

Board Retreat  
Friday, August 30, 2024 9:00 AM

Warner Pacific University - Edtvedt Hall Room  
203  
2219 SE 68th Ave  
Portland, Oregon 97215

## **Agenda**

1. Purpose and Introduction
2. Icebreaker and True Colors Exercise
3. Governance
4. Lunch Break
5. Communication
6. General Protocols
7. Debrief and Next Steps
8. Adjourn



# Portland Public Schools

School Board Retreat – August 30, 2024



PORTLAND  
Public Schools



# Our Purpose



Purpose: to foster a strong governance relationship that guides and supports district leadership, resulting in student success.





# Facilitators

Experienced leaders and life-long educators with a heart for kids and a passion for high-quality education.



**Dr. Barbara Jenkins**

Chief in Residence, Chiefs for Change  
Former Superintendent  
Orange County Public Schools, FL



**Dr. Jim McIntyre**

Dean, College of Education, Belmont University  
Former Superintendent  
Knox County Schools, Knoxville, TN



# Our Agenda



Unless otherwise noted, photos are courtesy of Portland Public Schools

- 1. Purpose & Introduction of Facilitators (Board Chair)**
- 2. Ice Breaker / True Colors**
- 3. Governance**
  - a. Governance Relationship
  - b. Harvard Case Study
  - c. Best Practices Research
  - d. State Statutes and Policy
  - e. School Board Meetings
  - f. Board Committees
- 4. Lunch**
- 5. Communications**
  - a. Superintendent
  - b. Staff
  - c. Constituents
  - d. Media
- 6. General Protocols**
  - a. Strategic Plan
  - b. Superintendent Evaluation
  - c. School Board Evaluation
- 7. Debrief and next steps**
- 8. Adjourn**



# Our Norms for Today

- Fully engage
- Listen and seek to understand
- Focus on what's best for our students
- Assume good intentions
- Be both candid and kind
- Self-regulate your “air-time”
- What else?





# Introductions

In 3 - 4 sentences, please tell us why you decided to be deeply involved in public education.

