

HIGLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD, SUPERINTENDENT AND DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

HUSD Governing Board and Superintendency Communication Agreements:

On January 16 and January 30, 2021 the HUSD Governing Board, HUSD Superintendent and cabinet leadership team met to receive training on the clarification of roles and responsibilities and successful communication practices. This document was also discussed at the April 9, 2022, Governing Board retreat. Together we discussed and outlined our working relationship and clarified the expectations we have for our team. This summary is an outline of our process and protocols and will serve as a working document for our understanding of these procedures going forward.



GOVERNING BOARD & SUPERINTENDENT COMMUNICATIONS

The HUSD Governing Board expects to:

1. Receive regular communication from the superintendent every week unless there is a holiday break.
2. Regular communication includes:
 - i. **Daily:** text messages on emergencies or important updates
 - ii. **Weekly:** status reports
3. Have access to the same information:
 - a. Board meeting packets and supporting documentation prior to our meetings (usually at least five days prior to a scheduled meeting).
 - b. One member's request for additional information results in all members receiving or having the same access to the information.
 - c. Special communications are done for all board members.

Shared Agreements:

- The superintendent and board members will treat each other and staff with respect.
- Superintendent will acknowledge receipt of feedback shared by board members and confirm issue will be addressed.
- Superintendent will respect and acknowledge the perspective of board members as representatives of the community.
- Board members will direct questions or concerns to the superintendent.
- Support, not surprises!

The Superintendent Expects:

Questions regarding district operations, emergency communication and/or concerns or feedback received should be directed to Superintendent, and the appropriate cabinet member and/or Board Secretary.

Shared Agreements:

- The superintendent and board members will be respectful toward staff and board members should be respectful of staff's time.



- Direction is only given at board meetings when a majority of the board votes to give direction.
- Board members will remain impartial and share both positive and negative feedback about the district with the superintendent.
- Board members will reserve judgement and refrain from investigating concerns instead deferring to chain of command.
- Support, not surprises!

Emergency Communication Protocols

Our Board Expects:

1. Be notified by the Superintendent as soon as it is possible for:
 - a. School emergency lock down or fire or similar event at a campus.
 - b. A student or staff emergency including arrest, injury, death or when first responders are called.
 - c. Any event or circumstance that would become newsworthy.
2. The Governing Board can expect communication from the Governing Board Secretary in the event the superintendent is managing the emergency. If there are additional questions, they can be directed to Superintendent or the Governing Board Secretary so that the responses and additional information can be provided to all Board members ASAP.

The Board should have an understanding:

- a. Emergency management plans.
- b. Under what circumstances would an emergency board meeting be called.
- c. How will board members be contacted/notified about an emergency meeting.

BOARD AGENDA AGREEMENTS

Current Board Agenda Items

1. The board president will meet with the superintendent approximately 7 days in advance of the meeting to review and approve the draft agenda.
2. A consent agenda will be used for items not requiring discussion.
3. Any board member may ask to have an item pulled from the consent agenda to allow for discussion or individual consideration. The board member will notify the superintendent



ASAP in advance of the meeting of the intent to pull an item off the consent agenda and what additional information may be required.

4. Pulled consent items will be discussed during consent agenda.

Future Board Agenda Items

1. While the board president and superintendent work together to create board agendas, all board members are afforded the opportunity to request agenda items.
2. Agenda items should move the district forward and be relevant to the priorities of the district as a whole. When requesting future agenda items board members will consider the following:
 - a. Is the item to celebrate a success?
 - b. Is the item a policy decision?
 - c. Is the item something that requires board action?
 - d. Is the item needed to ensure accountability?
3. Requested agenda items will be made during the portion of the meeting or directly to the Superintendent.
4. Request may be satisfied with additional conversation that will be followed up in writing and shared with all members of the board.
5. Requested items that the superintendent expects will take significant time or resources can be referred to the whole board who will vote on whether to pursue the request.
6. If there is concern about the timeliness or relevancy of a requested agenda item, the superintendent or member of the board may request to have the item come before the board for a vote regarding its inclusion on a future agenda.

