

A graphic of a target with concentric circles in shades of green and brown, positioned behind the text.

# Goal Setting

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## Setting Board Goals for the Mountain Lakes Board of Education



New Jersey School Boards Association

[www.njsba.org](http://www.njsba.org) | 609. 695. 7600 | 888.88NJSBA

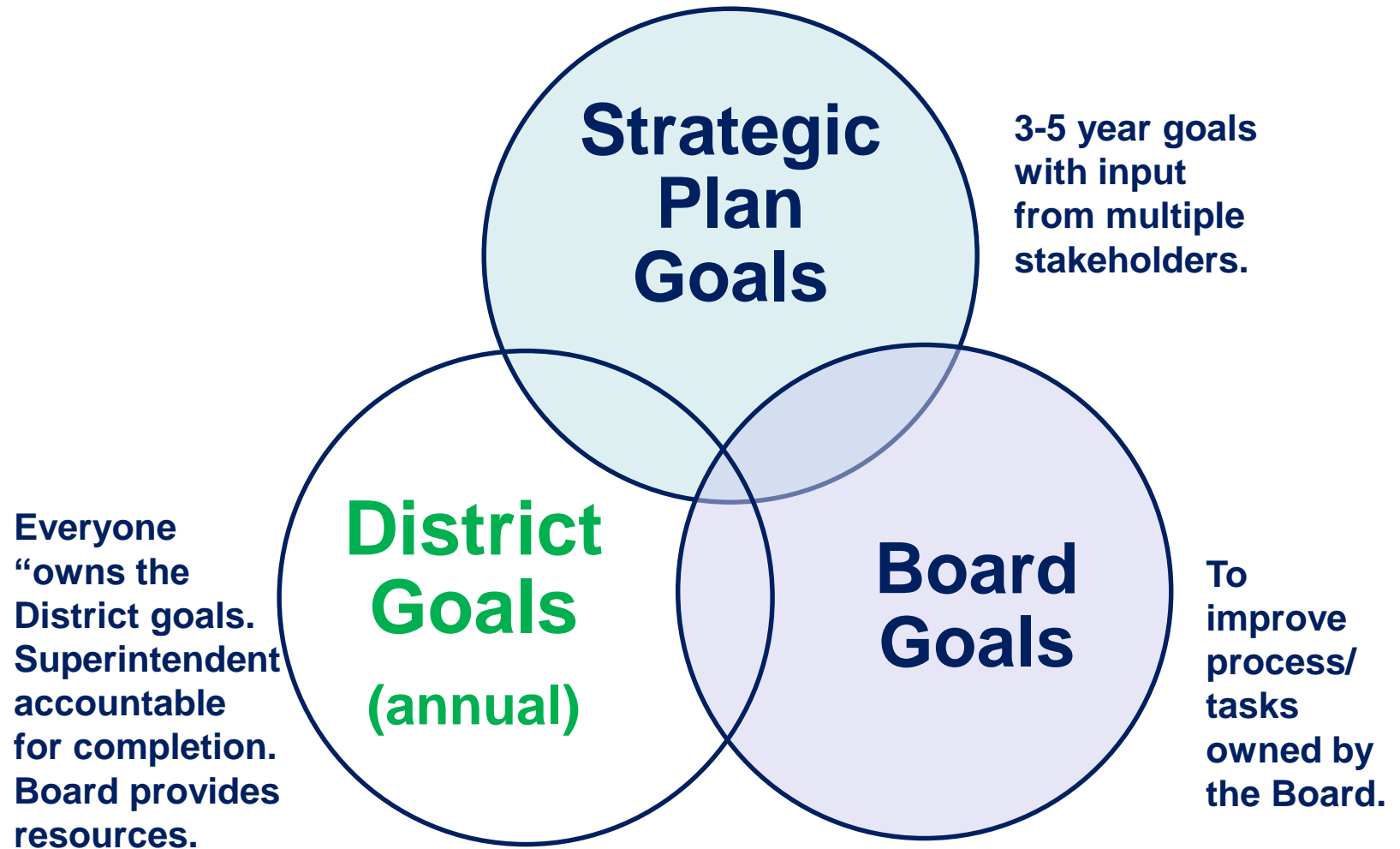
# Board Goals Development

## **Agenda:**

- **Relationship to other goals**
- **Review of last year's draft Board goals**
- **Identify draft 2022-2023 Board goals**



