



**HIT THE GROUND  
RUNNING**

**Tips for Recently  
Elected Board Members**



**All About  
Us**

## **LEADERSHIP**

Leadership is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something **extraordinary happen.**



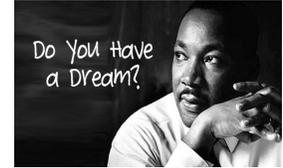
# The Key Work of School Boards

**Making Student Achievement Your  
Primary Focus**



## 1. Vision

Vision is the mental picture of what the schools and district would be if everything were perfect. It's a mental image of success.



**High expectations for students**  
**Quality instruction**  
**Clear goals toward that vision**  
**Shared beliefs and values about what is possible**

Vision is not about where we are, but what we want to be. Your vision should inspire, reflect community beliefs, look ahead and lead.



## 2. Accountability

**School Board accountability means taking your fair share of responsibility for student outcomes. Being accountable means answering not only for your actions but also for the results of your actions.**

- Accountability includes taking credit for achieving desired results and accepting responsibility when targets are missed.**
- True accountability depends on open decision making, community engagement and support, and receptivity to new ideas and constructive criticism.**

## Framework for Accountability

### □ What

- ✓ are we planning to do
- ✓ are the reasons for doing this
- ✓ are the expected outcomes
- ✓ will we accept as evidence

### □ So What

- ✓ actually happened
- ✓ did we learn
- ✓ were the challenges
- ✓ were the results

### □ Now What

- ✓ Should we celebrate
- ✓ Should we continue doing
- ✓ Should we change



## 3. Policy

**Policy permeates all aspects of school operations and is the manner in which a board exercises leadership. Through policy, school boards establish a set of cohesive guidelines able to transform vision and accountability into reality. Boards fulfill their policy responsibilities by articulating and adopting policy and by selecting an executive officer –superintendent - to implement policy.**

**“Board policy represents the intersection of vision and accountability.”**

## Policy vs. Procedures or Regulations

### **Policy – Board**

- ✓ Written statement about a desired condition, direction, or belief
- ✓ Guidelines for how the school system is to operate
- ✓ Describes what the board wants to happen
- ✓ Describes what the board doesn't want to happen
- ✓ Formally adopted by the board

### **Procedures or Regulations – Administration or Board or Both**

- ✓ Methods or steps for carrying out a policy
- ✓ Specific descriptions about how to put the policy in action
- ✓ States how, by whom, where, and when certain actions are to be carried out or are limited.
- ✓ Formal adoption may or may not be required



## 4. Community Leadership

**Through public advocacy and community engagement, school boards share their concerns and actions with the public and hear the public's concerns. Leadership that builds public support is vital to the implementation of the board's vision. Effective boards fully recognize the impact schools have on the community and understand what strong community connections mean to success for all.**



