

Slate Valley Unified Union School District Bylaws

I. PURPOSE

The Slate Valley Unified Union School District (SVUUSD) Board of School Directors (Board) shall carry out all responsibilities by law for public schools in the member towns of Benson, Castleton, Fair Haven, Hubbardton, Orwell, and West Haven. It shall provide leadership in developing a common educational program with emphasis on continuity for the grade pre-K-12 curriculum, encouraging cooperative efforts within the District and eliminating unnecessary duplication, resulting in savings or increased services to member schools.

The Board's governance approach will be to look at the broader picture of our educational system and embrace the idea that all SVUUSD students are "our" students. The Board will focus on operating as one system of schools with a shared vision, rather than a patchwork of separate schools with some common oversight.

SVUUSD is governed by the Articles of Agreement, by these Bylaws, and by applicable State and Federal law.

II. BOARD MEMBERSHIP

- A. The Board shall consist of eighteen members (directors), elected for three-year terms except for the initial Board. The Board shall have three members from each town, Fair Haven, West Haven, Castleton, Hubbardton, Benson, and Orwell. Terms of initial Board Members shall be staggered at one to three years, as provided in the Articles of Agreement.
- B. Each outgoing member shall provide his/her replacement with all official property and documents of a continuous or consecutive nature.
- C. Board members may be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the fulfillment of their official duties as authorized by the Board.
- D. If a director's position becomes vacant, the school board in consultation with the select board of the town represented by the departing director shall within 30 days select a replacement, who shall serve until the next annual or special town meeting. At that time the town will elect a director to fill the remainder of the term. 16 VSA 731.
- E. A vacancy in a District office other than director shall be temporarily filled by vote of the Board. The temporary officer shall serve until the District, at its next annual or special meeting, fills the position for the balance of the term. 16 VSA 731.

III. MEETINGS and AGENDA

- A. Meetings will be held at Fair Haven Union Middle High School, at the elementary schools, or at other places approved by the Board. There will be a meeting in each school at least once a year. A tentative schedule of meeting dates and places will be published following the annual Board reorganization meeting.
- B. Regular meetings will be held once monthly, unless the Board votes by a two-thirds majority to meet more or less often. Other meetings shall be held at the request of or at the discretion of the Board Chair.
- C. The superintendent and the Board Chair shall prepare the agenda for each meeting jointly. Unless otherwise provided for by 1 VSA §312 (Open Meeting Law), the agenda for each

meeting shall be distributed and posted in each school at least three (3) days prior to the meeting.

IV. ORGANIZATION AND OFFICERS

- A. The annual reorganization of the Board to elect Board officers, appoint committee members, designate a bank, designate a newspaper, and make other decisions respecting annual organization shall take place at the first Board meeting following the Annual Meeting.
- B. Election of officers of the Board shall be conducted by paper ballot when two or more candidates are nominated for the same office. The person receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be elected.
- C. Officers of the Board
 - 1. Officers of this Board shall be Chair, Vice-Chair and Board Clerk. They shall take office immediately upon election and shall serve one year or until their successors are chosen.
 - 2. If an office is vacated for any cause during the term of the holder, an election will be held at the next meeting of the Board or at a special meeting called by the Chair (or Vice-Chair, should the office vacated be the Chair).
 - 3. No member shall hold more than one of said offices concurrently.
 - 4. An officer of the SVUUSD may be removed from office for cause by a majority vote of board members present at a meeting called for that purpose.
- D. Duties of the Officers
 - 1. Board Chair
 - a) The SVUUSD Board Chair shall preside over all meetings of the Board and shall be official spokesperson for the Board, unless the Board directs otherwise.
 - b) The Board Chair's right to vote shall not be affected by their duties as presiding officer.
 - 2. Vice-Chair

The vice chair shall function as Board Chair in the absence of the Chair.
 - 3. Board Clerk
 - a) The Board Clerk shall perform all functions prescribed by law and other such duties as the Board shall from time to time prescribe.
 - b) The Board Clerk shall be responsible for arranging for the minutes of all Board meetings.
 - c) The Board Clerk shall arrange for the notification of all members, in advance, of all meetings.
 - d) A member of the District Staff may perform any of the Board Clerk's duties, or a person employed for the purpose, as determined by the Board.