# Relationship of Board Goals

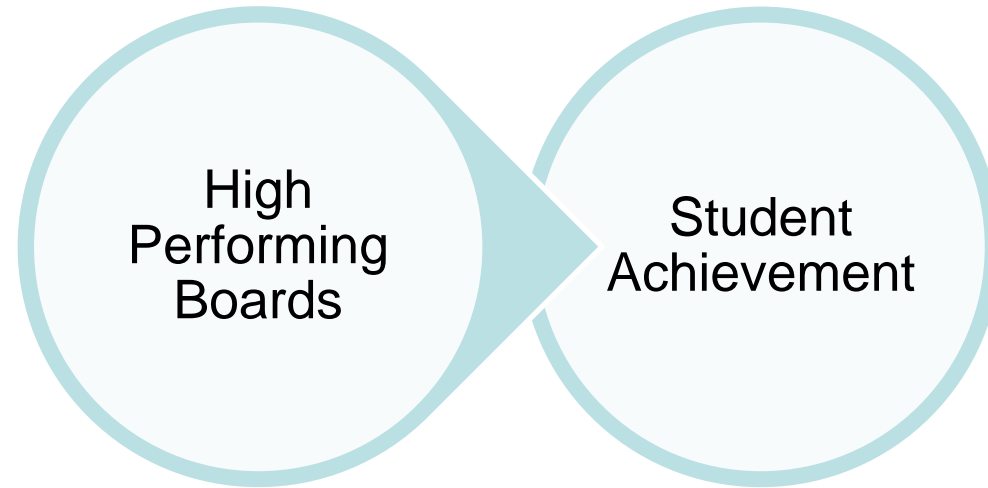


# Strategic Plan Goals 2022-2027

Goal Area	Goal Statement
Ensuring the Success of All Students	Create a learning environment and programs that provide a solid foundation for all and that supports students of all abilities and interest to achieve their potential in whatever learning path suits them best.
Ensuring the Success of All Staff	Develop and maintain an environment that values and empowers all staff which will lead to PASSIONATE educators who feel supported in their positions.
Supporting the Whole Child	To create a safe/nurturing, supportive and healthy environment where collaboration and diversity are encouraged and celebrated for inclusive learning both within and outside the walls of the classroom.
Finance/ Infrastructure/ Technology	Increase revenue, decrease/manage costs, and balance the budget by collaborating with stakeholders and local and state resources.
Strong Family/ School/ Community Partnerships	To foster meaningful relationships between school, family, and community that promotes a sense of unity, tradition, and shared responsibility for enriching the lives of all community members.



# Board Goals



**What do we need to focus on this year to continually improve our Governance work?**

All tasks to complete the goal must be within the Board's purview.



# 2022 Board Goals Discussed 11/15/2021

- Development of a sustainable comprehensive budget that supports the district's goals/priorities, short and long-term facility needs, and strengthens the district's financial position.
- The Board will continue to support the administrative team in the management of the remaining referendum work.
- To support and provide for the implementation of the districtwide five-year strategic plan that reflects the input of multiple stakeholders.
- To enhance the support, celebration, and recognition of the contributions and accomplishments of district staff and students.
- Strengthen the Board's governance capacity through training, exploration of best practices, and an understanding of national, state, and local issues/trends affecting the district.



# Effectively Managing Public Comments During Board Meetings

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# Public Comments

Public comments are a legal obligation at a meeting, but board members and staff have an opportunity to build trust with the community by ensuring there is a **process** that is not only **in compliance**, but also **makes people feel welcome and respected**.





