

Sioux City Community School District
School Board Work Session Notes
March 1, 2012
Creating the Board's Annual Work Plan

Board Work Session began at 4:00 p.m.

Attendees: Dr. Paul Gausman, Doug Batcheller, Molly Williams Mike Krysl, John Meyers, Dr. Mike McTaggart, Jackie Warnstadt, Walt Johnson, and Cyndi Lloyd

Visitors: Jim Hyatt, Consultant

Mr. Hyatt provided an overview of his services, as well as provided handouts to the Board of Directors. He stated that the purpose of the work session is how to be an effective Board and the Board's own work plan.

- Purpose of the Strategic Plan / Board's Role:
 - o It is not to educate students, but to ensure that students are well educated (one is a process, one is a result).
 - o To define the vision or the purpose.
 - o To focus completely on the point of it all.
 - o To hold the Superintendent accountable.
 - o District's Mission Statement: The Sioux City Community School District exists to educate students to *believe* in their talents and skills, *achieve* academic.
 - o Before you can assess the Superintendent, the Board must define the criteria in which to hold him accountable with or to assess him on.
 - o The Board's goal is to define the well-educated student that is to graduate, Paul's job is to make sure that it happens.

The Board members, Dr. Gausman, and Mr. Hyatt engaged in open discussion related to the following:

A. *If form follows function, what are the most important functions of the board?*

1. The Board's work plan details all the Board must do, not all it can do.
2. The work plan helps keep the Board focused on its most important tasks.
3. ...those it must accomplish to fulfill its fiduciary duty.

B. *Board's Essential Functions:*

1. Reflect community values and desires.
2. Create solid expectations of importance.
3. Delegate authority to insure accountability.
4. Make sure your expectations are met.

C. *The Board's Functions: Those Unique to the Board - What must the Board attend to:*

1. Connect with its community.
2. Set expectations for the Board and for Management.
3. Delegation that assures accountability.
4. Monitoring fulfillment of expectations.
 - a. Legally required items – consent agenda.
 - b. More focused Board meetings (Board discipline - self monitoring)
 1. Mr. Hyatt does not recommend the Board minutes be listed under "consent".
 2. Perhaps Second and Final Reading of Board Policies could go under "consent".
 3. Does every contract require Board approval? (legally?)
 4. Reduce
 - c. What is the most effective use of the Board's time?

Dr. McTaggart suggested removing some of the items brought to the Board members in a public meeting that should or could be handled by Dr. Gausman. Put criteria in place to eliminate such items. Once removed, their job becomes much more efficient.

D. Talking to the 'Boss':

1. Goal: to insure the diversity of community opinion is present at the Board table.
 - a. Don't have to agree, but they should be represented.
 - b. Challenge: reaching the silent members of the community, those who don't have time to talk to.
2. Distinguish management questions from Board questions.
 - a. Operational matters: How are we doing?
 - b. Board matters: What are we here to accomplish, and for whom?
3. Community dialogue is a two-way street.
 - a. Conveying your values and expectations.
 - b. Receiving input from them on the right topics.

E. Separating Owners, Customers, and Stakeholders (owners, vendors/employees, customers):

1. "We" focus vs "Me" focus.
2. Not just those who elect the Board, but all those who have a right to decide.
3. Board has to be proactive in seeking out its owners.

F. To Whom Do We Need To Talk? And What Do We Talk About?

1. Matrix
2. Technique
3. Map out the characteristics of our community.

G. Second Essential Function – Setting Clear Performance Expectations:

1. The Board's choice.
 - a. Wander around in the presence of data or operate at the level of values, standards, criteria, and expectations.
 - b. Three board areas:
 1. District purpose.
 2. Board operations.
 3. Superintendent operations.

H. Setting Clear Expectations: District Purpose – Student / Graduate Results:

1. Graduates will:
 - a. Exhibit competent thinking skills.
 - b. Demonstrate mastery of core academics.
 - c. Be responsible and productive citizens.

