

SECTION 2 - GOVERNING & EXECUTIVE BOARDS

Region III Education Cooperative

2:10 Cooperative Governance

The Cooperative is governed by a Governing Board consisting of six members. The Governing Board's powers and duties include the authority to adopt, enforce, and monitor all policies for the management and governance of the Cooperative's programs.

Official action by the Governing Board may only occur at a duly called and legally conducted meeting. Except as otherwise provided by the Open Meetings Act, a quorum must be physically present at the meeting.

District Representation

Membership on the Governing Board shall be limited to a member of the board of education of each Member District who is designated by the board as the board's representative, or another member of the board of education, designated by the board as an alternate when the designated representative cannot be in attendance.

Special Meetings

The Chairman or members of the Governing Board from three (3) or more Member Districts may call a special meeting of the Governing Board and in such event, shall give three (3) days written notice by U.S. Mail to each member of the Governing Board of the time and place of, and the business to be transacted, at such special meeting.

LEGAL REF.:

5 ILCS 120/, Open Meetings Act.

105 ILCS 5/10-1, 5/10-10, 5/10-12, 5/10-16.5, 5/10-16.7, and 5/10-20.5.

CROSS REF.: 1:10 (Cooperative Legal Status), 2:20 (Powers and Duties of the Governing Board; Indemnification), 2:80 (Governing Board Member Oath and Conduct), 2:120 (Governing Board Member Development), 2:200 (Types of Governing Board Meetings), 2:220 (Governing Board Meeting Procedure)

Adopted: October 20, 2021

Region III Education Cooperative

2:20 Powers and Duties of the Governing Board

The major powers and duties of the Governing Board include, but are not limited to:

1. Annually organizing the Governing Board by electing officers and establishing its regular meeting schedule and, thereafter, taking action during lawfully called meetings to faithfully fulfill the Governing Board's responsibilities in accordance with Governing Board policy and State and federal law.
2. Formulating, adopting, and modifying Governing Board policies, at its sole discretion, subject only to mandatory collective bargaining agreements and State and federal law.
3. Employing a Director and other personnel, making employment decisions, dismissing personnel, and establishing an equal employment opportunity policy that prohibits unlawful discrimination.
4. Directing, through policy, the Director, in his or her charge of the Cooperative's administration.
5. Approving the annual budget, tax levies, major expenditures, payment of obligations, annual audit, and other aspects of the Cooperative's financial operation; and making available a statement of financial affairs as provided in State law.
6. Entering contracts in accordance with applicable federal and State law, including using the public bidding procedure when required.
7. Providing, constructing, controlling, and maintaining adequate physical facilities; making school buildings available for use as civil defense shelters; and establishing a resource conservation policy.
8. Establishing an equal educational opportunities policy that prohibits unlawful discrimination.
9. Establishing and supporting student behavior policies designed to maintain an environment conducive to learning.
10. Complying with requirements in the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. Specifically, each individual Governing Board member must, if an allegation is raised to the member during an open or closed Governing Board meeting that a student is an abused child as defined in the Act, direct or cause the Governing Board to direct the Director or other equivalent school administrator to comply with the Act's requirements concerning the reporting of child abuse.
11. Notifying the State Superintendent of Education promptly and in writing of the name of a licensed teacher who was convicted of a felony, along with the conviction and the name and location of the court where the conviction occurred.
12. Notifying the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) of the State of Ill. Board of Trustees promptly and in writing when it learns that a teacher as defined in the Ill. Pension Code was convicted of a felony, along with the name and location of the court where the conviction occurred, and the case number assigned by that court to the conviction.
13. Communicating the cooperative's activities and operations to the community and representing the needs and desires of the community in educational matters.

Indemnification

To the extent allowed by law, the Governing Board shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless Governing Board members, employees, volunteer personnel (pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/10-22.34, 10-22.34a and 10-22.34b), mentors of certified staff (pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/2-3.53a, 2-3.53b, and 105 ILCS 5/21A-5 et seq.), and student teachers who, in the course of discharging their official duties imposed or authorized by law, are sued as parties in a legal proceeding. Nothing herein, however, shall be construed as obligating the Governing Board to defend, indemnify, or hold harmless any person who engages in criminal activity, official misconduct, fraud, intentional or willful and wanton misconduct, or acts beyond the authority properly vested in the individual.

LEGAL REF.:

105 ILCS 5/10, 5/17-1, 5/21B-85, and 5/27-1.

115 ILCS 5/, Ill. Educational Labor Relations Act.

325 ILCS 5/, Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act.

CROSS REF.: 1:10 (Cooperative Legal Status), 1:20 (Cooperative Organization, Operations, and Cooperative Agreements), 2:10 (Cooperative Governance), 2:80 (Governing Board Member Oath and Conduct), 2:140 (Communications To and From the Governing Board), 2:240 (Executive Board Policy Development), 4:60 (Purchases and Contracts), 4:70 (Resource Conservation), 4:100 (Insurance Management), 4:110 (Transportation), 4:150 (Facility Management and Building Programs), 4:165 (Awareness and Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Grooming Behaviors), 4:175 (Convicted Child Sex Offender; Screening; Notifications), 5:10 (Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Recruitment), 5:30 (Hiring Process and Criteria), 5:90 (Abused and Neglected Child Reporting), 5:120 (Employee Ethics; Code of Professional Conduct; and Conflict of Interest), 5:150 (Personnel Records), 5:210 (Resignations), 5:290 (Employment Termination and Suspensions), 6:10 (Educational Philosophy and Objectives), 6:20 (School Year Calendar and Day), 7:10 (Equal Educational Opportunities), 7:190 (Student Behavior), 7:200 (Suspension Procedures), 8:10 (Connection with the Community), 8:30 (Visitors to and Conduct on School Property)

Adopted: February 21, 2024

Region III Education Cooperative

2:80 Governing Board Member Oath and Conduct

Each Governing Board member, before taking his or her seat on the Governing Board, shall take the following oath of office:

I, (name), do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of member of the Governing Board of Education of Region III Education Cooperative, in accordance with the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the State of Illinois, and the laws of the State of Illinois, to the best of my ability.

I further swear (or affirm) that:

I shall respect taxpayer interests by serving as a faithful protector of the Cooperative's assets;

I shall encourage and respect the free expression of opinion by my fellow Governing Board members and others who seek a hearing before the Governing Board, while respecting the privacy of students and employees;

I shall recognize that a Governing Board member has no legal authority as an individual and that decisions can be made only by a majority vote at a public Governing Board meeting;

I shall abide by majority decisions of the Governing Board, while retaining the right to seek changes in such decisions through ethical and constructive channels;

As part of the Governing Board of Education, I shall accept the responsibility for my role in the equitable and quality education of every student in the Cooperative;

I shall foster with the Governing Board extensive participation of the community, formulate goals, define outcomes, and set the course for Region III Education Cooperative;

I shall assist in establishing a structure and an environment designed to ensure all students have the opportunity to attain their maximum potential through a sound organizational framework;

I shall strive to ensure a continuous assessment of student achievement and all conditions affecting the education of our children, in compliance with State law;

I shall serve as education's key advocate on behalf of students and our community's school (or schools) to advance the vision for Region III Education Cooperative; and

I shall strive to work together with the Cooperative Director to lead the Cooperative toward fulfilling the vision the Governing Board has created, fostering excellence for every student in the areas of academic skills, knowledge, citizenship, and personal development.

The Governing Board President will administer the oath in an open Governing Board meeting; in the absence of the President, the Vice President will administer the oath. If neither is available, the Governing Board member with the longest service on the Governing Board will administer the oath.

The Governing Board adopts the Illinois Association of Governing Boards' *Code of Conduct for Members of Governing Boards*. A copy of the *Code* shall be displayed in the regular Governing Board meeting room.

LEGAL REF.:

105 ILCS 5/10-16.5.

CROSS REF.:1:30 (Cooperative Philosophy), 2:20 (Powers and Duties of the Governing Board);

Indemnification), 2:50 (Governing Board Member Term of Office), 2:100 (Governing Board Member Conflict of Interest), 2:105 (Ethics and Gift Ban), 2:210 (Organizational Governing Board Meeting)

Adopted: September 20, 2023

Region III Education Cooperative

2:100 Governing & Executive Board Member Conflict of Interest

No Governing or Executive Board member shall: (1) have a beneficial interest directly or indirectly in any contract, work, or business of the Cooperative unless permitted by State or federal law; or (2) solicit or accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors, potential contractors, or parties to agreements or contracts with the Cooperative. Situations in which the interest is not substantial or the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal value must comply with State law and Governing Board policy 2:105, *Ethics and Gift Ban*.

Governing and Executive Board members must annually file a *Statement of Economic Interests* as required by the Illinois Governmental Ethics Act.

