

BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT ROLES AND OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The core purpose of the Selah School District is to ensure high levels of learning for all students. To realize this purpose requires a close and effective working relationship between the Board and the Superintendent, also known as the Leadership Team. The relationship amongst the team must be one of trust, honesty and transparency where the needs and interests of all children are the highest priority.

School Board directors are the representatives of the people, the face of the district, and elected to ensure the community’s schools educate the community’s children in accordance with the wishes of the community. Board Members have collective, not individual authority. Authority to make decisions is only granted to the Board as a whole. Likewise, the full Board gives direction to the Superintendent, most commonly at Board Meetings. Individual Board Members do not have the authority to direct the Superintendent.

The Superintendent is the chief executive officer and is responsible for the administration of the schools under applicable laws and policies of the District. The Superintendent should recommend, propose or suggest on most matters brought before the Board. Just as Board Members should govern and not manage the District, the Superintendent should not administer a district in isolation from the representatives whom the public has entrusted with the schools.

Clarifying Roles

Successful organizations are the result of strong and effective leadership. In order for the School Board and Superintendent to work effectively as a leadership team to ensure high levels of learning for all students, they both must know their roles.

Roles	
SCHOOL BOARD – GOVERNS (Guides/Directs)	SUPERINTENDENT – MANAGES (Administers/Operates)
<i>Decides What</i>	<i>Decides How</i>
<i>Requests Information</i>	<i>Seeks and Provides Information</i>
<i>Considers Issues</i>	<i>Provides Recommendations</i>
<i>Create, Review, Adopt Policy</i>	<i>Recommend, Implement Policy</i>
<i>Approves & Reviews Plans</i>	<i>Implements Plans</i>
<i>Monitors Progress</i>	<i>Reports Progress</i>
<i>Contracts with Personnel</i>	<i>Supervises and Evaluates Personnel</i>
<i>Approves & Reviews Budgets</i>	<i>Formulates Budgets</i>
<i>Represents Public Interest</i>	<i>Acts in Public Interest</i>

Leadership Team Operating Principles

I. Equity Statement & Advocacy

The Selah School District is committed to ensuring high levels of learning for each student in the district as our core purpose. As our community evolves and demographics change, we are charged with reshaping our practices to best meet the needs of the students and families we serve in an equitable and inclusive manner. Equity is about treating all students as the individuals that they are; it is not treating all children the same. That’s why we are deeply devoted to ensuring that each student receives what they personally need to develop to their full potential and succeed, and to narrowing the achievement/opportunity gap between our highest and lowest-performing students.

Equity Questions for Consideration

The *Equity Questions for Consideration* is a tool which district leaders will apply to decision making when it comes to internal systems, processes, resources, and programs in the Selah School District. The questions are designed to help create increased opportunities and access for each student by guiding decision makers to consider the burdens, barriers and benefits of decisions under consideration. The purpose of the tool is to align our strategies and approaches with more equitable outcomes for each student.

The questions are as follows:

1. Describe the proposed action, desired results and outcomes, and connection to Selah School District's foundations (The Viking Way).
2. How have you clearly defined the problem that you are trying to solve, using an improvement science approach which includes:
 - a. Being problem specific and user-centered
 - b. Embracing measurement and the use of data
 - c. Learning through disciplined inquiry
3. How have you intentionally involved stakeholders who are also members of the groups affected by this policy, program, practices or decision?
 - a. Is there stakeholder support or opposition to the proposal and why?
4. How does the proposed action expand opportunities for equity in the district?
 - a. Who are the demographic groups affected?
 - b. How will each group be impacted/affected by the decision or action?
 - c. Are there any potential unintended consequences for specific groups/populations? Are there strategies in place to mitigate any negative impacts?
5. Does the proposed action identify and address barriers to equitable outcomes?
 - a. How will you identify potential barriers?
 - b. How will you track progress toward reducing disparities?
6. Describe any changes you have made or will make to the action after applying the equity lens.

Leadership team members are committed to:

- Developing policy and making equity-based decisions that are focused on high levels of learning for each student.
- Supporting programs that are designed to ensure high levels of learning for each student in a kid-by-kid and skill-by skill manner.
- Asking for evidence of progress being made towards ensuring high levels of learning for each student.
- Visiting every building at least once per school year.
- Being open to new ideas that support student learning.

