



Special Governing Board Meeting Agenda

(Annual Retreat & Closed Session)

CABRILLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Pilarcitos High School Robert King Room, 498 Kelly Avenue, Half Moon Bay, California 94109

Saturday, August 21, 2021 • 9:00 AM

The Governing Board will meet for its annual retreat to discuss work being done on its established goal of promoting equity initiatives in CUSD. After that annual retreat, the Governing Board will meet for Closed Session to discuss labor negotiations, student discipline, personnel matters, litigation, and other matters as provided under California state law as set forth on the agenda below. Following Closed Session, the Board reconvenes to Public Session. Adjournment of the Public Session will be no later than 10:00 PM for all regular and special meetings, unless extended by a majority vote of the Board. Writings relating to a board meeting agenda item that are distributed to at least a majority of the Board members less than 72 hours before the noticed meeting, and that are public records not otherwise exempt from disclosure, will be available for inspection at the District administrative offices, 498 Kelly Avenue, Half Moon Bay, CA. Such writings may also be available on the District's website. (Government Code 54957.5b).

Individuals who require special accommodations (Spanish interpreter, accessible seating, documentation in an accessible format, etc.) should contact the Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent at (650) 240-3146 no later than 48 hours preceding the meeting.

IF YOU WISH TO ADDRESS THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Please submit a "Request to Address the Board" slip to the Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent prior to the introduction of the item. For meeting facilitation, please submit the slip at your earliest possible convenience. Upon recognition by the President of the Board, please come to the podium and identify yourself prior to speaking. The Governing Board reserves the right to limit speaking time to three (3) minutes or fewer per individual. Speakers are permitted to yield their time to one other speaker, however, no one speaker shall have more than four (4) minutes.

Closed Session Items: may be addressed under Public Comment on Closed Session Topics.

Non Agenda and Consent Items: may be addressed under Public Comments.

Agenda Items: may be addressed after the conclusion of the staff presentation on the item.

1. CALL TO ORDER – 9:00 AM

- a. Roll Call / Quorum

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

3. GENERAL BUSINESS (GOVERNING BOARD ANNUAL RETREAT)

- a. Review of Timeline of History of US Education (Work Session)
 - [3.a.1 Historical Timeline of Education 2020.pdf](#) (p. 3)
- b. Governing Board Equity Self-Assessment (Work Session)
 - [3.b.1 Board Assessment Eight Characteristics Equity Lens.pdf](#) (p. 7)
 - [3.b.2 CPE Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards.pdf](#) (p. 8)
 - [3.b.3 Racial Equity Detours Gorski.pdf](#) (p. 25)
- c. Review of Draft of CUSD Governing Board Equity Statement (Work Session)
 - [3.c.1 Revised CUSD Equity Statement 210706.pdf](#) (p. 31)
 - [3.c.2 Policy 0415 Equity.pdf](#) (p. 32)
- d. Review of CUSD Governance Handbook (Work Session)
 - [3.d.1 Cabrillo_USD_Governance_Handbook_APPD_191010.pdf](#) (p. 33)
- e. Board Self-Reflection (Work Session)

4. CLOSED SESSION

- a. Public Comments on Closed Session Topics
- b. Adjourn to Closed Session

Board Members will meet privately for Closed Session. Any action taken during Closed Session will be reported out under "Closed Session Action Report."

1. Public Employee Performance Evaluation (Government Code §54957)

- **Title:** Superintendent

2. Conference with Labor Negotiators (Government Code §54957.6)

- **District-designated representatives:** Dr. Sean McPhetridge, Superintendent
- **Employee organizations:** Cabrillo Unified Teachers' Association, California School Employees' Association Chapter 485, and Unrepresented

- c. Reconvene to Open Session
 - 1. Closed Session Action Report: If applicable

5. ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING

TIMELINE OF HISTORY OF US EDUCATION

Adapted from the work of Race Forward, National Equity Project, & ACSA

1647

General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony decrees every town of fifty families should have an elementary school and every town of 100 families should have a Latin school. The goal is to ensure Puritan children learn to read The Bible and receive basic information about their Calvinist religion.

1779

Thomas Jefferson proposes a two-track educational system with different tracks (in his words) for “the laboring and the learned.” Scholarship would allow a very few of the laboring class to advance, Jefferson says, by “raking a few geniuses from the rubbish.”

1790

Pennsylvania state constitution calls for free public education but only for poor children. It is expected rich people will pay for their children's schooling.

1820-1860

The percentage of people working in agriculture plummets as family farms are gobbled up by larger agricultural businesses and people are forced to look for work in towns and cities. At the same time, cities grow tremendously, fueled by new manufacturing industries and the influx of people from rural areas and many immigrants from Europe. During the 10 years from 1846 to 1856, 3.1 million immigrants arrive, a number equal to one eighth of the entire U.S. population. Owners of industry needed a docile, obedient workforce and look to public schools to provide it.

1837

Horace Mann becomes head of the newly formed Massachusetts State Board of Education. Edmund Dwight, a major industrialist, thinks a state board of education was so important to factory owners that he offered to supplement the state salary with extra money of his own.

