Why Board Culture Matters
Based on the September 2004 ASBJ Article by Linda J. Dawson and Randy Quinn

Allowed to go unchecked, boardroom dysfunction will erode the public’s trust.
The behavior that is modeled by the leader and management profoundly shapes the culture and practices of the organization.

Kately Bernandin Demougeot
The Turnover of Community College Presidents
What is it?

“...patterns of belief or shared meaning, fragmented or integrated, and supported by various operating norms and rituals can exert a decisive influence on the overall ability of the organization to deal with the challenges that it faces.”

Gareth Morgan, *Images of Organization*
Rebel (with or without cause?)
Board Member Behaviors

Have you ever...?
• Used passive-aggressive behavior
• Dominated meetings by talking too much
• Publicly criticized members of the board or the superintendent
• Refused to participate in board development
• Circumvented the superintendent
• Tried to “fix” individual concerns
• Declared your First Amendment right to say and do as you please

So, what’s a board to do?

Improve Board Culture

1. Govern as a Body
Vote!

Oregon School Boards Association
Selected Sample Policy

Individual Board Member’s Authority and Responsibilities

An individual Board member exercises the authority and responsibility of his/her position when the Board is in legal session only.

A Board member has the authority to cast his/her vote in the name of the Board when authorized by a specific Board motion. The affirmative vote of the majority of members of the Board is required to transact any business.

When authorized to act as the Board’s designated representative, a member must act unilaterally, and a Board member may make and accept proposals in his/her capacity and subject to subsequent approval by the Board.

A Board member has the right to express personal opinions. When expressing such opinions in public, a Board member must clearly identify the opinion as his/her own.

Members will be knowledgeable of information requested through Board action, supplied by the superintendent, gained through attendance at district activities and through professional Board activities.

Members of the Board will adhere to the following in carrying out the responsibilities of membership:

Board Member Standards of Conduct (Version 2)

A. Board member shall:

1. Comply with ethics laws for public officials;
2. Understand that the Board is the entity for the district through Board policy. Board members do not manage the district on an individual basis;
3. Understand that the Board takes decisions as a group. Individual Board members may not contact the Board for assistance;
4. Respect the right of other Board members to have opinions and show which differs;
5. Recognize that decisions are made by a majority vote and should be supported by all Board members;
6. Make decisions only after the facts are presented and discussed;
7. Understand the ethics of assumed and or public positions or complaints to the proper administrative officer;
8. Recognize that the Board must comply with the Public Meetings Law and only has authority to make decisions in open Board sessions.

Code: IBAA
Adopted:

Code: BMF
Adopted:
3. Self-evaluation

4. Listen

5. Don’t Ignore
6. Censure?

7. Board-Staff Relationship
Board-Staff Communications

The Board desires to maintain open communication channels between itself and the staff. The basic line of communication will be through the superintendent. However, this policy does not restrict or prohibit labor relations communications of bargaining unit members. The superintendent will develop and recommend to the board procedures for communications between the Board and district employees.

Communications or reports to the Board or Board committees from any staff member or members should be submitted through the superintendent. This procedure will not be construed as denying the right of any employee to address the Board about issues which are neither part of an active administrative procedure, nor disruptive to the operation of the district.

All official communications, policies and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the superintendent. The superintendent will communicate as appropriate to keep staff fully informed of the Board’s concerns and actions.

END OF POLICY

8. Strategic & Truthful

9. Recruit Integrity
Questions/ discussion

Contact

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