

Board Roles & Responsibilities

Springfield School District

Springfield



Springfield


Vince Adams

Board Development Specialist

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OREGON
SCHOOL
BOARDS
ASSOCIATION

An aerial photograph of a wide river flowing through a forested area. The left bank is densely lined with trees showing vibrant autumn foliage in shades of green, yellow, and orange. The right bank is also wooded but less visible. The water's surface is dark blue with numerous bright, shimmering reflections of sunlight. In the center of the river, a small, dark-colored canoe with a single person inside is visible. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

What do you need to
get out of this session?



Agenda

Why school boards?

What should school boards do?

Applying our knowledge.

Not on the agenda

Public meeting law/executive session

Ethics & School Law

School Finance

Policy Development

Why are you (as an individual) here?


Why did you run for the board?

Why do you serve today?





Why does a school board matter?
Why does board culture matter?

A group of eight diverse students are running away from the camera down a school hallway. They are wearing backpacks and casual clothing. The hallway has a green wall and a sign that says "SCHOOL" above a doorway. The students are of various ethnicities and ages, ranging from young children to teenagers.

Who are your students?

What are their racial and ethnic identities?

How many live in poverty?

How many seniors didn't graduate last year? Why?

Can every child learn?

Can every child show growth?

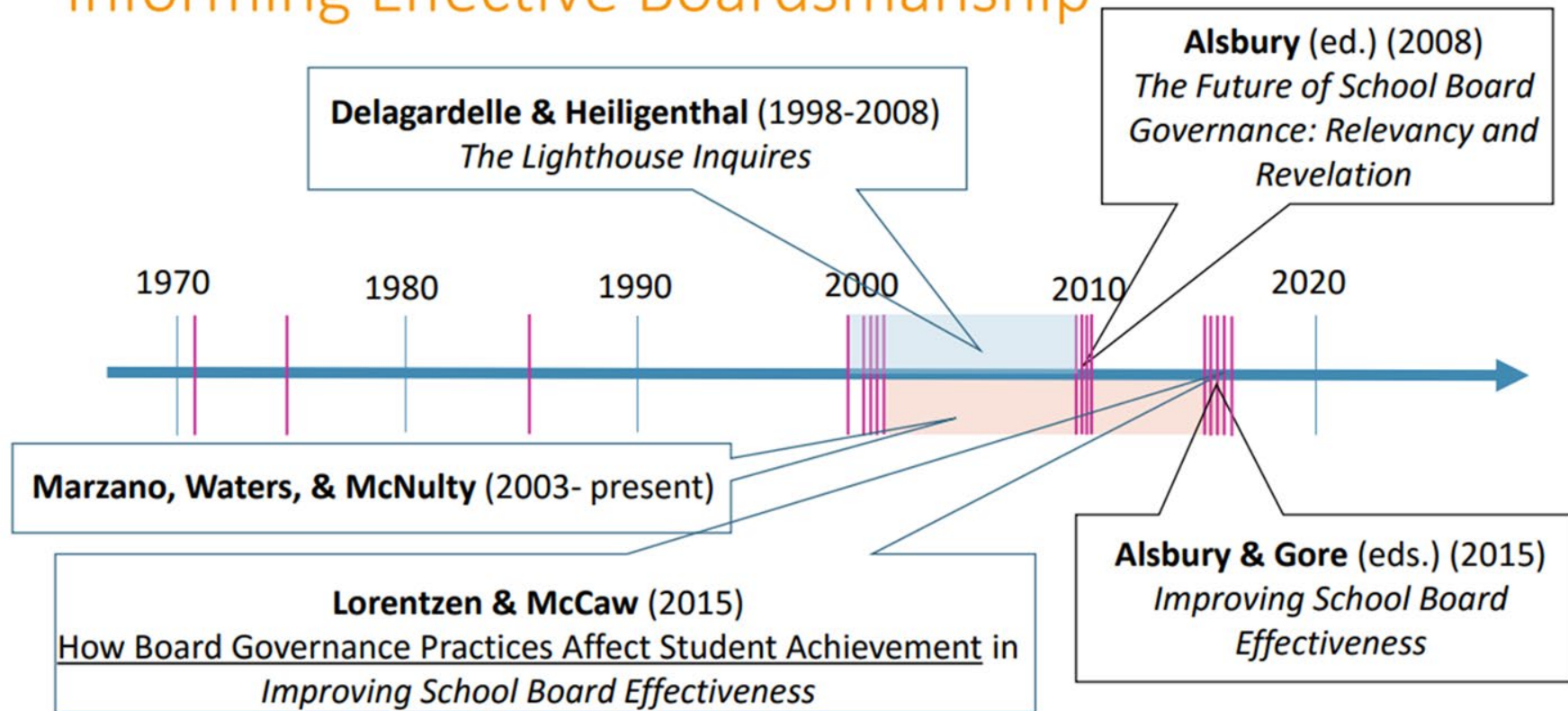
Can every child succeed?