Federal and State Grant Awards

No Board member shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by a federal award or State award governed by the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) (30 ILCS 708/) if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest. A conflict of interest arises when a Board member or any of the following individuals has a financial or other interest in or a tangible benefit from

Updated in response to PRESS Advisory Board (PAB) member feedback regarding alignment of the conflict of interest language to 2 C.F.R. §200.318. **Issue 110, October 2022**

the entity selected for the contract:

1. A member of the Board member's immediate family;
2. The Board member's partner;

The law does not define *partner*; consult the board attorney about whether this term includes domestic partners, business partners, or both. **Issue 110, October 2022**

or

3. An entity that employs or is about to employ the Board member or one of the individuals listed in one or two above.

LEGAL REF.:

105 ILCS 5/10-9.

5 ILCS 420/, Ill. Governmental Ethics Act.

30 ILCS 708/, Grant Accountability and Transparency Act.

50 ILCS 105/3, Public Officer Prohibited Activities Act.

2 C.F.R. §200.318(c)(1).

CROSS REF.: 2:105 (Ethics and Gift Ban), 4:60 (Purchases and Contracts), 5:120 (Employee Ethics; Code of Professional Conduct; and Conflict of Interest)

Adopted: February 21, 2023

2:105 Ethics and Gift Ban

Prohibited Political Activity

The following precepts govern political activities being conducted by Cooperative employees and Governing and Executive Board members:

1. No employee shall intentionally perform any *political activity* during any *compensated time*, as those terms are defined herein.
2. No Board member or employee shall intentionally use any Cooperative property or resources in connection with any political activity.
3. At no time shall any Board member or employee intentionally require any other Board member or employee to perform any political activity: (a) as part of that Board member's or employee's duties, (b) as a condition of employment, or (c) during any compensated time off, such as, holidays, vacation, or personal time off.
4. No Board member or employee shall be required at any time to participate in any political activity in consideration for that Board member or employee being awarded additional compensation or any benefit, whether in the form of a salary adjustment, bonus, compensatory time off, continued employment or otherwise; nor shall any Board member or employee be awarded additional compensation or any benefit in consideration for his or her participation in any political activity.

A Board member or employee may engage in any activity that: (1) is otherwise appropriate as part of his or her official duties, or (2) is undertaken by the individual on a voluntary basis that is not prohibited by this policy.

Limitations on Receiving Gifts

Except as permitted by this policy, no Board member or employee, and no spouse of or immediate family member living with a Board member or employee shall intentionally solicit or accept any *gift* from any *prohibited source*, as those terms are defined herein, or that is otherwise prohibited by law or policy. No prohibited source shall intentionally offer or make a gift that violates this policy.

The following are exceptions to the ban on accepting gifts from a prohibited source:

1. Opportunities, benefits, and services that are available on the same conditions as for the general public.
2. Anything for which the Board member or employee, or his or her spouse or immediate family member, pays the fair market value.
3. Any: (a) contribution that is lawfully made under the Election Code, or (b) activities associated with a fundraising event in support of a political organization or candidate.
4. Educational materials and missions.
5. Travel expenses for a meeting to discuss business.
6. A gift from a relative, meaning those people related to the individual as father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, great aunt, great uncle, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, grandfather, grandmother, grandson, granddaughter, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half brother, half sister, and including the father, mother, grandfather, or grandmother of the individual's spouse and the individual's fiancé or fiancée.
7. Anything provided by an individual on the basis of a personal friendship unless the recipient has reason to believe that, under the circumstances, the gift was provided because of the official position or employment of the recipient or his or her spouse or immediate family member and not because of the personal friendship. In determining whether a gift is provided on the basis of

personal friendship, the recipient shall consider the circumstances under which the gift was offered, such as: (a) the history of the relationship between the individual giving the gift and the recipient of the gift, including any previous exchange of gifts between those individuals; (b) whether to the actual knowledge of the recipient the individual who gave the gift personally paid for the gift or sought a tax deduction or business reimbursement for the gift; and (c) whether to the actual knowledge of the recipient the individual who gave the gift also at the same time gave the same or similar gifts to other Board members or employees, or their spouses or immediate family members.

8. Food or refreshments not exceeding \$75 per person in value on a single calendar day; provided that the food or refreshments are: (a) consumed on the premises from which they were purchased or prepared; or (b) catered. *Catered* means food or refreshments that are purchased ready to consume, which are delivered by any means.
9. Food, refreshments, lodging, transportation, and other benefits resulting from outside business or employment activities (or outside activities that are not connected to the official duties of a Board member or employee), if the benefits have not been offered or enhanced because of the official position or employment of the Board member or employee, and are customarily provided to others in similar circumstances.
10. Intra-governmental and inter-governmental gifts. *Intra-governmental gift* means any gift given to a Board member or employee from another Board member or employee, and *inter-governmental gift* means any gift given to a Board member or employee from an officer or employee of another governmental entity.
11. Bequests, inheritances, and other transfers at death.
12. Any item or items from any one prohibited source during any calendar year having a cumulative total value of less than \$100.

Each of the listed exceptions is mutually exclusive and independent of every other.

A Board member or employee, his or her spouse or an immediate family member living with the Board member or employee, does not violate this policy if the recipient promptly takes reasonable action to return a gift from a prohibited source to its source or gives the gift or an amount equal to its value to an appropriate charity that is exempt from income taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Enforcement

The Board Chairperson and Director shall seek guidance from the Board attorney concerning compliance with and enforcement of this policy and State ethics laws. The Board may, as necessary or prudent, appoint an Ethics Advisor for this task.

Written complaints alleging a violation of this policy shall be filed with the Director or Board Chairperson. If attempts to correct any misunderstanding or problem do not resolve the matter, the Director or Board Chairperson shall, after consulting with the Board Attorney, either place the alleged violation on a Board meeting agenda for the Board's disposition or refer the complainant to Board policy 2:260, *Uniform Grievance Procedure*. A Board member who is related, either by blood or by marriage, up to the degree of first cousin, to the person who is the subject of the complaint, shall not participate in any decision-making capacity for the Board. If the Board finds it more likely than not that the allegations in a complaint are true, it shall notify the State's Attorney and/or consider disciplinary action for the employee.

Definitions

Unless otherwise stated, all terms used in this policy have the definitions given in the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act, 5 ILCS 430/1-5.

Political activity means:

1. Preparing for, organizing, or participating in any political meeting, political rally, political demonstration, or other political event.
2. Soliciting contributions, including but not limited to the purchase of, selling, distributing, or receiving payment for tickets for any political fundraiser, political meeting, or other political event.
3. Soliciting, planning the solicitation of, or preparing any document or report regarding anything of value intended as a campaign contribution.
4. Planning, conducting, or participating in a public opinion poll in connection with a campaign for elective office or on behalf of a political organization for political purposes or for or against any referendum question.
5. Surveying or gathering information from potential or actual voters in an election to determine probable vote outcome in connection with a campaign for elective office or on behalf of a political organization for political purposes or for or against any referendum question.
6. Assisting at the polls on Election Day on behalf of any political organization or candidate for elective office or for or against any referendum question.
7. Soliciting votes on behalf of a candidate for elective office or a political organization or for or against any referendum question or helping in an effort to get voters to the polls.
8. Initiating for circulation, preparing, circulating, reviewing, or filing any petition on behalf of a candidate for elective office or for or against any referendum question.
9. Making contributions on behalf of any candidate for elective office in that capacity or in connection with a campaign for elective office.
10. Preparing or reviewing responses to candidate questionnaires.
11. Distributing, preparing for distribution, or mailing campaign literature, campaign signs, or other campaign material on behalf of any candidate for elective office or for or against any referendum question.
12. Campaigning for any elective office or for or against any referendum question.
13. Managing or working on a campaign for elective office or for or against any referendum question.
14. Serving as a delegate, alternate, or proxy to a political party convention.
15. Participating in any recount or challenge to the outcome of any election.

With respect to an employee whose hours are not fixed, *compensated time* includes any period of time when the employee is on premises under the control of the Cooperative and any other time when the employee is executing his or her official duties, regardless of location.

Prohibited source means any person or entity who:

1. Is seeking official action by: (a) a Board member, or (b) an employee, or by the Board member or another employee directing that employee;
2. Does business or seeks to do business with: (a) a Board member, or (b) an employee, or with the Board member or another employee directing that employee;
3. Conducts activities regulated by: (a) a Board member, or (b) an employee or by the Board member or another employee directing that employee;
4. Has an interest that may be substantially affected by the performance or non-performance of the official duties of the Board member or employee;
5. Is registered or required to be registered with the Secretary of State under the Lobbyist Registration Act, except that an entity does not become a prohibited source merely because a registered lobbyist is one of its members or serves on its Board of directors; or
6. Is an agent of, a spouse of, or an immediate family member living with a prohibited source.

Gift means any gratuity, discount, entertainment, hospitality, loan, forbearance, or other tangible or intangible item having monetary value including but not limited to, cash, food and drink, and honoraria for speaking engagements related to or attributable to government employment or the official position of a Board member or employee.

LEGAL REF.:

105 ILCS 5/22-93.

5 ILCS 430/, State Officials and Employees Ethics Act.

10 ILCS 5/9-25.1, Election Interference Prohibition Act.

CROSS REF.: 2:100 (Governing & Executive Board Member Conflict of Interest), 4:60 (Purchases and Contracts), 5:120 (Employee Ethics; Code of Professional Conduct; and Conflict of Interest)

Adopted: February 21, 2023

Region III Education Cooperative

2:110 Qualifications, Term, and Duties of Governing and Executive Board Officers

At its regular annual meeting, the Governing Board shall elect from its membership, its own Chairman and Vice-Chairman to serve until their respective successors be elected and qualify. Duties of the newly elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall begin immediately upon election. The Chairman of the Governing Board shall be selected by alphabetical order of school system name, and the initial time proceeding through the list of schools of schools, eliminate that school district which had a previous Chairman. The Vice-Chairman should be the next member in line for chairmanship.

