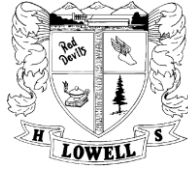


LANE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT 71

Lowell/Fall Creek

www.lowell.k12.or.us



Board Operations Handbook

The Board of Education is entrusted by the community to uphold the Constitutions of Oregon and the United States, to protect the public interest in schools, and to ensure that a high quality education is provided to each student.

Board of Directors

Dennis McCallum, President
Suzanne Kintzley, Vice President
Leslie Brandt, Member
Jim Chapman, Member
Mike Galvin, Member

Superintendent

Walt L. Hanline, Ed.D.

Unity of Purpose, Roles and Responsibilities, Norms, Agreements

This handbook reflects the governance team's work on creation of a framework for effective governance. This involves ongoing discussions about unity of purpose, roles, norms, and coming to agreement on protocols for formal structures that enable the governance team to continue to perform its responsibilities in a way that best benefits all children.

This Operations Handbook was developed in a Board Governance workshop conducted on August 17, 2013, with the assistance of Walt L. Hanline, Ed.D., Superintendent. **The Operations Handbook was approved on September 23, 2013 and revised on January 26, 2015**

Building a Governance Team

Unity of Purpose

School district governance is the act of transforming the needs, wishes, and desires of the community into policies that direct the community's schools.

In a school district, the Board and Superintendent work together as a governance team. For a governance team to work together effectively, members need to: Maintain a unity of purpose; agree on and govern within appropriate roles; create and sustain a positive governance culture and; create a supportive structure for effective governance.

What do we as a governance team want to accomplish? What do we stand for?

- Our shared purpose is to have the best learning environment for all students.
- We want to build trust and move the District forward.
- We want to be an effective team.
- We want to understand our individual jobs and collective responsibilities.
- We want to be a team with a common focused direction so we are not a distraction to the District or community, but a catalyst for the focused efforts of employees, so that the community can see evidence of this focused direction.
- We want to be partners with the staff in positive change.
- We want to oversee the creation and implementation of a first-rate program and first-rate facilities, making sure we continue to improve – never resting on our laurels.
- We want to perpetuate a legacy of positive culture as people come and go.

Roles and Responsibilities

Mutual agreement on the roles of the Board and Superintendent

The role of a Board member is to stay focused on the big picture while fulfilling five responsibilities in a series of job areas. These five responsibilities are:

1. We set the direction.
2. We establish the structure.
3. We provide support.
4. We ensure accountability.
5. We act as community leaders.

We carry out these responsibilities in each of the following job areas:

- Setting the District's Direction
- Student Learning and Achievement
- Finance
- Facilities
- Human Resources
- Policy
- Judicial Review
- Collective Bargaining
- Community Relations and Advocacy

The Superintendent assists the Board in carrying out its responsibilities in each of the job areas, and leads the staff toward the accomplishment of the agreed upon District vision and goals.

Creating and Sustaining a Positive Governance Team 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.

Governance Norms

In addition to meeting the norms below in order to create a positive culture and atmosphere, we agree to act in ways that will help us meet the CSBA Professional Governance Standards.

WE AGREE TO –

- Keep from taking disagreements personally (individuality is embraced, respected).
- To show respect (never dismiss/devalue others).
- Make a commitment to effective deliberation, each listening openly while everyone is allowed to express his or her point of view.
- Make a commitment to open communication, honesty, no surprises.
- Commit the time necessary to govern effectively. This means being there, being knowledgeable, participating, understanding the full scope of being a Board Member, and being willing to take on all the responsibilities involved.
- Be collaborative (this is the way we operate)!
- Maintain confidentiality (builds trust).
- Look upon history as lessons learned; focus on the present and the future.

AND – ABOVE ALL –

- Focus on students' best interest – on what's best for the students! This is what we do! It is the touchstone that allows us to have our differences.

Board Protocols

Leadership Responsibility and Roles of the Board

The only authority to direct actions rests with the quorum of the Board sitting at the Board table. A majority vote sets such direction. Individuals can request action by bringing up a new idea, explaining their interest in a particular course of action, and working to get a Board majority to support moving in that direction. When a majority of the Board, sitting in a formal meeting, requests action, that request should be made in the context of the intended results, not the methods used to achieve those results.

As a Board, we recognize that no individual member of the Board, by virtue of holding office, shall exercise any administrative or investigatory responsibility with respect to the schools; nor as an individual, command the services of any employee. Board members are to channel their requests and/or concerns directly to the Superintendent (and, if necessary, through the Board President).

Board Policies of the District relate to the role and responsibility of the Board collectively and Board members individually.

In responding to concerns regarding the work of the District, Board members will:

- *Receive* the information, remembering that only one side of the story is being presented (listening)
- *Repeat* the information – paraphrase to ensure understanding
- *Remind* the individual that a Board member has no authority as an individual and share the appropriate line of command and process to follow to address their concern.
- *Re-Direct* – Thank them for sharing their thoughts and refer them to the appropriate staff member and, if necessary, encourage them to initiate the formal complaint process.
- *Report* – In a timely manner, inform the Superintendent.

When interacting with the public, Board members will hold to the highest level of professional conduct, including emphasizing the positive aspects of the District.

The Board's Role and Relationship with the Staff and Community

When individually visiting schools or departments, as a professional courtesy, Board members are encouraged to notify the Principal that they will be visiting a school or department. The Principal should be free to relate that the visit could be disruptive and suggest rescheduling the visit.

The Board member shall provide input to the Superintendent on issues or concerns that may arise from such a visit.