1848

Massachusetts Reform School at Westboro opens, where children who have refused to attend public schools are sent. This begins a long tradition of “reform schools” combining the education and juvenile justice systems.

1851

The State of Massachusetts passes its first compulsory education law. The goal is to ensure children of poor immigrants get “civilized” and learn obedience to be good workers and not contribute to social upheaval.

1865-1877

African Americans mobilize to bring public education to the South for the first time. After the Civil War, and with the legal end of slavery, African Americans in the South make alliances with white Republicans to push for many political changes, including for the first time rewriting state constitutions to guarantee free public education. In practice, white children benefit more than Black children.

By 1870

California devised a “formula of ten.” When African Americans, Asian Americans, or American Indians numbered ten students, a district was empowered to create separate schools for whites and non-white children.

1870s

The United States government enrolled Native American students in Christian-run boarding schools. In these institutions, children were forbidden to speak in their own languages or wear their hair long, they were taught principles of Christianity, they dressed and groomed according to European styles, and their given names were replaced with Christian-European names. Many boarding houses were former military sites and were operated by military personnel.

1900s

Education for European immigrant children included immersion in English-only classrooms without accommodations, placement in 1st grade classrooms regardless of the age of the child, and intelligence testing

which led to the disproportionate placement of immigrant children in special education classes. Meanwhile, in the West and Southwest, separate schools were developed for Spanish-speaking students. These schools focused on teaching English and punished students for speaking in Spanish. Fewer resources were given to these schools and they were generally staffed by less qualified teachers.

1917

Smith-Hughes Act passes, providing federal funding for vocational education. Big manufacturing corporations pushed it because they wanted to remove job skill training from apprenticeship programs of trade unions and bring it under their own control.

1921

The California school law (Political Code 1662) was amended once again to read as follows: "The governing body of a school district shall have power to exclude children of filthy or vicious habits, or children suffering from contagious or infectious diseases, and also to establish separate schools for Indian children and for children of Chinese, Japanese, or Mongolian parentage. When such schools are established, Indian children or children of Chinese, Japanese, or Mongolian parentage must not be admitted into any other school."

1924

An act of Congress makes Native Americans U.S. citizens for the first time.

1930-1950

The NAACP brings a series of suits over unequal teachers' pay for Blacks and whites in southern states. At the same time, southern states realize they are losing African American labor to the northern cities. These two sources of pressure resulted in some increase of spending on Black schools in the South.

1942-1945

Japanese internment camps were established during World War II by President Franklin Roosevelt through his Executive Order 9066. From 1942 to 1945, it was the policy of the U.S. government that people of Japanese descent would be interned in isolated camps. Enacted in reaction to Pearl Harbor and the ensuing war, the Japanese internment camps are now considered one of the most atrocious violations of American civil rights in the 20th century. Children of Japanese descent who attended American public schools from "so called" international settlements were moved to War Relocation Authority Centers.

1945

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) lawyers implement a strategy to challenge school segregation in California filed by Mexican-American parents in Orange County, California. NAACP lawyers followed the Mendez v. Westminster case and modeled its strategy in Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954.

1948

Educational Testing Service is formed, merging the College Entrance Examination Board, the Cooperative Test Service, the Graduate Records Office, the National Committee on Teachers Examinations and others, with huge grants from the Rockefeller and Carnegie foundations. These testing services continued the work of eugenicists like Carl Brigham (originator of the SAT) who did research "proving" that immigrants were feeble-minded.

1954

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka. The Supreme Court unanimously agrees that segregated schools are "inherently unequal" and must be abolished. Almost 45 years later in 1998, schools, especially in the north, were as segregated as ever. In 2020, the impact of race and poverty as well as charter schools and school boundary policies continue to impede progress towards the reality of this landmark decision.

1957

The Soviet Union launched the first Earth orbiting satellite, Sputnik. In response, President Eisenhower signed into law the National Defense Education Act (NDEA), which provided funding to improve science, technology, and foreign language education in American schools. This was also the first large-scale involvement of the U.S. federal government in education and the first endorsement of foreign language being seen as an asset.

1965

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society program. When passed, it created a clear role for the federal government in K-12 policy, offering more than \$1 billion a year in aid under its first statutory section, known as Title I, to districts to help cover the cost of educating disadvantaged students. The law has been reauthorized and changed more than half a dozen times since initial legislation. For the most part, each new iteration has sought to expand the federal role in education.

1968

The Bilingual Education Act (BEA) provided funding for bilingual education in the form of competitive grants directly to school districts while provisions in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) created programs such as Head Start and Title I in an attempt to offset the impact of poverty on students in the public education system. The Bilingual Education Act did not require instruction in the students' native languages, but instead encouraged the development of new and innovative programs to teach students English. The Act also placed priority on supporting low income students to learn English. This Act came into conflict with certain states that had English-only laws for schools and it also ran the risk of violating de-segregation laws by separating these students into bilingual classes.

