

“Efficiency is the foundation for survival. Effectiveness is the foundation for success.”

~ Unknown

---

**T**he Association supports the use of board committees to sustain the work of the board to carry out the governing mission. Board members garner ownership of their role and contribution to the board as a whole. Board committees cannot act for the board. Board action can only be taken during a properly called board meeting with a quorum in place.

Outside of the required Americanism Committee, state statute does not require a board to operate under the auspice of a committee structure. Board committees are nonetheless important.

There are various benefits the board/district will realize as a result of committee work, for example, working through committees will enable board members, administrators, and other appropriate personnel to focus on a specific goal, objective, or education issue, and the ability to provide recommendations to the board through informational reports. The investment of time by board members in committee work is purposeful, requires less personal time toward board service, and allows the board member to serve in specific areas of interest and/or expertise. For example: A transportation committee may study the specifications of a bus purchase and then make the recommendation to the board. While not all board members are a member of the committee, their values, their knowledge, and their expertise, reinforce the non-committee members’ ability to accept the recommendation based upon the value of their expertise and the time invested in the committee’s work and recommendation.

It is worthy to note the use of committees does not always work for every board. Some may argue the committee is perceived to carry too much power, which could impact board decision-making outside of the boardroom. Committee work is driven by the charge, information, and data supplied by the administration and the staff. Committees do not have the authority to take formal action. Committees instead, support informed decision-making of the board as a whole.

*“Effective committees unify, represent, motivate, coordinate, consolidate, and communicate.*

*They function best when the members are selected appropriately and when a clearly defined mission exists.*

*Strong leadership is key as well.” ~NASB*

In order to achieve success through committee work, the board must possess confidence and faith in their fellow board members. Board members must also possess confidence in the administration (i.e., superintendent, building principals, and other administrators). The administration likewise must have confidence in the board members. Lack of administrative support has a negative influence on the success and function of committee work.

Committee appointments are typically made at the beginning of the calendar year of the board. The board may appoint standing committees, special or temporary committees, committees of the whole board, and subcommittees on special projects. Through the appointments, board members are able to apply personal and professional skills and expertise applicable to district business. The right appointment for a board member can build a sense of ownership and commitment to proper board governance.

Note: From time to time, there will be matters that are best considered by the board as a whole rather than a sub-committee of the board.

---

## COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

---

“Good business leaders create a vision, articulate the vision, passionately own the vision, and relentlessly drive it to completion.

~ Jack Welch

---

**W**hile committees are ongoing in nature, some are temporary. Ad hoc committees are temporary committees created to accomplish a specified task. Ad hoc board committees might be comprised of at least one board member, administrator(s), possibly staff members, and in some districts a community member who may possess expertise in a specified area.

The appointment of board members to a committee is a task carried out by the board president. Members do not have the right to appoint themselves to committees. The board president may appoint a committee chair and consult with the chair regarding the remaining appointments to the committee. As board president, reference board policy first to understand specific board rules governing appointment of board committees. In the absence of a specific policy, consider tradition or work cooperatively with the board to define a process. There are varying ways to approach assignments, but underlying each appointment is a direct link to the board’s decision-making and business.

In reviewing appointments, consider the following:

**Term limit**—occasionally assess at what point it is in the best interest of the committee to

replace a long-term board member to bring about a fresh approach to the charge of the committee.

**Board member preference**—consider distributing a list of all committees to allow board members to inform you of their preferred assignments. The final decision remains with you, the board president, but this process allows the board members to express personal interest and expertise.

**Rotation of duties**—consider rotating board members to expose members to the work and charge of each committee. With the makeup of each board, this consideration may not be appropriate nor will all of these suggestions be appropriate all of the time.

