



# Working Well with Superintendents and Treasurers Capital Conference November 15, 2016

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OSBA leads the way to educational excellence by serving Ohio's public school board members and the diverse districts they represent through superior service, unwavering advocacy and creative solutions.



**“The quality of the board is the strongest determinant of school effectiveness. If the board is functioning well, is organized, and has a clear vision, you have a prayer. If it doesn’t, you have no chance.”**

**--Rod Paige, former Secretary, US Department of Education**



At the heart of every truly high-impact school board is a solid board-administration working partnership.

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***All too often, school board members are like firefighters on the ground, battling the flames when they should be in a helicopter above the fire, able to see how extensive the blaze is, which way the wind is blowing and where the resources need to be deployed.***



# Build Trust with Administration

- Communicate
- Remember your purpose and roles
- Be flexible
- Commit to agreed upon high standards
- Grow and learn
- Celebrate!



# High Quality Relationships

## **Characteristics**

- ◆ Respect
- ◆ Allowing for differences
- ◆ Listening for understanding
- ◆ Sharing responsibility
- ◆ Mutual trust
- ◆ Honesty
- ◆ Making and keeping agreements
- ◆ Viewing disagreements as opportunities
- ◆ Commitment to make it work



# Ways to Build Good Relationships

- BOE President knows and models basic Rules of Order
- Conduct New Member Orientations with both Treasurer and Superintendent in January
- BOE President encourages openness among the team
- Talk about ways to increase reliability with projects and deadlines among all members of the team