Secretary

The Secretary shall be appointed by the Governing Board and may or may not be a member of the Governing Board. The Secretary shall keep a complete record of the proceedings of the Governing Board.

Officers - Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary

At its regular meeting held in September of each year, the Executive Board shall elect from its membership, its own Chairman and Vice-Chairman to serve until their respective successors be elected and qualify. Duties of the newly elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall begin immediately upon election. The Chairman of the Executive Board shall be selected by alphabetical order of school system name, and, beginning with East Alton Elementary then proceeding through the list of schools. The Vice-Chairman should be the next member in line for chairmanship.

The Secretary shall be appointed by the Executive Board and may or may not be a member of the Executive Board.

The Secretary shall keep a complete record of the proceedings of the Executive Board.

The Executive Board shall also act in the capacity of an Advisory Body to the Governing Board.

LEGAL REF.:

105 ILCS 5/8-1, 5/8-2, 5/8-3, 5/8-6, 5/8-16, 5/8-17, 5/10-1, 5/10-5, 5/10-7, 5/10-8, 5/10-13, 5/10-13.1, 5/10-14, 5/10-16.5, 5/10-21.9, 5/17-1, 5/21B-85, and 5/22-94.

5 ILCS 120/7, Open Meetings Act.

5 ILCS 420/4A-106, Ill. Governmental Ethics Act.

CROSS REF.: 2:80 (Governing Board Member Oath and Conduct), 2:150 (Committees), 2:210 (Organizational Governing Board Meeting), 2:220 (School Board Meeting Procedure), 5:30 (Hiring Process and Criteria)

Adopted: June 21, 2023

2:125 Governing & Executive Board Member Compensation; Expenses

Governing and Executive Board Member Compensation Prohibited

Board members provide volunteer service to the community and may not receive compensation for services, except that a Board member serving as the Board Secretary may be paid an amount up to the statutory limit if the Board so provides.

Roll Call Vote

All Board member expense requests for travel, meals, and/or lodging must be approved by roll call vote at an open meeting of the Board.

Regulation of Cooperative Expenses

The Board regulates the reimbursement of all travel, meal, and lodging expenses in the Cooperative by resolution. No later than approval of the annual budget and when necessary, the Director will recommend a maximum allowable reimbursement amount for expenses to be included in the resolution. The recommended amount should be based upon the Cooperative's budget and other financial considerations.

Money shall not be advanced or reimbursed, or purchase orders issued for: (1) the expenses of any person except the Board member, (2) anyone's personal expenses, or (3) entertainment expenses. Entertainment includes, but is not limited to, shows, amusements, theaters, circuses, sporting events, or any other place of public or private entertainment or amusement, unless the entertainment is ancillary to the purpose of the program or event.

Exceeding the Maximum Allowable Reimbursement Amount(s)

All requests for expense advancements, reimbursements, and/or purchase orders that exceed the maximum allowable reimbursement amount set by the Board may only be approved by it when:

1. The Board's resolution to regulate expenses allows for such approval;
2. An emergency or other extraordinary circumstance exists; and
3. The request is approved by a roll call vote at an open Board meeting.

Advancements

The Board may advance to its members actual and necessary expenses to be incurred while attending:

1. Meetings sponsored by the Illinois State Board of Education or by the Regional Superintendent of Schools;
2. County or regional meetings and the annual meeting sponsored by any school board association complying with Article 23 of the School Code; and
3. Meetings sponsored by a national organization in the field of public school education.

Expense advancement requests must be submitted to the Director or designee on the Board's standardized estimated expense approval form. After spending expense advancements, Board members must use the Board's standardized expense reimbursement form and submit to the Director: (a) the itemized, signed advancement voucher that was issued, and (b) the amount of actual expenses by attaching receipts. A Board member must return to the Cooperative any portion of an expense advancement not used. If an expense advancement is not requested, expense reimbursements may be issued by the Board to its members for the activities listed in numbers one through three, above, along with registration fees or tuition for a course(s) that allowed compliance with other professional development opportunities that are encouraged by the School Code (see the **Reimbursements and**

Purchase Orders subhead, below). Expense advancements and vouchers shall be presented to the Board in its regular bill process.

Reimbursements and Purchase Orders

Expense reimbursement is not guaranteed and, when possible, Board members should seek pre-approval of expenses by providing an estimation of expenses on the Board's standardized estimated expense approval form, except in situations when the expense is diminutive. When pre-approval is not sought, Board members must seek reimbursement on the Board's standardized expense reimbursement form. Expense reimbursements and purchase orders shall be presented to the Board in its regular bill process.

Credit and Procurement Cards

Credit and procurement cards shall not be issued to Board members.

Standardized Expense Form(s) Required

All requests for expense advancement, reimbursement, and/or purchase orders in the Cooperative must be submitted on the appropriate itemized, signed standardized form(s). The form(s) must show the following information:

1. The amount of the estimated or actual expense, with attached receipts for actual incurred expenses.
2. The name and office of the Board member who is requesting the expense advancement or reimbursement. Receipts from group functions must include the names, offices, and job titles of all participants.
3. The date(s) of the official business on which the expense advancement or reimbursement will be or was expended.
4. The nature of the official business conducted when the expense advancement or reimbursement will be or was expended.

Types of Official Business for Expense Advancements, Reimbursements, and Purchase Orders

1. Registration. When possible, registration fees will be paid by the Cooperative in advance.
2. Travel. The least expensive method of travel will be used, providing that no hardship will be caused to the Board member. Board members will be reimbursed for:
 - a. Air travel at the coach or economy class commercial airline rate. First class or business class air travel will be reimbursed only if emergency circumstances warrant. The emergency circumstances must be explained on the expense form and Board approval of the additional expense is required. Copies of airline tickets must be attached to the expense form.
 - b. Rail or bus travel at actual cost. Rail or bus travel costs may not exceed the cost of coach airfare. Copies of tickets must be attached to the expense form to substantiate amounts.
 - c. Use of personal automobiles at the standard mileage rate approved by the Internal Revenue Service for income tax purposes. The reimbursement may not exceed the cost of coach airfare. Mileage for use of personal automobiles in trips to and from transportation terminals will also be reimbursed. Toll charges and parking costs will be reimbursed.
 - d. Automobile rental costs when the vehicle's use is warranted. The circumstances for such use must be explained on the expense form.
 - e. Taxis, airport limousines, ride sharing or other local transportation costs.
3. Meals. Meals charged to the Cooperative should represent mid-fare selections for the

hotel/meeting facility or general area, consistent with the maximum allowable reimbursement amount set by the Board. Tips are included with meal charges. Expense forms must explain the meal charges incurred. Alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed.

4. Lodging. Board members should request conference rate or mid-fare room accommodations. A single room rate will be reimbursed. Board members should pay personal expenses at checkout. If that is impossible, deductions for the charges should be made on the expense form.
5. Miscellaneous Expenses. Board members may seek reimbursement for other expenses incurred while attending a meeting sponsored by organizations described herein by fully describing the expenses on the expense form, attaching receipts.

Additional Requirements for Travel Expenses Charged to Federal and State Grants

All Board member expenses for travel charged to a federal grant or State grant governed by the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (30 ILCS 708/) must comply with Board policy 5:60, *Expenses*, and its implementing procedures. Travel expenses include costs for transportation, lodging, meals, and related items.

LEGAL REF.:

105 ILCS 5/10-20 and 5/10-22.32.

30 ILCS 708/, Government Accountability and Transparency Act.

50 ILCS 150/, Local Government Travel Expense Control Act.

CROSS REF.: 2:100 (Board Member Conflict of Interest), 2:120 (Board Member Development), 2:240 (Board Policy Development), 4:50 (Payment Procedures), 4:55 (Use of Credit and Procurement Cards), 5:60 (Expenses)

Adopted: February 17, 2021

Region III Education Cooperative

2:130 Governing and Executive Boards-Director Relationship

The Governing Board directs, through policy, the Director in his or her charge of the administration of the Cooperative by delegating its authority to operate the Cooperative and provide leadership to staff.

The Governing Board employs and jointly evaluates the Director with the Executive Board and holds him or her responsible for the operation of the Cooperative in accordance with Governing Board policies and State and federal law.

The Governing Board-Director relationship is based on mutual respect for their complementary roles. The relationship requires clear communication of expectations regarding the duties and responsibilities of both the Governing Board and Director.

The Governing Board considers the recommendations of the Director as the Cooperative's Chief Executive Officer. The Governing Board adopts policies necessary to provide general direction for the Cooperative and to encourage achievement of Cooperative goals. The Director develops plans, programs, and procedures needed to implement the policies and directs the Cooperative's operations.

The establishment and operation of all special education programs and services shall be under the coordination and educational direction of a state approved Director of Special Education. Such Director refers to an individual functioning in that capacity whose credentials have been approved by the State Board of Education

The Governing Board and Executive Board shall, from time to time, define and provide for the scope and limit of the duties of the Director, responsibilities and authority. The Governing Board and Executive Board on an annual basis shall jointly evaluate the performance of the Director.

LEGAL REF.:

105 ILCS 5/10-16.7 and 5/10-21.4.

CROSS REF.: 3:40 (Director)

Adopted: October 20, 2021

Region III Education Cooperative

2:140 Communications To and From the Governing & Executive Boards

The Executive Board welcomes communications from staff members, parents/guardians, students, and community members. Individuals may submit questions or communications for the Executive Board's consideration to the Director or may use the electronic link to the Executive Board's email address(es) posted on the Cooperative's website.