I. Setting Clear Expectations: Board Operations – Work Plan Topics:

1. Annual / Meeting agendas to accomplish Work Plan results.
2. Board organization: officers, committees.
3. Board discipline: authority of individual members, speaking with One Voice.
4. Delegation of authority to others: power granted / limits on such power.
5. Monitoring fulfillment of expectations – accountability.

J. Setting Clear Expectations: Board Officers:

1. Board President:
 - a. What does the Board of Directors expect the Board President to do?
 1. Runs the Board.
 2. Keeps the Board focused on meeting expectations.
 3. Does not oversee or instruct the Superintendent or staff.
 4. Produces the agenda, but does not control the agenda.
 - b. Corresponding member expectation: support the Board President in doing his/her job and holds him/her accountable for it.

K. Clear Expectations: Board Committees:

1. Board Finance Committee (example).
 - a. Authority / Responsibility.
 - b. Committee expectation.
 - c. Who sets the criteria?

L. Clear Expectations: Individual Board Members:

1. Members of the Board only have authority when acting as a Board legally in session.
2. The Board shall in no way be bound by any statement or action on the part of an individual member, unless such statement or action is in pursuance of specific instruction of the Board.
3. Members should speak as One Voice.
4. The Board Work Plan should contain regular Board self-monitoring to insure the Board's expectations of itself are fulfilled.

M. Clear Expectations: Superintendent (District) Operations:

1. Topics to consider:
 - a. Budget and financial expectations. What should they be?
 - b. Facilities. What construction and maintenance standards?
 - c. Treatment of students, teachers, staff, public, etc.
 1. Safety, conduct, communication, etc.
 - d. Treatment of the Board.
 1. Awareness of events and specifics.
 - e. Student results – most important.

N. Setting Clear Expectations: District Operations:

1. Treatment of Students / Faculty / Public.
 - a. Safety, privacy / confidentiality, behavior.
2. Budget and Financial Planning.
 - a. Revenues, expenses, credible assumptions and projections, and multi-year perspective.
3. Treatment of the Board.
 - a. No surprises, obfuscation, or favorites.
4. Why this is so important.
 - a. The Board never delves into a matter without standards and criteria for the subject.
 - b. Prevents wandering around in the presence of data.
 - c. Focuses the Board's efforts which make the meetings more productive and perhaps shorter.
5. The Superintendent has a clearer idea of what is expected of him/her.
 - a. Understands what his boss expects or wants.
 - b. Criteria for his/her evaluation is set in advance = fairness.
 - c. Trusts that the Board acts as a unit or One Voice vs seven voices.
 - d. Trusts that the authority delegated to him/her will be respected.
6. Board and Superintendent work together as a team.
 - a. Knows the line between governing and managing.
 - b. It is easier for the Board to hold itself and the Superintendent accountable for producing results.

O. Essential Board Work Plan Functions – Delegation of Authority:

1. Reflect community values and desires.
2. Create solid expectations of performance.
3. Delegate authority to insure accountability.

P. Essential Board Work Plan Functions – Delegating the Board's Expectations:

1. Why should the Board delegate?
 - a. You can delegate some authority to others in order to fulfill your expectations, but you cannot delegate authority for the actions of those to whom you have given this authority.
 - b. What about the silent Board member(s) – fear?

Q. Fulfilling Accountability – Clearly Delegate Authority:

1. Every delegation of authority is accompanied by limits on that authority. Once delegated, no one else has the responsibility for fulfilling that particular expectation.
 - a. Board > Board Officers.
 - b. Board > Board Committees
 - c. Board > Superintendent > Cabinet > Other Staff

R. Fulfilling Accountability – Clearly Delegate Expectations – Board Level: Speaking with One Voice:

1. Easy in concept but difficult in application.
2. No Board member has authority unless the Board specifically granted it.
3. The full Board (majority) must always be in charge, not a collection of 7 individuals.
4. Debate occurs in the board room (in public), not over lunch or in the media.