Photo credit: KATU



# Our Starting Point

- Working Styles Discussion



Photo courtesy Cedar Rapids Community School District



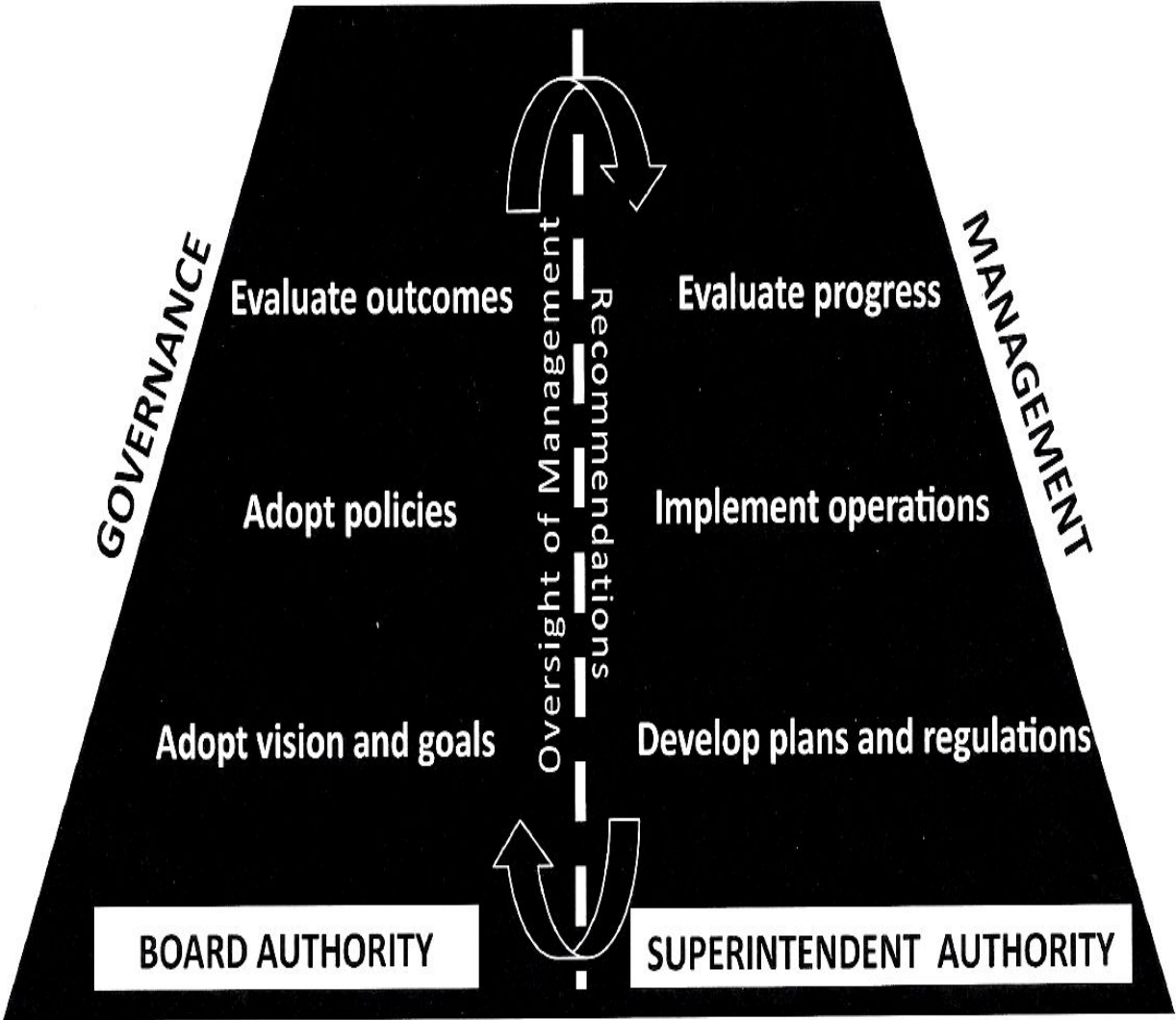
# True Colors



Source: Bethany United Church



# Governance Relationship



Courtesy Florida School Boards Association



# Governance Relationship - Simplified

## The School Board...

- Sets a vision and goals that reflect community priorities
- Hires and evaluates a superintendent
- Creates policy and adopts a budget
- Monitors progress toward vision and goals



## The Superintendent...

- Takes direction on vision and goals from the School Board as a whole
- Implements Board policy and leads the school district toward the Board's visions and goals
- Manages the day-to-day operations of the school district, and hires / supervises personnel
- Makes recommendations on policy and resources, reports on progress toward goals

# Governance Relationship

Harvard Business School Case Study

“New Director Dilemmas: Blurring the Line Between Governance and Management”  
John J-H Kim, Harvard Business Publishing, 2021.



Photo: Web stock picture



# Research on School Board Governance



"Our vision is of a governance system, school board and superintendent working together as a cohesive, unified team with a common vision driven by a shared moral imperative. This is a dynamic, powerful role for school boards... it is a governance system that fulfills its responsibility to all the children and the community it serves." - Campbell & Fullan

Source: Campbell, D., & Fullan, M. (2019). *The Governance Core: School boards, Superintendents, and Schools Working Together*. Corwin Press.





# Effective School Boards...



1. Commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision.
2. Have 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.
3. Are accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.
4. 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.
5. Are data savvy; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.
6. Align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.
- 7. Lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.**
8. Take part in team development and training, sometimes with their superintendents, to build shared knowledge, values and commitments for their improvement efforts.

Source: Dervarics, C., & O'Brien, E. (2019). *Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards*. Center for Public Education.  
[www.nsba.org/-/media/NSBA/File/cpe-eight-characteristics-of-effective-school-boards-report-december-2019.pdf](http://www.nsba.org/-/media/NSBA/File/cpe-eight-characteristics-of-effective-school-boards-report-december-2019.pdf)



# Effective School Boards: Factors Associated with Student Achievement

1. **Creating a vision** – Effective boards are actively involved with district leaders and the community in creating a clear, long-term, shared vision for the district
2. **Using data** – Utilize data to set goals, establish accountability for themselves and others, monitor progress, apply pressure, and inform decision making
3. **Setting goals** - Collaboratively establish a few reasonable, nonnegotiable goals for student achievement and instruction
4. **Monitoring progress and taking corrective action.**
5. **Creating awareness and urgency** – especially about any gap between the vision and outcome data.
6. **Engaging the community** - in pursuit of the district’s shared vision and goals.
7. **Connecting with district leadership** - in pursuit of the district’s vision and goals in ways that complement the superintendent’s implementation efforts.
8. **Creating climate** - characterized by participatory decision making and a commitment to high-quality teaching and learning.
9. **Providing staff development** – invest in quality professional learning for all staff focused on improving instruction.
10. **Developing policy with a focus on student learning.**
11. **Demonstrating commitment** – to the district’s vision and goals by allocating time and resources.
12. **Practicing unified governance** – where the Board and superintendent have complementary roles in policy development and implementation (respectively) that lead toward achieving district vision and goals.