"The problem is that many of our school-age children come from homes where the mother tongue is not English. As a result, these children enter school not speaking English and not able to understand the instructions that is [sic] all conducted in English. [There is] an urgent need for this legislation to provide equal educational opportunity for those children who do not come to school with English-speaking ability. We received almost unanimous enthusiasm and support for this legislation as being an effective remedial program."

-- Senator Ralph Yarborough of Texas, on his support for the Bilingual Education Act of 1968

1972

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is enacted into law. Title IX prohibits federally funded educational institutions from discriminating against students or employees based on sex. It begins: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." As a result of Title IX, any school that receives any federal money from the elementary to university level—in short, nearly all schools—must provide fair and equal treatment of the sexes in all areas, including athletics.

1974

Chinese American students who were English Language Learners living in San Francisco filed the class action suit *Lau v. Nichols*. They claimed that since the schools did not provide English Language Learners such as Chinese Americans with extra support to learn English, the schools were violating Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits educational discrimination on the basis of national origin. Essentially, the question at hand was whether school administrators met their obligation to provide equal educational opportunities by treating all students the same, or whether they must offer special help for students learning English. Lower federal courts absolved the San Francisco school district of any responsibility for providing extra services for English Language Learners, but a unanimous Supreme Court disagreed, setting a precedent for providing equitable resources instead of equal resources to students and for the idea that language-based discrimination is another form of national origin discrimination.

1974

Milliken v. Bradley. A Supreme Court made up of Richard Nixon's appointees rules that schools may not be desegregated across school districts. This effectively legally segregates students of color in inner-city districts (i.e., Detroit) from white students in wealthier white suburban districts.

1975

President Gerald Ford signed into law the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142), now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In adopting this landmark civil rights measure, Congress opened public school doors for millions of children with disabilities and laid the foundation of the country's commitment to ensuring children with disabilities have opportunities to develop their talents, share their gifts, and contribute to their communities.

The law guaranteed access to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) to every child with a disability. Subsequent amendments, as reflected in the IDEA, have led to an

increased emphasis on access to the general education curriculum, the provision of services for young children from birth through five, transition planning, and accountability for the achievement of students with disabilities. IDEA upholds and protects the rights of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and their families.

Late 1970s

The so-called "taxpayers' revolt" leads to the passage of Proposition 13 in California and copy-cat measures like Proposition 2-1/2 in Massachusetts. These propositions freeze property taxes, which are a major source of funding for public schools. As a result, in twenty years California drops from first in the nation in per-student spending in 1978 to number 43 in 1998.

1996

California passes Proposition 209, which outlaws affirmative action in public employment, public contracting, and public education. Other states jump on the bandwagon with their own initiatives and efforts are made to pass similar legislation on a federal level.

2001

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which passed Congress with overwhelming bipartisan support in 2001 and was signed into law by President George W. Bush on Jan. 8, 2002, is the name for the most recent update to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The NCLB law—which grew out of concern that the American education system was no longer internationally competitive—increased the federal role in holding schools responsible for the academic progress of all students. And it put a special focus on ensuring that states and schools boost the performance of certain groups of students, such as English-language learners, students in special education, and poor and minority children, whose achievement, on average, trails their peers. States did not have to comply with the new requirements, but if they didn't, they risked losing federal Title I money.

2008

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell delivered his fifth annual State of Education Address and unveiled an ambitious, comprehensive plan aimed at closing California's pernicious achievement gap that exists between students who are white and students of color, as well as with English learners, students in poverty, and students with disabilities.

2010

The Texas School Board adopts revisions to the Texas social studies curriculum. The revised curriculum plays down the role of Thomas Jefferson among the founding fathers, questions the separation of church and state, and claims that the U.S. government was infiltrated by Communists during the Cold War.

2013

California's Budget Act included landmark legislation that greatly simplified the state's school finance system. The changes introduced by the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) represented a major shift in how California funds Local Educational Agencies (LEAs). For nearly 40 years, California relied on a system that included general purpose funding (known as revenue limits) and more than 50 tightly defined categorical programs to provide state funding to LEAs. Under LCFF, California funds school districts, charter schools, and county offices of education equally per student with adjustments based on grade levels and demographic characteristics. LCFF replaces complexity in favor of equity, transparency, and performance.

2016

California Governor, Jerry Brown, signs AB 2016, which modifies existing education code requirements around pupil instruction. It requires an ethnic studies model to be offered in grades 9-12. It is the intent of the legislation that local educational agencies submit course outlines for ethnic studies for approval as A-G courses.

In 2018, AB 2772 is amended to mandate one semester of ethnic studies to be included in high school graduation requirements commencing in 2023-2024. Although this bill was vetoed, several school districts have offered ethnic studies courses. The SBE recently released an Ethnic Studies Curriculum Model along with AB 331 potentially becoming a mandate to support these efforts.

School Board Equity Assessment

According to the Center for Public Education Report in 2011, there are eight characteristics of an effective school boards. School board members are encouraged to embrace each these characteristics with an equity lens in addition to three board actions to guide the work. Please complete with fellow board members to assess the basic functioning of your governance board as a precursor to the examination, revision, and creation of equity focused policy and practice.