## 5. Board/Superintendent Relationships

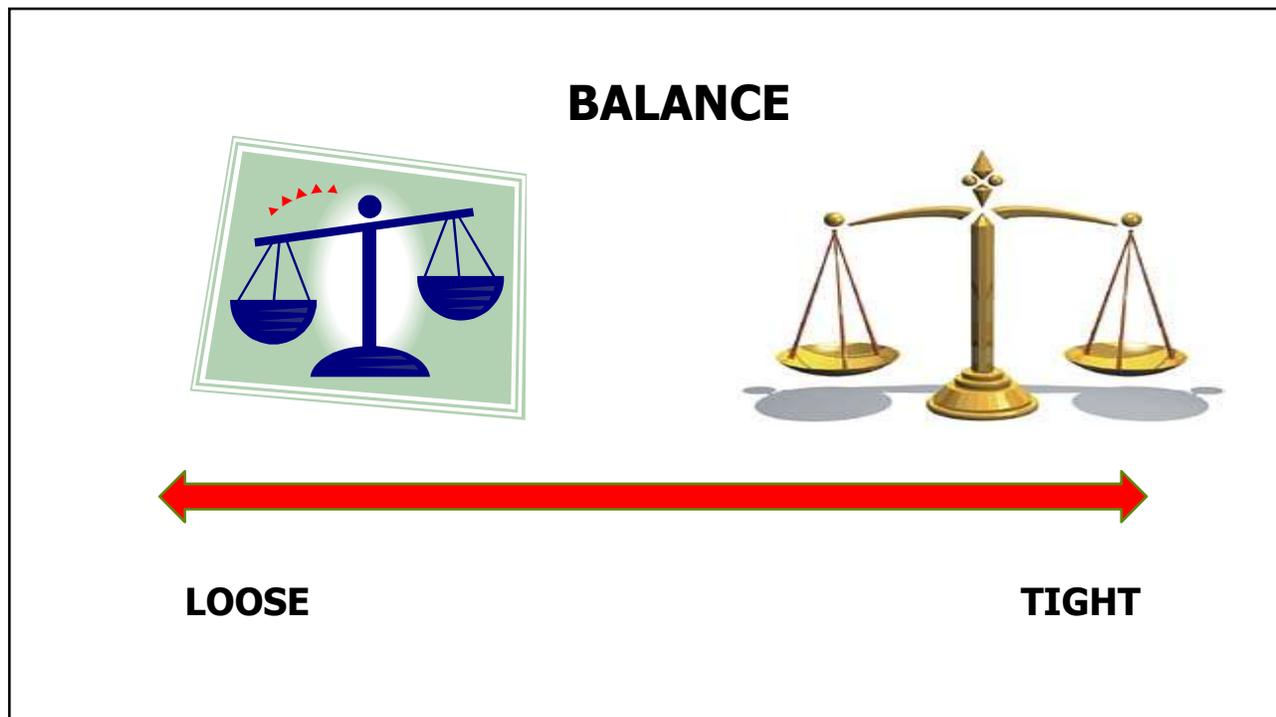
**Both the school board and the superintendent have essential leadership roles that are interconnected but different.**

**Effective school boards lead as a district leadership team with the superintendent, each in their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.**

**“United we stand, divided we fall.”**

### **Relationships**

- A. Establish clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations**
  - ✓ Aligned to district vision and goals
  - ✓ Expectations are well defined
  - ✓ Superintendent evaluation designed for improvement
- B. Practice effective communication techniques**
  - ✓ Listen to understand
  - ✓ Speak to be understood
  - ✓ Start from common points or agreements
- C. Develop a positive attitude**
  - ✓ I assume good faith; I do not question your sincerity or your sanity
  - ✓ I care about our relationship; if we have differences I want you to help me see it from your perspective
  - ✓ I am open to being influenced and am prepared to change



### You Might Be Micro-managing If What You Are Doing....

1. has to do with day to day operations of the district instead of governance or the big picture future of the district
2. is part of a staff member's job description
3. takes a board member out of the chain of command (or communication) as established by your board policy and best practices
4. should only be undertaken as part of a whole board deliberation not as an individual's decision or responsibility

## YOUR JOB?

- A. Checking to see that the buses run on time
- B. Patrolling the crowd at the football game
- C. Sitting in the back of the science room rating the teacher
- D. Holding an employee grievance hearing
- E. Changing the lunch menu
- F. Interviewing perspective teachers
- G. Approving contracts for new teachers
- H. Fixing the lights in the parking lot

## My Constituents

- **Who are my constituents?**
- **How do I serve them?**
- **How do I react to questions, concerns, complaints, criticisms?**

## Wyoming Ethics and Disclosure Act

### Use of Title and Prestige

- No benefit of gifts as a result of office

### Nepotism

- Can't advocate for employment of, supervise, or discipline family members

### Decisions and Votes

- Don't vote if gives financial benefit to self or family

### Misuse of Office

- Can't use public funds, personnel, time facilities, equipment for private use or political campaign
- Can't disseminate information not available to full public

### Penalties

- If violate and are guilty, is a misdemeanor
- If convicted, fined up to \$1000 and removal from office

## Voting

1. Board members **should vote** on all matters that come before the board.
2. Board members **cannot be compelled to vote** on an issue.
3. Board members **must abstain** from voting and taking part in discussions about action in which they have a conflict of interest
4. Board members **should not abstain** on difficult or controversial issues.
5. Board members **should vote** by weighing the information presented to them.
6. A board member **should consider** each issue independently.
7. A board member **should consider the ramifications** of the decision to abstain from voting.