Board Member Meeting Preparation Agreements

1. Board members will call or email the Governing Board Secretary with questions about agenda items or supporting materials by at least the Monday before the scheduled board meeting.
2. Any questions received will be collected and answered in writing and will be shared with the whole Board at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled Governing Board meeting.
3. Board members will come to the meeting prepared to discuss items on the agenda.
4. Board members will notify the superintendent before the meeting about positive and negative comments received from the community on specific agenda items.
5. Board members will give the superintendent time to research clarifying questions about agenda items.



During the Meeting Agreements

1. The board president will ensure that only one person speaks at a time and that each member has an equal opportunity to participate.
2. Board members will model the behaviors expected of students, staff and community members.
3. Procedures for public comment are clear and available at the meeting site.
4. Only the board president will respond to public comment during the meeting.
 - a. The board president may recognize the superintendent for factual information.
 - b. The board president may recognize a board member to respond to a personal attack.
5. The superintendent will provide clarifying information to board member questions.
6. Issues, not people, will be discussed during meetings.
7. Board members will listen respectfully to each other and staff and will not engage in side conversations.
8. Monitor for compliance with Open Meeting Law (OML) and policy:
 - a. Superintendent, Governing Board secretary, and all Board members have the responsibility to comply with OML.
 - b. Members will use “point of order” to interrupt and get meeting back on track.
9. Members will refrain from making long, unnecessary speeches, that do not move discussion forward.

HUSD Meeting Norms:

In HUSD we conduct our meetings in a professional, collegial, and respectful atmosphere. The Governing Board and all district administration will hold themselves to the following expectations:

- Be on time.
- Be present and participate.
- Silence cell phones and if emergency calls need to be taken leave the room.
- Listen attentively with openness and respect for those speaking.
- Voice concerns as we go, be real and authentic with others in a respectful way.

After Board Meeting Agreements

1. Board members and staff will support (or stay silent – not undermine) the decision of the board.
2. Board members and staff will abide by confidentiality laws of executive sessions.
3. The superintendent will ensure that all documents, records, reports, etc., are processed and maintained in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, policies, etc.



Site Visit Agreements

1. Governing Board secretary will let Board members know about upcoming events.
2. Board members are encouraged to attend as many school events (sporting events, fine arts events, community events) as a spectator as their time permits.
3. Board members wishing to visit a school will:
 - a. work with Governing Board secretary about the best time to visit.
 - b. follow campus guidelines for visitors (sign in, guest badge, escort, etc.)
 - c. respect staff time and allow staff to perform their duties.
 - d. not evaluate staff.
 - e. not give direction to any staff or students.
 - f. not accept gifts (other than nominal tokens) or favors from any district employee.
4. When visiting with teachers of their own children, board members will make it clear that they are acting as parents rather than board members.
5. If a board member observes an issue on a campus that needs administrative follow-up, the concerns will be communicated to the superintendent.

BOARD & COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS

The HUSD Governing Board understands that:

1. Board members will serve as ambassadors for their district, emphasizing the positive aspects of the district.
2. If board members plan to attend community meetings, the superintendent's office should be notified.
3. Complaints received from staff, or the community will be directed through the appropriate chain of command, per board policy KE and KEB and shared with the superintendent. Anonymous complaints will not be heard.

The Board Recognizes that:

- a. it is the last stop in the complaint process.
- b. individual Board members have no authority to solve problems.
- c. individual board members can confirm with the superintendent that complaints are addressed.
- d. in order to avoid violating policy and to promote equity in how they respond to questions concerns and complaints board members will consider utilizing the "Thank, Acknowledge and Refer" protocol when responding to community email communication.



“Thank, Acknowledge, and Refer” EMAIL Protocol

The “Thank, Acknowledge, and Refer” protocol was a suggested way that board members can respond to community members with questions, complaints, and concerns. Below are some email examples that you could use that follow our policies KE and KEB on responding to concerns.

THANK:

- Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.
- Thank you for your email regarding this issue.
- Thank you for letting me know of your concern.
- Thank you for reaching out to me regarding your concern.
- Thank you for bringing this issue to my attention.
- Thank you for contacting me about this matter.
- Thank you for your email.

