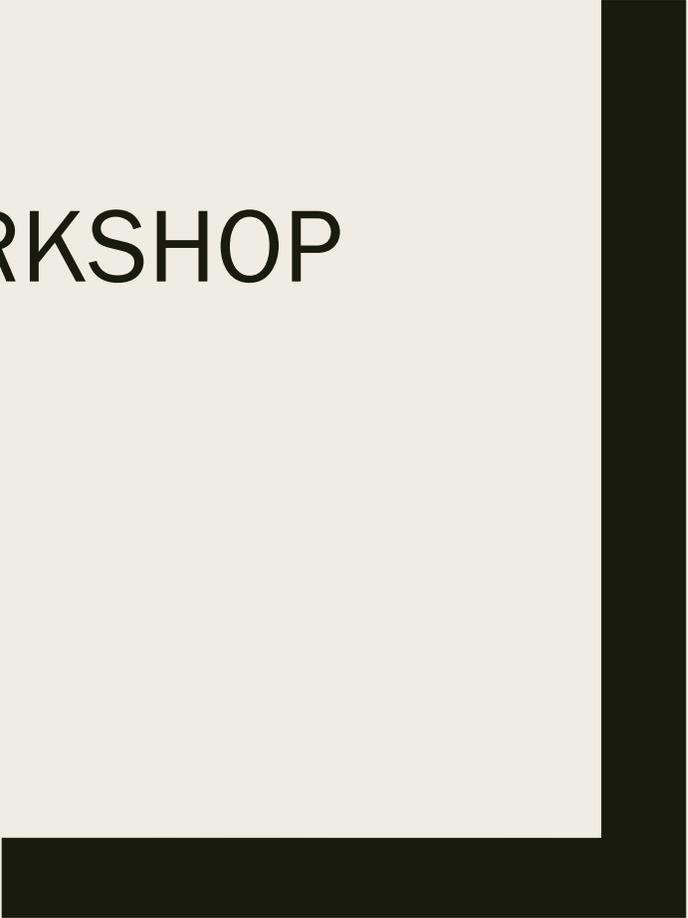


TORRANCE USD
BOARD GOVERNANCE WORKSHOP

July 30, 2020



Common Ground

Best interest of students, our community and the District

Proud of our district

Respect each other

Goals for our work together:

- Impact of current context on our work.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities of the Board and the Superintendent.
- Norms of engagement.
- Work toward a common vision and speak with one voice.
- Effective communication with superintendent, staff and community.

Board-Superintendent Governance Team Built on Relationships:

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 superintendent and the board members.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Board

TUSD Bylaws of the Board:

The Board of Education...to provide leadership and citizen oversight of the District... The Board will shall work with the Superintendent to fulfill its major responsibilities, which include: Setting the direction for the District through a process that involves the community, parents/guardians, students, and staff and is focused on student learning and achievement.

Governance Standards:

The Board expects its members to work with each other and the Superintendent to ensure that a high-quality education it provided each student. Each individual Board member shall:

...keep learning and achievement for all students as the primary focus.

...Understand the distinctions between Board and staff roles, refrain from performing management functions that are the responsibility of the Superintendent and staff.

... Understands that authority rests with the Board as a whole and not with individual.

Public Statements

...The Board believes that effective Board members have a responsibility to express their opinions, whether in agreement or disagreement with the Board majority, in ways that promote the Board's ability to govern the District.

...when speaking to community groups, the media or other members of the public, individual board members should recognize that their statements might be perceived as reflecting the views and positions of the Board. Board members have a responsibility to identify personal viewpoints as such and not as the viewpoint of the Board.

All public statements authorized to be made on behalf of the Board shall be made by the board president or, if appropriate, by the Superintendents or other designated representative,.