The Director or designee shall:

1. Ensure that the home page for the Cooperative's website contains an active electronic link to the email address(es) for the Executive Board, and
2. During the Board's regular meetings, report for the Board's consideration all questions or communications submitted through the active electronic link along with the status of the Cooperative's response in the Board meeting packet.

If contacted individually, Executive Board members will refer the person to the appropriate level of authority, except in unusual situations. Executive Board members' questions or communications to staff or about programs will be channeled through the Director's office. Executive Board members will not take individual action that might compromise the Executive Board or Cooperative. There is no expectation of privacy for any communication sent to the Executive Board or its members, whether sent by letter, email, or other means.

Executive Board Member Use of Electronic Communications

For purposes of this section, *electronic communications* includes, without limitation, electronic mail, electronic chat, instant messaging, texting, and any form of social networking. Electronic communications among a majority or more of an Executive Board-quorum shall not be used for the purpose of discussing Cooperative business. Electronic communications among Executive Board members shall be limited to: (1) disseminating information, and (2) messages not involving deliberation, debate, or decision-making. The following list contains examples of permissible electronic communications:

- Agenda item suggestions
- Reminders regarding meeting times, dates, and places
- Executive Board meeting agendas or information concerning agenda items
- Individual emails to community members, subject to the other limitations in this policy

In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, individual Board members will not (a) reply to an email on behalf of the entire Board, or (b) engage in the discussion of Cooperative business through electronic communications with a majority of a Board-quorum.

LEGAL REF.:

5 ILCS 120/, Open Meetings Act.

50 ILCS 205/20, Local Records Act.

CROSS REF.:2:220 (Governing Board Meeting Procedure), 3:30 (Chain of Command), 8:110 (Public Suggestions and Concerns)

Adopted: May 15, 2024

2:160 Cooperative Attorney

The Governing & Executive Boards may retain legal services with one or more attorneys or law firms to be the Board Attorney(s). The Board Attorney represents the Governing Board or Executive Board in its capacity as the governing body for the Cooperative. The Board Attorney serves on a retainer or other fee arrangement as determined in advance. The Board Attorney will provide services as described in the agreement for legal services or as memorialized by an engagement letter. The Cooperative will only pay for legal services that are provided in accordance with the agreement for legal services, as memorialized by an engagement letter, or that are otherwise authorized by this policy or a majority of the Board.

The Director, his or her designee, and Executive Board Chairperson, are each authorized to confer with and/or seek the legal advice of the Cooperative Attorney. The Board may also authorize a specific Board member to confer with the Board Attorney on its behalf.

The Director may authorize the Board Attorney to represent the Cooperative in any legal matter until the Executive Board has an opportunity to be informed of and/or consider the matter.

The Cooperative retains the right to consult with or employ other attorneys and to terminate the service of any attorney.

LEGAL REF.:

Rule 1.7 (Conflict of Interest: Current Clients) and Rule 1.13 (Organization as Client) of the Ill. Rules of Professional Conduct adopted by the Ill. Supreme Court.

CROSS REF.: 4:60 (Purchases and Contracts)

Adopted: February 17, 2021

Region III Education Cooperative

2:170 Procurement of Architectural, Engineering, and Land Surveying Services

The Executive Board selects architects, engineers, and land surveyors to provide professional services to the Cooperative on the basis of demonstrated competence and qualifications, and in accordance with State law.

LEGAL REF.:

40 U.S.C. §1101 et seq.

50 ILCS 510/, Local Government Professional Services Selection Act.

105 ILCS 5/10-20.21.

Shively v. Belleville Twp. High Sch. Dist. 201, 329 Ill.App.3d 1156 (5th Dist. 2002), *appeal denied*.

Adopted: September 20, 2023

Region III Education Cooperative

2:200 Types of Governing & Executive Board Meetings

General

For all meetings of the Executive Board, the Director or designee shall satisfy all notice and posting requirements contained herein as well as in the Open Meetings Act. This shall include mailing meeting notifications to news media that have officially requested them and to others as approved by the Board. Unless otherwise specified, all meetings are held in the Cooperative's main office. Board policy 2:220, *Governing Board Meeting Procedure*, governs meeting quorum requirements.

The Director is designated on behalf of the Board to receive the training on compliance with the Open Meetings Act that is required by Section 1.05(a) of that Act. The Director may identify other employees to receive the training.

Regular Meetings

The Board announces the time and place for its regular meetings at the beginning of each fiscal year. The Director shall prepare and make available the calendar of regular Board meetings. The regular meeting calendar may be changed with ten days' notice in accordance with State law.

A meeting agenda shall be posted at the Cooperative's main office and the Board's meeting room, or other location where the meeting is to be held, at least 48 hours before the meeting.

Closed Meetings

The Board may meet in a closed meeting to consider the following subjects:

1. The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity. However, a meeting to consider an increase in compensation to a specific employee of a public body that is subject to the Local Government Wage Increase Transparency Act may not be closed and shall be open to the public and posted and held in accordance with [the Open Meetings Act]. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1).
2. Collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2).
3. The selection of a person to fill a public office, as defined in the Open Meetings Act, including a vacancy in a public office, when the public body is given power to appoint under law or ordinance, or the discipline, performance or removal of the occupant of a public office, when the public body is given power to remove the occupant under law or ordinance. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(3).
4. Evidence or testimony presented in open hearing, or in closed hearing where specifically authorized by law, to a quasi-adjudicative body, as defined in the Open Meetings Act, provided that the body prepares and makes available for public inspection a written decision setting forth its determinative reasoning. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(4).
5. Evidence or testimony presented to the Board regarding denial of admission to school events or property pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/24-24, provided that the Board prepares and makes available for public inspection a written decision setting forth its determinative reasoning. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(4.5).
6. The purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body, including meetings held for the purpose of discussing whether a particular parcel should be acquired. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5).
7. The setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the public body. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(6).
8. The sale or purchase of securities, investments, or investment contracts. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(7).
9. Security procedures, school building safety and security, and the use of personnel and

equipment to respond to an actual, a threatened, or a reasonably potential danger to the safety of employees, students, staff, the public, or public property. 5ILCS 120/2(c)(8), amended by P.A. 99-235, eff. 1-1-16.

10. Student disciplinary cases. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(9).
11. The placement of individual students in special education programs and other matters relating to individual students. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(10).
12. Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the public body finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the closed meeting. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11).
13. The establishment of reserves or settlement of claims as provided in the Local Governmental and Governmental Employees Tort Immunity Act, if otherwise the disposition of a claim or potential claim might be prejudiced, or the review or discussion of claims, loss or risk management information, records, data, advice or communications from or with respect to any insurer of the public body or any intergovernmental risk management association or self insurance pool of which the public body is a member. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(12).
14. Self evaluation, practices and procedures or professional ethics, when meeting with a representative of a statewide association of which the public body is a member. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(16).
15. Discussion of minutes of meetings lawfully closed under the Open Meetings Act, whether for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21).
16. Meetings between internal or external auditors and governmental audit committees, finance committees, and their equivalents, when the discussion involves internal control weaknesses, identification of potential fraud risk areas, known or suspected frauds, and fraud interviews conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards of the United States of America. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(29).

The Board may hold a closed meeting, or close a portion of a meeting, by a majority vote of a quorum, taken at an open meeting. The vote of each Board member present, and the reason for the closed meeting, will be publicly disclosed at the time of the meeting and clearly stated in the motion and the meeting minutes.

A single motion calling for a series of closed meetings may be adopted when such meetings will involve the same particular matters and are scheduled to be held within three months of the vote.

No final Board action will be taken at a closed meeting.

Reconvened or Rescheduled Meetings

A meeting may be rescheduled or reconvened. Public notice of a rescheduled or reconvened meeting shall be given in the same manner as that for a special meeting, except that no public notice is required when the original meeting is open to the public and: (1) is to be reconvened within 24 hours, or (2) an announcement of the time and place of the reconvened meeting was made at the original meeting and there is no change in the agenda.

Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson or by any three members of the Board by giving notice thereof, in writing, stating the time, place, and purpose of the meeting to remaining Board members by mail at least 48 hours before the meeting, or by personal service at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Public notice of a special meeting is given by posting a notice at the Cooperative's main office at least

48 hours before the meeting and by notifying the news media that have filed a written request for notice. A meeting agenda shall accompany the notice.

All matters discussed by the Board at any special meeting must be related to a subject on the meeting agenda.

Emergency Meetings

Public notice of emergency meetings shall be given as soon as practical, but in any event, before the meeting to news media that have filed a written request for notice.

Posting on the Cooperative Website

In addition to the other notices specified in this policy, the Director or designee shall post the following on the Cooperative website: (1) the annual schedule of regular meetings, which shall remain posted until the Board approves a new schedule of regular meetings; (2) a public notice of all Board meetings; and (3) the agenda for each meeting which shall remain posted until the meeting is concluded.