## What Should I Do When Approached By A Patron?

**B = Be nice**

**L = Listen - but no longer than is appropriate**

**A = Acknowledge feelings**

**M = Make the explanation**

**N = Name who can help**

**O = Outline authority**

## My Constituents

Your neighbor, Sally, rushes to your door to complain about the way her daughter Ashley's fifth grade teacher, Mr. Miller, applies his classroom rules. What will you do?

You're about to leave for work when an irate father phones. Apparently, for the second time in two weeks, the school bus driver has left his fourth grader at the bus stop. What will you do?

### How Do I ...

1. Respond to criticism about the board?
2. Respond to criticism about a staff member?
3. Respond to requests for me to fix something?
4. Find out information about what is "really" happening in the district?

### How Do I ...

5. Find out additional information about an issue?
6. Respond when asked about a recent board decision I did not support?
7. Respond when I hear false reports about what happened in an executive session?
8. Confront a fellow board member who I think is out of line?

## Getting Ready for Your First Meeting

### A. Orientation

- Meet with superintendent or board chairman
- Ask some big picture questions about the district
- District technology

### B. Board packet

- Receiving
- Questions

### C. District Website

- Past minutes
- Accountability results
- Strategic plan

## December Board Meeting

### A. Reorganization of board

1. Election of officers
2. Appointments to committees
3. Regular meeting dates for the year

### B. Approvals

1. Minutes
2. Agenda

### C. Reports

1. Budget
2. Administrator
3. Superintendent

### D. Possibilities

1. Audit
2. Board evaluation and /or superintendent evaluation
3. Policy revisions
4. Executive session

### Parliamentary Quiz

1. To take action, there must be a motion and a second to the motion T F
2. The Board member who made a motion may withdraw that motion T F
3. The chairman's decision may be overruled with a majority vote. T F
4. A motion would be passed if the vote by a seven member board was: T F  
     Aye - 3                      Nay - 2                      Not Voting - 2
5. The board chairman only votes in case of a tie. T F
6. An item may not be discussed until a motion is on the floor. T F

### Parliamentary Quiz

7. The chairman may limit the length of discussion on a motion T F
8. The chairman cannot enter into debate on an issue unless he/she yields the chair to vice-chairman. T F
9. When addressing the chairman of the board, it is Chairman regardless of gender. T F
10. A school board has the authority to adopt a set of rules of order other than Roberts Rules of Order as Board Policy. T F
11. Each member of the school board should be allowed to speak on issues under debate. The chairman may refuse to call upon other board members for second comments until each member has had a chance to speak. T F

## Executive Session - Open Meeting Law Nine (of 11) Statutory Reasons

1. Litigation
2. Consider appointment, employment, right to practice, or dismissal of employee
3. Selection of or purchase of real estate
4. Receive information classified as confidential from an attorney
5. Consider expulsion, suspension, or other disciplinary action of a student
6. Consider accepting or tending offers concerning salaries, wages, benefits, and terms of employment
7. Threats to public security
8. National security
9. Consider accepting donations requesting confidentiality

**Must have a motion, a second, and majority approval**

## Future Meeting Topics

1. Superintendent evaluation
2. Superintendent contract
3. Administrator contracts
4. Certified staff contracts
5. Legislative issues
6. Budget preparation
7. School calendar
8. Board policy

## Myths About Board Service

- ✓ Read through all the myths.
- ✓ Put a  next to any myths that really resonate with you.
- ✓ Put a  next to any myths you want to discuss.

## Final Thoughts

- ✓ Relationships matter
- ✓ **Team building yields dividends**
- ✓ Developing governance skills takes time
- ✓ **Asking questions can help you get the information you need**
- ✓ You are not alone **(January 12 and January 19)**