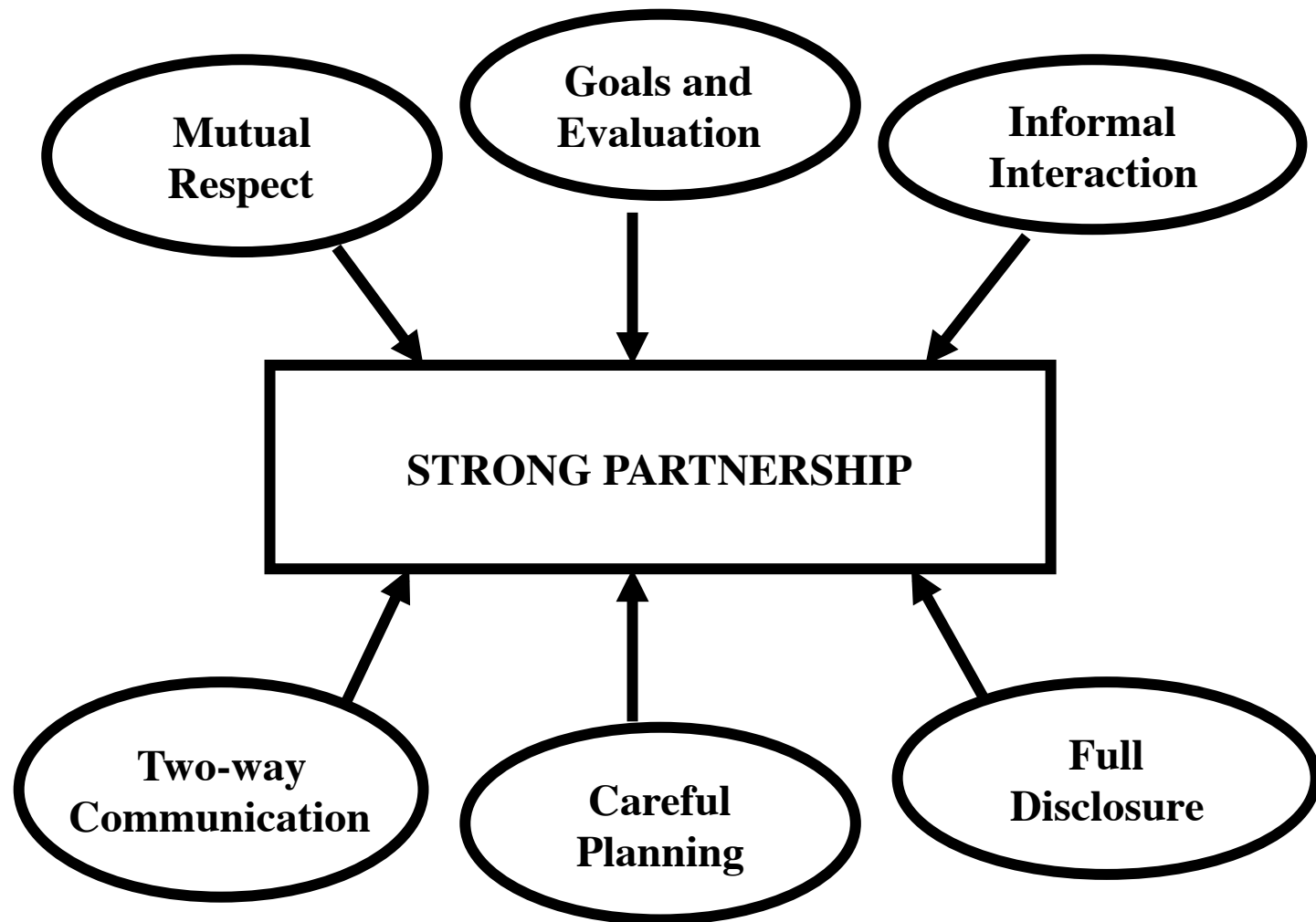


# Building Relationships, cont.

- BOE President makes sure both have opportunity to speak and be heard during meetings
- Do annual evaluations and base them on measurable goals
- Believe in the value of professional development for the staff
- Make sure administrators understand that last minute additions to the agenda should be exemptions
- Never “throw them under the bus”



*Those wanting to end micro-management problems should start by developing ways to streamline board approval of administrative action items and create an authentic board agenda that forces discussion toward education issues and future results.*





# Governance: Policy vs Process

- Board sets policy; determines issue
- Superintendent and Treasurer outline possibilities for process or solution
- Leadership team works together to understand trade-offs
- Board makes informed decision
- Administration implements processes



# ***Boards of education are capacity builders...***

- ***Creating the vision***
  - ***Setting Policy***
  - ***Allocating resources***
  - ***Monitoring quality***
- ***Communicating results***





# The Superintendent needs...

- To know the dynamics of the board
- A trustful relationship with each board member and the treasurer
- History of roles in governance and administration



**Board**

*Ends*

**Superintendent**

*Means*

**WHAT?  
WHY?  
HOW MUCH?  
HOW WELL?**

**Vote/Monitor**

**HOW?  
WHEN?  
WHERE?  
BY WHOM?**

**Recommend/Implement**

**TRUST**



# The Treasurer needs...

- Resources to record minutes and easily be able to manage public records requests
- To be supported by the board when late entry or early withdrawal of members at meetings are recorded
- To have a board who understands sources of revenue, tax levying and budgeting procedures
- A board who is cognizant of deadlines, such as annual appropriation and spending plans



# How to recognize high functioning boards

- They have a **shared mission and vision**
- They work to maintain a climate of **trust and openness**
- Communication is **honest and timely**





# How to recognize high functioning boards

You don't have true freedom until you allow a diversity of opinion and a diversity of voices.

– *Don Lemon*

- **Diversity** of thought and opinion is valued and seen as an **asset**
- Individuals work toward what's **best for the team and for the district**, as opposed to an individual or minority group



# What can challenge effective governance

- **Not understanding the governance role (Policy vs. Process)**
  - Trust and Accountability
  - Satisfying Passions Appropriately
  - Opting for Long Term or Deeper Impact
- **Not staying true to our Unity of Purpose**
  - Why are we here?
  - Staying focused on the big picture/goals



# What can challenge effective governance

- **Not finding or honoring consensus when necessary**
  - Listening; knowing the district's and each other's bottom line
- **Not honoring agreed upon codes of conduct**

Treating all board and leadership team members with professional respect and integrity is critical in making progress as a district and to providing a governance example to the community.



# Best Practices for Board Members

- Utilize and treat your superintendent as your CEO and your treasurer as your CFO
  - Visiting the buildings
  - Receiving and giving information
  - Emergency notification
  - Board Meeting management





# Remember...for trust to develop

- Board members should have the opportunity to request the justification, alternatives, and consequences for items presented for a decision and to participate in full and free discussion before voting.
- All board members should be in possession of the same information and have equal opportunity to address concerns and ask questions.



