

Modesto City Schools Governance Team Workshop

Presenter
Sally Frazier
Leadership Associates
January 11, 2021

Workshop Overview



- Protocols for agreements of the role of a board member
- Roles and Responsibilities in Board/Superintendent relationship
- Identify Board strengths and challenges
- Issues or questions on your mind

Workshop Norms

- Virtual Delivery and Involvement
- Respect and Trust
- Seek Clarity
- Use of Cell Phones/Other Devices

Foundational Question

- What do you expect from our work together?

from:
Modesto City Schools
Board of Education

Board Protocols and Norms

December 10, 2018

Page 18:

The purpose of the District's governance team agreements is to ensure a positive and productive working relationship among Board members, the Superintendent, the District staff, students and the community. The protocols were developed for and by the members of the governance team, and may be modified over time as needed. Upon election or appointment of new Board members, these Protocols shall be reviewed and adopted by the new Board.

Relationships Matter

Foundational Assumptions:

- Schools operate best when there is a strong partnership between the board and the superintendent
- Such a partnership does not develop by chance. It must be carefully cultivated by both the superintendent and the board members.

Selection of Superintendent

- Superintendent tenure is positively correlated with student achievement.
- McRel found two studies that looked specifically at the correlations between superintendent tenure and student achievement.
- These positive effects appear to manifest as early as two years into a superintendent's tenure.

Unity of Purpose

- Unity of Purpose is a common focus, the values and beliefs governance team members share in common about children, the district and public education that help them transcend their individual differences to fulfill a greater purpose.
- Governance team demonstration of Unity of Purpose manifests itself in community confidence.
- Review Page 3, Governance Team Beliefs:
 - Modesto City Schools
 - Board of Education
 - Board Protocols and Norms
 - December 10, 2018

Roles

- Effective teams value and respect their essential roles, reach mutual agreement on the roles of the board and superintendent and strive to operate within them.
- Going from “I” to “We” without losing “Me”

Culture

- Culture is the positive or negative atmosphere created by the way people in an organization treat each other. Teams have unwritten (implicit) or written (explicit) agreements about how they will behave with each other and others. These behavioral ground rules, often called norms, enable teams to build and maintain a positive culture or shift a negative one.

- See Page 2, Governance Team Norms

Modesto City Schools
Board of Education
Governance Team Norms
December 10, 2018

Roles and Responsibilities

- Only the governing board can adopt policy
- The superintendent implements board policies

Clarity is essential.....

- Clarifying roles and responsibilities of the board member, superintendent, and the governance team is important
- Agreeing upon a set of operating protocols
- Agreeing upon a code of ethics, our norms
- Agreeing upon the handling of issues from employees or the general public

Careful Planning

- No one enjoys surprises - careful planning avoids most surprises.
- The board should reserve judgment on all matters until hearing the recommendation of the superintendent and discussing the matter in a duly authorized meeting.
- Situational information and context

Board/Superintendent Roles and Responsibilities

BOARD

- Establish framework for action
- Employ/Direct the Superintendent
- Establish direction through policy
- Govern through policy
- Allocate resources
- Evaluate progress of Superintendent

SUPERINTENDENT

- Establish the management system
- Establish the internal vision
- Act on policies
- Select, monitor and evaluate staff
- Implement agreements
- Evaluate staff and progress of programs

What does this mean?

- Boardsmanship is the “how” of school board governance.
- How boards operate and how they do business as an effective team occurs when members discuss and agree on the formal structures and processes used by the board (e.g., agenda structure, visiting schools, handling complaints or concerns from the community, bringing up a new idea).

Communication when something happens:

- Phone call, text, email or Friday letter

Common Protocols

- How to handle calls from parents, staff or community members
- School visits
- Board member requests for information

The Board

- Representative of all the people
- Only authority comes at the board table...no individual authority
- Only action comes from a majority decision of the board
- The WHAT?

The Superintendent

- A trained professional leading a staff
- Acts on authority of the board-at the direction of the board
- Implements and administers board policy
- The HOW?

THE WHAT AND THE HOW

Board

- Establish Vision and Goals
- Set student achievement goals
- Adopt budget
- Develop policy
- Request future facilities
- Review and approve contracts/agreements
- Evaluate Superintendent

Superintendent

- Develop plans
- Develop programs and monitor student progress
- Propose for adoption and implement budget
- Present draft policy
- Develop regulations
- Prepare agreements
- Select staff/Employee relations
- Evaluate/monitor staff

A Word About Oversight vs Overstepping

- What does overstepping do?
 - Undermines the Chain of Command
 - Undermines the authority of the Superintendent and administrators
 - Undermines the authority of the Board and individual Board Members
 - Creates mistrust
 - How will we handle this?

Conflict of Ideas without Personal Conflict

- If everyone is thinking alike no one is doing much thinking.
- Conflict of ideas does not mean absence of mutual support. Trust is the result of understanding, not agreement.
- The board and superintendent need mutual support from each other. A strong partnership is strengthened when board members support the superintendent from unjust criticism and when the superintendent defends the board members from unwarranted accusations.
- Constructive criticism should be welcomed, but destructive and unjust criticism should be exposed.

It's in the News or Grapevine!

- The behavior of a governance board in a public meetings and the issues on which the board spends time, communicate to the public and staff what the board values.
- As you consider recent public meetings of your board, what messages are you sending about your values for respect, teaching and learning?

What is a Board Meeting?

- Board meeting **IS a Meeting of the Board in Public**
- Board meeting **Is Not a public meeting** (unless a Public Hearing is on the agenda)

Maintaining Closed Session Confidentiality

- If you reveal information regarding a personnel matter, you could be subject to a lawsuit
 - This includes information about students and staff
 - This includes information about real estate property
- General rule **Everything!**

At this point...

- Issues
- Questions
- Concerns
- Next Steps