To what extent does your school board effectively demonstrate the following characteristics?	Not Effective	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective
1. Our school board commits to a vision for equity through high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision.			
2. Our school board has strong shared beliefs and values about equity for students and their ability to learn, and of the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels.			
3. Our school board has a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals around equity.			
4. Our school board is accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on equity and policies to improve student achievement.			
5. Our school board is data savvy; we embrace and monitor quantitative and qualitative data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement to close equity gaps.			
6. Our school board aligns, monitors, and sustains resources, such as equity focused professional development, to meet district goals.			
7. Our school board leads as a united team with the superintendent, each from our respective roles, with mutual trust and strong equity focused collaboration.			
8. Our school board takes part in team development and equity focused training, sometimes with our superintendent, to build shared knowledge, values and commitments for our equity efforts.			
To what extent has the school board developed and implemented the following:	Not drafted/adopted	Drafted	Adopted
9. Our school board has developed an equity statement			
10. Our school board has developed an equity policy			
11. Our school board has developed an equity impact action plan to strategically address and measure the impact of the district's equity policies and practices for target student group achievement			

Adapted by Nicole Anderson and Associates Consulting, L.L.C. 2020

Center for Public Education



Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards

Chuck Dervarics and Eileen O'Brien

AN **nsba** PUBLICATION

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Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards

More than 90,000 men and women are members of local school boards in the United States, all serving as important trustees of the nation's public education systems. According to the National School Boards Association, these public officials serve on 13,809 elected or appointed boards in the U.S.

Most of the public knows that school boards do things like set the budgets, establish school boundaries and set school policies. But does school boards' work affect student achievement? The higher media visibility of teachers and principals in the push for better learning, while important, has led some to question whether school boards matter.

From a research perspective, it's a complex question. Isolating what makes an effective board—that is, one that impacts student achievement—involves evaluating virtually all functions of a board, from internal governance and policy formulation to communication with teachers, building administrators, and the public.

But the answer is: Yes, they do. In this research brief, NSBA's Center for Public Education looks at indicators of school board effectiveness. From this research, it is clear that school boards in high-achieving districts exhibit habits and characteristics that are markedly different from boards in low-achieving districts. In the most dramatic examples from this research, scholars compared districts with similar levels of poverty and disadvantage to determine factors that separate high-performing districts from those with low performance. In many cases, these differences included the approaches taken by local school boards.

So what do these boards do? Here are some examples:

- Boards in high-achieving districts are more likely to engage in goal setting and monitoring their progress.
- They are increasingly data savvy—identifying student needs and justifying decisions based on data.

- Board members possess detailed knowledge of their district, including initiatives to jump-start success.
- Board members have crafted a working relationship with superintendents, teachers, and administrators based on mutual respect, collegiality and a joint commitment to student success.

For the full list of eight characteristics of effective school boards, keep reading.

Background on the studies

Despite the pivotal role of school boards in the nation's educational framework, comparatively few studies focused on the practices and effectiveness of elected or appointed boards. As Sam Stringfield and Deborah Land noted in their 2002 study, *Educating At-Risk Students*, “quantitative and qualitative studies of board effectiveness are virtually non-existent,” (Land and Stringfield, National Society for the Study of Education, 2002). Nonetheless, while there may be no magic bullet to assess boards comprised of individuals with divergent views, there is a consistent body of research examining the characteristics and practices of effective school boards. (For the purpose of this paper, effective boards are those operating in high-achieving districts, particularly those that are making significant strides despite serving large numbers of disadvantaged students.)

Much of the research cited here focuses on school board/district practices and approaches gleaned through interviews, surveys, observations and qualitative measures rather than in-depth quantitative information. Several studies also date back to the early 2000s or earlier; as a result, the data have limitations.

Nonetheless, the research base now includes notable studies comparing the practices of boards in high-achieving districts and contrasting those with practices of boards in lower-achieving districts. Several of these include detailed case studies exploring the evolution of districts from low performing to high achieving—a process that includes discussion of the school board role. In addition, scholars have used quantitative methods to assess the effect of district leadership on student achievement; often, this assessment includes data and trends related to school board operation, thus providing rich details on the evolution and, in some cases, transformation of local boards.

Taken together, these reports provide a sound basis to explore the role played by school boards in student achievement. The pertinent studies for this paper fall into three general areas:

- Meta-analyses of education research, with a focus on the practices of boards, superintendents, and other school leaders;
- Case studies of high-achieving districts, with a focus on the evolving role of school boards; and
- Studies that compare school board practices in districts with similar demographics but substantially different student outcomes as reflected by annual assessments and other factors.

Meta-Analysis: In 2006, J. Timothy Waters and Robert Marzano of Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) examined 27 studies since 1970 that, they concluded, included rigorous quantitative methods to assess the effect of school district leadership on student achievement. Their analysis, *School District Leadership That Works: The Effect of Superintendent Leadership on Student Achievement: Meta-analysis of Influence of District Administrators on Student Achievement*, looked at more than two

dozen studies covering more than 2,800 districts and 3.4 million students. Of the 27 studies examined, 14 had information about the relationship between district leadership and average student academic achievement.

