

Meaningful Meetings

More than Just Going Through the Motions!

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We Begin with Some Questions

Where does the Superintendent sit at meetings?

- a) Next to the Board chair
- b) With the Board, but at the end of the table
- c) In the audience
- d) Superintendent?



How are board members seated at meetings?



- a) Randomly dispersed
- b) By seniority
- c) By political party
- d) We're just happy Board members show up for meetings

How does the Board address public participation at the meetings?

- a) One opportunity for public comment during meeting
- b) Two opportunities for public comment during meeting
- c) Public comment throughout the meeting
- d) Board members enjoy debating the public during the meeting

How would you describe your Board's discussion of issues?

- a) Thoughtful discussion and exploration of issues leading to consensus
- b) Vigorous back and forth of competing viewpoints
- c) No holds-barred battle for superiority and control
- d) A lot of yelling and name calling over the incessant banging of a gavel

The Importance of Board Meetings

- ✧ Where and when the work of the Board is done
- ✧ **Failure to focus on how proper Board meetings are conducted can be harmful to the district.**



The Work of Board Meetings

- ✦ Elect Board Officers
- ✦ Debate and Approve Motions
- ✦ Hear Public Opinion and Grievances
- ✦ Opportunity for Board Member Statements



.... ALL UNDER THE PUBLIC
EYE!

The *REAL* Work of Board Meetings



- ✧ Model Desired Behaviors
- ✧ Communicate Board Values and Vision
- ✧ Focus Primary Work of District
- ✧ Create a Board and District Culture

Model Desired Behaviors

Board meetings should be an example of the desired ideal of “professional behavior” within the School District



What are some examples of “professional behavior”?

Available Tools

- ✦ **Materials available to the public**
- ✦ **Post-meeting evaluation or survey**
- ✦ **Board evaluation documents**



Model Desired Behaviors

Self-evaluation Questions

- ✧ Does the Board set aside time to discuss and evaluate its meeting behaviors?
- ✧ Has the Board made efforts to ascertain how their meetings appear to those in attendance?
- ✧ Does the Board regularly examine its structure and meeting format, or is it “the way it’s always been done?”

Focus Work of District



- ✧ Meeting time spent on matters should reflect their relative importance to district improvement.
- ✧ Make sure that Board members and staff share an agreed upon definition of “success”.
- ✧ Match the work of Board meetings to district’s vision and mission.

Focus Work of District

Suggestions:

Align agenda items to Board goals and initiatives

Board committee structure tied to goals instead of tasks



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Focus Work of District



Available Tools

- ✦ Board agenda
- ✦ Board committee structure and assignments
- ✦ Board priorities for district
- ✦ Board self improvement plan.

Communicate Board Values

Some Suggestions

- ✦ Be conscious of layout and appearance of Board meeting room.
- ✦ Board mission statement and goals displayed during Board meetings.



Communicate Board Values

Available Tools

- ✧ “Public friendly” materials and information available to public
- ✧ Copies of Board vision, mission statements and goals available at every meeting



Create a Common Culture

Some Suggestions

- ✧ A portion of yearly Board Self-evaluation process should focus on Board meetings
- ✧ Invest time and energy on Board member orientation
- ✧ Insist on Board member professional development
- ✧ Have and stick to a yearly calendar to assure all necessary work is accomplished



Create a Common Culture

Available Tools

- ✧ Board self-evaluation (include administrators)
- ✧ Board retreat
- ✧ Board member orientation materials
- ✧ Professional development calendar
- ✧ Board Member Handbook

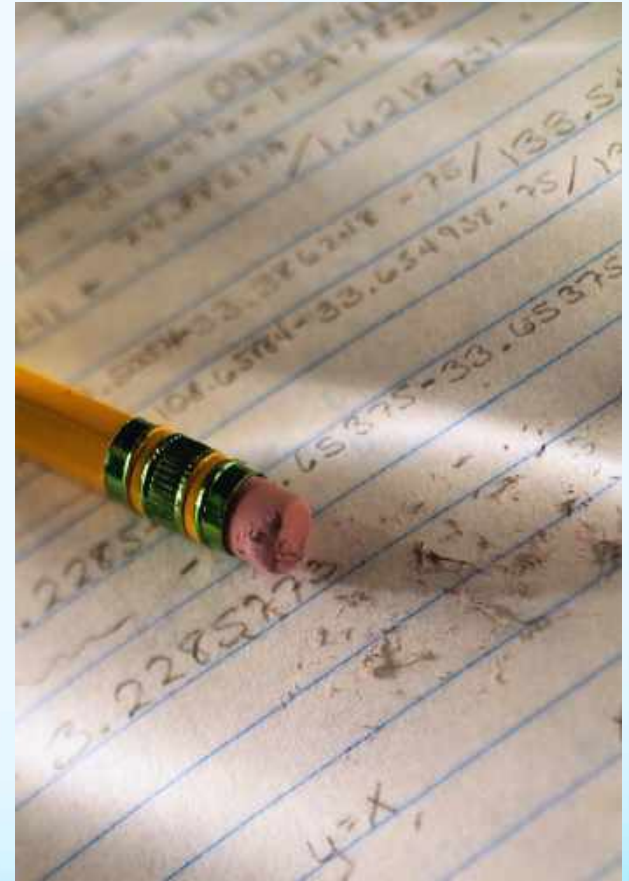


Power of Planning

Board meetings should be bound together by a common, consistent thread; each meeting linked to past and future meetings, always focused on the Board's vision, mission and strategic plan goals

- ✧ Board meetings should not be scripted, but they should be planned
- ✧ Consider plotting out meetings for the school year, focusing on the yearly calendar of events
- ✧ Plan Board meetings in accordance with governance goals, tying to past and future meetings

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS...



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