

# Board & Meeting Effectiveness



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# Agenda

- Effective board leadership teams
- Roles & responsibilities (general)
  - Board President – at meetings
  - Board Member – at meetings
- Meeting effectiveness & procedures
  - Parliamentary Procedures / Robert's Rules
  - Chain of Command
  - Board Member Meeting Responsibilities
  - Communication
- Communication Tips

# How to recognize effective board leadership teams

They have a shared mission and / or vision and refer to them consistently for guidance.

They work to maintain a climate of trust and openness.

Leadership team members understand and respect one another and their roles.

Communication is honest, equal and timely.

Diversity of thought and opinion is valued and seen as an asset.

All members stay in touch with the notion of “the greater good.”



**"THE PRICE OF  
GREATNESS IS  
RESPONSIBILITY."**

**- WINSTON CHURCHILL**

**RESPONSIBILITY**

starts with *me.*



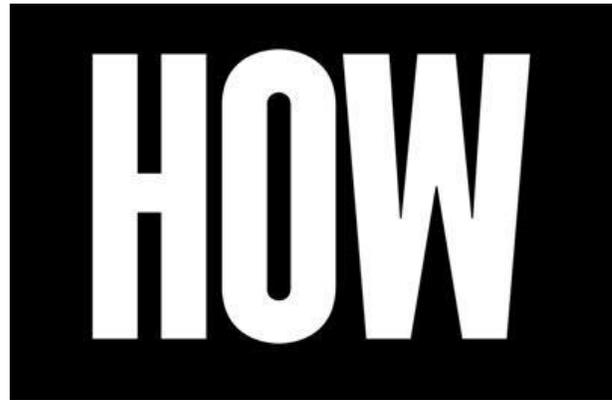
# Roles & Responsibilities

Simply put –  
The Board is the



**WHAT?**

The Superintendent is the



**HOW**

# Setting the Stage

	<b>PLANNING</b> (Long-range, Strategic, Vision)	<b>PROGRAM</b> (Curricular and Co-Curricular)	<b>PERSONNEL</b> (Standards, hiring, evaluation, retention, training)	<b>FINANCE</b> (Budget, allocation, evaluation)	<b>FACILITIES</b> (planning, maintenance)	<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b> (Internal and external, feedback, input and updates)
 <p><b>Role of the Board – the WHAT (direction, policy, oversight)</b></p>	Critical issue analysis, long-term vision, incorporating that vision into yearly goal-setting, making sure site-based goals mesh.	Standards and expectations; policy that demands equity; funds resources and development; evaluation components built in; updates.	Standards and expectations; personnel policies (equity, hiring, training, eval, retention); bargaining; recognition and ensuring communication.	Matching goals with budget development; setting budget calendar, process; receive, interpret financial reports, audit. Communicate financial information to the community.	Matching facilities with demographics and program needs. Resource allocation for long-term planning, maintenance and support.	Two-way, on-going PR and input/feedback cycle. Interaction on local, county and state levels. Resources for district internal chain and external newsletters, etc. Building public engagement.
 <p><b>Role of the Administration – the HOW (day-to-day implementation supervision, accountability)</b></p>	Educational information, best practices, developing action plans, allocating resources, training, evaluation reporting out.	Matching programs with the standards; curriculum cycle, scope and sequence; technology; balance between schools, programs, co- and extra-curricular.	Hiring practices, interviews, recommendation; staff deployment and assignments, staff development programs, supervision, evaluation; recommendation for retention and tenure.	Actual construction and management of budget; purchasing, procurement and reporting. Preparation for audit and any recommendations for improvement.	Actual facilities management on day-to-day and long-term projects. Work with projects' management. Supervision of staff and support personnel.	Updates and reports on progress; interaction on local, county and state levels. Creation and distribution of newsletters, PR, on-going projects.

# The Role of the Board Member

Board members have no legal status other than that of any citizen **except** when sitting with other board members in a **legally constituted meeting**.

**See: Sen. Byron M. Baer  
Open Public Meetings Act** *N.J.S.A. 10-4-6*



# The Role of the Board Member

As individuals, board members **cannot**:

- **make decisions** for the board,
- **take actions** for the board, or
- **speak** for the board.

Also, individual board members **cannot**:

- **direct** any staff member or
- **direct** the superintendent

unless the board has  
authorized them to do so.  
(Check your Policy Manual!)





# The Board President at Meetings

Civility &  
Professionalism  
– Keys to a  
Productive Board  
of Education

## Chairs the Meeting

- Keeps Order / Manages the Meeting
- Ensures all participate
- Gavel – As Necessary

## Uses Parliamentary Procedures

- Understands & Uses Robert's Rules Protocols
- Ensures protocols are followed  
Protects the rights of the minority

## Public Comment

- Spokesperson for the Board
- Adheres to approved Process (By-Laws)
- Engages Superintendent and Board Members, as appropriate  
Avoids Dialogues

# The Board Member at Meetings

- Attend meetings (if unable-communicate to BP)
- Arrive on time
- Be prepared – having read through the agenda and attachments prior to the meeting
- Ask questions before the meeting – to the president, committee chair, or superintendent so questions can be answered at the board meeting
- Focus on policy-making, planning & goal-setting
- Listen and be respectful
- Confine comments / discussion to motion on the table

# Meeting Procedures

Most BOE's adopt Robert's Rules of Order at their Reorganization Meeting.