Case Studies: Several studies on district leadership focus at least in part on board activities. The Learning First Alliance study, *Beyond Islands of Excellence*, (Togneri and Anderson, 2003), examined the practices in five school districts with high student test scores despite moderate to high student poverty levels. Districts in the study were Aldine, Tex., Independent School District; Chula Vista, Calif., Elementary School District; Kent County Public Schools in Maryland; Minneapolis, Minn., Public Schools, and Providence, R.I., Public Schools.

Also, a study of 10 districts in five states, *Getting There from Here* (Goodman, Fulbright, and Zimmerman, 1997), sought to identify the effect of quality governance on student achievement. Included in the analysis was an examination of the relationship between school board and superintendent and characteristics of effective board leadership. Researchers selected the districts to reflect diversity in size, geography, student achievement, graduation rates, dropout rates, board/superintendent relations and race/ethnic factors.

Studies with Comparison Districts: One of the richest data sets available is the Lighthouse I study of the Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB). Looking at similar districts with either unusually high or unusually low records on student achievement, the project examined the role of boards and how they relate to student achievement. In studying Georgia districts, Lighthouse I contrasted the knowledge, beliefs, and actions of school board members from high- and low performing districts. Since conducting this original study in 1998-2000, IASB has expanded the project into an action research approach, identifying pilot districts in Iowa for further testing of this concept (Lighthouse II) and launching a multi-state project focused on board leadership (Lighthouse III). Multiple Lighthouse research papers were cited in this report, including *The Lighthouse Inquiry: School Board/Superintendent Team Behaviors in School Districts with Extreme Differences in Student Achievement* (Iowa Association of School Boards, 2001), *The Lighthouse Re-*

EIGHT CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD

1. Effective school boards commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision
2. Effective school boards have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn, and of the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels.
3. Effective school boards are accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.
4. Effective school boards have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.
5. Effective boards are data savvy; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.
6. Effective school boards align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.
7. Effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.
8. Effective school boards take part in team development and training, sometimes with their superintendents, to build shared knowledge, values and commitments for their improvement efforts.

search: *Past, Present and Future: School Board Leadership for Improving Student Achievement* (Iowa School Boards Foundation, 2007) and in the Thomas Alsbury-edited *The Future of School Board Governance: Relevancy and Revelation* (2008).

In addition, *Foundations for Success: Case Studies of How Urban School Systems Improve Student Achievement* (MDRC for Council of Great City Schools, 2002) examined what it termed “fast-moving” urban districts and compared them with slower-moving districts of similar size and demographics. In selecting the districts, researchers looked for cities with improvement in reading and math in more than half of their grades through spring 2001. Districts also had to achieve growth rates faster than their respective states and narrow racial achievement gaps. The project ultimately focused on Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, the Houston Independent School District, the Sacramento, Calif., United School District, and a subset of New York City schools known as the Chancellor’s District. One key research question was to examine district-level strategies used to improve student achievement and reduce racial achievement disparities. Several of these strategies involved school boards.

Finally, a 1993 report on school leadership in British Columbia, Canada, *The Politics of Excellence: Trustee Leadership and School District Ethos*, concluded that districts with a productive “ethos” produced higher-than-expected student achievement and lower-than-expected costs over time (LaRocque and Coleman, 1993). The role of the board was part of this district “ethos.”

In reviewing these studies, it is reasonable to conclude that school boards in high-achieving school districts look different, and that they often feature characteristics and approaches that differ from those in lower-achieving districts.

Eight characteristics of effective boards

1. Effective school boards commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision.

In comparing district leadership and student achievement, Waters and Marzano (2006) identified five specific district leadership responsibilities that positively correlated with student achievement:

- Establishing a collaborative process to set goals;
- Establishing “non-negotiable goals” (that is, goals all staff must act upon once set by the board) in at least two areas: student achievement and classroom instruction;
- Having the board align with and support district goals;
- Monitoring goals for achievement and instruction; and
- Using resources to support achievement and instruction goals.

“Publicly adopting broad five-year goals for achievement and instruction and consistently supporting these goals, both publicly and privately, are examples of board-level actions that we found to be positively correlated with student achievement,” they said. Typically, they adopted the goals with specific achievement targets and benchmarks. “The board ensures that these goals remain the top priorities in the district and that no

other initiatives detract attention or resources from accomplishing these goals.” The districts also provided professional development to board members and examined the effectiveness of such training.

In *Beyond Islands of Excellence*, Togneri and Anderson (2003) provided examples of the positive effects of goal setting. In its case studies, the majority of high-achieving districts adopted specific goals and boards adopted policies to consistently support them. At three case study sites—Kent County, Md., Minneapolis, and Providence—boards adopted broad strategic plans that contained both goals and the action steps needed to attain them. To assess progress on a regular basis, Kent County and Minneapolis also added indicators of success to the plan so board members could review gains or address challenges.

