

Connecting with the Community Session 1 An Overview of the Board's Role

Park Ridge-Niles SD 64
January 11, 2016

Barbara B. Toney
Field Services Director
630/629-3776, ext. 1263
btoney@iasb.com

Session Objectives

- Understand what community engagement is and how it differs from public relations;
- Understand the key principles of effective community engagement;
- Understand and practice how to fulfill the board's role in community engagement efforts;
- Consider why effective community engagement is essential to public education;
- Determine our next steps.

What is Community Engagement in the Public School System?



IASB Foundational Principles of Effective Governance

The Board ...

1. Clarifies the District Purpose.
2. Connects with the Community.
3. Employs a Superintendent.
4. Delegates Authority.
5. Monitors Performance.
6. Takes Responsibility for Itself.

Balcony Perspective

The ongoing, two-way process enables the board to:

- Listen to and understand the community's educational aspirations;
- Serve effectively as an advocate for district needs and improvement;
- Inform the community of the district's performance.

Public Relations vs. Community Engagement

Public relations:

- The professional maintenance of a favorable public image by a company or organization (Google.com)
- The activity or job of providing information about a particular person or organization to the public so that people will regard that person or organization in a favorable way (Merriam-Webster.com)

Community Engagement

Community Engagement, also called public engagement or civic engagement, is the process by which school boards actively involve diverse citizens in **dialogue, deliberation, and collaborative thinking** around common concerns.

Illinois Association of School Boards
2013



Group Discussion

Share recent examples of how you have **informed** and how you have **listened** to your community.



***Promise to the Public**

***International Association for Public Participation**

The Board will...

- Be clear about its purpose
- Listen to all the voices in the community
- Seek to understand the community's aspirations
- Use that information to advocate
- Be respectful of time commitments
- Keep the community well informed

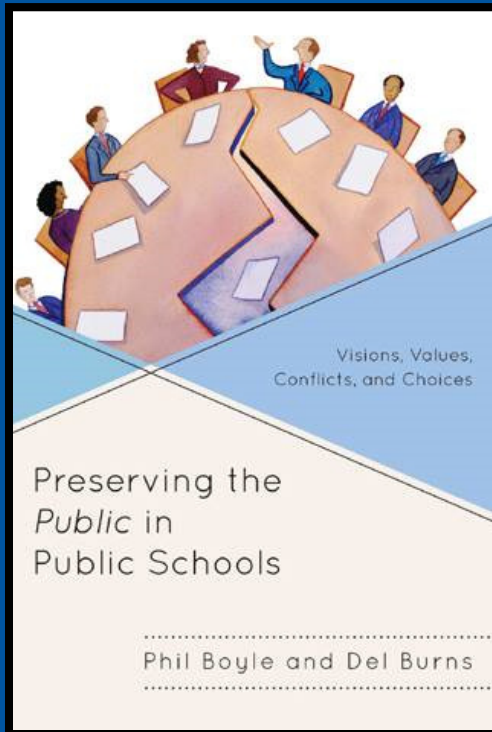
The Community will...

- Convey what it expects from the board
- Offer honest, direct information
- Understand that the board must make decisions
- Respect board decisions and support the process

What is the Board's Role in Community Engagement?



Public Education



“Public schools are more than simply schools paid for with public dollars. They are schools that fulfill a public purpose. Similarly, public leadership is more than simply leadership in public organizations.”

“Public leadership is the art and science of solving policy problems, making policy choices and crafting solutions on behalf of the public good.”

Board Work: Modeling Attitudes and Values

Dialogue not Debate

1. Many people have pieces to the answer
2. More than one solution may exist

*Key Principles for Engaging Your Community

(*Reconnecting Communities and Schools,
Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, 2000)

1. Pursue civic engagement, not public input.

Community Engagement, also called public engagement or civic engagement, is the process by which school boards *actively involve diverse citizens in dialogue, deliberation, and collaborative problem solving around common concerns.*

Key Principles for Engaging Your Community

2. Engage people as citizen-owners, not customers.

Community Engagement, also called public engagement or civic engagement, is the process by which school boards *actively involve diverse citizens in dialogue, deliberation, and collaborative problem solving around common concerns*.