We can predict student outcomes by social factors. Is that acceptable?

What percent of students not graduating is acceptable for your board?

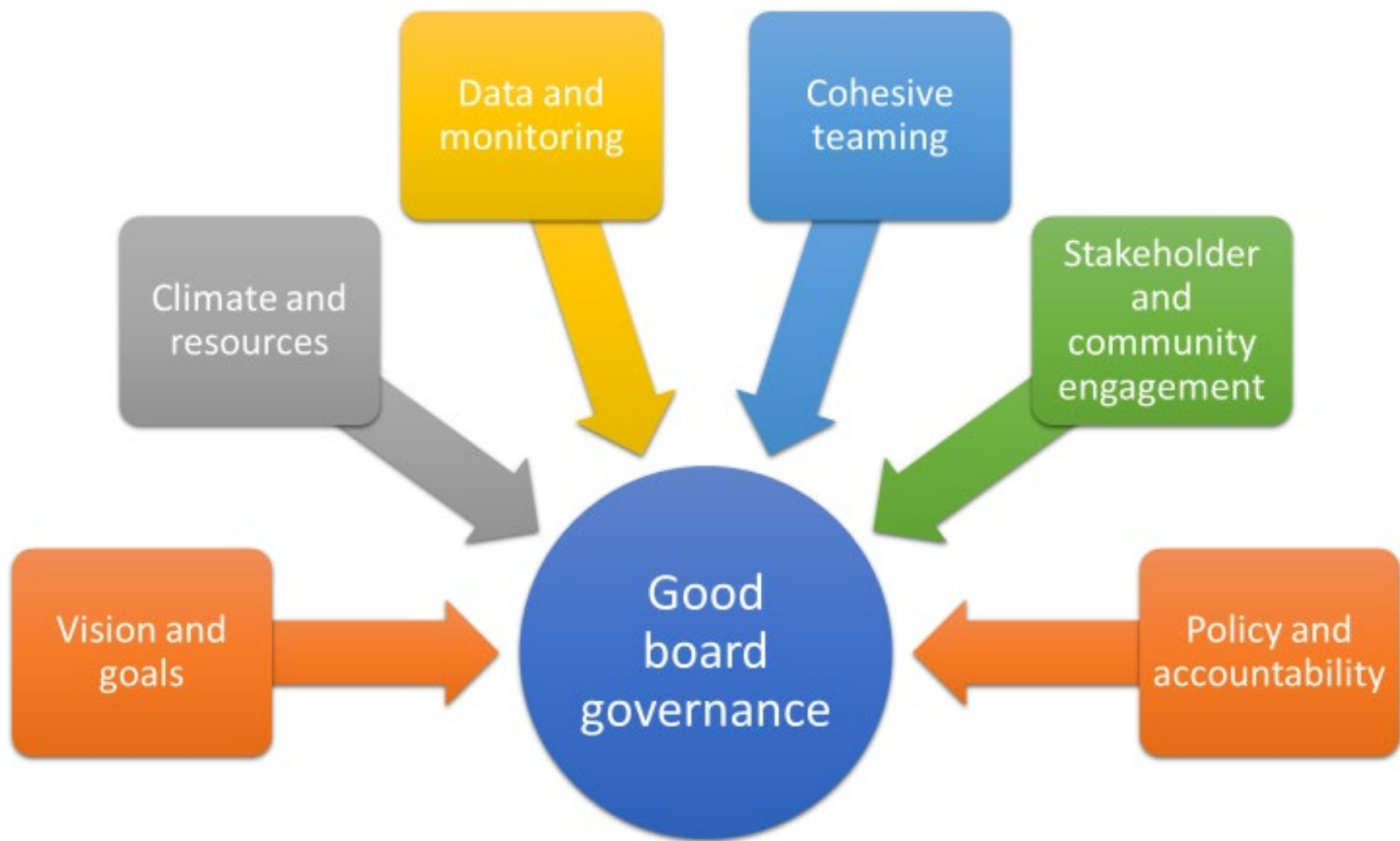


Chronology of Applicable Research Informing Effective Boardsmanship



Practices of High-performing boards

	Lighthouse (Rice, et al., 2000 and Delagardelle & Alsbury, 2014)	Essential board leadership practices (Johnson, 2013)	Characteristics of effective school boards (Dervarics & O'Brien, 2016)
Vision & Goals	Set clear expectations ; set goals	Creating a vision	Commit to a vision of high expectations for students and set goals toward that vision
Climate & Resources	Create conditions for success	Creating climate; providing staff development; creating awareness and urgency	Align and sustain resources to meet goals