Each district also adopted what Togneri and Anderson termed a simply stated vision of student success. For goals on student achievement, board members identified brief, one-line vision statements such as “All our students will achieve on grade level” and used them in public and staff presentations. Significantly, the report said, school boards and superintendents also carefully examined how to stretch limited dollars to focus sufficient funding on the goals.

The Lighthouse I studies (2001, 2007) also offer important details about the importance of identifying goals. In high-achieving districts, board members adopted goals and had detailed knowledge about their relationship to curriculum, instruction, assessment and staff development. As a result, these public officials could identify not only the purposes and processes behind school improvement initiatives but also the board’s role in supporting these efforts. By comparison in low-achieving districts, board members were “only vaguely aware of school improvement initiatives,” researchers noted. “They were sometimes aware of goals, but seldom able to describe actions being taken by staff members to improve learning.”

Notably, these differences extended down to the staff level. In high-achieving districts, staff members could link the school board’s goals to building-level goals for student learning and explain how the goals impacted classrooms. “Staff members identified clear goals for improvement, described how staff development supported the goals, and how they were monitoring progress based on data about student learning.” By comparison in the low-achieving districts, “There was little evidence of a pervasive focus on school renewal at any level when it was not present at the board level.”

2. Effective school boards have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn, and of the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels.

In the Lighthouse I studies (2001, 2007), board members consistently expressed their belief in the learning ability of all children and gave specific examples of ways that learning had improved as a result of district initiatives. Poverty, lack of parental involvement and other factors were described as challenges to be overcome, not as excuses. Board members expected to see improvements in student achievement quickly as a result of initiatives. Comments made by board members in Lighthouse were indicative of the differences. In a high-achieving district, one board member noted, “This is a place for all kids to excel.” Another board member noted, “Sometimes people say the poor students have limits. I say all kids have limits. I believe we have not reached the limits of any of the kids in our system.”

Yet in low-achieving districts, board members frequently referred to external pressures as the main rea-

sons for lack of student success. Board members often focused on factors that they believed kept students from learning, such as poverty, lack of parental support, societal factors, or lack of motivation. Board members expected it would take years to see any improvements in student achievement. For these board members, the reasons for pursuing change often were simple ones—to meet state mandates (and avoid sanctions) and a desire to not “have the lowest test scores” in the state.

In addition, board members in low-achieving districts offered many negative comments about students and teachers when they were interviewed by Lighthouse researchers. Said one, “You can lead a horse to water but you can’t make them drink. This applies to both students and staff.”

In one low-performing district, teachers made 67 negative comments about students and their parents during Lighthouse interviews. In a similar number of interviews in a high-performing district, there were only four such comments.

3. Effective school boards are accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.

According to Goodman, Fulbright, and Zimmerman (1997), another characteristic of quality governance is the ability to focus on student achievement while spending comparatively little time on day-to-day operational issues. In interviews with hundreds of board members and staff across the districts, they found that high-performing boards focus on establishing a vision supported by policies that target student achievement. Yet poor governance is characterized by factors such as micro-management by the board; confusion of the appropriate roles for the board member and superintendent; interpersonal conflict between board chair and superintendent; and board member disregard for the agenda process and the chain of command.

Case studies of individual districts in other studies support many of these findings. In Chula Vista, Calif., the board took its policy role seriously and developed policies that supported instructional reform. As profiled in Togneri and Anderson (2003), the focus began when top administrators recognized a need for a new cadre of exceptional principals and asked the school board for help. In response, the board approved a policy with higher salaries for principals, giving the district more leverage to attract quality candidates to the district. Later, the board granted the central office greater flexibility to provide principal raises and bonuses. Members also supported the superintendent in dismissing principals who did not meet performance standards; this smaller but still significant action reflected the policy and partnership approach adopted earlier by the board.

Other case studies in this report were replete with examples of board commitment to policy and accountability, something often reflected through visions and strategic plans. In Aldine, Tex., board members made sure to adopt strategic plans that placed children’s learning needs front and center. As one Aldine board member explained, “Everything we do is based on what’s best for the children, period. Whether you are dealing with an administrative issue or a student issue, we ask, ‘What’s best for the children?’”

With everyone on board to promote achievement, boards encouraged their staffs to tackle difficult issues and seek innovative solutions. As a result, the districts engaged in a collegial policy-making process that emphasized the need to find solutions. An administrator in Kent County, Md., summed up the board’s work as follows: “The board recognizes its role as a policy-maker. [Board members] are very professional.

They never humiliate each other. They have no hidden agendas. The goal is what is best for the children.”

Boards held the superintendent and his or her colleagues accountable for progress but did not engage in the daily administration of schools. Explained one board member: “I am not a professional educator.... [The superintendent and her staff] are the professionals, and we say to them, “These are the results we want to see; you are in charge of how to do it.”

Likewise, Snipes, Doolittle, and Herlihy’s case studies (2002) include similar findings. The groups concluded that fast-moving districts had developed a consensus among board members and other leaders on the identification and implementation of improvement strategies. This required a new role for the school board, which focused on decisions “that support improved student achievement rather than on the day-to-day operations of the district.”