Key Principles for Engaging Your Community

3. Discover voices, not simply demographics.

Community Engagement, also called public engagement or civic engagement, is the process by which school boards *actively involve diverse citizens in dialogue, deliberation, and collaborative problem solving around common concerns.*

Key Principles for Engaging Your Community

4. Seek synergy, not consensus.

Community Engagement, also called public engagement or civic engagement, is the process by which school boards *actively involve diverse citizens in dialogue, deliberation, and collaborative problem solving around common concerns.*

Key Principles for Engaging Your Community

5. Seek to educate, not merely inform.

Community Engagement, also called public engagement or civic engagement, is the process by which school boards *actively involve diverse citizens in dialogue, deliberation, and collaborative problem solving around common concerns.*

Group Discussion

What did you hear that might have challenged some of your previous assumptions or practices?



Why Invest in Community Engagement?



INVEST in'vest – transitive verb to contribute time, energy, or effort to an activity, project, or undertaking in the expectation of a benefit.

Encarta Dictionary: English (North America)

The Benefits of Community Engagement

- Understanding of community-wide concerns and values
- Developing a new contract and culture
- Practicing proactive leadership rather than reactive response

What's at Stake?

“Would public education come closer to serving the country's needs ... if it were run by visionary reform-driven leaders rather than by cautious, community-based fiduciaries?”

Chester Finn
2011 blog posting

What's at Stake?

“Public education is a vital institution in our democratic society, and its governance must be democratic, open to public discussion and participation.”

Diane Ravitch

The Death and life of the Great American School System

2010

•

BREAK TIME



Board Work: Preparing for Community Engagement

1. Clarifying the purpose
2. Involving the community
3. Considering tools and tactics

Board Work: Clarifying and Articulating Purpose

Why are we engaging in this process?

- What do we hope to learn? To decide? To accomplish?
- How will this process support our district's ends?
- How will we use what we learn?

Public Participation Spectrum

PURPOSE:	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE
OBJECTIVE:	Provide the public with information	Obtain public feedback	Work directly with the public throughout the process	Partner with the public in decision-making

Public Participation Spectrum

PURPOSE:	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE
OBJECTIVE:	Provide the public with information	Obtain public feedback	Work directly with the public throughout the process	Partner with the public in decision-making
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC:	We will keep you informed	Provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	Ensure public concerns & issues are reflected in the alternatives	Incorporate public advice & recommendations into the decision

Board Work: Identifying and Recruiting Members

- Engage people as citizen-owners, not customers
- Discover voices, not demographics

Identifying and Recruiting Members



1. Ask
2. Develop a Recruiting Message
 - a) Find the WIIFM
 - b) Then emphasize the WIIFD
 - c) Articulate purpose, objective, promise to the public

Board Work: Identifying Resources

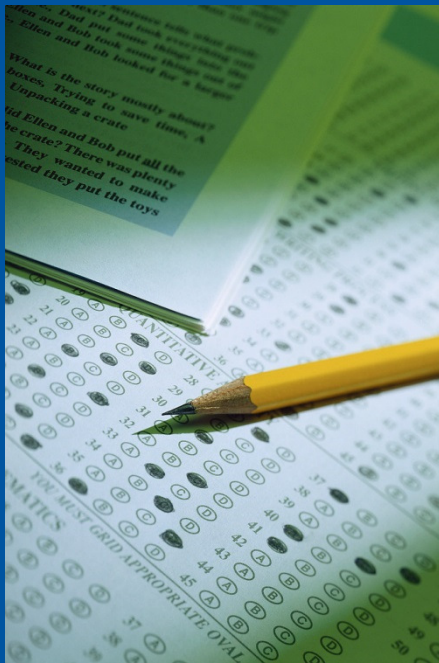


Select tools, tactics and facilitators that match your purpose, objectives, promise to the public and resources.

Public Participation Spectrum

PURPOSE:	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE
OBJECTIVE:	Provide the public with information	Obtain public feedback	Work directly with the public throughout the process	Partner with the public in decision-making
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC:	We will keep you informed	Provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	Ensure public concerns & issues are reflected in the alternatives	Incorporate public advice & recommendations into the decision
EXAMPLE TOOLS:	Fact sheets Websites Open houses	Public comment Focus Groups Surveys Public meetings	Workshops Deliberative polling	Citizen Advisory Committees Synergy-building Participatory decision-making

Evaluation Considerations



Formative

Summative

Board Work: Utilizing and Communicating Results

Authentic intent

Authentic use

Facilitated Community Engagement Process

- Session 2: Clarifying and Articulating Purpose – 2 to 2.5 hour session
- Session 3: Recruiting Participants; Determining Evaluation Needs; Considering Resources – 3 hour session

Facilitated Community Engagement Process

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS
IS CONDUCTED BY IDENTIFIED
RESOURCES

- Session 4: Working with the Results – 2 hour session

Thank You!