

BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT WORKING AGREEMENTS 2009-10

Purpose:

The Board of Directors is the educational policy making body for School District 4J. To effectively meet the District's challenges the School Board and Superintendent must function together as a leadership team. To ensure unity among team members, effective group agreements must be in place. The following are the group agreements for the Board and Superintendent.

Governance Principles:

1. Work with members of the Board, the Superintendent, and members of the executive leadership in a cooperative and collaborative partnership aligned toward a common mission.
2. Focus on policy making, planning and evaluation, rather than day-to-day operations.
3. Make decisions as a whole Board only at properly called meetings. Board members recognize that individual members have no authority to take individual action in policy or district and school administrative matters.
4. Support decisions of the majority after honoring the right of individual members to express opposing viewpoints and vote their convictions.
5. Recognize and respect the Superintendent's responsibility to manage the school district and to direct employees in district and school matters.
6. Actively solicit input, listen to all perspectives and give careful consideration to all issues. We will operate as representatives and make decisions in the best interest of the whole district.
7. Value the role we play in the community and represent the district, when possible, by attending school and community functions.

Meeting Operational Agreements:

1. Acknowledge that two Board members must agree before an item is placed on a meeting schedule.
2. Uphold the legal requirement for confidentiality on all matters arising from the Board meeting Executive Session.
3. Start our meetings and end our meetings on time.
4. Attend regularly scheduled Board meetings unless a situation occurs that makes attendance impossible.
5. Cooperate in scheduling special meetings and/or work sessions for planning and training purposes.
6. Cast a vote on all matters except when a conflict of interest arises.

Communication Agreements:

1. Communicate directly with the Superintendent and/or members of the executive leadership team when a question arises, or a concern is voiced by a staff member, student, parent, or community member.
2. Whenever possible, communicate directly with the Superintendent, member of the executive leadership team, or Board Chair prior to meetings of the Board to identify questions and /or concerns about agenda items so that the Board Chair and staff can prepare for the meeting discussion.
3. Communicate directly with the Superintendent or Board Chair prior to raising new issues or concerns at Board meetings or in other arenas.
4. Communicate one-on-one, when an individual concern arises, with the Superintendent, member of the executive leadership team, or other Board member, as appropriate. Communicate with Board leadership about concerns with Board process.
5. A Board member with a routine question should first consider going to Board Leadership, the Superintendent or the Chief of Staff. A Board member who desires staff assistance beyond routine inquiry should first raise the issue at Board Leadership. Board Leadership should decide whether to proceed before staff time is allocated.
6. Give the principal a courtesy call or e-mail before visiting a school.
7. No individual Board member, other than the Board Chair or designee, has the authority to speak for the entire Board. Individual Board members may always share their individual viewpoint but must clarify that they are speaking for themselves, rather than the entire Board. The Board recognizes that changing technology and the growing use of social media will affect the way individual Board members communicate to and interact with constituents and receive and process information. The Board will develop appropriate use guidelines that recognize the complex issues that may arise from Board members acting in their official capacity.
8. The Board may be required to make findings of fact that are appealable to another agency. In these situations, no Board member will have personal contact related to the issue with parties who have a personal interest in the findings and in the Board's decision prior to the time the decision is made.

Annual Planning and Evaluation:

1. Set priorities as a Board for Board professional development annually.
2. Participate in annual self-assessment of the Board's performance.
3. Annually affirm the Board of Director's Guiding Beliefs and Value Statement.
4. Participate in establishing annual expectations and goals for the Superintendent.
5. Objectively evaluate the Superintendent's performance and provide appropriate feedback.

Orientation of New Board Members:

1. Assure timely orientation of new Board members.

Role of Board Leadership:

1. Recognize the role of the Chair to speak for, and about, the Board and to describe the Board's process and positions. Recognize the role of the Chair to convene meetings and execute documents, as appropriate.
2. Recognize the role of the Chair and Vice Chair to meet regularly with the Superintendent to develop the agenda and determine whether an item should be scheduled for action or future action, to provide input on information needed by the Board for decision-making, to plan meeting processes, and to distribute assignments.
3. Ensure that information exchanged with the Superintendent is shared with all Board members via meeting notes and/or Board meeting agenda materials. (The purpose of this agreement is to help ensure that no Board member will receive any information regarding a pending matter that is not available to all Board members prior to the time the decision is made. Examples of such decisions include personnel matters, official land use decisions, and charter school applications.)

Expectations of the Superintendent:

1. Function together as a team with Board members and the executive leadership team.
2. Respect and acknowledge the Board's role in setting policy and overseeing the performance of the Superintendent.
3. Work with the Board to establish a clear vision for the school district.
4. Prepare preliminary goals annually for the Board's consideration.
5. Provide data to the Board members so that data driven decisions can be made.
6. Possess a working knowledge of all legal and local policies.
7. Inform the Board of all critical information including relevant trends, anticipated adverse media coverage, or critical external or internal change.
8. Work with the Chair and Vice Chair to effectively bring issues and information to the Board.
9. Distribute appropriate information to all Board members, including a summary of meetings held with the Chair and Vice Chair.
10. Communicate with Board members promptly and effectively.
11. Distribute the Board agenda in a timely manner.
12. Respect the confidentiality requirement of Board meeting Executive Sessions.
13. Treat all Board members professionally.

14. Communicate to Board Leadership if a problem or issue is observed developing with an individual Board member.
15. Conduct a self-assessment prior to the Board's evaluation of the Superintendent's job performance.
16. Represent the school district by being visible in the community.
17. Provide follow-up information to Board members on concerns and issues they have referred to the Superintendent--close the loop.