LEGAL REF.:

5 ILCS 120/, Open Meeting Act.

5 ILCS 140/, Freedom of Information Act.

105 ILCS 5/10-6 and 5/10-16.

CROSS REF.:2:110 (Qualifications Term, and Duties of Board Officers), 2:120 (Board Member Development), 2:210 (Organizational Governing Board Meetings), 2:220 (Governing Board Meeting Procedure), 2:230 (Public Participation at Governing Board Meetings and Petitions to the Board), 6:235 (Access to Electronic Networks), 8:30 (Visitors to and Conduct on School Property)

Adopted: February 21, 2024

Region III Education Cooperative

2:220 Executive Board Meeting Procedure

Agenda

The Executive Board Chairperson is responsible for focusing the Executive Board meeting agendas on appropriate content. The Director shall prepare agendas in consultation with the Executive Board Chairperson. The Chairperson shall designate a portion of the agenda as a consent agenda for those items that usually do not require discussion or explanation before Executive Board action. Upon the request of any Executive Board member, an item will be withdrawn from the consent agenda and placed on the regular agenda for independent consideration.

Each Executive Board meeting agenda shall contain the general subject matter of any item that will be the subject of final action at the meeting. Items submitted by Executive Board members to the Director or the Chairperson shall be placed on the agenda for an upcoming meeting. Cooperative residents may suggest inclusions for the agenda. The Executive Board will take final action only on items contained in the posted agenda; items not on the agenda may still be discussed.

The Director shall provide a copy of the agenda, with adequate data and background information, to each Executive Board member at least 48 hours before each meeting, except a meeting held in the event of an emergency. The meeting agenda shall be posted in accordance with Executive Board policy 2:200, *Types of Executive Board Meetings*.

The Executive Board Chairperson shall determine the order of business at regular Executive Board meetings. Upon consent of a majority of members present, the order of business at any meeting may be changed.

Voting Method

Unless otherwise provided by law, when a vote is taken upon any measure before the Executive Board, with a quorum being present, a majority of the votes cast shall determine its outcome. A vote of *abstain* or *present*, or a vote other than *yea* or *nay*, or a failure to vote, is counted for the purposes of determining whether a quorum is present. A vote of *abstain* or *present*, or a vote other than *yea* or *nay*, or a failure to vote, however, is not counted in determining whether a measure has been passed by the Executive Board, unless otherwise stated in law. The sequence for casting votes is rotated.

On all questions involving the expenditure of money and on all questions involving the closing of a meeting to the public, a roll call vote shall be taken and entered in the Executive Board's minutes. An individual Executive Board member may request that a roll call vote be taken on any other matter; the Chairperson or other presiding officer may approve or deny the request but a denial is subject to being overturned by a majority vote of the members present.

Any Executive Board member may include a written explanation of his or her vote in the Cooperative file containing individual Executive Board member statements; the explanation will not be part of the minutes.

Minutes

The Executive Board Secretary shall keep written minutes of all Executive Board meetings (whether open or closed), which shall be signed by the Chairperson and the Secretary. The minutes include:

1. The meeting's date, time, and place;
2. Executive Board members recorded as either present or absent;
3. A summary of the discussion on all matters proposed, deliberated, or decided, and a record of any votes taken;
4. On all matters requiring a roll call vote, a record of who voted *yea* and *nay*;

5. If the meeting is adjourned to another date, the time and place of the adjourned meeting;
6. The vote of each member present when a vote is taken to hold a closed meeting or portion of a meeting, and the reason for the closed meeting with a citation to the specific exception contained in the Open Meetings Act (OMA) authorizing the closed meeting;
7. A record of all motions, including individuals making and seconding motions;
8. Upon request by a Executive Board member, a record of how he or she voted on a particular motion; and
9. The type of meeting, including any notices and, if a reconvened meeting, the original meeting's date.

The minutes shall be submitted to the Executive Board for approval or modification at its next regularly scheduled open meeting. Minutes for open meetings must be approved within 30 days after the meeting or at the second subsequent regular meeting, whichever is later.

Every six months, or as soon after as is practicable, in an open meeting, the Executive Board: (1) reviews minutes from all closed meetings that are currently unavailable for public release, and (2) determines which, if any, no longer require confidential treatment and are available for public inspection. This is also referred to as a *semi-annual review*. The Executive Board may meet in a prior closed session to review the minutes from closed meetings that are currently unavailable for public release, but it reports its determination in open session.

The official minutes are in the custody of the Executive Board Secretary. Open meeting minutes are available for inspection during regular office hours within 10 days after the Executive Board's approval; they may be inspected in the Cooperative's main office, in the presence of the Secretary, the Director or designee, or any Executive Board member.

Minutes from closed meetings are likewise available, but only if the Executive Board has released them for public inspection, except that Executive Board members may access closed session minutes not yet released for public inspection (1) in the Cooperative's administrative offices or their official storage location, and (2) in the presence of the Recording Secretary, the Director or designated administrator, or any elected Executive Board member. The minutes, whether reviewed by members of the public or the Executive Board, shall not be removed from the Cooperative's administrative offices or their official storage location except by vote of the Executive Board or by court order.

The Executive Board's open meeting minutes shall be posted on the Cooperative website within 10 days after the Executive Board approves them; the minutes will remain posted for at least 60 days.

Verbatim Record of Closed Meetings

The Director, or the Executive Board Secretary when the Director is absent, shall audio record all closed meetings. If neither is present, the Executive Board Chairperson or presiding officer shall assume this responsibility. After the closed meeting, the person making the audio recording shall label the recording with the date and store it in a secure location. The Director shall ensure that: (1) an audio recording device and all necessary accompanying items are available to the Executive Board for every closed meeting, and (2) a secure location for storing closed meeting audio recordings is maintained within the Cooperative's administrative offices or their official storage location.

After 18 months have passed since being made, the audio recording of a closed meeting is destroyed provided the Executive Board approved: (1) its destruction, and (2) minutes of the particular closed meeting.

Individual Executive Board members may access verbatim recordings in the presence of the Recording Secretary, the Director or designated administrator, or any elected Executive Board member. Access to the verbatim recordings is available at the Cooperative's administrative offices or the verbatim recording's official storage location. Requests shall be made to the Director or Executive

Board Chairperson. While a Executive Board member is listening to a verbatim recording, it shall not be re-recorded or removed from the Cooperative's main office or official storage location, except by vote of the Executive Board or by court order.

Before making such requests, Executive Board members should consider whether such requests are germane to their responsibilities, service to Cooperative, and/or Oath of Office in policy 2:80, *Executive Board Member Oath and Conduct*. In the interest of encouraging free and open expression by Executive Board members during closed meetings, the recordings of closed meetings should not be used by Executive Board members to confirm or dispute the accuracy of recollections.

Quorum and Participation by Audio or Video Means

A quorum of the Executive Board must be physically present at all Executive Board meetings. A majority of the full membership of the Executive Board constitutes a quorum.

Provided a quorum is physically present, a Executive Board member may attend a meeting by video or audio conference if he or she is prevented from physically attending because of: (1) personal illness or disability, (2) employment or Cooperative business, (3) a family or other emergency, or (4) unexpected childcare obligations. If a member wishes to attend a meeting by video or audio means, he or she must notify the recording secretary or Director at least 24 hours before the meeting unless advance notice is impractical. The recording secretary or Director will inform the Executive Board Chairperson and make appropriate arrangements. A Executive Board member who attends a meeting by audio or video means, as provided in this policy, may participate in all aspects of the Executive Board meeting including voting on any item.

No Physical Presence of Quorum and Participation by Audio or Video; Disaster Declaration

The ability of the Board to meet in person with a quorum physically present at its meeting location may be affected by the Governor or the Director of the Ill. Dept. of Public Health issuing a disaster declaration related to a public health emergency. The Board Chairperson or, if the office is vacant or the Chairperson is absent or unable to perform the office's duties, the Vice Chairperson determines that an in-person meeting or a meeting conducted under the **Quorum and Participation by Audio or Video Means** subhead above, is not practical or prudent because of the disaster declaration; if neither the Chairperson nor Vice Chairperson are present or able to perform this determination, the Director shall serve as the duly authorized designee for purposes of making this determination.

The individual who makes this determination for the Board shall put it in writing, include it on the Board's published notice and agenda for the audio or video meeting and in the meeting minutes, and ensure that the Board meets every OMA requirement for the Board to meet by video or audio conference without the physical presence of a quorum.

Rules of Order

Unless State law or Executive Board-adopted rules apply, the Executive Board Chairperson, as the presiding officer, will use the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, as a guide when a question arises concerning procedure.

Broadcasting and Recording Executive Board Meetings

Any person may record or broadcast an open Executive Board meeting. Special requests to facilitate recording or broadcasting an open Executive Board meeting, such as seating, writing surfaces, lighting, and access to electrical power, should be directed to the Director at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Recording meetings shall not distract or disturb Executive Board members, other meeting participants, or members of the public. The Executive Board Chairperson may designate a location for

recording equipment, may restrict the movements of individuals who are using recording equipment, or may take such other steps as are deemed necessary to preserve decorum and facilitate the meeting.

LEGAL REF.:

5 ILCS 120/2a, 120/2.02, 120/2.05, 120/2.06, and 120/7, Open Meetings Act.

105 ILCS 5/10-6, 5/10-7, 5/10-12, and 5/10-16.

CROSS REF.: 2:80 (Governing Board Member Oath and Conduct) , 2:200 (Types of Governing & Executive Board Meetings), 2:230 (Public Participation at Executive Board Meetings and Petitions to the Executive Board)

Adopted: February 21, 2024

Region III Education Cooperative

2:230 Public Participation at Executive Board Meetings and Petitions to the Executive Board

For a maximum of 30 minutes during each regular and special open meeting of the Executive Board, any person may comment to or ask questions of the Executive Board (*public participation*), subject to the reasonable constraints established and recorded in this policy's guidelines below. The time limit for public participation at a meeting may be extended upon the majority vote of the Executive Board members at the regular or special meeting. The Executive Board listens to comments or questions during public participation; responses to comments to or questions of the Board are most often managed through policy 3:30, *Chain of Command*.