# Best Practices Takeaway!

- Use (and encourage others to use) the Chain of Command.
- Participate in agenda discussion or preparation and in the meetings. This is your forum!
- Remember, it is not a public meeting but “a meeting of the Board in public”





# What do you think?

- Cool City School Board Member Greg, a landscaper by trade, does a district tour of the grounds every week, and submits a list of items he'd like addressed to the operations director. Is this okay?





# Consider...

- Satisfying board member expertise or passion
- Respecting the chain of command
- Balancing timing, expectations and staff work priorities



# What do you think?

Cool City's superintendent and treasurer meet a week ahead of each board meeting to draw up the draft agenda. They send it out to the board for a quick review before it is finalized. Is this okay?



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# Consider...



- It is the board's meeting
- Equal opportunity for input
- Focus on governance is the board's job



# What do you think?

- When Cool City Schools were on the ballot three years ago, the board hosted some coffee meetings for the community. Board member Jim thought they made a big difference and has continued doing them on his own since then. Is this okay?



## Consider...

- Opportunities for community engagement by the full board
- One member speaking for or on behalf of the board
- Risk of basing decisions on minority opinion
- Being “on the ballot” every day



# What do you think?

- Cool City School's superintendent leads a meeting each week for administrators and invites two different board members to these meetings on a rotating basis. Is this okay? Is the meeting subject to the open meetings act?



# Board of Education

**Ask yourself every time!**

Is this decision the best  
one for the *district*?

Does this decision make financial  
sense?

Does this decision put us in a  
position to make continued  
progress?

Will our community support  
this decision?

Does our district have the resources to  
make this decision work?



## Leadership Team Effectiveness: The Board Meeting

- When meetings go well, other things seem to go well, too.
  - Timely and equal information for all
  - Support and buy-in for the agenda
  - Discussion, discussion, discussion!
  - Managing Public Participation



# You can't get all this work done well...



- If your meetings are a mess!



# Planning the Board Meeting

- ❖ Who comes up with the draft agenda?
- ❖ Who finalizes the draft agenda?





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"The meeting's at 10. I'll send you a copy  
of the agenda, the hidden agenda and  
your personal agenda."



# Executing the Board Meeting

- ❖ How are you all seated?
- ❖ What are your traditions about the pledge, sharing your vision, etc.?
- ❖ Is your process for taking minutes working for you?



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No alarms and no  
surprises please

Preparing your colleagues when you have “issues”  
Expecting the discussion and debate  
Addendums or last minute changes to the agenda



# What do you think?

- Board member Jim grew up with Alan Smith, who is the Athletic Director at Cool City's rival district. They are best friends and their families have vacationed together for years. There's an opening for Athletic Director for Cool City Schools and Alan would love the job. Will this work?

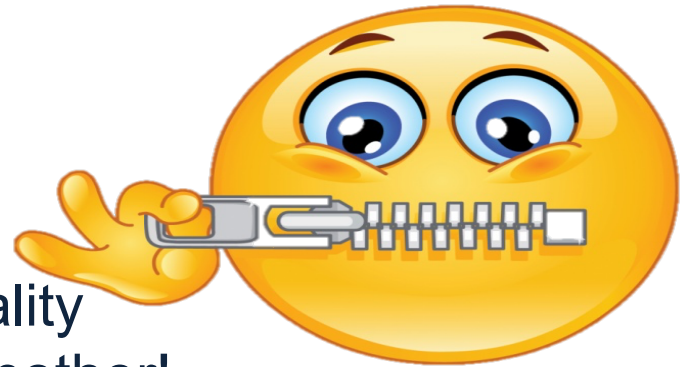


# Consider...

- HR process and board involvement
- Openness and transparency
- Abstaining: When you have to and when you should
- Fair and equal consideration



# ETHICS AND TRUST: HAVING THEM AND KEEPING THEM



- ❖ Respecting confidentiality
- ❖ Getting to know one another!
- ❖ Meeting away from the school district
- ❖ No grudges allowed!
- ❖ Be there for the “whole” district



## **OSBA School Board Services**

- ❖ Executive searches
- ❖ Customized board workshops
- ❖ Strategic planning
- ❖ District surveys
- ❖ Board, superintendent and treasurer evaluations



# Thank you!



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