# Foundational Duties of Effective Governance

**1. The Board clarifies the district purpose.**

- Defines and articulates goals and expected results.

**2. The Board connects with the community.**

- Engages in an on-going two-way dialogue with the entire community.

**3. The Board employs a superintendent.**

- With a clear understanding of roles, responsibilities, and expectations.

**4. The Board delegates authority.**

- Empowering the superintendent to pursue Board-defined district goals.

**5. The Board monitors performance.**

- Making sure delegated authority is leading to progress toward defined goals.

**6. The Board takes responsibility for itself.**

- Creates clear policies, nurtures positive culture, evaluates its own effectiveness, plans for smooth succession.



Source: [https://www.iasb.com/IASB/media/Documents/found\\_prin.pdf](https://www.iasb.com/IASB/media/Documents/found_prin.pdf)



# More Research

More Research on the Impact of Effective School Boards on Student Learning:

Goodman, R. H., Fulbright, L., & Zimmerman Jr, W. G. (1997). *Getting There from Here. School Board-Superintendent Collaboration: Creating a School Governance Team Capable of Raising Student Achievement*. Educational Research Service.

Snipes, J., Doolittle, F., & Herlihy, C. (2002). *Foundations for Success: Case Studies of How Urban School Systems Improve Student Achievement*, Council of the Great City Schools.

Marzano, R. J., & Waters, T. (2009). *District Leadership That Works: Striking the Right Balance*. Solution Tree Press.





# Synthesis of School Board Research

Effective School Boards...

1. Understand the difference between governance and management, and **focus their work on policy and governance.**
2. **Create a compelling vision** for the school district, and develop public goals related to student learning, typically through a strategic planning process.
3. Carefully hire a superintendent, articulate clear expectations, delegate appropriate authority, empower the leader to manage the district, monitor progress, and **rigorously evaluate the CEO.**
4. **Define and refine policies** that support student learning, and strategically and equitably allocate resources to enable success for all students.
5. **Utilize data** to inform policy and decision making.
6. **Develop a culture of collaboration** among themselves and with the superintendent, and regularly evaluate their own effectiveness.
7. Meaningfully **engage the community** in their educational work.
8. Minimize distractions, and keep their **focus on high-quality instruction and student learning.**





# School Board Research



## Questions for reflection:

1. In what ways has our School Board been most strongly aligned with the research on effective School Boards?
2. In what ways (if any) has our School Board acted inconsistently with the research on effective School Boards?
3. Are there policies, structures, mutual commitments, and/or practices that could bring our School Board into closer alignment with the effective School Boards research?



# Governance Relationship



## Oregon Revised Statutes

**332.072 Legal status of school districts.** All school districts are bodies corporate, and the district school board is authorized to transact all business coming within the jurisdiction of the district and to sue and be sued. Pursuant to law, district school boards have control of the district schools and are responsible for educating children residing in the district.



