



ORLEANS PARISH SCHOOL BOARD BOARD DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

**February 10, 2014 @ 4:00 pm
Propeller Building
4035 Washington Avenue**

The “3 Rs” of Being a Successful Board Member: Roles, Responsibilities and Relationships

Introduction

This workshop is designed to facilitate discussion among the board members relative to the *Roles, Responsibilities and Relationships* that the Board desires to develop and how to use them as a guide in developing a positive working relationship among board members and in the Board's selection of a new superintendent, as well as in developing a collaborative working relationship with the superintendent in order to ensure that the areas of highest priority are identified and addressed on behalf of the students in Orleans Parish.

The workshop will be discussion based, seeking input from the board members relative to what you want your Board to be. The success of the workshop is dependent upon the commitment of all board members to be active participants and abide by the guidelines developed at the workshop. Following are the anticipated objectives to be achieved via the workshop.

Objectives

To assist the Board in developing a common understanding of *Governance* and *Management* and how this understanding translates into a common understanding of the respective roles of the Board and the Superintendent.

To develop a common understanding of the need for effective long range planning, why it is essential to clearly define long-term expectations, and how to develop appropriate processes/strategies for effective short and long term planning for the School District.

To discuss and establish processes to ensure that the Board appropriately exercises its responsibilities for setting the direction for the District and providing oversight to ensure the District is moving in that direction.

To identify priorities among the many criteria desired in the new superintendent to help guide the decision making process and to ensure that the selected superintendent will understand the areas that need to be given priority attention when he/she assumes the responsibility for leading the District.

To provide the Board with operating tips and techniques that will enhance the image of board members and the Board with the public and other stakeholders.

Agenda

The following agenda was developed with input from board members. Please reference the appendix beginning on page 4 that briefly discusses many of the concepts and strategies we will be discussing at the workshop. Please review them and come prepared to enter into discussion on each of the topics.

The 3 “Rs” of Being a Successful Board Member:

Roles, Responsibilities and Relationships

1. Introductions
2. Review of Agenda
3. Roles - Basic Concepts regarding Governance and Management
 - a. Trusteeship
 - b. Governance
 - c. Management
 - d. CEO or COO
 - e. Micro-management – what it is and how to avoid it
4. Responsibilities – Operating within appropriate Roles
 - a. Strategic Planning in relation to governance and management
 - b. Continuous improvement
 - c. Determining expectations/goals
 - d. Providing Oversight and Evaluating Success of School District
 - i. What is success?
 - ii. How do we determine success?
 - iii. What is oversight?
 - e. Evaluating Performance of Superintendent
 - f. Board Self Evaluation
5. Relationships - Developing appropriate positive relationships, which is a prerequisite to developing a high performing Board and School District
 - a. Fellow board members
 - i. Voice of the Board Member – Presenting one’s perspective
 - ii. Working together – Board as a Corporate Body
 1. Listening rather than hearing
 2. Tips to facilitate consensus in decision making
 3. Agreeing to disagree
 4. Respecting the decision of the majority
 - iii. Code of conduct

- iv. Organizing the Board for greater effectiveness – review of committee structure
 - b. The Superintendent
 - i. Takes direction from the Board via policy and at Board meetings, not from individual board members
 - ii. Has to have a clear understanding of expectations
 - iii. Needs to be evaluated rigorously relative to expectations
6. Superintendent Selection – reflecting on the discussions relative to *Roles, Responsibilities and Relationships*, the Board will be led in a discussion aimed at developing greater specificity on primary criteria that will be used to guide the Board in the superintendent selection process – what are the primary criteria that will drive the Board’s decision-making?
- a. What Role does the Board desire the new superintendent to have?
 - b. What does the Board expect him/her to accomplish?
 - i. Identify priority areas through brainstorming
 - ii. Categorize identified topics into “big buckets.”
 - iii. Prioritize the “big buckets” into primary criteria.
 - iv. Restructure approved criteria to reflect priorities.
 - c. Are there any special parameters that the Board feels are needed to provide limits on the superintendent’s authority?
7. Next Steps
- a. Sharing expectations during interviews with candidates
 - b. Follow-up Workshops?
 - i. Prepare operational policies related to roles.
 - ii. Discuss process and procedure for development of comprehensive Strategic Plan
 - iii. Retreat/Workshop with new superintendent to review respective roles, establish goals for 2014-15 and 2015-16, and define/determine evaluation/accountability process.
 - c. Other?
8. Workshop Evaluation

Follow-up Report

A written report will be prepared outlining the items agreed upon and major concepts/issues discussed during the workshop.

