New Board Member Orientation Plan and
Mentor Guidelines
April 2017
Dear Prospective Board Member,

Your interest in becoming a member of The Winnetka Public Schools District 36 School Board is commendable. You are joining more than 6,000 Illinois men and women who volunteer their time as members of their local boards of education. Serving on a school board is, without question, an investment of time and energy. Most board members agree, however, that the personal satisfaction they gain far outweighs the challenges associated with this work. Thank you for your willingness to work on behalf of the students, parents, community members, and staff of The Winnetka Public Schools.

The School Board and Superintendent are fully committed to the development of an effective orientation for its new Board members. This document will serve to provide a formalized mentor program and orientation plan in an effort to provide you with the framework needed to begin your tenure.

The orientation plan is divided into three stages.

1. District Documents and Board Materials
2. New Board Member/Mentor Overview
3. Orientation with District and Building Administrators

**Orientation Stage 1: Review of District Documents and Board Materials**

In order to provide a comprehensive orientation, a review if several key District documents and materials, School Board policies, and Board Governance publications will be helpful. While some materials will be provided during orientation, a number of documents are available electronically on the District’s website.

The District website, [www.winnetka36.org](http://www.winnetka36.org), provides an excellent overview of the District’s history and current day activities. The School Board tab provides links to a variety of topics including School Board meeting dates, agendas, minutes, podcasts and access to policy.
Orientation Stage 2: New Board Member/Mentor Overview

School Board Policy 2:120, adopted December 2013, provides guidance for orienting new board members. The policy states that, “The Board President may request a veteran Board member to mentor a new member.” The following guidelines have been established to meet that objective of effectively mentoring new Board members:

1. Veteran Board members will be appointed by the Board President to mentor new Board members.
2. Following the Consolidated election, mentors will contact new Board members to review the orientation documents and process.
3. Mentors will establish with new Board members a communication schedule that will facilitate conversations regarding Board roles and responsibilities and familiarization with District philosophies and practices.
4. Mentors will make themselves available for questions and concerns from new Board members between the election and April turnover meeting.

Exit Survey: In recognition of the wealth of information gathered during Board service on the School Board, members whose term has been completed are asked to complete the following survey questions:

(1) Why did you originally agree to serve on the Board?
(2) Was your understanding about the requirements of serving consistent with your actual Board experience?
(3) What did you like best and least about serving on the Board?
(4) If you could do the job over again what would you do differently?
(5) What suggestions would you make for improving the way the Board operates?
(6) What would you like your involvement with The Winnetka Public Schools to be in the future?
(7) What advice would you offer to incoming Board members?
(8) What are some things that would be important to tell Board candidates about the Board?
(9) Is there anything else you would like to share with the Board?
Orientation Stage 3: Meeting with District and Building Administrators

An essential part of new Board member orientation includes visiting the schools and meeting with administrative team members. It is through these visits that new Board members are best able to see the rich learning experience that The Winnetka Public Schools provides. Administrative team members will provide resources, discuss initiatives, and be available to answer questions to help new members gain insights and a comprehensive introduction to the matters that are brought to the Board regularly for discussion and action.

New Board members will participate in a 20-hour orientation, held over 4 days.

**Day 1: (9AM – 1PM)** Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Greg Kurr and Director of Buildings and Grounds, Mr. Adam Rappaport will meet with new Board members to tour the facilities and meet building administration.

**Day 2: (9AM – 3PM)** Superintendent, Ms. Trisha Kocanda, Board Secretary, Ms. Linda Wehrheim, CFO, Mr. Greg Kurr, and School Board Attorney will Board Roles and Responsibilities, Board Policy, Board Meetings and Packets, Strategic Planning, and Finances.

**Day 3: (9AM – 3PM)** Director of Innovation, Teaching, and Learning, Mr. Barry Rodgers, and Director of Technology, Ms. Maureen Miller, will meet with new Board members to provide a deeper understanding of the Teaching and Learning initiatives and technology infrastructure. A tour of Hubbard Woods, Carleton Washburne and Skokie School classrooms will be provided.

**Day 4: (9AM – 1PM)** Director of Student Services, Ms. Beth Martin and Assistant Superintendent of Professional Learning and Human Resources, Dr. Daniel Ryan will meet with new Board members to provide an overview of the work and initiatives that these departments are responsible for implementing. A tour of Crow Island and Greeley classrooms will be provided.

Orientation is one step in the development of Board Members. In addition the Board holds a June Retreat and ongoing opportunities for continued growth throughout the year both within and outside the District. The School Board holds memberships with The National School Boards Association, Illinois Association of School Boards, ED-RED (Educational/Research/Development) for Illinois Suburban Schools. Additionally Board members serve as liaisons for The Winnetka Alliance Early Childhood, The Village Plan Commission, Northern Suburban Special Education District, The Winnetka Public Schools Foundation, and, The Winnetka Public Schools Central PTO.

Welcome to the School Board of The Winnetka Public Schools.