# Governance Relationship – Powers of the Board

**332.075 Powers of board; rules.** (1) Any district school board may:

- (a) Fix the days of the year and the hours of the day when schools shall be in session.
- (b) Adopt textbooks and other instructional materials as provided in ORS 337.120 and 337.141 and courses of study for the use of such schools as provided in ORS 336.035.
- (c) Authorize the use of the schools for purposes of training students of an approved educator preparation provider, as defined in ORS 342.120, and for such purposes may enter into contracts with the approved educator preparation provider on such terms as may be agreed upon. Such contracts as they relate to student teachers shall have the same effect and be subject to the same regulations as a contract between a licensed teacher and a district school board.
- (d) Develop and operate with other school districts or community college districts secondary career and technical education programs for pupils of more than one district and fix by agreement the duration of the district’s obligation to continue such activity, subject to the availability of funds therefor.
- (e) Authorize the school district to be a member of and pay fees, if any, to any voluntary organization that administers interscholastic activities or that facilitates the scheduling and programming of interscholastic activities only if the organization:
  - (A) Implements equity focused policies that:
    - (i) Address the use of derogatory or inappropriate names, insults, verbal assaults, profanity or ridicule that occurs at an interscholastic activity, including by spectators of the interscholastic activity;
    - (ii) Prohibit discrimination as defined in ORS 659.850;
    - (iii) Permit a student to wear religious clothing in accordance with the student’s sincerely held religious belief and consistent with any safety and health requirements; and
    - (iv) Balance the health, safety and reasonable accommodation needs of participants on an activity-by-activity basis;
  - (B) Maintains a transparent complaint process that:
    - (i) Has a reporting system to allow participants of interscholastic activities or members of the public to make complaints about student, coach or spectator behavior;
    - (ii) Responds to a complaint made under sub-subparagraph (i) of this subparagraph within 48 hours of the complaint being received; and
    - (iii) Strives to resolve a complaint received under sub-subparagraph (i) of this subparagraph within 30 days of the complaint being received;
  - (C) Develops and implements a system of sanctions against schools, students, coaches and spectators if a complaint made under subparagraph (B) of this paragraph is verified; and
  - (D) Performs an annual survey of students and their parents to understand and respond to potential violations of equity focused policies adopted under subparagraph (A) of this paragraph or violations of ORS 659.850.
- (f) Accept money or property donated for the use or benefit of the school district and, consistent with the laws of this state, use such money or property for the purpose for which it was donated.
- (g) Enter into an approved written agreement with the governing body of a federally recognized Native American tribe in Oregon to allow the use of a mascot that represents, is associated with or is significant to the Native American tribe entering into the agreement. An agreement entered into under this paragraph must:
  - (A) Describe the acceptable uses of the mascot;
  - (B) Comply with rules adopted by the State Board of Education that:
    - (i) Are adopted after consultation with the federally recognized tribes in Oregon pursuant to ORS 182.164 (3); and
    - (ii) Prescribe the requirements for approval; and
  - (C) Be approved by the State Board of Education, which the board must provide if the agreement meets the requirements of this paragraph and the rules adopted under this paragraph.
- (2) All contracts of the school district must be approved by the district school board before an order can be drawn for payment. If a contract is made without the authority of the district school board, the individual making such contract shall be personally liable.
- (3) Notwithstanding subsection (2) of this section, a district school board may, by resolution or policy, authorize its superintendent or the superintendent’s designee to enter into and approve payment on contracts for products, materials, supplies, capital outlay, equipment and services that are within appropriations made by the district school board pursuant to ORS 294.456. A district school board may not authorize its superintendent or the superintendent’s designee under this subsection to enter into and approve payment on contracts that are collective bargaining agreements or service contracts that include the provision of labor performed by employees of the school district.



# Governance Relationship – Duties of the Board

**332.105 General duties of board.** (1) The general duties of district school boards are:

- (a) To cause to be used in the district state blanks, registers and other forms, whenever supplied and required by the state.
- (b) To perform such other duties as the wants of the district may from time to time demand.

(2) The district school board may participate in the activities of and may become members of associations of school boards. When provided for in an approved school district budget, the board may pay from school district funds annual dues to such association.

**332.107 Rules for school government.** Each district school board shall establish rules for the government of the schools and pupils consistent with the rules of the State Board of Education.

# Governance Relationship

Review the School Board's governing documents on **Board-Superintendent Relationship:** Policy 1.10.010-P Role of the Board of Education and Resolution 6298 (adopted May 11, 2021) PPS Board and Superintendent / Staff Expectations and Operating Protocols.

Questions:

- Do these guidelines sound appropriate and comprehensive to you?
- Anything missing? Anything need to be adjusted?
- Are the Board and the Superintendent generally following these guidelines?
- Any lessons learned about these protocols from working through a crisis?
- What enables the Board to fully adhere to these structures?





# School Board Meetings



**Review current protocols.**

**Review items discussed at **8/28/23 Board Workshop** but not adopted:**

- Agenda Setting: Are committee recommendations automatically added to Board meeting agendas? (What are the responsibilities of the Board Chair?)
- Board information and materials: Timeline for providing various documents? Are there exceptions and/or grace in certain circumstances?
- Consent agenda protocols: When can an item be removed? How communicated? Consensus that item is removed from consent, but not from the School Board agenda.

# Board Committees



## Examining the role of Board Committees.

- What is the purpose of Board Committees?
- How are Board committees helpful in achieving the goals of the Board?
- What is the relationship of the Board and Superintendent to Board Committees?
- How should Board Committees communicate their on-going work and recommendations?

## Review current protocols.

## Review items proposed at **8/28/23 Board Workshop** but not adopted:

- Committees only meet if assigned a specific deliverable from the Chair.
- Committees are dissolved if they do not have a currently assigned deliverable.