In Lighthouse II (2007), researchers identified five pilot school districts and provided technical assistance and support to the boards based on research findings documented in Lighthouse I.

Results from this study also showed that districts made gains when they were able to focus on achievement rather than administrative issues. In the majority of districts, boards spent more than double the amount of time on policy and student achievement than they did prior to Lighthouse II. It was also common for these districts to schedule additional work sessions on student achievement. (More information on Lighthouse II is in the sidebar on the next page).

A DOZEN DANGER SIGNS

While this paper did not specifically focus on characteristics of ineffective school boards, it may be helpful to review some of the descriptions of ineffective boards mentioned in the research:

1. Only vaguely aware of school improvement initiatives, and seldom able to describe actions being taken to improve student learning
2. Focused on external pressures as the main reasons for lack of student success, such as poverty, lack of parental support, societal factors, or lack of motivation
3. Offer negative comments about students and teachers
4. Micro-manage day-to-day operations
5. Disregard the agenda process and the chain of command
6. Left out the information flow; little communication between board and superintendent
7. Quick to describe a lack of parent interest in education or barriers to community outreach
8. Looked at data from a “blaming” perspective, describing teachers, students, and families as major causes for low performance
9. Little understanding or coordination on staff development for teachers
10. Slow to define a vision
11. Did not hire a superintendent who agreed with their vision
12. Little professional development together as a board

4. Effective school boards have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.

The Lighthouse I studies are particularly relevant in conveying this theme. Looking across high- and low-achieving districts in Georgia, school board members in high achieving districts had strong communication between the superintendent, staff, and each other. They received information from many sources including the superintendent, curriculum director, principals, teachers, and sources outside the district. While the superintendent was a primary source of information, he or she was not the only source. In addition, findings and research were shared among all board members. By comparison, in low-achieving districts, board members expressed concern that not all information was shared or shared equally. As a result, researchers said, “Some felt left out of the information flow.”

In high-achieving districts, school board members could provide specific examples of how they connected and listened to the community, and were able to identify concrete ways they promoted this involvement. Likewise, staff members in these districts described the boards as supportive, noting that these public officials “would respect and listen to them.” In interviews, board members were quick to note how they communicated actions and goals to staff. One strategy was to schedule post-board meetings to provide teachers and administrators with in-depth briefings on policy decisions.

By comparison, school boards in

**CONVERTING RESEARCH TO ACTION:
LIGHTHOUSE II**

Building on the success of Lighthouse I—which identified the different knowledge, beliefs and actions of school boards in high-achieving districts—the Iowa Association of School Boards expanded the initiative to begin embedding these ideas in other jurisdictions.

Under Lighthouse II, from 2002 to 2007, IASB identified five pilot districts in Iowa and offered technical assistance and support to the board, superintendent, and, at some sites, district leadership teams. The goal was to move entire districts from one set of assumptions, beliefs and practices to another: the set possessed by the high-achieving districts in Lighthouse I. After five years of work, the project showed significant gains:

- In three of the five districts, the time spent on policy and student achievement during regular board meetings increased from 16 percent to 37 percent.
- By the end of the project, boards in all five districts regularly scheduled extra time for boards to focus on student achievement.
- Four of the sites showed significant increases—some as high as 90 percent—in the number of staff and board members who could consistently describe the district’s school improvement goals.
- At all sites, 83 percent to 100 percent of all staff and board members reported a clear, district-wide focus on improving literacy.
- All districts, by year 3 of the project, agreed strongly that local school boards can positively affect student achievement.
- By year 3, significant gains on a measure of reading comprehension were seen at every grade level in one district. In addition, in the fourth year of the study, four of the five sites showed statistically significant gains in student reading and/or math for at least two grade levels on the statewide norm-referenced measure of achievement.

Starting in 2008, IASB launched the Lighthouse III project, through which the association is working with several states to outline best practices for school boards and state school board associations.

low-achieving districts were likely to cite communication and outreach barriers. They were quick to describe a lack of parent interest in education; in fact, they were able to list only a few efforts to solicit community involvement. Compared with board members from high-achieving districts, they frequently noted frustration with the lack of community involvement and said there was little they could do about it. As for relationships within the district, staff members from the comparison low-achieving districts contacted for the research often said they didn't know the board members at all.

While such findings perhaps could be limited to high- and low-achieving districts in Georgia, other research highlights similar findings. Similar factors were evident in Waters and Marzano's 2006 meta-analysis of 27 studies. In this study, the authors found that high-achieving districts actively involved board members and community stakeholders in setting goals.

While individual board members did pursue their own issues, the researchers said, there was a reluctance to place these issues at center stage. "When individual board member interests and expectations distract from board-adopted achievement and instructional goals, they are not contributing to district success, but in fact, may be working in opposition to that end." School board members realized, the authors noted, that these issues can be a distraction from core district goals.

5. Effective boards are data savvy; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.

In the Lighthouse I study, board members in high-achieving districts identified specific student needs through data, and justified decisions based on that data. In addition, board members were not shy about discussing trends on dropout rates, test scores, and student needs, with many seeking such information on a regular or monthly basis.