E. Committees

1. The Board may establish committees to assist it in carrying out its duties. Committees, except for the Executive Committee, may include non-voting members of the public who have special expertise in the subject matter of the committee's work.
2. Committees shall make recommendations to the Board but shall not have the authority to make decisions
3. There will be five standing committees, as follows, unless the number or functions are modified by the Board.
 - a) **Executive Committee** will be comprised of one person from each town. The Board Chair shall serve as the representative from his or her town on the Executive Committee. Its charge is to give advice to the superintendent as requested. It shall make recommendations to the board on the procedures to follow in hiring a new superintendent, and shall make recommendations on evaluation of the superintendent.
 - b) **Finance Committee** is charged with reviewing the SVMUUSD budget, giving the superintendent feedback during the formation of the budget, preparing a report to the Board on the prospective budget, reviewing and signing the district pay orders, and make periodic reports to the board on financial matters.
 - c) **Policy Committee** is charged with developing policies on behalf of the district, reviewing existing policies on a regular basis for update or revision, and engaging staff and community as the committee deems appropriate for the purpose of establishing comprehensive policies to effectively and efficiently operate the district.
 - d) **Negotiations Committee** is charged with facilitating the bargaining of master contracts with teachers and support staff and other entities as needed.
 - e) **Buildings and Grounds Committee** is charged with supporting the overall maintenance, repair, upkeep, construction and future needs of all school buildings and grounds, of whatever type.
4. Ad Hoc committees shall be created by the chair, on the chair's own authority or at the request of three members of the Board, or the Superintendent. Ad hoc committees will be given a charge and provide a report upon completion of said charge. Members will be appointed by the chair. Ad hoc committees will include Board members from at least two towns.

V. TREASURER AND DISTRICT TREASURY

A. Treasury

There shall be an SVUUSD treasury for the purpose of transacting the financial affairs of the District.

B. Treasurer

1. At the Annual Meeting, voters shall elect a SVUUSD Treasurer, fix their salary and expenses and determine the amount of a bond or of insurance.

2. It shall be the duty of the SVUUSD Treasurer to sign all checks, oversee investments, direct that a financial report be prepared for SVUUSD meetings, and reconcile monthly accounts with the SVUUSD Business Manager.
3. The Treasurer may appoint one or two Assistant Treasurers. The Board shall fix their salaries, with the advice of the Treasurer.

C. Audit

1. Annually, the SVUUSD Board shall employ a public accountant to audit the financial statement of the SVUUSD.
2. Any annual report of the SVUUSD to the members shall include notice that an audit has been performed for the previous fiscal year.

D. Budget

The Board shall propose an annual budget in accordance with 16 V.S.A. Chapter 11. The annual budget vote shall be conducted by Australian ballot pursuant to 17 V.S.A. Chapter 55, as provided in Article 13 of the Articles of Agreement.

VI. TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS

A. Quorum

A majority of the number of members currently provided for in the Articles of Agreement shall normally constitute a quorum. However, in order to constitute a quorum for votes requiring unanimity, a quorum shall consist of all members of the board currently provided for by the Articles of Agreement.

B. Voting

1. Elections and transaction of business at a Board meeting shall be determined by majority vote of members present, provided they constitute a quorum, with the following exceptions.
2. Amendment of the Articles of Agreement, or of these Bylaws, requires a two-thirds majority of all current members of the Board.

VII. BYLAW CHANGES

These bylaws may be changed, where permitted by law and consistent with the Articles of Agreement and VI above, by addition or deletion at any warned Board meeting, provided that each member has received a copy of the proposed change(s) at least five days in advance of such action. See also VI.B.3 (two-thirds majority required for amendments to the Bylaws). If a Bylaw's source is in the Articles of Agreement, or the bylaw otherwise affects an Article, both the Bylaw and the Article must be amended.

Adopted by the SVUUSD Board of directors, March 11, 2024.

Board Chair, SVUUSD