To preserve sufficient time for the Executive Board to conduct its business, any person appearing before the Board is expected to follow these guidelines:

1. Address the Executive Board only at the appropriate time as indicated on the agenda and when recognized by the Executive Board Chairperson. This includes following the directives of the Executive Board Chairperson to maintain order and decorum for all.
2. Use a sign-in sheet, if requested.
3. Identify oneself and be brief. Ordinarily, the time for any one person to address the Board during public participation shall be limited to five minutes. In unusual circumstances, and when an individual has made a request to speak for a longer period of time, the Executive Board Chairperson may allow a person to speak for more than five minutes. If multiple individuals wish to address the Board on the same subject, the group is encouraged to appoint a spokesperson.
4. Observe, when necessary and appropriate, the Executive Board Chairperson's authority to:
 - a. Shorten the time for each person to address the Board during public participation to conserve time and give the maximum number of people an opportunity to speak; and/or
 - b. Determine procedural matters regarding public participation not otherwise covered in Board policy.
5. Conduct oneself with respect and civility toward others and otherwise abide by Board policy 8:30, *Visitors to and Conduct on School Property*.

Petitions or written correspondence to the Executive Board shall be presented to the Executive Board in the next regular Executive Board packet.

LEGAL REF.:

105 ILCS 5/10-6 and 5/10-16.

5 ILCS 120/2.06, Open Meetings Act.

CROSS REF.: 2:220 (Executive Board Meeting Procedure), 8:10 (Connection with the Community), 8:30 (Visitors to and Conduct on School Property)

Adopted: August 24, 2022

2:240 Executive Board Policy Development

The Executive Board governs using written policies. Written policies ensure legal compliance, establish Executive Board processes, articulate Cooperative ends, delegate authority, and define operating limits. Executive Board policies also provide the basis for monitoring progress toward Cooperative ends.

Policy Development

Anyone may propose new policies, changes to existing policies, or deletion of existing policies. Staff suggestions should be processed through the Director. Suggestions from all others should be made to the Executive Board Chairperson or the Director.

The Director is responsible for: (1) providing relevant policy information and data to the Executive Board, (2) notifying those who will implement or be affected by or required to implement a proposed policy and obtaining their advice and suggestions, and (3) having policy recommendations drafted into written form for Executive Board deliberation. The Director shall seek the counsel of the Cooperative Attorney when appropriate.

Policy Adoption and Dissemination

Policies or policy revisions will not be adopted at the Executive Board meeting at which they are first introduced, except when: (1) appropriate for a consent agenda because no Executive Board discussion is required, or (2) necessary or prudent in order to meet emergency or special conditions or to be legally compliant. Further Executive Board consideration may be given at a subsequent meeting(s) and after opportunity for community input. The adoption of a policy will serve to supersede all previously adopted policies on the same topic.

The Executive Board policies are available for public inspection in the Cooperative's main office during regular office hours. Copy requests should be made pursuant to Executive Board policy 2:250, *Access to Cooperative Public Records*.

Executive Board Policy Review and Monitoring

The Executive Board will periodically review its policies for relevancy, monitor its policies for effectiveness, and consider whether any modifications are required. The Executive Board may use an annual policy review and monitoring calendar.

Words Importing Gender

Throughout this policy manual, words importing the masculine and/or feminine gender include all gender neutral/inclusive pronouns.

Director Implementation

The Executive Board will support any reasonable interpretation of Executive Board policy made by the Director. If reasonable minds differ, the Executive Board will review the applicable policy and consider the need for further clarification.

In the absence of Executive Board policy, the Director is authorized to take appropriate action.

Suspension of Policies

The Executive Board, by a majority vote of members present at any meeting, may temporarily suspend a Executive Board policy except those provisions that are controlled by law or contract. The failure to suspend with a specific motion does not invalidate the Executive Board action.

LEGAL REF.:

105 ILCS 5/10-20.5.

CROSS REF.: 2:150 (Committees), 2:250 (Access to Cooperative Public Records), 3:40 (Director)

Adopted: October 20, 2021

Region III Education Cooperative

2:250 Access to Cooperative Public Records

Full access to the Cooperative's *public records* is available to any person as provided in the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), this policy, and implementing procedures. The Director or designee shall: (1) provide the Governing Board with sufficient information and data to permit the Governing Board to monitor the Cooperative's compliance with FOIA and this policy, and (2) report any FOIA requests during the Governing Board's regular meetings along with the status of the Cooperative's response.

Freedom of Information Officer

The Director shall serve as the Cooperative's Freedom of Information Officer and assumes all the duties and powers of that office as provided in FOIA and this policy. The Director may delegate these duties and powers to one or more designees, but the delegation shall not relieve the Director of the responsibility for the action that was delegated.

Definition

The Cooperative's *public records* are defined as records, reports, forms, writings, letters, memoranda, books, papers, maps, photographs, microfilms, cards, tapes, recordings, electronic data processing records, electronic communications, recorded information and all other documentary material pertaining to the transaction of public business, regardless of physical form or characteristics, having been prepared by or for, or having been or being used by, received by, in the possession of, or under the control of the Cooperative.

Requesting Records

A request for inspection and/or copies of public records must be made in writing and may be submitted by personal delivery, mail, telefax, or email directed to the Cooperative's Freedom of Information Officer. Individuals making a request are not required to state a reason for the request other than to identify when the request is for a commercial purpose or when requesting a fee waiver. The Director or designee shall instruct Cooperative employees to immediately forward any request for inspection and copying of a public record to the Cooperative's Freedom of Information Officer or designee.

Responding to Requests

The Freedom of Information Officer shall approve all requests for public records unless:

1. The requested material does not exist;
2. The requested material is exempt from inspection and copying by the Freedom of Information Act; or
3. Complying with the request would be unduly burdensome.

Within five business days after receipt of a request for access to a public record, the Freedom of Information Officer shall comply with or deny the request, unless the time for response is extended as specified in Section 3 of FOIA. The Freedom of Information Officer may extend the time for a response for up to five business days from the original due date. If an extension is needed, the Freedom of Information Officer shall: (1) notify the person making the request of the reason for the extension, and (2) either inform the person of the date on which a response will be made, or agree with the person in writing on a compliance period.

The time periods are extended for responding to requests for records made for a *commercial purpose*, requests by a *recurrent requester*, or *voluminous requests*, as those terms are defined in Section 2 of FOIA. The time periods for responding to those requests are governed by Sections 3.1, 3.2, and 3.6 of FOIA.

When responding to a request for a record containing both exempt and non-exempt material, the Freedom of Information Officer shall redact exempt material from the record before complying with the request.

Fees

Persons making a request for copies of public records must pay any and all applicable fees. The Freedom of Information Officer shall establish a fee schedule that complies with FOIA and this policy and is subject to the Governing Board's review. The fee schedule shall include copying fees and all other fees to the maximum extent they are permitted by FOIA, including without limitation, search and review fees for responding to a request for a *commercial purpose* and fees, costs, and personnel hours in connection with responding to a *voluminous request*.

Copying fees, except when fixed by statute, shall be reasonably calculated to reimburse the Cooperative's actual cost for reproducing and certifying public records and for the use, by any person, of its equipment to copy records. In no case shall the copying fees exceed the maximum fees permitted by FOIA. If the Cooperative's actual copying costs are equal to or greater than the maximum fees permitted by FOIA, the Freedom of Information Officer is authorized to use FOIA's maximum fees as the Cooperative's fees. No copying fees shall be charged for: (1) the first 50 pages of black and white, letter or legal sized copies, or (2) electronic copies other than the actual cost of the recording medium, except if the response is to a *voluminous request*, as defined in FOIA.

A fee reduction is available if the request qualifies under Section 6 of FOIA. The Freedom of Information Officer shall set the amount of the reduction taking into consideration the amount of material requested and the cost of copying it.

Provision of Copies and Access to Records

A public record that is the subject of an approved access request will be available for inspection or copying at the Cooperative's administrative office during regular business hours, unless other arrangements are made by the Freedom of Information Officer.

Many public records are immediately available from the Cooperative's website including, but not limited to, the process for requesting a public record. The Freedom of Information Officer shall direct a requester to the Cooperative's website if a requested record is available there. If the requester is unable to reasonably access the record online, he or she may resubmit the request for the record, stating his or her inability to reasonably access the record online, and the Cooperative shall make the requested record available for inspection and copying as otherwise provided in this policy.

Preserving Public Records

Public records, including email messages, shall be preserved and cataloged if: (1) they are evidence of the Cooperative's organization, function, policies, procedures, or activities, (2) they contain informational data appropriate for preservation, (3) their retention is required by State or federal law, or (4) they are subject to a retention request by the Governing Board Attorney (e.g., a litigation hold), Cooperative auditor, or other individual authorized by the Governing Board or State or federal law to make such a request. Unless its retention is required as described in items numbered 3 or 4 above, a public record, as defined by the Illinois Local Records Act, may be destroyed when authorized by the Local Records Commission.

