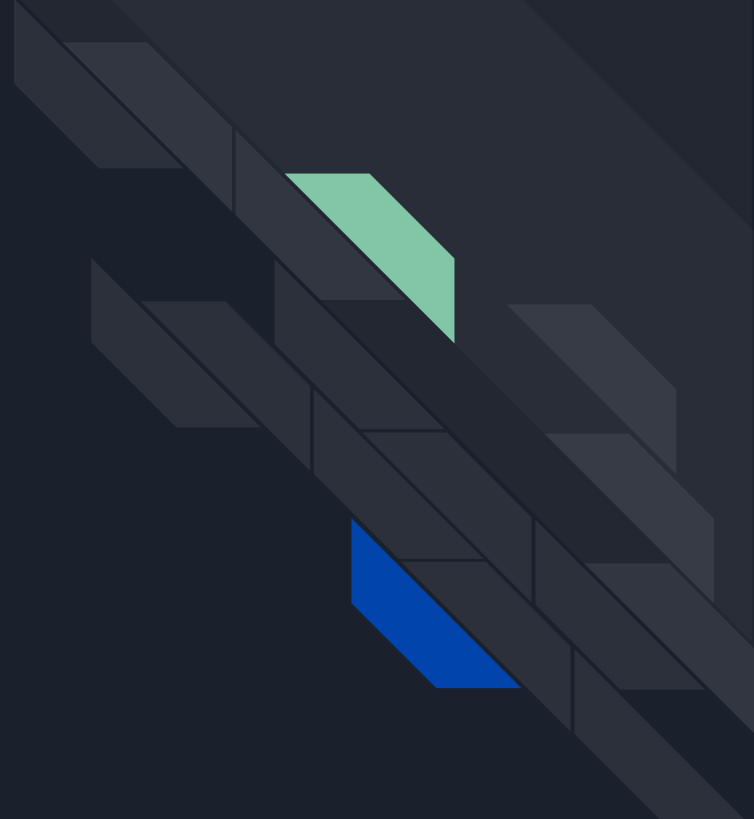
- 1. Recognize that conflict exists.** You can't fix a problem that isn't acknowledged. State the problem and have the board acknowledge it as well.
- 2. Diagnose the issue:** the source of the conflict, what is happening, who is involved, as well as the feelings on each side of the conflict.
- 3. Identify the needs or wants of each side of the conflict.**
- 4. Come to agreement that is amenable to both parties or agree to disagree.** Often, resolving conflict involves making compromises; it is unlikely that either side will get everything they want.

# Other Considerations



# Absence or Conflict of Board President...

- In absence, vice president may preside over meetings (or portions of meeting) – NDCC 15.1-09-28; policy BBBA
- Conflict of interest?
- To avoid appearance of impropriety





# Removal from Office

- Policy BBBA contains removal procedure (typically by majority vote)
- Malfeasance in office or other negative conduct
- Ethics policy (policy BA) – contains “consequences”



Questions?



Stay tuned for “*The School  
Board President’s Handbook*”



# Next NDSBA “Lunch” & Learn

When: June 15, 2022 at **9 a.m. CT**

What: School Finance 101

Who: Paul Stremick

More info/  
register: [www.ndsba.org/resources/lunchlearn](http://www.ndsba.org/resources/lunchlearn)