# Agenda

- ❖ Understand Legal/ethical requirements
- ❖ Educate public about meeting protocols
- ❖ Show consistency in applying guidelines
- ❖ Demonstrate respect and make feel welcome



# Legal Requirements

N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 - OPMA



A board of education shall be **required to set aside a portion of every meeting**, the length of the portion to be determined by the board of education, **for public comment on any school district issue** that a member of the public feels may be of concern to the residents of the school district.



# Legal Requirements

## Besler v. BOE West Windsor - Plainsboro

- Mr. Besler attended over 9 board meetings to address concerns about accountability /conduct for coaches.
- District policy set 5-minute limit on public comments, with other speakers allowed to exceed that limit.
- Mr. Besler was silenced after 30 seconds and told his comments would not be entertained because they discussed personnel and were repetitive.



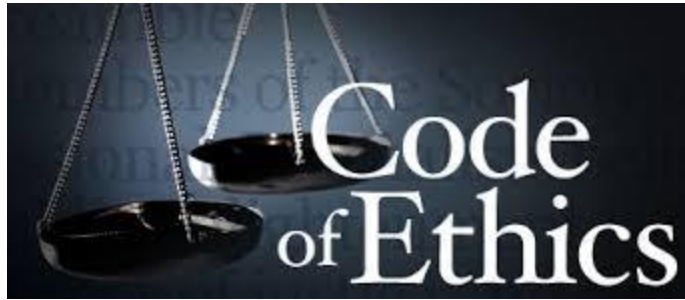
# Legal Requirements

## Besler v BOE West Windsor - Plainsboro

- 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment right of free speech is subject to reasonable limits.
- A public body may control its proceedings in a **content-neutral** manner by placing restrictions on the time, place and manner of speech and stopping a speaker who is disruptive or fails to keep to the subject matter.
- Verdict was that Board's actions were motivated by finding the content disagreeable.



# Ethical Considerations



- **j.** I will refer all complaints to the chief administrative officer and will act on the complaints at public meetings only after failure of an administrative solution.
- **c.** I will confine my board action to policy making, planning, and appraisal ...
- **d.** I will carry out my responsibility, not to administer the schools ...



# Navigating Public Comments

Advice from experts in effectively getting the Board's business done, maintaining control of the meeting and inviting public input:



- Educate the public about meeting protocol
- Show consistency in applying those rules
- Demonstrate respect to speakers.

Rosa Cirianni,  
*School Leader*,  
Spring 2022



# Educate Public on Meeting Protocols

- Meeting and public comment procedures should:
  - be readily available on the district website.
  - be provided at every meeting.
  - notify public of consequences.
- Post agenda in advance.
- Proactively provide information prior to public comments.
- Identify the process for follow-up if needed.



# Consistency in Applying Guidelines

## The Board should:

### WHO

- Be clear on **who** is speaking for the Board during meetings:
  - Usually Board president and superintendent.
  - May refer to Board attorney or other designees.
- And who is not speaking for the Board – other board members (unless requested).

### HOW

- Follow bylaw and defined guidelines and be consistent, regardless what the person is saying.

### WHEN

- When should respond?
  - At meeting for comments that are not factual or can be answered from existing policy.
  - For comments that require follow-up – what is the process?





# Consistency in Applying Guidelines

## **Presiding Officer should:**

- Set the right tone for the meeting – helps to manage expectations from the beginning of the meeting.
- Use script when reviewing guidelines at every meeting.
- Be consistent in applying the rules and in the tone used.
- Maintain a professional meeting and take steps to regain control if needed.



# Respect/Welcoming



**Establish expectations for Board member conduct – be models of acting and speaking with respect.**



**Listen genuinely and attentively to every person who addresses the Board.**



**Be mindful of facial expressions, body language, and make eye contact.**



**Presiding officer should thank public for attending and for speaking.**



# Public Comments - Closing

- View public as part of the solution and not a problem.