Data & Monitoring	Hold the system accountable	Monitoring progress and taking corrective action; using data	Data savvy , embracing and monitoring data, even when negative
Cohesive Teaming	Learn together as a board team	Demonstrating commitment; practicing unified governance	Strong shared beliefs and values about the system and all students
Community Engagement	Build public will	Engaging the community ; connecting with district leadership	Collaborative relationship with staff and community; strong structure to inform/engage stakeholders
Policy & Accountability		Developing policy with a focus on student learning	Accountability driven , focused on policy and not operations



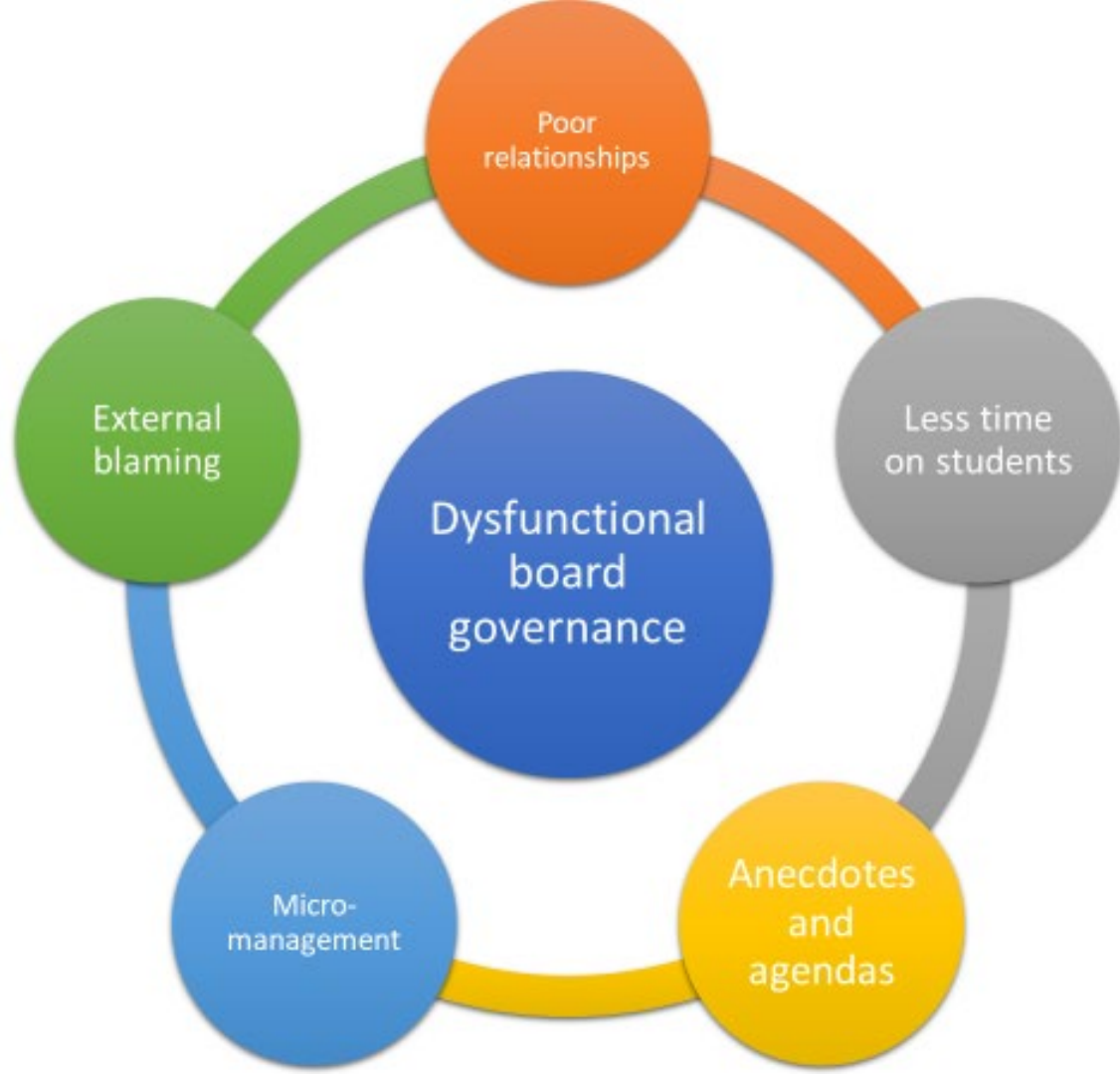
Practices associated with negative impacts on student outcomes