LEGAL REF.:

5 ILCS 140/, Illinois Freedom of Information Act.

105 ILCS 5/10-16 and 5/24A-7.1.

820 ILCS 40/11.

820 ILCS 130/5.

CROSS REF.: 2:140 (Communications To and From the Governing Board), 5:150 (Personnel Records), 7:340 (Student Records)

Adopted: September 20, 2023

Region III Education Cooperative

2:260 Uniform Grievance Procedure

A student, parent/guardian, employee, or community member should notify any Cooperative Complaint Manager if he or she believes that the School Governing Board, its employees, or its agents have violated his or her rights guaranteed by the State or federal Constitution, State or federal statute, or Governing Board policy, or have a complaint regarding any one of the following:

1. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §12101 et seq.
2. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq., excluding Title IX sexual harassment complaints governed by policy 2:265, *Title IX Grievance Procedure*
3. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. §791 et seq.
4. Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq.
5. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §2000d et seq.
6. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §2000e et seq.
7. Sexual harassment prohibited by the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act, 5 ILCS 430/70-5(a); Illinois Human Rights Act, 775 ILCS 5/; and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §2000e et seq. (Title IX sexual harassment complaints are addressed under policy 2:265, *Title IX Grievance Procedure*)
8. Breastfeeding accommodations for students, 105 ILCS 5/10-20.60
9. Bullying, 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7
10. Misuse of funds received for services to improve educational opportunities for educationally disadvantaged or deprived children
11. Curriculum, instructional materials, and/or programs
12. Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act, 820 ILCS 180/
13. Illinois Equal Pay Act of 2003, 820 ILCS 112/
14. Provision of services to homeless students
15. Illinois Whistleblower Act, 740 ILCS 174/
16. Misuse of genetic information prohibited by the Illinois Genetic Information Privacy Act, 410 ILCS 513/; and Titles I and II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, 42 U.S.C. §2000ff et seq.
17. Employee Credit Privacy Act, 820 ILCS 70/

The Complaint Manager will first attempt to resolve complaints without resorting to this grievance procedure. If a formal complaint is filed under this policy, the Complaint Manager will address the complaint promptly and equitably. A student and/or parent/guardian filing a complaint under this policy may forego any informal suggestions and/or attempts to resolve it and may proceed directly to this grievance procedure. The Complaint Manager will not require a student or parent/guardian complaining of any form of harassment to attempt to resolve allegations directly with the accused (or the accused's parents/guardians); this includes mediation.

Right to Pursue Other Remedies Not Impaired

The right of a person to prompt and equitable resolution of a complaint filed under this policy shall not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies, e.g., criminal complaints, civil actions, etc. Use of this grievance procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies and use of this grievance procedure does not extend any filing deadline related to the pursuit of other remedies. If a person is pursuing another remedy subject to a complaint under this policy, the Cooperative will continue with a simultaneous investigation under this policy.

Deadlines

All deadlines under this policy may be extended by the Complaint Manager as he or she deems appropriate. As used in this policy, *school business days* means days on which the Cooperative's main office is open.

Filing a Complaint

A person (hereinafter Complainant) who wishes to avail him or herself of this grievance procedure may do so by filing a complaint with any Cooperative Complaint Manager. The Complainant shall not be required to file a complaint with a particular Complaint Manager and may request a Complaint Manager of the same gender. The Complaint Manager may request the Complainant to provide a written statement regarding the nature of the complaint or require a meeting with a student's parent(s)/guardian(s). The Complaint Manager shall assist the Complainant as needed.

For any complaint alleging bullying and/or cyberbullying of students, the Complaint Manager shall process and review the complaint according to Governing Board policy 7:180, *Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment*, in addition to any response required by this policy. For any complaint alleging sexual harassment or other violation of Governing Board policy 5:20, *Workplace Harassment Prohibited*, the Complaint Manager shall process and review the complaint according to that policy, in addition to any response required by this policy.

Investigation Process

The Complaint Manager will investigate the complaint or appoint a qualified person to undertake the investigation on his or her behalf. The Complaint Manager shall ensure both parties have an equal opportunity to present evidence during an investigation. If the Complainant is a student under 18 years of age, the Complaint Manager will notify his or her parents/guardians that they may attend any investigatory meetings in which their child is involved. The complaint and identity of the Complainant will not be disclosed except: (1) as required by law, this policy, or any collective bargaining agreement, (2) as necessary to fully investigate the complaint, or (3) as authorized by the Complainant.

The identity of any student witnesses will not be disclosed except: (1) as required by law, this policy, or any collective bargaining agreement, (2) as necessary to fully investigate the complaint, or (3) as authorized by the parent/guardian of the student witness, or by the student if the student is 18 years of age or older.

The Complaint Manager will inform, at regular intervals, the person(s) filing a complaint under this policy about the status of the investigation. Within 30 school business days after the date the complaint was filed, the Complaint Manager shall file a written report of his or her findings with the Director. The Complaint Manager may request an extension of time.

The Director will keep the Governing Board informed of all complaints.

If a complaint contains allegations involving the Director, the written report shall be filed directly with the Governing Board, which will make a decision in accordance with paragraph four of the following section of this policy.

Decision and Appeal

Within five school business days after receiving the Complaint Manager's report, the Director shall mail his or her written decision to the Complainant and the accused by registered mail, return receipt requested, and/or personal delivery as well as to the Complaint Manager. All decisions shall be based upon the *preponderance of evidence* standard.

Within 10 school business days after receiving the Director's decision, the Complainant or the accused may appeal the decision to the Governing Board by making a written request to the Complaint Manager. The Complaint Manager shall promptly forward all materials relative to the

complaint and appeal to the Governing Board.

Within 30 school business days after an appeal of the Director's decision, the Governing Board shall affirm, reverse, or amend the Director's decision or direct the Director to gather additional information. Within five school business days after the Governing Board's decision, the Director shall inform the Complainant and the accused of the Governing Board's action.

For complaints containing allegations involving the Director or Governing Board member(s), within 30 school business days after receiving the Complaint Manager's or outside investigator's report, the Governing Board shall mail its written decision to the Complainant and the accused by registered mail, return receipt requested, and/or personal delivery as well as to the Complaint Manager.

This policy shall not be construed to create an independent right to a hearing before the Director or Governing Board. The failure to strictly follow the timelines in this grievance procedure shall not prejudice any party.

Appointing a Nondiscrimination Coordinator and Complaint Managers

The Director shall appoint a Nondiscrimination Coordinator to manage the Cooperative's efforts to provide equal opportunity employment and educational opportunities and prohibit the harassment of employees, students, and others.

The Director shall appoint a Title IX Coordinator to coordinate the Cooperative's efforts to comply with Title IX.

The Director shall appoint at least one Complaint Manager to administer this policy. If possible, the Director will appoint two Complaint Managers, each of a different gender. The Cooperative's Nondiscrimination Coordinator may be appointed as one of the Complaint Managers.

The Director shall insert into this policy and keep current the names, office addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers of the Nondiscrimination Coordinator and the Complaint Managers.

Nondiscrimination Coordinator:

Kim Hood
400 Alby Street
Alton, IL 62002
khood@region3sec.org
618-462-1031

Title IX Coordinator:

Messina Lenger
1800 Storey Lane,
Cottage Hills, IL 62018
mlenger@region3sec.org
618 462-1031

Complaint Managers:

Messina Lenger
1800 Storey Lane
Cottage Hills, IL 62018
mlenger@region3sec.org
618-462-1031

Katie Wieckhorst
1800 Storey Lane
Cottage Hills, IL 62018
kwieckhorst@region3sec.org
618-462-1031

LEGAL REF.:

8 U.S.C. §1324a et seq., Immigration Reform and Control Act.

20 U.S.C. §1232g, Family Education Rights Privacy Act.

20 U.S.C. §1400, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq., Title IX of the Education Amendments; 34 C.F.R. Part 106.

29 U.S.C. §206(d), Equal Pay Act.

29 U.S.C. §621 et seq., Age Discrimination in Employment Act.

29 U.S.C. §791 et seq., Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

29 U.S.C. §2612, Family and Medical Leave Act.

42 U.S.C. §2000d et seq., Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

42 U.S.C. §2000e et seq., Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

42 U.S.C. §2000ff et seq., Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act.

42 U.S.C. §11431 et seq., McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

42 U.S.C. §12101 et seq., Americans With Disabilities Act.

105 ILCS 5/2-3.8, 5/3-10, 5/10-20, 5/10-20.5, 5/10-20.7a, 5/10-20.60, 5/10-20.69 5/10-20.75, 5/10-22.5, 5/22-19, 5/24-4, 5/27-1, 5/27-23.7, and 45/1-15.