ACKNOWLEDGE:

- I understand your concern.
- I understand your frustration.
- I appreciate you letting me know about your experience.
- I understand this must be frustrating for you.
- I appreciate that you took the time to share your experience.

REFER:

- I would recommend that you speak to your child’s teacher regarding this concern.
- I would suggest that you take this concern to your student’s principal.
- I will forward this information to the appropriate district personnel.
- This concern will be brought to the attention of district personnel.

Recommended Email Signature:

Below is the suggested message that Governing Board members include at the footer of the emails sent:

To ensure compliance with the Open Meeting Law, recipients of this message should not forward it to other board members. Any board members, who may inadvertently receive this message, should not reply.

This message is a public record and should not be deleted.



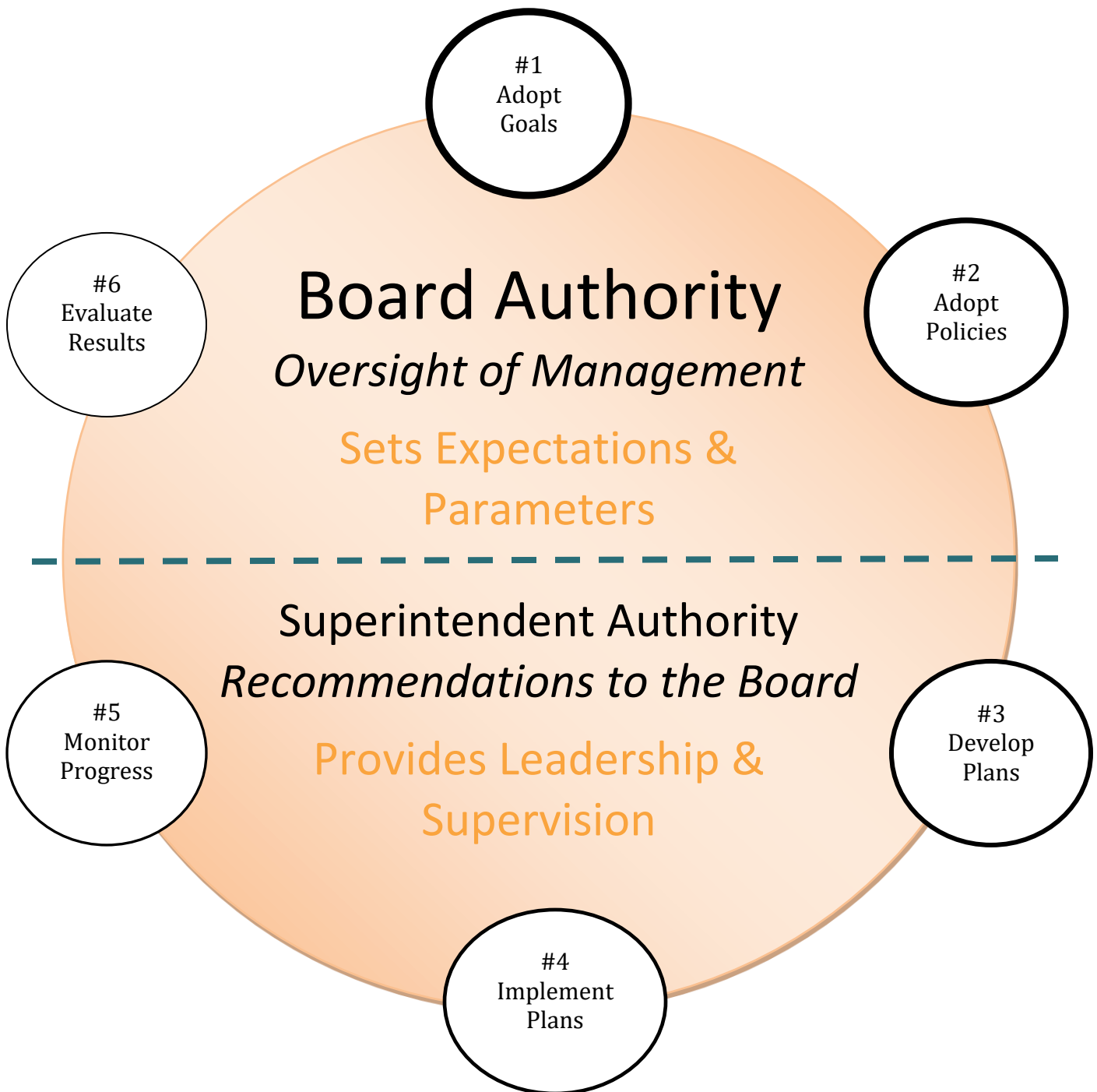
EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARDS:

- Commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear policies and goals toward that vision
- Have a strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn, and of the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels.
- Are accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement
- Have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.
- Are data savvy; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.
- Align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.
- Lead as a united team with their administrator, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.
- Take part in team development and training, sometimes with their administrator, to build shared knowledge, values and commitments for their improvement efforts.

Dervarics, C, O'Brian, E (January 28, 2011). Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards. Center for Public Education. Retrieved from <http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Public-education/Eight-characteristics-of-effective-school-boards/Eight-characteristics-of-effective-school-boards.html>



BOARD - SUPERINTENDENT GOVERNANCE



ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

| BOARD | SUPERINTENDENT |
|--|--|
| <p>Sets the Direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision, Mission, Goals | <p>Executes the Direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accomplishes goals |
| <p>Establishes the Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets policy • Reviews procedures | <p>Implements Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy guidelines • Writes and implements procedures |
| <p>Provides Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approves a budget that supports goals • Approves staffing to support goals | <p>Operationalizes Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops a budget to support goals • Hires staff to accomplish goals |
| <p>Ensures Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly reviews budget vs. actual expenses • Reviews academic performance | <p>Monitors Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjusts to meet operational and academic district goals • Responsible for district performance |
| <p>Act as Community Leaders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates and advocates within the community • Provides feedback to the superintendent | <p>Serves as Leader of the District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains communication internally with staff and externally community leaders |



Code of Ethics for School Board Members

The ASBA Board endorses the following code for local school board members:

As a member of my local Board of Education I will strive to improve public education, and to that end I will:

- Attend all Board meetings insofar as possible, and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings;
- Recognize that a board member should endeavor to make policy decisions only after full discussion at publicly held Board meetings;
- Render all decisions based on the available facts and my independent judgment, and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups;
- Encourage the free expression of opinion by all Board members, and seek systematic communications between the Board and students, staff, and all elements of the community;
- Work with other Board members to establish effective Board policies and to delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the Superintendent;
- Communicate to other Board members and the Superintendent expression of public reaction to Board policies and school programs;
- Inform oneself about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed information, such as those sponsored by my state and national school boards association;
- Support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as school staff, and insist on a regular and impartial evaluation of all staff;
- Avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest, and refrain from using my Board position for personal or partisan gain;
- Take no private action that will compromise the Board or administration, and respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law, and
- Remember always that my first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the public schools.



HOW DOES OUR BOARD RATE?

Answer yes or no to the following questions.

Is Your Board...?

- _____ Slow to define a vision, mission, and goals for the district?
- _____ Unprepared for board meetings?
- _____ Negatively impacting the district by engaging in gossip or innuendo?
- _____ Engaging in micro-management of day-to-day school district operations?
- _____ Disregard the chain of command when getting complaints from community members or staff?
- _____ Uninformed about initiatives or programs being implemented to improve student achievement?
- _____ Unaware of the importance of professional development for teachers?
- _____ Focused on external issues (such as poverty, lack of parental support or lack of motivation) as the main reasons for lack of student success?
- _____ Quick to describe barriers to community outreach, rather than taking responsibility for communication with their community?
- _____ Using data as punishment (a hammer) instead of as opportunity (a flashlight)?
- _____ Concerned about learning together as a board?
- _____ Routinely “ambushing” your administrative team with surprise questions and concerns?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, your board has an opportunity to improve its governance.