Board members also shall assume collective responsibility for building unity and creating a positive organizational culture. To operate effectively, the Board shall have a unity of purpose and:

Keep the district focused on learning and achievement for all students

Communicate a common vision

Limits of Board Members Authority

Unless agreed by the Board as a whole, individuals members of the Board shall not exercise any administrative responsibility with respect or command the services of any school employee. Individuals shall submit request for information to the superintendent.

Individual Board members do not have authority to resolve complaints. Any Board member approached directly by a person with a complaint should refer the complainant to the Superintendent or designee so that the problem may receive proper consideration and be handled through the appropriate district process.

Board member Electronic Communications

..shall exercise caution so as to ensure that electronic communications are not used as a means for the Board to deliberate outside of an agenda Board meeting.

...may use electronic communications to discuss matters that do not pertain to district business

...shall make every effort to ensure that their electronic communications conform to the same standards and protocols established for other forms of communication

...A Board member may respond, as appropriate, to an electronic communication received from a member of the community and should make it clear that his/her response does not necessarily reflect the views of the Board as a whole.

...Any complaint or request for information should be forwarded to the Superintendent so the issue may receive proper consideration..

...To the extent possible, electronic communications regarding any district-related business shall be transmitted through a district-provided device or account. When such communication is transmitted through a Board member's personal device or account, he/she shall copy the communication to a district electronic storage device for easy retrieval.

Best Practices

*CSBA Governance Standards

General -The Board and Superintendent

will: * CSBA Governance Standards

1. Keep learning and achievement for all students as the primary focus.*
2. Value, support, and advocate for public education.*
3. Operate openly with trust and integrity.*
4. Govern in a dignified and professional manner, treating everyone with civility, dignity, and respect*, while honoring the right to disagree with each other.
5. Define and respect the difference between administration and policy-making and respect the roles of each.
6. Keep confidential matters confidential.* Uphold the legal requirement for confidentiality on all matters arising from Board Meeting Executive Sessions; will keep all conversations taking place in Closed Session absolutely confidential.

Board Members will:

1. Work with all members of the Board and the Superintendent to become a team devoted to students; be dedicated to making all members of the team successful.
2. Act with dignity, and understand the implication of demeanor and behavior.*
3. Recognize and respect difference of perspective and style on the Board and among staff, students, parents, and the community.*
4. Focus on policymaking, planning and evaluation for student success.
5. Govern within Board-adopted policies and procedures.*
6. Communicate a common vision.*
7. Understand authority rests with the Board as a whole and not with individuals.*
Recognize decisions are made only at properly scheduled meetings.
8. As an individual Board member, not make or appear to make a decision that appropriately should be made by the entire Board.
9. Support decisions of the majority after honoring the right of individual members to express opposing viewpoints and vote their convictions.
10. Ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform Board deliberations.*
11. Attend regularly scheduled Board meetings unless a situation occurs that makes attendance impossible; cooperate in scheduling special meetings and/or work sessions for planning and training purposes.

12. Understand the distinctions between Board and staff roles, and refrain from performing management functions that are the responsibility of the Superintendent and staff.*

13. Acknowledge individual requests for reports and projects will be directed only to the superintendent.

14. Understand the Superintendent's role to make personnel recommendations and changes in consultation with the Board.

15. Understand the Board as a collective body must give clear signals to its professional staff through its Superintendent.

16. Participate in establishing annual expectations and goals for the Superintendent.

17. Objectively evaluate the Superintendent's performance and provide appropriate feedback.

18. Periodically evaluate its own effectiveness*; review its protocols at least every two years.

19. Take collective responsibility for the Board's performance.*

20. Communicate directly with the Superintendent whenever a question or concern is raised by a staff member, student, parent, or community member.

21. Contact the Superintendent whenever contacted by the media regarding an incident, event, or agenda item.

22. Communicate directly with the Superintendent prior to Board meetings to address questions and/or concerns about agenda items; honor the “no surprises” rule with the Superintendent and fellow Board members.