It is imperative that a staff member not provide any information to a Board member beyond the information that would be provided to any regular community member. Staff members are directed to relay requests from Board members to their supervisor to ensure that appropriate information is provided to all Board members.

Management staff are directed to relay requests from Board members to the Superintendent to ensure that appropriate information is provided to all Board members.

This protocol does not imply a censoring of any private and informal conversations.

Board Meetings and the Agenda

Meetings of the Board are held in public, but are not open-forum town hall meetings. Meetings will be conducted in such a way as to allow the public to provide input in the time allotted to ensure that multiple voices of the community inform Board deliberations; however, when the Board deliberates, it will be a time for the Board to listen and learn from each other, taking public input into consideration without re-engaging the public.

Board meetings will be on the Fourth Monday's of each month. Each Board meeting will begin with Closed Session at 6:00 pm. The Regular Public Meeting will begin at 7:00 pm. Study Sessions may be scheduled and shall be scheduled at the discretion of the Board.

Board Meetings and the Agenda (continued)

The Superintendent, with the support of staff, will create each Board Agenda. In advance of the preparation of the Board Agenda, Board members may request items to be placed on the agenda. The Board President and the Superintendent will discuss the contents of the agenda and the process that will be followed at the meeting, in advance of the Board Meeting.

Board member will make every effort to submit, prior to the meeting, questions they intend to ask so that the Superintendent and district staff has the opportunity to prepare to answer Board members' questions at Board meetings.

When an individual Board member requests information, that information will be provided to all Board members. If unforeseen questions arrive during the meeting, Board members will acknowledge their question or comment as spontaneous and that they understand that staff may not have the information on hand to answer the question.

Individual Board members are expected to self-monitor compliance to the Public Meeting Law, including limiting Closed Session to the agenda item(s). Board members need equal access to information, and to operate within the Law. The use of email communication is subject to the Law. The Superintendent shall forward questions and answers to all Board members. Board members, when responding, shall not "reply to all."

Board members will read the information provided to them and commit to ongoing professional development and training.

Board members, when attending professional development activities, shall provide a report of the activity at the next meeting. Out of state training shall be approved by the Board, in advance of the conference.

Each Board member has the obligation, in serving the community, to vote or abstain on items presented before the Board. When abstaining, the Board member must state the reason for the abstention.

Board Meetings and the Agenda (continued)

The Board shall strive for brevity in deliberations, keeping remarks brief and to the point so that all opinions can be expressed and meetings can be efficient. Addressing each agenda item the Board shall, normally, adhere to the following process:

- Input from the Community
- Staff Presentation/addressing questions from the Board
- Board Discussion and Deliberation

Each Board member respects the right of other Board member to vote in the minority position. If so doing, each Board member agrees, as a courtesy to the team, to explain the reason for their minority vote, either during deliberation or after casting the vote.

The Board wishes to maintain a culture of professionalism, stay focused, and respect the need of Board members to be available to their families:

- Cell phones will be set for 'silent' or vibrate.
- If necessary to check cell phones, Board members will be discreet.

The Board's Role in Collective Bargaining

Board members will be actively involved in the collective bargaining process to ensure that the District is represented well by those selected to negotiate on behalf of the Board and the Community. The involvement of the Board will be to:

- Ensure that the ethical, fiscal and educational goals of the Community are represented in the actions taken throughout the collective bargaining process;
- Participate by providing direction and guidance to those selected to represent the Board (District Negotiation Team);
- Annually, the Board shall determine membership of the District's Negotiation teams. Establish the bargaining approach to be utilized by its negotiation team;
- Set the District's collective bargaining parameters for its negotiation team;
- Expect, as the representative of the Board, that the Superintendent will ensure that the Board, collectively and individually, is informed on the issues and strategies implemented within the collective bargaining process; and,
- The Superintendent or designee shall be the Collective Bargaining spokesperson for the Board to the community and the media.

The Board's Relationship with the Superintendent

The Board will commit to work through and with the Superintendent on issues regarding the running of the District. The Superintendent will inform the Board as soon as possible of:

- notable achievements
- serious safety concerns
- serious disciplinary action
- serious / unexpected personnel changes or disciplinary issues
- serious illness or death of a student, a staff member, or members of a staff member's immediate family
- legal or liability concerns
- serious issues involving school property

In all matters, the Board and Superintendent are expected to protect confidential information.

It is the Superintendent's responsibility to organize the staff in the manner that best serves the needs of the District. As a professional courtesy, the Superintendent shall provide appropriate notice to the Board in advance of action being taken.

As the norm, the Superintendent speaks on behalf of the District. The Board President is authorized to speak on behalf of the Board, when necessary.

The Superintendent will inform the Board when media contacts the Superintendent.

All conflicts between the Superintendent and the Board will be handled in Executive Session, with the Superintendent being in attendance, when appropriate and necessary.

Conflicts between individual Board members and/or the Superintendent will be addressed privately between those who hold the conflict and will not involve other members of the team.

The Board's Relationship with the Superintendent continued

The Board commits to complete an annual evaluation of the Superintendent. The Board will set aside at least one special meeting in January for the purpose of completing the annual evaluation of the Superintendent. In consultation with the Superintendent, the evaluation process and associated documents will be developed and approved by the Board, not later than the first Board meeting in September. The evaluation process and instrument is designed to bring about the collective view of the Board. Thus, the evaluation will reflect the majority view of the Board, as a whole.

The Ongoing Implementation of Board Approved Protocols

Within 90 days of the election/appointment of a new Board member or appointment of a new Superintendent, a Study Session of the whole Board will be held for the purpose of reviewing/updating the governance protocols of the Board.

Upon the request of two or more Board members, a special study session will be called for the purpose of reviewing/updating of the governance operations of the Board.