Lee & Eadens (2014)

- Meetings **less orderly**; **Less respectful** engagement, some individuals take up too much airtime
- Less time spent on **student achievement**
- Members seek to advance their own **agendas**
- Less effective **working relationships**
- Less reliance on the **superintendent advice**
- Less focus on **policy** items

Dervarics & O'Brien (2016)

- Only **vague awareness** of initiatives
- **Making excuses**: external pressures, communication, teachers/staff, families, students as cause for lower performance
- **Micromanagement**
- Staff don't know the board
- **Anecdotes** and personal experiences drive decisions instead of data



Leadership Team



Management

Navigation

Engineering

Housekeeping & Maintenance

Food Service & Entertainment

Crew & Staffing



Governance

Commissions the journey

Sets the destination

Approves the ports of call

Relies on the maritime professional







**Hire & Evaluate
Superintendent**

**Develop &
Adopt Policy**

**Track District
Progress**

**Approve
Budget**

**Ministerial
Functions**

Board Superintendent

Hires Superintendent

Hires Staff

Approve Contracts

Employee Relations

Sets Vision & Goals

Turns into Action

Adopts Policy

Develops Administrative Regulations

Sets Budget

Plans Expenditures

Monitors Progress

Reports Progress

Governance



Management



Balanced Governance



Governance Continuum

Disengaged
“Rubberstamp”

Informed Oversight

Overreaching
“Micromanaging”

Balanced Governance Standards

1. Vision-Directed Planning^{CORE}
2. Community Engagement
3. Effective Leadership
4. Accountability^{CORE}
5. Using Data^{CORE}
6. Cultural Responsiveness
7. Culture & Climate
8. Learning Organization
9. Systems Thinking
10. Innovation & Creativity
11. Board Conduct & Superintendent Relationship^{CORE}
12. Budgeting & Finance^{CORE}

IMPROVING SCHOOL BOARD EFFECTIVENESS

A BALANCED GOVERNANCE APPROACH

EDITED BY
THOMAS L. ALSBURY
PHIL GORE

FOREWORD BY
WILLARD R. DAGGETT

Standard 11: Board Member Conduct, Ethics, and Relationship with the Superintendent^{CORE}

The Board recognizes that it is essential to have a clear, mutual understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of the Board and the superintendent. The Board supports and practices team building as an essential part of this relationship.

Visiting schools unannounced to observe student learning in classrooms and check on overall staff and student morale. Board work?

Is this board work? Why?

How would this be superintendent work?