23. Communicate one-on-one with the Superintendent when an individual concern arises; will not allow a matter to fester.

24. Cast a vote on all matters except when a conflict of interest arises.

25. Recognize the individual role of constituents and special interest groups, while understanding the importance of using one’s best judgement to represent all members of the community.

26. As time permits, visit school sites and attend school functions, but avoid interrupting instruction or interrupting employees at work.

27. Represent the District, when possible, by attending community functions.

28. Participate in professional development and commit the time and energy necessary to be an informed and effective leader.*

Discussion

Impact of current context on our work

Clarify roles and responsibilities of the Board and the Superintendent:

Role of Board-set policy-the “What”

Authority rest with the Board, not an individual board member.

Role of Superintendent-implement policies-the “How”

Norms of Engagement:

Be visible, be accessible, but caution you only have authority as a “Board” not as an individual board member.

Work toward a common vision and speak with one voice:

Once a vote is taken, decisions must be supported

Effective communication with superintendent, staff and community:

Is connected to speaking with one voice.

Board and Superintendent are jointly responsible for effective communication and handling issues that may come before the board.

Peak Performing Governance Teams
Guided by
Seven Elements

Element #1

Areas of Responsibility

The Role and Function of the Board and Superintendent

*Only the governing board can adopt policy which has impact of state law.

*The superintendent and staff are accountable for the implementation of all board policies.

Failure to follow and overlapping of these responsibilities=ineffective management and waste.

Confusion and misunderstanding between board members, superintendent, staff and community most often result from a lack of understanding regarding the role and function of the board and superintendent.

Element #2

Meaningful Communication

The greatest problem in communication is the illusion it has been accomplished.

*The cornerstone of a strong board-superintendent relationship depends on openness in all matters by all members and the superintendent.

No decision of the board is any better than the amount and kind of information provided.

Everyone must be willing to inform and be informed. A “no surprise rule” is vital

Communication is the cement that holds an organization together.

Element #3

Ability to Have a High Level of Conflict of Ideas without Personal Conflict-tough on issues, soft on people

If everyone is thinking alike no one is doing much thinking.

Conflict of ideas does not meant absence of mutual support.

*The board and the superintendent need 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.

Element #4

Careful Planning

No one enjoys surprises-careful planning avoids most surprises.

The board must be involved in regular, at least yearly, planning for the district.

The superintendent and the board must be headed basically in the same direction.

The board reserves judgment on all matters until hearing the recommendations of the superintendent and discussing the matter in a duly authorized meeting.

The superintendent presents strategic and other long range plans for review and approval by the Board.

Element #5

A Clear Understanding of the Decision Making Process

Before major decisions are made:

- Alternatives are considered.
- Background information is studied.
- Ramifications of decisions are examined.
- As much input as feasible is considered.
- Decisions are made by people closest to the problem whenever possible.
- Authority can be delegated - Accountability cannot.

Before voting, trustees should ask themselves two questions:

1. Am I voting solely on the merit of the issue and not being influenced by vested interest groups or listening to the most vocal?
2. Whatever the outcome, will I abide by and support a decision of the board, knowing each board member of the board is obligated to abide by and uphold a decision of the board whether that individual voted with the majority or not.

Keep students in mind when making all decisions.

Element #6

Periodic Evaluation

The objective of evaluation is improvement.

*The board through the superintendent monitors the progress of district schools toward established targets.

*The board evaluates the superintendent, based on agreed upon goals.

*The board should evaluate its own performance at least yearly or every two years.

Evaluating people is often difficult but an honest, open discussion is essential for a successful working relationship.

Element #7 Leadership

A superintendent is employed to lead, understanding the power of:

- Trust
- Sensitivity
- Caring
- Vision
- Pride
- Motivation
- Human Skills

*A strong board-superintendent partnership provides direction, stability and confidence to the total staff and community.

This partnership leads to high morale, people who work effectively and efficiently and most importantly...students benefit.