**Board committee**—the following committee should be appointed by the board president. To ensure the board is in compliance with

**NEB. REV. STAT. § 79-724. American citizenship; committee on Americanism; created; duties; required instruction; patriotic exercises; duties of officers.**

An informed, loyal, just, and patriotic citizenry is necessary to a strong, stable, just, and prosperous America. Such a citizenry necessitates that every member thereof be fully acquainted with the nation's history and that he or she be in full accord with our form of government and fully aware of the liberties, opportunities, and advantages of which we are possessed and the sacrifices and struggles of those through whose efforts these benefits were gained. Since youth is the time most susceptible to the acceptance of principles and doctrines that will influence men and women throughout their lives, it is one of the first duties of our educational system to conduct its activities, choose its textbooks, and arrange curriculum in such a way that the love of liberty, justice, democracy, and America will be instilled in the hearts and minds of the youth of the state.

(1) Every school board shall, at the beginning of each school year, appoint from its members a committee of three, to be known as the committee on Americanism. The committee on Americanism shall:

(a) Carefully examine, inspect, and approve all textbooks used in the teaching of American history and civil government in the school. Such textbooks shall adequately stress the services of the men and women who achieved our national independence, established our constitutional government, and preserved our union and shall be so written to include contributions by ethnic groups as to develop a pride and respect for our institutions and not be a mere recital of events and dates;

(b) Assure themselves as to the character of all teachers employed and their knowledge and acceptance of the American form of government; and

(c) Take all such other steps as will assure the carrying out of the provisions of this section.

(2) All American history courses approved for grade levels as provided by this section shall include and adequately stress contributions of all ethnic groups (a) to the development and growth of America into a great nation, (b) to art, music, education, medicine, literature, science, politics, and government, and (c) to the war services in all wars of this nation.

(3) All grades of all public, private, denominational, and parochial schools, below the sixth grade, shall devote at least one hour per week to exercises or teaching periods for the following purpose:

(a) The recital of stories having to do with American history or the deeds and exploits of American heroes;

(b) The singing of patriotic songs and the insistence that every pupil memorize the Star-Spangled Banner and America; and

(c) The development of reverence for the flag and instruction as to proper conduct in its presentation.

(4) In at least two of the three grades from the fifth grade to the eighth grade in all public, private, denominational, and parochial schools, at least three periods per week shall be set aside to be devoted to the teaching of American history from approved textbooks, taught in such a way as to make the course interesting and attractive and to develop a love of country.

(5) In at least two grades of every high school, at least three periods per week shall be devoted to the teaching of civics, during which courses specific attention shall be given to the following matters:

(a) The United States Constitution and the Constitution of Nebraska;

(b) The benefits and advantages of our form of government and the dangers and fallacies of Nazism, Communism, and similar ideologies; and

(c) The duties of citizenship, including active participation in the improvement of a citizen's community, state, country, and world and the value and practice of civil discourse between opposing interests.

(6) Appropriate patriotic exercises suitable to the occasion shall be held under the direction of the superintendent in every public, private, denominational, and parochial school on Lincoln's birthday, Washington's birthday, Flag Day, Memorial Day, and Veterans Day, or on the day preceding or following such holiday, if the school is in session.

(7) Every school board, the State Board of Education, and the superintendent of each school district in the state shall be held directly responsible in the order named for carrying out this section, and neglect thereof by any employee or appointed official shall be considered a dereliction of duty and cause for dismissal.

A committee has the capacity to focus and become knowledgeable in a particular area and to encourage less formal and more expansive consideration of issues or proposals. There are three basic types of committees:

### **Committees of the Whole**

Example: Superintendent Search

The value of a committee of the whole provides knowledge and involvement of all board members and facilitates discussion that may occur at regular board meetings. This type of committee meeting must be preceded with proper meeting notice due to the presence of all board members. The committee does not meet to take action; however, a quorum is present creating a public meeting.

The disadvantage of a committee of the whole is it creates time and involvement for all board members.

### **Standing Committees**

Example: Policy, Budget, Facilities

The value of a standing committee fosters greater in-depth study and specialization of board members and can expedite the business of the board.

The disadvantage of a standing committee requires mutual confidence by all members of the board, the committee cannot make a decision or commit on behalf of the board, and committee members periodically misunderstand their roles and responsibilities becoming overly involved and operate with an entitlement that over steps their authority.