- Consider other opportunities for public expression in addition to board meetings.



## Board Roles

# SCHOOL BOARD WISDOM FROM A DOZEN TRUTHS



## Truth # 1

***"No surprises."***



# No Surprises – the Cardinal Rule

No one (superintendent, board member) should get surprised at any time — in the meeting or between meetings. Some people resist because they don't want the whole thing to appear scripted. Others love to play "got-cha." The truth of "no surprises" is **respect**. Jump outside of respect for either people or processes, and someone will get surprised — and end up looking or feeling bad — and the work will suffer.



# No Surprises



**What are some steps that your  
Board takes to  
minimize surprises?**



## Truth # 2

***Trust is the foundation  
of good governance.***





# Trust

Good governance is about roles and relationships. All members need to respect the various roles and live within good relationships. Both require effort and trust — trust that others will perform their own roles appropriately and trust that others are not out to get you or the system. Trust is earned by a system (and individually by participants) when integrity and quality outcomes are ensured.



# Trust

“Collaboration moves at the speed of trust.”



What are some ways that your Board works toward earning and keeping trust?



## Truth # 3

***It's a meeting in  
public, not a meeting  
of the public.***



# Public Meeting

School boards provide leadership for what are typically multi-million dollar organizations. The board has important work to accomplish with limited public meetings per year. The Open Public Meetings Act requires that business be done in public, and that citizens have opportunity to observe and comment at every meeting. Wise school boards understand the value of public comment to help inform their work, but do not lose sight that the purpose of their meeting is their work to advance student achievement. They also create appropriate venues (coffee, forums, surveys) to engage the public.



# Public Meeting

What steps does your Board take to conduct effective meetings? Is it clear to everyone in the audience that student achievement is the focus of the meeting?



