

The Board of Directors of the Yakima Public Schools met November 30, 2006, at Yakima School District Central Services, Conference Rooms A and B, 104 N. 4th Avenue, Yakima, Washington. This meeting was advertised as required by law.

Present were: Vickie Ybarra, President; John Vornbrock, Vice President; Martha Rice, Raymond Navarro, Jr. and Walt Ranta, members; and Benjamin A. Soria, Superintendent. Others in attendance were Jack Irion, Cece Mahre, Rick Doehle, Scott Izutsu, Mary Beth Wright, Becky Scholl, Karen Campbell, Rocky Jackson, and Sharon Surbrook.

President Vickie Ybarra called the meeting to order at approximately 8:37 a.m. She shared that the board has looked at transitioning to Policy Governance (PG) over the past one and one-half years.

Discussion

1. Policy Governance – Background, Theory and Implementation Overview

Setting the Stage - Connie Fletcher provided consultation on implementation of the Carver Model of Policy Governance. She listed the following workshop objectives:

- Become familiar with and understand the key concepts of Policy Governance;
- Become prepared to write board policies based on the model;
- Develop a strategy to implement and evaluate the new board operational procedures;
- Be able to apply the model to real life situations.

Introduction to Policy Governance - The broad purpose of PG is to re-engage the public, clarify roles of the board and superintendent, clear away trivia and redundancy, focus attention on student achievement, and ensure accountability. Owners, i.e., all residents within its boundaries, delegate the responsibility of the district to the board, so the board should seek out opinions from a broad cross-section of its owners. The board delegates expectations to the superintendent, sets executive limitations in advance to establish parameters, checks to see that expectations are met, and provides direction to the superintendent. Organization issues are taken care of through Ends (what results, for whom, and at what cost) and Means (how things get done, including staff means and board means). Boards preserve a dominant focus on Ends and maintain control over Means, while minimizing interference with the creativity of staff.

In PG, there are four policy quadrants:

- 1) *Governance Process* – This is the manner in which the board represents the ‘ownership’ and provides strategic leadership to the organization. The board’s three primary responsibilities are 1) maintaining links to ownership; 2) establishing the four categories of written policies; and 3) ensuring executive performance. The board’s job is to gather and process input from its owners through options such as study circles, random samples, focus groups, and public meetings. It is most important that the focus be on what the Ends goals are, and then those Ends are given to the superintendent to establish the Means to accomplish the goals. The board may reserve certain rights such as maintaining the responsibility for linking with the legislature, which may be shared with the superintendent as well.
- 2) *Ends Policies* – The board defines which human needs are to be met, for whom (outside the operating organization) and at what cost. Long-term (10- to 15-year) ‘mega-End statements’ are established, supported by additional Ends policies. The superintendent interprets the Ends policy, how it will be measured, and where the district is at the current time. He determines what strategies should be used to get to the goal, how long it will take, what resources are needed, and what interim goals should be set. Yakima School District policies to be considered for PG will primarily be the current Section 1000 Board Policies.
- 3) *Executive Limitations* – The board establishes the boundaries of acceptability within which staff methods and activities can responsibly be left to staff. The policies should provide sufficient details. Wherever the board stops in the policy, it is delegated to the superintendent to make any reasonable interpretation. The board participated in an ‘Ends-Means’ exercise to help them distinguish the difference between the two.

4) *Board/Superintendent Linkage* – The board delegates organizational operation only through the superintendent, and the board ensures district performance by monitoring compliance with its policies. Instructions to the superintendent come through official board action, not from individual board members or committees. In evaluating the superintendent, the board never makes a judgment on any criterion the board as a full body did not explicitly set. The superintendent evaluation is systematic, rigorous and against written criteria. It is based on organizational accomplishments of the Ends, the organizational operations within boundaries (Executive Limitations), and any reasonable interpretation. It is not against behavior and/or style issues.

Monitoring is accomplished through the following steps:

1. Board writes performance criteria into policy;
2. Board sets method/frequency of monitoring data through these internal and external reports, and direct inspection;
3. Superintendent interprets board instructions and provides evidenced of compliance with policies;
4. Board makes judgment about data.

Summary of Principals of Policy Governance - The board represents the owners and speaks with one voice, or not at all. It instructs via written policies and instructs no staff member except the superintendent. The Ends are differentiated from the Means. Ends are defined positively (achieve) and the Means negatively (avoid). The board progressively sets expectations (broad/general, narrow/specific) that may change at any time. Evaluation is only against criteria written into the policy.

Policy Governance provides high-integrity linkage with owners; written governance policies in a constantly updated form; and assurance of organizational performance, which is treated as superintendent performance.

Transitioning to a policy governance system includes learning the concepts, developing board policies, and launching. Ends development will involve beginning with a placeholder, linking with the community to learn their values, assessing the educational needs of students in the future, drafting Ends statements, and establishing priorities. Connie Fletcher recommended that she return to the district to help finalize the Ends statements.

Participants completed an evaluation form.

2. **Adjournment**

At 3:59 p.m., there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Signature on File
Vickie Ybarra, Board President

Signature on File
Benjamin A. Soria, Secretary to the Board