Appendix – Concepts To Be Discussed during Workshop

Many individuals make themselves available to serve on a board of education out of a commitment “to serve” without fully comprehending the knowledge, skills and “tools” that may be necessary to be a contributing member. To be a successful board, it is desirable for board members to develop a common understanding of the following concepts and strategies, and for the board to embrace and reflect them in its governing policies and practices.

Trusteeship

Individual board members are elected to be the “trustees” responsible for fulfilling the purpose of the organization, which, in the case of a school district, is to provide a quality educational program for all children of school age within the school board’s jurisdiction. This could be contrasted to the concept that board members are elected to represent the wishes, directions, special interests or “what have you” of the “people.” In truth, it is impossible to represent the “people” served by any school district. A common perspective of the “people” generally does not exist on most issues because the “people” generally do not possess the background information, responsibility and/or accountability relative to the issues under consideration.

Within the concept of being a trustee, board members should make decisions on the basis of what is “correct” or “best” in terms of providing a quality common educational program within the framework of a legally constituted school district, recognizing the constraints of available resources. There may be disagreement as to the quality and quantity of services that appropriately might be provided. An individual’s values, beliefs and perspectives are brought into play in the “trustee” role. Consequently, there appropriately may be disagreements pertaining to what is “correct” or “best” in terms of quality and quantity. The quality and quantity of services also can be limited by the willingness of the majority of the “people” to pay for these services.

Governance

As trustees, board members come together as a Board, which usually exists to govern an organization. Governance is the primary responsibility of a Board of Education. What is governance? It is the articulation of the reason the organization exists (its mission), the defining of what the organization should achieve (expectations), the establishment of acceptable parameters within which these expectations can be achieved (policies), and oversight of those responsible for achieving the expectations to determine how well they are achieved and whether they are achieved within the parameters established by the governing body (evaluation). In governing, a board generally address only those issues that are not relegated to those involved in managing the organization, except when required to do otherwise by law or regulation. Basic to the concept of governance is the employment of an individual (superintendent) to lead and

oversee the management of the organization within the framework of the policies established by the governing body.

Management

The role of the superintendent is to understand the mission, vision and expectations of the organization that have been developed or endorsed by the governing body (board), articulate them to the appropriate stakeholders and provide leadership to the organization in a manner that will ensure that the expectations are met, the vision fulfilled and the mission accomplished within realistic parameters (policies) established by the governing body. To do this, the superintendent is responsible for developing/restructuring an organization (employing, deploying, supervising and evaluating staff), delegating responsibilities and holding individuals accountable. The superintendent also is responsible to work collaboratively with the myriad of agencies and organizations which impact on the district in order to be able to fulfill the district's mission.

Superintendent in CEO or COO Structure

A superintendent is responsible for executing his/her responsibilities in a structure similar to a chief executive officer (CEO) or chief operating officer (COO), depending on the policies and practices of the of the board. Generally, a board that employs a superintendent to perform in a CEO role has expectations that it will be a governing board and the CEO will be in charge of providing the leadership and supervising the management of the district to ensure the expectations of the board are achieved. This is how most organizations are structured. Boards that see themselves as operating boards are engaged in both governing and leading the organization and usually employ a COO who is responsible for implementing the decisions of the board in the management of a school district. When a superintendent is employed within the framework of a CEO structure, the superintendent is expected to *lead* the district. When s/he is employed within the framework of a COO, s/he is expected to *manage* the district. It is important for a school board and superintendent to understand the distinction between the responsibilities and expectations for these apparently similar yet significantly different organizational structures.