## Truth # 4

***The board has one employee.***



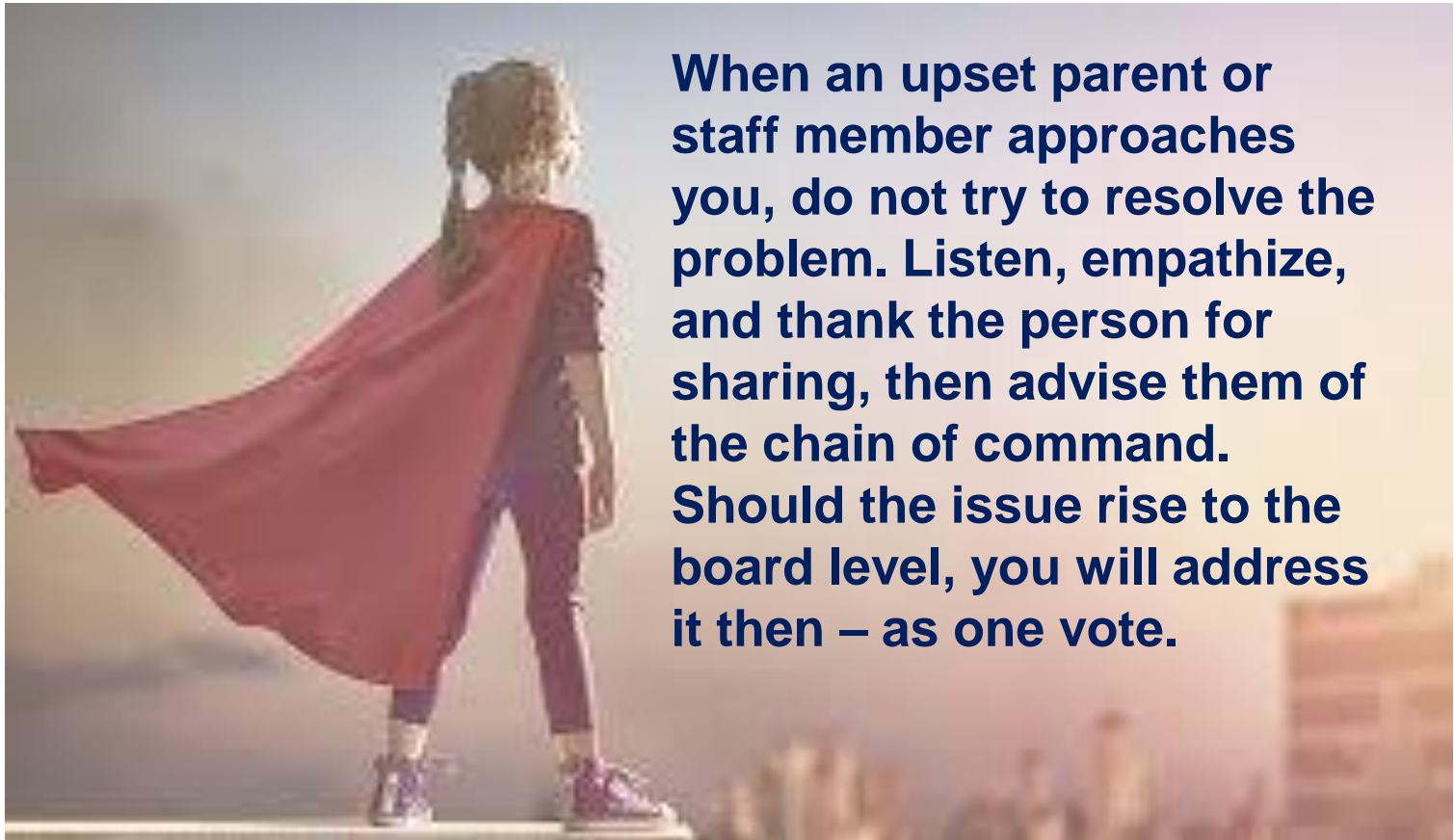
# 1 Employee – the Superintendent

The Board hires the superintendent and understands that everyone else in the district works for the superintendent. This keeps the lines of accountability clear. The superintendent is responsible for all operational aspects of the district.



# Chain of Command

**You don't have to be the hero.**



**When an upset parent or staff member approaches you, do not try to resolve the problem. Listen, empathize, and thank the person for sharing, then advise them of the chain of command. Should the issue rise to the board level, you will address it then – as one vote.**





# Chain of Command

- How does your Board utilize the chain of command?



## Truth # 5

***A Board's job is not to run the schools but to ensure they are well run.***



# Avoid Micromanagement

**Spend your time and energy doing the Board's work rather than doing the job of those you hired.**

## **DO NOT:**



**Get involved in the day-to-day operation of the school district or frequent the board office or schools (except as parent or board business).**

**Contact staff directly. Board has 1 employee – the superintendent.**

**Take on a task that is the job of a staff member.**

**Engage in practices outside the chain of command.**

**Make individual requests to the superintendent outside the work of the Board.**



# Avoid Micromanagement

- How does your Board ensure that it stays focused on the Board's work and not the work of the superintendent?



## Truth # 6

***Individual board members  
have no power away from  
board meetings.***



# No Power as an Individual

The school board is empowered by the state to perform a number of critical functions. Individual school board members have official power *only* at the board table. Wise and effective board members make sure they, and their colleagues, only exercise legitimate power and refrain from assuming authority in areas where none has been given.



# Individual

How does your Board discourage members taking independent action that may compromise the Board?



## Truth # 7

***The essential board skill:  
being able to count to six*** (or  
whatever number is your board majority).





# Act with a Majority

Board members only have power when they act with a majority of the board. It takes a majority to accomplish anything. But the real power of the board is finding common ground on behalf of the whole community. Common ground can only emerge when all the voices are attended to. A board that runs rough shod over the minority (board member or citizens) is headed for trouble.



# Act with a Majority

- How does your Board find common ground and come to a consensus?