5 ILCS 415/10(a)(2), Government Severance Pay Act.

5 ILCS 430/70-5(a), State Officials and Employees Ethics Act.

410 ILCS 513/, Ill. Genetic Information Privacy Act.

740 ILCS 174/, Whistleblower Act.

740 ILCS 175/, Ill. False Claims Act.

775 ILCS 5/, Ill. Human Rights Act.

820 ILCS 180/, Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act; 56 Ill.Admin.Code Part 280.

820 ILCS 112/, Equal Pay Act of 2003.

820 ILCS 70/, Employee Credit Privacy Act.

23 Ill.Admin.Code §§1.240, 200.40, 226.50, and 226.570.

CROSS REF.: 2:105 (Ethics and Gift Ban), 2:265 (Title IX Grievance Procedure), 5:10 (Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Recruitment), 5:20 (Workplace Harassment Prohibited), 5:30 (Hiring Process and Criteria), 5:90 (Abused and Neglected Child Reporting), 6:120 (Education of Children with Disabilities), 6:260 (Complaints About Curriculum, Instructional Materials, and Programs), 7:10 (Equal Educational Opportunities), 7:15 (Student and Family Privacy Rights), 7:20 (Harassment of Students Prohibited), 7:180 (Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment), 7:185 (Teen Dating Violence Prohibited), 7:310 (Restrictions on Publications; Elementary Schools), 7:315 (Restrictions on Publications; High Schools), 8:70 (Accommodating

Individuals with Disabilities), 8:95 (Parental Involvement)

Adopted: May 15, 2024

Region III Education Cooperative

2:265 Title IX Grievance Procedure

Sexual harassment affects a student's ability to learn and an employee's ability to work. Providing an educational and workplace environment free from sexual harassment is an important Cooperative goal. The Cooperative does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any of its education programs or activities, and it complies with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) and its implementing regulations (34 C.F.R. Part 106) concerning everyone in the Cooperative's education programs and activities, including applicants for employment, students, parents/guardians, employees, and third parties.

Title IX Sexual Harassment Prohibited

Sexual harassment as defined in Title IX (Title IX Sexual Harassment) is prohibited. Any person, including a Cooperative employee or agent, or student, engages in Title IX Sexual Harassment whenever that person engages in conduct on the basis of an individual's sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. A Cooperative employee conditions the provision of an aid, benefit, or service on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct; or
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the Cooperative's educational program or activity; or
3. *Sexual assault* as defined in 20 U.S.C. §1092(f)(6)(A)(v), *dating violence* as defined in 34 U.S.C. §12291(a)(11), *domestic violence* as defined in 34 U.S.C. §12291(a)(12), or *stalking* as defined in 34 U.S.C. §12291(a)(36).

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, touching, crude jokes or pictures, discussions of sexual experiences, teasing related to sexual characteristics, spreading rumors related to a person's alleged sexual activities, rape, sexual battery, sexual abuse, and sexual coercion.

Definitions from 34 C.F.R. §106.30

Complainant means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

Education program or activity includes locations, events, or circumstances where the Cooperative has substantial control over both the *Respondent* and the context in which alleged sexual harassment occurs.

Formal Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint means a document filed by a *Complainant* or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a *Respondent* and requesting that the Cooperative investigate the allegation.

Respondent means an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of the conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

Supportive measures mean non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the *Complainant* or the *Respondent* before or after the filing of a *Formal Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint* or where no *Formal Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint* has been filed.

Title IX Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response

The Director or designee will ensure that the Cooperative prevents and responds to allegations of Title IX Sexual Harassment as follows:

1. Ensures that the Cooperative's comprehensive health education program in Board policy 6:60, *Curriculum Content*, incorporates (a) age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention programs in grades pre-K through 12, and (b) age-appropriate education about the warning signs, recognition, dangers, and prevention of teen dating violence in grades 7-12. This includes incorporating student social and emotional development into the Cooperative's educational program as required by State law and in alignment with Board policy 6:65, *Student Social and Emotional Development*.
2. Incorporates education and training for school staff pursuant to policy 5:100, *Staff Development Program*, and as recommended by the Director, Title IX Coordinator, Nondiscrimination Coordinator, Building Principal, or a Complaint Manager.
3. Notifies applicants for employment, students, parents/guardians, employees, and collective bargaining units of this policy and contact information for the Title IX Coordinator by, at a minimum, prominently displaying them on the Cooperative's website, if any, and in each handbook made available to such persons.

Making a Report

A person who wishes to make a report under this Title IX Sexual Harassment grievance procedure may make a report to the Title IX Coordinator, Nondiscrimination Coordinator, Building Principal, a Complaint Manager, or any employee with whom the person is comfortable speaking. A person who wishes to make a report may choose to report to a person of the same gender.

School employees shall respond to incidents of sexual harassment by promptly making or forwarding the report to the Title IX Coordinator. An employee who fails to promptly make or forward a report may be disciplined, up to and including discharge.

The Director shall insert into this policy and keep current the name, office address, email address, and telephone number of the Title IX Coordinator.

Title IX Coordinator:

Messina Lenger

1800 Storey Lane

Cottage Hills, IL 62018

mlenger@region3sec.org

618-462-1031

Processing and Reviewing a Report or Complaint

Upon receipt of a report, the Title IX Coordinator and/or designee will promptly contact the *Complainant* to: (1) discuss the availability of supportive measures, (2) consider the *Complainant's* wishes with respect to *supportive measures*, (3) inform the *Complainant* of the availability of *supportive measures* with or without the filing of a *Formal Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint*, and (4) explain to the *Complainant* the process for filing a *Formal Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint*.

Further, the Title IX Coordinator will analyze the report to identify and determine whether there is another or an additional appropriate method(s) for processing and reviewing it. For any report received, the Title IX Coordinator shall review Board policies 2:260, *Uniform Grievance Procedure*; 5:20, *Workplace Harassment Prohibited*; 5:90, *Abused and Neglected Child Reporting*; 5:120, *Employee Ethics; Code of Professional Conduct; and Conflict of Interest*; 7:20, *Harassment of Students Prohibited*; 7:180, *Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment*;

7:185, *Teen Dating Violence Prohibited*; and 7:190, *Student Behavior*, to determine if the allegations in the report require further action.

Reports of alleged sexual harassment will be confidential to the greatest extent practicable, subject to the Cooperative's duty to investigate and maintain an educational program or activity that is productive, respectful, and free of sexual harassment.

Formal Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Grievance Process

When a *Formal Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint* is filed, the Title IX Coordinator will investigate it or appoint a qualified person to undertake the investigation.

The Director or designee shall implement procedures to ensure that all *Formal Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaints* are processed and reviewed according to a Title IX grievance process that fully complies with 34 C.F.R. §106.45. The Cooperative's grievance process shall, at a minimum:

1. Treat *Complainants* and *Respondents* equitably by providing remedies to a *Complainant* where the *Respondent* is determined to be responsible for sexual harassment, and by following a grievance process that complies with 34 C.F.R. §106.45 before the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions or other actions against a *Respondent*.
2. Require an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence – including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence – and provide that credibility determinations may not be based on a person's status as a *Complainant*, *Respondent*, or witness.
3. Require that any individual designated by the Cooperative as a Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, or any person designated by the Cooperative to facilitate an informal resolution process:
 - a. Not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual *Complainant* or *Respondent*.
 - b. Receive training on the definition of sexual harassment, the scope of the Cooperative's *education program or activity*, how to conduct an investigation and grievance process (including hearings, appeals, and informal resolution processes, as applicable), and how to serve impartially.
4. Require that any individual designated by the Cooperative as an investigator receiving training on issues of relevance to create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence.
5. Require that any individual designated by the Cooperative as a decision-maker receive training on issues of relevance of questions and evidence, including when questions and evidence about the *Complainant's* sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant.
6. Include a presumption that the *Respondent* is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.
7. Include reasonably prompt timeframes for conclusion of the grievance process.
8. Describe the range of possible disciplinary sanctions and remedies the Cooperative may implement following any determination of responsibility.
9. Base all decisions upon the *preponderance of evidence* standard.
10. Include the procedures and permissible bases for the *Complainant* and *Respondent* to appeal.
11. Describe the range of *supportive measures* available to *Complainants* and *Respondents*.
12. Not require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use questions or evidence that constitute, or seek disclosure of, information protected under a legally recognized privilege, unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege.

Enforcement

Any Cooperative employee who is determined, at the conclusion of the grievance process, to have engaged in sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge. Any third party who is determined, at the conclusion of the grievance process, to have engaged in sexual harassment will be addressed in accordance with the authority of the Board in the context of the relationship of the third party to the Cooperative, e.g., vendor, parent, invitee, etc. Any Cooperative student who is determined, at the conclusion of the grievance process, to have engaged in sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, suspension and expulsion consistent with student behavior policies. Any person making a knowingly false accusation regarding sexual harassment will likewise be subject to disciplinary action.

This policy does not increase or diminish the ability of the Cooperative or the parties to exercise any other rights under existing law.

Retaliation Prohibited

The Cooperative prohibits any form of retaliation against anyone who, in good faith, has made a report or complaint, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in a proceeding under this policy. Any person should report claims of retaliation using Board policy 2:260, *Uniform Grievance Procedure*.

Any person who retaliates against others for reporting or complaining of violations of this policy or for participating in any manner under this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge, with regard to employees, or suspension and expulsion, with regard to students.

LEGAL REF.:

20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq., Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; 34 C.F.R. Part 106.

Davis v. Monroe County Bd. of Educ., 526 U.S. 629 (1999).

Gebser v. Lago Vista Independent Sch. Dist., 524 U.S. 274 (1998).

CROSS REF.: 2:260 (Uniform Grievance Procedure), 5:10 (Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Recruitment), 5:20 (Workplace Harassment Prohibited), 5:90 (Abused and Neglected Child Reporting), 5:100 (Staff Development Program), 5:120 (Employee Ethics; Code of Professional Conduct; and Conflict of Interest), 6:65 (Student Social and Emotional Development), 7:10 (Equal Educational Opportunities), 7:20 (Harassment of Students Prohibited), 7:180 (Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment), 7:185 (Teen Dating Violence Prohibited), 7:190 (Student Behavior)

Adopted: May 15, 2024

Region III Education Cooperative