Robert's Rules:

- Ensures the rights of the majority
- Protects the rights of the minority
- Defends the rights of individual members
- Safeguard's members who are absent from the meeting



# Meeting Procedures

Robert's Rules:

- Treat one item at a time
- Extend courtesy and fairness to all (fair & consistent)
- Majority rule (responsible board members support board majority decisions even when they are in the minority opinion)
- Guarantee the rights of the minority

# Which reflects your meetings?



**The community's perception of the board's effectiveness rests on the way the board meetings are conducted.**

**The community's perception of how the district is run also rests on the way board meetings are conducted.**



# Meeting Procedures

- No surprises!
- President / Chair recognizes each speaker and gives all members the chance to speak
- Discussion should be confined to the question or item on the table being considered
- Avoid using members' names during debate – keep it professional, not personal
- During debate, all remarks are to be addressed to the President / Chair not to other board members.

# Meeting Procedures

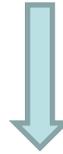
- Remember – you are on stage!
  - No multi-tasking
  - No cellphones or devices (turn off or to vibrate)
  - Be mindful of your body language
- Support board decisions!
- Follow protocols for communications
- Support district staff in proper performance of their duties
- Listen, be respectful, wait to be recognized to speak

# Chain-of-Command

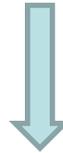
- Understand the chain-of-command – it is in place to allow the issue to be handled in the most expedient manner.
- Know what the chain of command is for issues brought to your attention:
  - by parents, community members
  - by staff or administrators
- Refer the individual(s) to that chain and then notify the superintendent

# Board Member's Chain-of-Command

- Board member is advised of ANY issue / complaint in the district (does not solicit)



- Board member refers individual to lowest level in the Chain-of-Command



- Board member notifies Superintendent of issue / complaint and advises Superintendent that he / she has referred individual back to the Chain-of-Command

# Board Member's Meeting Responsibilities

- **Studying the agenda** and supporting documents. (A 12-Month Planning Calendar is available.)
- **Referring all questions**, or need for further information, to the committee chair, board president or superintendent before the meeting (follow your agreed upon process).
- **Surprise free meetings.** If a board member has received a complaint or is dissatisfied with the agenda, he or she should call the board president or superintendent prior to the meeting to try and resolve the problem.



# Board Member's Meeting Responsibilities (cont.)

- **Give the responsible party time to prepare an answer.** Referring to the point above, asking for clarification or additional info before the meeting allows the responsible person to develop thoughtful answers that might not be possible without time to gather information.
- **Avoid embarrassment.** When the member is not prepared, he or she may be caught by surprise at the meeting, causing needless delay in reaching decisions on the agenda.



## Board Member's Meeting Responsibilities (cont.)

- **Not “playing” to the audience.** A school board member does not represent a particular area, interest or group, and must work for the welfare of all children in the district. Base decisions on what is best for the total community rather than a particular area, vested interest group, or organization.
- **Thoughtful votes.** Board members must feel reasonably comfortable with their votes. Sometimes this means delaying a decision for further research. And sometimes it means trusting the judgment of the superintendent or other staff expert.
- **Conflicts of Interest.** Board members who have a conflict of interest will need to recuse themselves on any votes related to that conflict of interest. **(Check with your board attorney re: conflicts.)**



# Board Member Communication Tips

- The superintendent, by policy, is the spokesperson for the district.
- The board president, by policy, is the spokesperson for the board.
- Know and use your board's communication protocols.
- Emailed information should be one-way information. Call the sender with questions.
- **NEVER, EVER, reply to all!**



# Board Member Communication Tips (con't)

- Use a district email address for all board communication (if you forward to personal email account your personal account can be OPRA'd)
- **Be VERY careful when posting to social media.**
  - Strongly recommend NOT having a board member social media account
  - Strongly recommend NOT belonging to any private groups on social media
  - Disclaimer stating while you are a board member, you are not speaking for the board, nor does your comment reflect the opinion of the board.
  - New ethics ruling - despite the disclaimer the board member was found to be in violation

# Closing Thoughts...

## Effective Boards Communicate Effectively

**Do I professionally disagree or am I just being disagreeable?**

**Do I treat my fellow board members with the same respect that I wish for them to treat me?**

**How am I doing?**

**Do I show the Superintendent, Staff, and Public respect?**

**Does our BOE govern in a civil and professional manner?**



# Questions?