Micro Management

More often than not, boards want to know what micro management is and whether they are micro managing. Whether a school board is or is not micro managing may be related to whether it has CEO or COO expectations for its superintendent. In very simple terms, if the board is a governing board, it governs or determines the “whats” for an organization. In this case, a board employs a superintendent to determine the “hows,” “whos” and “whens” to get the “whats” done. If a governing board gets involved with the “hows,” “whos” and whens,” it probably is micro-managing. On the other hand, if the school board determines that it desires to be an operating board, it must become much more extensively involved in the day-to-day management of the schools and may get more involved in the “hows,” “whos” and “whens.” When a board

determines that it desires to be an operating board, it assumes significantly more responsibility and accountability for the day-to-day operations of the district and significantly diminishes the responsibilities and accountability of the superintendent. There are rare examples of operating boards successfully managing a large or complex organization.

In either type of organization, there is not a distinct line between governance and management. More often than not, there is a gray area between the responsibilities of the board and the superintendent. When the board or a board member regularly crosses beyond this “grey area” into the area defined as the role of the superintendent, micro management concerns generally surface. Conversely, care needs to be exerted to avoid having a superintendent cross too far or too often into the area defined as the role of the board.

The best way to ensure that a school board or board member does not get into micro managing is by having open, honest dialogues with the superintendent on a regular basis relative to the behavior of the board and individual board members and the impact of their behavior on the superintendent’s ability to lead and/or manage the district.

Strategic Planning

Planning is the foundation for successful execution. Rarely would anyone embark on a long journey without determining before hand where you want to go and how to get there. When one does, he doesn’t ever know if he arrived at the place he wanted to be. Likewise, it is impossible to know whether you have achieved an objective and how well you have achieved it if expectations for the objective are not clearly defined. Enter the role of strategic or long-range planning. Individuals and organizations usually do not improve without an intent to improve, and systemically will not improve without a roadmap to do so. Effective boards recognize a need for a plan to embark on the journey of continuous improvement; and the more complex the journey, the more complex the plan. A comprehensive strategic plan is the “road map,” a critical and necessary prerequisite, for an organization that desires to embark on a course of sustained or continuous improvement.

Continuous Improvement

Another important concept for a board to understand in its pursuit of excellence is how improvement comes about. Organizations don’t improve just because someone wants them to improve, or because someone identifies a list of things that could or should be improved. Improvement comes about only when the improvements are clearly defined and a plan for improvement is developed and implemented. Even when this is done, many organizations fail to achieve their desired expectations because they employ leaders who do not know how to execute or, as is more often the case, they attempt to do too much too quickly.

Organizations that have been successful in the pursuit of improvement generally have an understanding of the following principles:

- Improvement usually requires change and change does not come easily to most people.
- Lasting improvement is the result of planning and effective execution.

- Organizations generally improve in small steps by involving the stakeholders who will be impacted by the change as completely as possible.
- Systemic change requires the engagement of everyone in the organization who has involvement in or with the area of change.

Determining Expectations/goals

Based on the principles in support of continuous improvement, governing bodies that desire improvement engage in long term systematic planning which results in lasting systemic change. These governing bodies identify what needs to be improved, clarify the improvements so that they are commonly understood, prioritize the improvements which will have the greatest impact on the organization, and then address the items deemed to be of the highest priority, being cognizant of personnel, time and fiscal constraints. Continuously improving organizations will address only two to four priority goals each year. Over a sustained period, however, significant improvement is observed. On the other hand, organizations that attempt to tackle a multitude of priorities generally achieve none of them to the satisfaction of the governing board, the organization, or the stakeholders.

Providing Oversight – Evaluation of the District, Superintendent, and Board

As referenced earlier, continuous improvement requires effective long range planning, which includes a process for identifying needs and establishing priorities, the development of annual improvement goals that will move the organization toward the implementation of its long-range plan, and a functional monitoring system that ensures that these priorities are being addressed effectively and efficiently. All of these are governance functions. To effectively monitor the performance of a district, a superintendent, and/or a board, it is necessary to clearly articulate what the expectations are and how the achievement of the expectation will be determined. The more general or vague expectations are, the more difficult it will be to determine whether or not they have been achieved. Annually, the governing board has the responsibility to determine realistically achievable expectations/goals and what the product or “deliverable” will look like if the expectation is achieved. These expectations need to be significant, specific, outcome based, and limited, if a board intends to have them implemented successfully. A board then has to have the instrumentation and process in place to evaluate how well the expectations have been achieved, as well as the overall performance of the district, the superintendent and the board as part of this process.