# Communication: Superintendent

**Review current protocols.**

**Consider additional points for discussion:**

- Superintendent will share information with the Board through a variety of channels:
  - Superintendent Report at Board Meetings
  - E-mail updates as needed between meetings
  - Phone calls for more sensitive matters that require a more nuanced conversation
  - Text messages for critical, emergent, and time-sensitive situations
- With the exception of some communication with the Board Chair, all Board members will receive the same relevant information in approximately the same timeframe.
- Answers to a substantive question or information request from an individual Board member be shared with all Board members.
- The Superintendent will seek to deepen personal and professional relationships with each individual board member through periodic 1:1 meetings, and occasional 1:1 lunches and/or school visits.





# Communication: District Employees



**Review current protocols.**

**Consider additional points for discussion:**

- Board members are encouraged to have appropriate, positive, professional relationships with district employees, including teachers, administrators and other staff.
- Recognizing that the Superintendent supervises all district employees, individual Board members will refrain from giving directives to district employees.
- In the near-term, any Board member requests for information or substantive questions will be sent to the Superintendent (with Senior Board manager copied) for follow-up and response.



# Communication: Constituents

**Review current protocols.**

**Consider additional points for discussion:**

- Constituent questions or concerns about a particular classroom or school should be referred back into the district at the appropriate level (e.g. teacher, principal, etc.).
- Issues that are unresolved at the school level (or represent larger systemic concerns) should be brought to the attention of the superintendent to be addressed by appropriate staff.
- If an individual board member has concerns about school district personnel, those concerns should be raised directly with the superintendent, and received as important feedback, but not as a directive.





# Communication: Media



Photo: Web stock picture

**Review current protocols.**

**Consider additional points for discussion:**

- The Board Chair should be the primary spokesperson for the School Board with the media.
- Individual Board members who intend to respond to media inquiries are encouraged to utilize the Office of Communications as a resource to assist in managing the interaction.
- Once a vote has been taken and a decision made, all Board members should publicly support the action of the Board as a body, or not comment.
- The Superintendent should serve as the primary spokesperson for the school district with the media.
- Individual Board members should take great care in interacting with the public on social media about issues that affect the school district or may come before the Board. All such interactions should reflect positively on the district and the Board.

# Other Important Protocols

- Strategic Planning
- Superintendent Evaluation
- Board Self-Evaluation





# Strategic Plan



## PPS Strategic Plan

Forward Together: PPS's 2021–2025 Strategic Plan for Racial Equity, Inclusion and Excellence is the first of a series of multi-year strategic plans for the district, outlining this important step toward realizing its vision.

The focus areas of the plan are organized under four main themes:

1. Racial Equity and Social Justice
2. Inclusive and Differentiated Learning for Every Child
3. Professional Excellence and Support
4. Embracing Change

[Read the PPS Strategic Plan >](#)

# Superintendent Evaluation



## Review current protocols.

- Is the instrument adopted via Resolution #6559 on 8/9/22 still the tool the Board wishes to utilize to assess the superintendent's performance?

## Review items discussed at **8/28/23 Board Workshop** but not adopted:

- What are the qualitative elements of the Board evaluation of Superintendent?
- How "public" should constructive feedback to the Superintendent be?



# Superintendent Evaluation



## Consider additional points for discussion:

- The Superintendent will be evaluated annually by the School Board.
- The Board, in conversation with the Superintendent, will identify three to five major performance areas aligned to the Board's vision and goals (e.g. student learning outcomes, closing achievement gaps, community engagement, effective use of resources, etc.) upon which to assess the Superintendent.
- The evaluation will highlight student learning data, but will be in the form of a narrative report and discussion with the Superintendent regarding progress in each performance area.
- The Board Chair will solicit a self-evaluation from the superintendent as well as a narrative assessment from each individual board member. The Board Chair (or Board designee) will then synthesize the feedback into an overall narrative evaluation report.
- The overall report will be presented to the Superintendent.



# School Board Self-Evaluation

**Review current protocols.**

**Consider additional points for discussion:**

- There are several reputable School Board self-evaluation instruments that the Board might consider:
  - Council of the Great City Schools
  - School Board Partners
  - Oregon School Boards Association
- Alternatively, an annual School Board self-evaluation tool could be developed based on the specific needs of the School Board here in Portland.





# Wrap Up

- Identification of Next Steps
- Reflections on the day (Pluses & Deltas)
- Thank you!





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