S. Fulfilling Accountability – Clearly Delegate Expectations – Staff / Faculty Level:

1. Superintendent District Performance (example).
 - a. Accomplish results.
 - b. Avoid unacceptable circumstances illegal, imprudent, unethical, etc.
2. Accomplish results – students will:
 - a. Think critically.
 - b. Understand prescribed content knowledge.
 - c. Exhibit citizenship characteristics.
 - d. Demonstrate innovation, creativity, entrepreneurialism.
3. Superintendent authority limits – may not:
 - a. Budget, financial conditions, facilities, etc.

T. Fulfilling Accountability – Clearly Delegate Expectations – Staff / Faculty Level – Board Approvals?

1. If the Superintendent has been delegated authority over a matter but the Board approves it, now who owns it?
2. What have we done to the Superintendent's accountability?
3. Once authority has been delegated at the Board or staff level, respect it and do not interfere with it.
4. If you do, you have lost ability to hold the delegate accountable.

U. Essential Board Work Plan Functions - Delegating the Board's Expectations:

1. How does this function get reflected in the work plan?
 - a. Schedule regular reviews of Board behavior.
 - b. Base only on previously established standards.
 - c. Just as you would review the Superintendent performance.
2. The job of the Board President is primarily to see that Board self-monitoring appears regularly on the agenda.
 - a. A specific incident or simply in the course of regular review of the Board's expectations of itself.

V. Essential Board Work Plan Functions – Monitoring:

1. Reflect community values and desires.
2. Create solid expectations of performance.
3. Delegate authority to insure accountability.
4. Make sure your expectations are met.

W. Essential Board Work Plan Functions – Summary:

1. You've talked to the boss and reflected their diverse desires.
2. You've created expectations of performance at both the Board and staff levels.
3. You've delegated authority for meeting expectations clearly and with limits on authority where necessary.
4. Now you can properly monitor expectation fulfillment.

X. Monitoring vs Traditional Reporting:

1. With what criteria do you assess traditional report data?
 - a. It becomes a process of comparing actual results with expected results.
 - b. Three areas; Board operations, Superintendent/District operations, Student Achievement as defined by the Board.

Y. Monitoring Fulfillment of Your Expectations:

1. Reports to the Board take on new purpose.
 - a. Only data relevant to Board expectations are presented, not irrelevant information.
 - b. Focus on expectations, not unwanted data so you can focus on what is important.

Z. The Monitoring Report:

1. Superintendent should report on any aspect of District operations; budget, ongoing finances, treatment of students/parents/public, facilities development, etc.

AA. The Work Plan Organizes and Schedules Board Monitoring:

1. The Work Plan should cover each expectation at least once a year.
 - a. The Board determines when and how often.
 - b. Financial monitoring – more frequently.
 - c. Student Achievement – less frequently.
 - d. Board behavior – regularly at least once a month and as needed when necessary.

BB. Tools of an Effective Board:

1. Focus on results while keeping process / operations within safe limits.
2. Know your highest purpose: assure Superintendent / District creates well-educated students.
3. Transparency: talk to the 'boss' and reflect their values and desires.
 - a. Owners talk to the Board the definition of 'well-educated'.
 - b. Customers talk to Superintendent and staff.
4. Create solid expectations of performance.
 - a. Board President, officers, committee members – speaking as one voice.
 - b. Superintendent – what results to achieve, what limits?
5. Delegate authority carefully to those able to fulfill the expectation.
 - a. Be specific to what authority is delegated and place limits on that authority.
 - b. Unambiguous delegation – at every level, delegate once.
6. Monitor expectation fulfillment regularly and completely at least once a year.

Mr. Hyatt engaged Board members in open dialogue, comments, and critical thinking.

In summary, the Board's role is to set the goals and/or expectations of the Superintendent and then allowing Dr. Gausman to get it done, and then evaluate him on what he does or does not get accomplished.

1. Have a definite, clear practical ideal; a goal, an objective.
2. Have the necessary means to achieve your ends: wisdom, money, materials, and methods.
3. Adjust all your means to that end.

Misc. Comments:

- Don't waste a lot of time delving through the data.

The Monitoring Report:

- State the Board's Expectation
- Give the Board Your Response or Interpretation of it
- Present only data reflective of the expectation as interpreted.

The Board work session ended at 7:05 p.m.