## Truth # 8

***School board members run for election as individuals but must govern as part of a team (the board).***



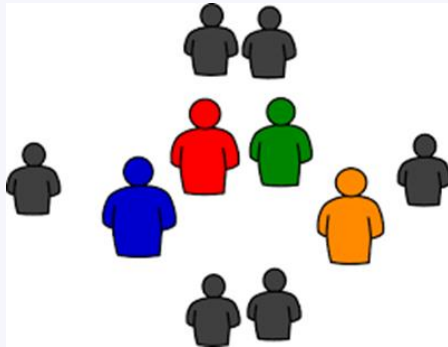
# Teamwork

Many board members are ill prepared to work cooperatively with their board colleagues. Teamwork is a skill that must be nurtured. Board candidates make promises in the election and then come to understand their only power is the ability of the board to act as a whole. Part of the task of each board member and superintendent is to help build a team that works together to advance student achievement.



# Governance Choice – a Fork in a Board's Road

**A fundamental choice for any Board is how they as a group choose to govern within that team.**



**As a collection of individuals each with own agenda**



**OR**



**As a cohesive unified team working toward a common vision?**

**How does your Board help build the Board's team?**



## Truth # 9

***The board speaks with one voice (or it doesn't speak at all).***



# Speaks with One Voice

Essentially, in their actions, the Board majority speaks to the superintendent, setting direction for the district: "Here's what the community expects us to achieve." Until the board reaches an agreement, no individual board member has a right to expect a particular action from the district.



# Voice of the Board Majority

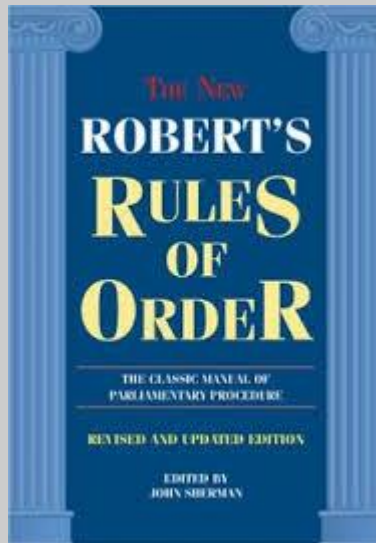
How does the Board ensure that the voice of the Board majority is communicated to the public and staff, and provides direction to the superintendent?





# Truth #10

***Roberts Rules guarantees you get your "say" but not necessarily your "way."***



# Balancing of Rights

Roberts Rules is about balancing the "rights of the individual" and "will of the majority." On some boards, it's expected everyone will quickly join ranks with the majority; a dissenting voice is rarely encouraged. Other boards have a culture where dissent is so prevalent there is no effort to find common ground. Good governance is a balance that values the individual voice *and* the ability of the board to act (speak).



# Balancing of Rights

How does your Board provide for a climate that allows free, open, and orderly discussion by all members at your meeting and then come to a consensus?



# Truth # 11

***A wise superintendent knows he/she cannot get involved with board performance.***



# Board Performance

Board members often look to the superintendent to fix a board member or situation that is out of line. The superintendent works for the Board, and the Board cannot expect the superintendent to intervene in Board disputes, or to take responsibility for keeping the Board on the "straight and narrow." A local board of education must take responsibility for itself.



# Board Performance

- What steps does your Board take to ensure that the Board and its members model behavior your students can emulate?



## Truth # 12

***What gets measured  
gets done.***



# Board Accountability

Effective boards know "what the board cares about will soon be what the district cares about." There is incredible power in providing a focus and direction for the organization. One way the board exercises leadership is in deciding what to monitor (measure). As it measures, wise boards assure the data gets used to learn how to do better, not to blame.





# Board Accountability

SCHOOL  
BOARDS ARE  
ACCOUNTABLE  
FOR HOW  
SCHOOLS—AND  
STUDENTS—  
PERFORM.

- How does your Board hold itself accountable for ensuring that the district is carrying out its mission and vision?



# Good Governance

Thank you for the interest in good governance practices to support student achievement.



Adapted from the Illinois Association of School Boards