To facilitate the implementation and monitoring of a comprehensive improvement plan, it is suggested that the steps needed to do so be built into a planning calendar that will guide the activities of a board and superintendent throughout the year.

The Board Member as an Individual and as a member of the Board Team - Working Together

As discussed above, individual school board members are elected as “trustees” of the school district in order to bring their unique perspectives to the board table when issues are deliberated. The reason boards have seven members is to provide different perspectives, values, beliefs,

philosophies, etc. that may bear on decision making at the governance level. School boards are better served when they capitalize upon rather than disavow this diversity. Boards need to channel these different and, at times, diverse opinions into an effective decision making process. Unfortunately, boards generally are not proactive in capitalizing on this aspect of governance and trusteeship. Rather, the opposite is generally true, with many boards disdaining or disapproving of differences of opinions among board members. Boards need to learn how to deliberate, debate, present different perspectives, etc. in an agreeable manner. It is okay to disagree agreeably, as long as everyone on a board sincerely listens to the perspectives of all members with an open mind.

Governance policies should stipulate that each board member should be heard on every issue, except for routine, legislated or mandated issues, before a decision is made. In providing the opportunity to be heard, each board member should present his/her position on the issue and the rationale behind his/her position. Board members should listen to the perspectives of all of their colleagues, discuss the pros and cons of each alternative solution, and then modify their respective position on the basis of any new concept or information presented. There is a common belief that intelligent adults, when provided the same base of information, generally will come to the same conclusion. This is why many good boards have a high number of unanimous votes. At times, these boards are criticized for being “rubber stamp” boards. Unfortunately, many who make the allegation either don’t understand the processes of effective governance and decision-making or are intent upon being negative and disruptive.

Despite the prevalence of agreement or unanimity, there will be issues upon which a board is not unanimous. In these cases, it is suggested the board consider a consensus approach wherein the differences between the majority and minority positions are clarified. The member(s) supporting the minority position is (are) then given an opportunity to indicate how the majority position might be modified to garner his/her/their support. The majority then can make a decision based on their “trustee” role as to whether it would be preferable to the organization to modify their position and have greater unanimity behind a decision or to go forward with their position on a majority-minority basis. Whether the decision is the will of the entire board or of a majority of the board, the decision made by the board is the decision of the board as a corporate body, and all board members are ethically bound to support it.

Many times, board members who are on the minority side ask what “support” means. At best, it would be to pro actively support the position of the board. At worst, it would be to make sure one neither attempts to demean nor undermine the decision, generally remaining silence or, when pressed for an opinion, stating that the board deliberated it thoroughly, has made a decision and, as a board member, one has the responsibility to support the decision of the board. The only instances in which it would be appropriate for a board member to publicly oppose or disavow a position of a board is if the board’s action is illegal, immoral or unethical. In these cases, board members would have a moral and ethical responsibility to speak out.

Developing and Maintaining a Strong Board-Superintendent Team Relationship

Developing a strong board-superintendent relationship begins before a superintendent is hired. A board need to discuss and agree upon what will be its role as a board, and what the role of the superintendent will be. These roles need to be clearly understood by all board members and

articulated with the superintendent candidates. Once a superintendent is employed, a board needs to be guided by a long-range plan. If a plan is not in place, one needs to be developed. Thereafter, annually, a board needs to identify clear expectations for the district and the superintendent, as well as for the board, if needed. It also needs to develop a process and instrument, preferably in consort with the superintendent, for the superintendent's evaluation. The purpose for evaluation throughout the organization should be to support the quest of a board for sustained, continuous improvement. Therefore, the evaluation of the superintendent should address both the leadership expectations that the board expects the superintendent to demonstrate as leader of the district, as well as the superintendent's ability to lead the organization in addressing/fulfilling the expectations developed by the board and superintendent.