II. School Board Meetings

School Board Meetings are the mechanism through which the leadership team conducts the business of the District in an open and public format. The Selah School District utilizes two main types of meeting formats: the Business Meeting and the Study Session. There are, however, several other types of meetings that may exist. A description of each type of meeting can be found here: <https://www.selahschools.org/Page/462>.

For all meetings, leadership team members are committed to:

- Being prepared.

- Encouraging the open expression of ideas, even constructive disagreement, by listening, acknowledging, and respecting each director's voice equally.
- Expressing our thoughts, comments, suggestions, and questions.
- Speaking courageously and supporting decisions.
- Staying on task with well-defined agenda topics.
- Notifying the Superintendent and Board President ahead of time with proposed changes to the agenda.
- Discussing concerns with the Superintendent and Board President prior to any meeting.
- Respecting the Open Public Meetings Act regarding topics to be discussed in the Executive Session and maintaining confidentiality of said topics.

In addition to the above, for Study Session meetings the leadership team is committed to:

- Taking a deeper dive about learning strengths and challenges through "School of Focus" study sessions or other pertinent topics identified to increase leadership team knowledge and awareness.
- Working within the established time frame.
- Including a wrap-up at the end of the meeting for the following month's study session.
- Recommending future topics to the Superintendent and the Board President.

III. Decision Making

Awareness of short and long-term consequences, identification and evaluation of alternatives, an appreciation for the needs of the group, as well as individuals, and sensitivity toward collective action are all essential to the decision-making process.

Leadership team members are committed to:

- Working as a group to arrive at collaborative decisions that support the District's foundational statements.
- Pursuing thorough understanding of the problem trying to be solved by addressing all challenges concerning the issue (*problem focused*).
- Seeking and reviewing appropriate research and data and using that data to make decisions (*embrace measurement*).
- Involving those parties who will be affected by the decision (*user centered*) and any ramifications to the system as a whole (*see the system*).
- Supporting the conclusion of the team.
- Allowing appropriate time for decisions to be made

IV. Judgment and Trust

The complexities of operating a school district cannot be fully addressed in policies, procedures or operating principles. Working with people and handling difficult and controversial issues on a daily basis requires good judgment, common sense and a strong trust relationship between the Board and Superintendent. Every complaint cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved; every issue or concern will not be foreseen. For these reasons trust, allowance for error, and collaboration to address problems are key parts of an effective school district operation. The leadership team will approach challenging situations in the belief that the others involved are working in good faith with good expectations.

Leadership team members are committed to:

- Trusting that the intentions of others are positive.
- Being truthful and trusting that others are truthful.
- Allowing for error and calculated risk-taking.

- Recognizing that each of us may approach problems and challenges in a different manner. This does not make another's approach wrong, just different.

V. Communication

Open communication requires trust, respect and a fundamental belief in goodwill among the leadership team. Good communication is also timely, thorough and includes opportunities for two-way dialogue.

Leadership team members are committed to:

- Focusing communication on issues, not personalities.
- Utilizing a "24-hour rule" return rule on emails, voicemails and text messages unless otherwise specified.
- Providing each other with feedback regarding progress towards goals, work plans and/or policy development.
- Digging for the facts and seeking to understand before communicating outside the leadership team.
- Utilizing the Board President as the spokesperson for the Board unless otherwise specified.
- Promptly, whenever appropriate and possible, notify one another of events, rumors and issues that are likely to be issues of potential concern within the District and/or community.
- Understanding and respecting the Open Public Meetings Act restrictions on communication.

VI. Appropriate handling of concerns/complains from the public and/or staff

Individual Board Members will contact the Superintendent and/or Board President directly when they hear concerns in the community regarding issues relating to district administration, programs or personnel. The team will handle public concerns in tactful, orderly and effective ways.

Leadership team members are committed to:

- Listening to the individual's concern.
- Explaining that the Board and Administrative team have established a process for handling concerns (Policy 4220P).
- Asking if he or she has discussed the issue with the employee immediately responsible and/or at the lowest level.
- Expressing appreciation to the individual for expressing his/her concern.
- Assuring the person that the Superintendent will be informed of a significant complaint. However, reaffirm that the chain of command must be followed.
- Confirmation that the loop is closed provided by the Superintendent.