OSBA Model Sample Policy

Code: BG
Adopted:

Board-Staff Communications

The Board desires to maintain open channels of communication between itself and the district staff. The basic line of communication will be through the superintendent.

Staff Communications to the Board

All formal communications or reports to the Board, or any Board committee, from staff members will be submitted through the superintendent. This procedure will not be construed as denying the right of any employee to address the Board about issues which are neither part of an active administrative procedure, nor disruptive to the operation of the district. In addition, this procedure does not restrict protected labor relations communications of bargaining unit members. Staff members are invited to Board meetings, which provide an opportunity to observe the Board's deliberations on matters of district operation.

Board Communications to Staff

All official Board communications, policies and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the superintendent. The superintendent will provide appropriate communication to keep staff fully informed of the Board's policies, priorities and actions.

Visits to Schools

School visits by Board members will be regarded as informal expressions of interest in school affairs and not as "inspections" or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes. Official visits by Board members will be carried on only under Board authorization and with the full knowledge of staff, including the Superintendent, Principals, and other supervisors.

Legal Reference(s):

[ORS 332.107](#)

[OR 581-022-2405](#)

Anderson v. Central Point Sch. Dist., 746 F.2d 505 (9th Cir. 1984).

Connick v. Myers, 461 U.S. 138 (1983).

Lebanon Education Association/OEA v. Lebanon Community School District, 22 PECBR 323 (2008).

A board member receives several telephone calls from people in the community complaining because the superintendent has non-renewed a well-liked teacher. The board member is familiar with this teacher and believes they did a good job teaching their child this year. The board member indicates to community members that they denounce the superintendent's decision and will personally investigate the situation. While discussing the issue with the superintendent the board member requests to see all the information relevant to the dismissal. The superintendent denies the request and the board member replies, "I will personally see that your upcoming performance review reflects your insubordination."

What is working well here? What is not?

What might be the impact?

OSBA Model Sample Policy

Code: BBAA

Adopted:

Individual Board Member's Authority and Responsibilities

4. Board Member's Relationship to Administration

Individual Board members will be informed about the district's educational program, may visit schools or other facilities to gain information, and may request information from the superintendent.

No individual Board member may direct the superintendent to action without Board authorization.

Board members will not intervene in the administration of the district or its schools.

A Board member has the right to express personal opinions. When expressing such opinions in public, the Board member must clearly identify the opinions as their own.

OSBA Model Sample Policy

Code: BBF

Adopted:

Board Member Standards of Conduct

(Version 1)

Individual Board members and the Board as a public entity must comply with ethics laws for public officials.

Board members will treat other Board members, the superintendent, staff and the public with dignity and courtesy and will provide an opportunity for all parties to be heard **with** due respect for their opinions.

Board members will recognize the superintendent as the chief executive officer to whom the Board has delegated administrative authority to establish regulations and oversee the implementation of Board policy.

When a Board member expresses personal opinions in public, the Board member should clearly identify the opinions as personal.

A Board member will respect the privacy rights of individuals when dealing with confidential information gained through association with the district.

OSBA Model Sample Policy

Code: KL

Adopted:

Public Complaints */**

(Version 1)

A parent or guardian of a student attending a school in the district[,], [or] a person who resides in the district[, a staff member] [, or a student] may petition the district with a complaint. A complainant will be referred through the proper administrative process for resolution of a complaint before investigation or action by the Board. An exception will be a complaint against the superintendent or one that involves Board actions or Board operations.

The complaint procedure is available at the district's administrative office and on the home page of the district's website.

[The Board advises that there is a process available for resolving complaints, including but not limited to complaints in one or more of the following areas:

1. Instruction;

When does the board hear complaints?

(Hint: There are four instances)

1. Complaint appeal



OSBA Model Sample Policy

Code: KL-AR[(1)]

Revised/Reviewed:

Public Complaint Procedure

A parent or guardian of a student attending a school in the district[,] [or] a person who resides in the district[, a staff member] [, or a student] who wishes to express a concern should discuss the matter with the school employee involved.



