

Yakima School Board and Policy Governance

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School Board Considerations

- YSB is interested in doing the best job we possibly can as board members
- Responsibility to be efficient and effective in our work
- Limited time together as a board
- Great challenges ahead of us as a district
- This is the board's part of the work to ensure a strong and effective district into the future

Policy Governance

- A way for the board to organize its work
- A specific set of governing principles and practices that help the board –
 - Clarify relationship to owners of the district
 - Clarify relationship to the Superintendent
 - Set out how the board will conduct board business

Consistent with Board Best Practice

- WSSDA and other school board professional organizations provide professional development for school boards on “Governing Through Policy”
- Policy Governance is a specific model for how to do that

WASHINGTON STATE
SCHOOL DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION



Governing Through Policy: A Guide for School Board Members

This Policy Guide is intended to help school board members better understand the workings of their district's *Policy Manual*. Many districts develop their manuals in collaboration with WSSDA Policy Services. All these manuals share a uniform policy category structure (essential, priority, and optional) and consistent document format that includes: (1) Policy; (2) Procedure; (3) Cross References; (4) Legal References; and (5) Management Resources. Every district policy manual, however, is as unique as the district it serves. Each defines the legal foundation upon which a particular local school district is built, and each defines local priorities and principles.

School Board's Job

- Connect with the owners of the district in an ongoing way to get input that will be incorporated into the goals of the district
- Create long-term goals for the district
- Ensure the district achieves what it should, while avoiding what is unacceptable
- Delegate expectations to the Superintendent
- Check to see that expectations are met while also checking to see that unacceptable means are not used
- Provide direction to the Superintendent that preserves proper board accountability

Policy Governance

- Rests on the belief that the board has an obligation to represent the owners of the district
- Operationalizes our belief that the board speaks with one voice or not at all
- Provides a structure for the work of the board, focuses on assuring outcomes are achieved for all students while assuring inappropriate methods are not employed

YSB move to Policy Governance

- Operating by many of these principles for years
- July 2006 first formal meeting with consultant
- September 2006 decision made to move to PG
- December 2006 Business meeting - Initial 26 new policies for first reading
- March 2007 Approved 10 of 26 PG policies
- Jan-June 2007 Community Linkages
- June 22, 2007 finalized Global Ends Statements
- April 15, 2008 Business Mtg. - Intend to approve remaining 16 policies

Open Process

- June 06-March 08: Policy Governance topic on >20 public board meetings
- Jan 07-June 07: 13 Community Linkages
- Feb 07-Mar 07: 4 PG presentations to staff groups and taped for community
- Specific changes to >15 proposed policies based on input, tracking document posted since March 2007

Some Questions Received

- Is the board insulating itself?
 - No, in fact PG will provide greater opportunity for the board to interact with the community in community linkage activities. Board will maintain policy of open mic time at public business meetings, and expects to continue the open communication we have with members of the Superintendent and management team. Board members' contact information is now and will continue to be publicly available.

Some Questions Received

- Will the new policies allow the Superintendent to violate negotiated agreements?
 - No. The limitation policies the board is adopting for the Superintendent explicitly prohibit unlawful acts. In addition as suggested, the board has added clarifying language to make clear that the Superintendent is not to violate the negotiated agreements.

Some Questions Received

- If the board gives all the operational responsibility to the Superintendent, what will the board do?
 - The board will focus energy and time on those things for which it has greatest and unique responsibilities – connecting with the community, crafting meaningful long-term district goals, monitoring district outcomes including focused supervision of the Superintendent and Supt. limitations, and focusing on our own effectiveness as board members with a standard of excellence in governance.

Some Questions Received

- How will school board meetings look different?
 - The board will calendar specific topics related to policy governance and spent much of its meeting time on those items. These will include community linkage meetings with community owners of the district, monitoring Supt. performance and monitoring adherence to executive limitation policies.
 - We will expect to continue to hold informal board meetings at school buildings as we do now.

Other Boards in WA

- Mercer Island SD BOD
- Lake Washington SD BOD
- Manson SD BOD
- University Place SD BOD
- Finley SD BOD
- Issaquah SD BOD
- Washougal SD BOD

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