

POLICY TITLE: DIRECTOR ORIENTATION	POLICY SECTION: GOVERNANCE PROCESS	POLICY NO: GP-15
APPROVED BY: BOARD	REGULAR BOARD POLICY REVIEW FREQUENCY: EVERY TWO YEARS (ODD YEARS)	BOARD MONITORING OF BOARD COMPLIANCE FREQUENCY: EVERY TWO YEARS
DATE APPROVED: SEPTEMBER 28, 2010	DATE REVIEWED / REVISED: OCTOBER 14, 2014, DECEMBER 6, 2016, AUGUST 11, 2017, AUGUST 16, 2019, JUNE 29, 2021, AUGUST 16, 2023, OCTOBER 17, 2025	

BACKGROUND

The Board of Directors is accountable for ensuring Board of Directors capacity and performance excellence. The Board recognizes that initial orientation is critical for new School Directors and ongoing orientation is key for experienced Directors.

POLICY

Board of Directors development will include orientation of new School Directors, a mentorship program for new Directors, continuing education for experienced Directors, and periodic Board of Directors discussion on orientation process improvement.

The Board of Directors cultivates a sense of group responsibility for ensuring that new School Directors are made to feel part of the governance team quickly, are oriented thoroughly, and are actively supported in their new role. The Board will help newly elected or appointed Directors to understand the policies and procedures of the Board.

To facilitate this process, the Superintendent will set up orientation meetings with the new Directors on the following topics:

- WSSDA publications (e.g., Evaluation of School Personnel, Parliamentary Procedure)
- Board policies and administrative procedures
- Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook
- Collective bargaining agreements
- School budget
- Financial status reports (most recent copies)
- District organization chart

Critical components of the orientation include the following topics:

- Duties and Responsibilities
 - Board Policy Development
 - Monitoring Performance of the Superintendent and the Board of Directors
 - External Relationships/Community Involvement
- Governance as Leadership and Stewardship
 - Board Policy Structure
 - Ends
 - The Current Ends Policy and Its Rationale
 - Board/Superintendent Relationship

- Executive Limitations
 - Governance Process
 - The Governance Structure and Approach
 - The Board’s Approach to Delegation and Accountability
 - The Ownership Structure of Federal Way (legal and moral ownership) and an Overview of the Board’s Ownership Linkage Approach
- Bylaws
- Directors’ Code of Conduct
 - Legal and Fiduciary Responsibilities
- Current Governance Issues Facing the Board
- The resources and document storage tools for use by Directors, with special emphasis on accessing and using the Board website
- Federal Way Public Schools Structure
 - An overview of the history of Federal Way School Board
 - The structure and programs of Federal Way
 - The Organizational Chart
 - The Strategic Plan and the Annual Operating Plan
 - An overview of the financial condition of Federal Way

The new School Director orientation will be organized by the Board President/CGO and will be conducted by experienced School Directors with the support and assistance of the Superintendent. Orientation will begin, when possible, with the observation of a Board meeting prior to election where possible. While orientation is an ongoing process, the process will be weighted toward accelerating the learning of new School Directors within their first 3 months of tenure.

New School Directors will sign appropriate documentation with respect to confidentiality, accountability, and commitment.

Directors will be encouraged to attend meetings, workshops and conferences to increase their knowledge and competencies. The Board shall annually evaluate feedback from School Directors on the learning topics and process through the Board annual self-evaluation of Board effectiveness. This process provides the Board with information on where to enhance the learning experiences for School Directors.

The School Director Mentor Program

The School Director Mentor Program provides a customized support system to new School Directors leading into their election and for the first 3 months of their term. It is designed to be an effective method of sharing Board knowledge and understanding of FWPS governance processes, mission, work programs and culture.

The specific goals of the New School Director Mentor Program are to:

- Provide informal support for new School Directors.
- Provide a designated “go to” experienced Director for each new Director to answer questions and provide insights as the new Director learns the governance processes. This may include facilitating interaction between New School Directors and operating staff, members of operating and governance committees, and others to expand new School Director knowledge in areas of importance to the School Director and/or to FWPS.
- Expedite the experiential learning of new School Directors.
- Reinforce the learning from the formal New School Director Orientation.

The Board President/CGO shall appoint an experienced Director to provide mentoring for each new Director (where available). There will be three key steps in the Mentor Program, which will run from the time that the new director has had a first formal orientation session for approximately 6 months.

Step 1 – Meeting Following First Formal Orientation Session

The new Director shall formally meet with his/her mentor, during which meeting the topics of discussion will include (but are not limited to):

- Answers to any outstanding questions from the formal orientation session.
- Review of the School Director Role and Code of Conduct Policy.
- Description, by mentor, of the most helpful documents and/or experience in learning the job of School Director.
- Description by the mentor of what knowledge the new Director needs to acquire quickly.
- Best way to contact each other to discuss any questions that arise.

Step 2 – Telephone Meeting Prior to the Next Board Meeting

The mentor and new School Director will briefly meet prior to the new Director's next Board meeting. This discussion will cover:

- How the Board package is laid out.
- Types of questions the Directors may choose to ask at Board meetings.
- Any topics for which the new Director has questions or requires further background.
- A review of the Board Annual Strategic Work Plan.
- Any further advice/follow-up from the mentor.

The new Director will be welcome to contact his/her mentor informally over the mentorship period if any specific questions arise.

Step 3 – Report to Board

The new School Director will report to the Board on the completion of the official Mentorship Program. This will give the Board the assurance that the Program has been effectively completed and gain insight into how the program can be enhanced.