The Board: Step Three

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the superintendent's or designee's findings and conclusion, the complainant may appeal the decision to the Board within [five] working days of receiving the superintendent's decision. The Board will review the findings and conclusion of the superintendent in a public meeting to determine what action is appropriate. The Board may use executive session if the subject matter qualifies under Oregon law. Appropriate action may include, but is not limited to, holding a hearing, requesting additional information, and adopting the superintendent's decision as the district's final decision. All parties involved, including the school administration, may be asked to attend such hearing for the purposes of making further explanations and clarifying the issues.

When does the board hear complaints?

(Hint: There are four instances)

1. Complaint appeal
2. Complaint against the superintendent
3. Complaint against a board member
4. Complaint against the whole board



A photograph of a woman and a man sitting at a table by a large window. The woman, on the left, has dark hair and is wearing a light-colored sweater, looking towards the man with a smile. The man, on the right, has a beard and is wearing a grey turtleneck, sitting in a wheelchair and looking back at the woman. The background shows a blurred view of a city street through the window.

Complaints: What about conversations with parents?

- Honor the conversation
- Avoid hearing details of a potential complaint

No ex-parte!



A photograph of a woman with dark hair and a man with a beard in a wheelchair sitting at a table by a large window, engaged in conversation. The woman is on the left, wearing a light-colored top and a watch, with her hands clasped. The man is on the right, wearing a grey turtleneck. The background shows a blurred view of a building exterior through the window.

Complaints: What about conversations with parents?

- Honor the conversation
- Avoid hearing details of a potential complaint
- Direct them to resources (teacher, principal, Policy KL)
- Let the superintendent know

A photograph of two women in conversation. On the left, a woman with dark curly hair is seen from the back, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt. On the right, an older woman with short white hair and black-rimmed glasses is smiling and gesturing with her hands. She is wearing a dark green shirt with a white polka-dot pattern and holding a black smartphone in her left hand. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with stone walls and a doorway.

Complaints: What about conversations with staff?

- Consider refusing the conversation (see Policy BG)
- Disclose that you WILL speak with the superintendent
- Honor the conversation
- Avoid hearing details of a potential complaint
- Direct them to resources (supervisor, principal, director)
- Follow up with the superintendent

A wooden gavel with a dark head and a light handle lies diagonally across the frame. In the center, a brown envelope is prominently displayed with a red rectangular stamp that reads "EVIDENCE" in bold, red, sans-serif capital letters. To the right, a black pen with a silver clip is positioned vertically. The background consists of several sheets of white paper with faint, illegible text, suggesting a legal or official setting.

EVIDENCE

What are the investigative powers of the board and its members?

In a contentious debate over the school resource officer (SRO) program, one school board member, staunchly opposed to SROs, independently rallied the BIPOC community to voice their objections. This mobilization led to passionate public comment sessions and a demonstration and counter-protest in the district office's parking lot. Meanwhile, another board member utilized personal connections to discuss the program privately with the mayor and police chief to gather their candid views. Amid escalating tensions in meetings and in the community, the superintendent worked to create a committee tasked with assessing the SRO program's effectiveness and making informed recommendations, and comprised of district staff, law enforcement representatives, students, parents, and other community partners.

What is the role of the board?

What should members do?

What might be the impacts?

A board member posts a question on Facebook asking for input on the high school math teacher's behavior/action. She states that her daughter is upset because of the way the teacher runs her classroom and wants to know if others are having the same concerns. She makes herself available for questions by text, email, and social media. She goes to the superintendent and shows them the concerns, wanting something to immediately change. She also emails other board members for their input. She tells the superintendent that if they do not deal with it, she will bring it up at the next board meeting.

What is working well here?

What could be better?

What would be the impacts?

During a recent board meeting, a board member asked the superintendent board for a comprehensive explanation on how they facilitate district outreach and community engagement activities that include the participation of culturally diverse groups.

Is this board work? Why?

What might be the impact?

Superintendent Evaluation



When board work is like this...





...come back to this.

Is this an adult problem
or a kiddo problem?

How does this align
with our strategic
priorities (goals)?

What is right for kids?





Research: School boards impact student outcomes





Targeted training
Board Self-Assessment
Superintendent Evaluation
Executive Search
Strategic Planning
Charter Schools
Facilitation

Thank you!

Vince Adams
Board Development Specialist
vadams@osba.org | 971.446.0904