By comparison, board members in low-achieving districts tended to greet data with a "blaming" perspective, describing teachers, students and families as major causes for low performance. In one district, the superintendent "controls the reaction of the board to recommendations by limiting the information he gives to them." The Lighthouse I study contrasts this with the policy of a high-performance district, where the superintendent "believes sharing information will get them to react and encourage engagement." Board members in this district view data as a diagnostic tool, without the emotional response of assessing blame.

Board members in lower-performing districts also provided little evidence of considering data in the decision making process. In these districts, board members frequently discussed their decisions through anecdotes and personal experiences rather than by citing data. In many cases, the study noted, "The board talked very generally about test scores and relied on the interpretation made by the superintendent." As a result, board members believed the superintendent "owned" information, leaving it to the top administrator to interpret the data and recommend solutions.

Togneri and Anderson (2003) also emphasized how effective school boards embraced data. Boards in high-achieving districts were not afraid to confront negative data and, in fact, used it as a basis to improve teaching and learning. In Minneapolis, a renewed emphasis on data has helped drive improvement. Yet back in the mid-1990s, the district showed a wide achievement gap between white and minority students and posted a high school graduation rate barely above 40 percent. When the city's Chamber of Commerce

failed to support the school board's request for a tax increase, the board began a fundamental rethinking based on goals and data. It hired a new superintendent with a strong foundation in instructional improvement. Together, the board and superintendent developed goals and performance indicators to rank and monitor school progress. This process ultimately helped build trust among school and community leaders, eventually leading to district progress and, later, successful new tax proposals beneficial to schools.

Minneapolis was typical of the report's study districts, which "had the courage to acknowledge poor performance and the will to seek solutions." With the board, superintendent and community supporting the new process, the district developed a vision focused on student learning and instructional improvement with system-wide curricula connected to state standards with clear expectations for teachers.

6. Effective school boards align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.

Successful boards recognize the need to support high priorities even during times of fiscal uncertainty. One leading example is in providing professional development for teachers, administrators and other staff. According to LaRocque and Coleman (1993), effective boards saw a responsibility to maintain high standards even in the midst of budget challenges. "To this end, the successful boards supported extensive professional development programs for administrators and teachers, even during times of [fiscal] restraint," they wrote in *The Politics of Excellence: Trustee Leadership and School District Ethos*.

Lighthouse I researchers (2001, 2007) also identified research-based professional development for staff as one of seven "conditions for improvement" typically evident in high-achieving districts. From the board's perspective, members did not simply provide funding for such professional development – they could cite specific examples of activities and their link to improvement plans. "In high-achieving districts, board members described staff development activities in the district and could describe the link between teacher training and board or district goals for students," the study noted. "Board members described a belief in the importance of staff development activities focused on student needs."

In low-achieving districts, however, board members said teachers made their own decisions on staff development based on perceived needs in the classroom or for certification. "Board members knew there was a budget for staff development but were unsure whether there was a plan for staff development," the study noted. In fact, board members frequently made "disparaging remarks" about staff development, calling it an ineffective strategy.

Lighthouse II, as noted in Alsbury (2008) further reinforced this point. Boards not only took an active interest in professional development but also provided the infrastructure for such programming to succeed. "For most boards, this required significant changes in the allocation of resources (people, time and money) and would not have happened without a clear understanding of the characteristics of quality professional development and a belief in the importance of improving the knowledge and skills of educators in order to improve student outcomes."

Additional evidence is available in the Snipes, Doolittle and Herlihy's 2002 analysis of high- and low-achieving districts. In high-achieving districts, the board and superintendent support uniform professional development built on curriculum. In lower-achieving districts, professional development may vary extensively

from school to school. One example was in Sacramento, Calif., where teachers received at least 18 hours of in-service training per year based on uniform curricula. New teachers also received six full days of instructional training, and teachers had common planning periods to encourage collaboration on lesson plans and strategies to address student needs. In the Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N.C., schools, weeklong seminars for Advanced Placement teachers, leadership retreats for principals and financial support for attaining national board certification were among effective strategies by the district to improve curriculum.

Waters and Marzano (2006) also touts the importance of professional development. While not specifically examining the school board role in this process, this study on leadership notes that “a meaningful commitment of funding must be dedicated to professional development for teachers and principals. This professional development should be focused on building the knowledge, skills and competencies teachers and principals need to accomplish a district’s goals.”

7. Effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.

In *Getting There from Here*, Goodman and colleagues (1997) concluded that those with a strong board/superintendent relationship had greater student achievement as measured by dropout rates, the percentage of students going to college, and aptitude test scores. Goodman’s review of characteristics of quality governance included several that were directly related to school boards and their relationships:

- A trusting and collaborative relationship between the board and superintendent;
- Creation by the board of conditions and organizational structures that allowed the superintendent to function as the chief executive officer and instructional leader of the district;
- Evaluation of the superintendent according to mutually agreed upon procedures; and
- Effective communication between the board chair and superintendent and among board members.

Likewise, Snipes, Doolittle, and Herlihy (2002) also emphasizes the importance of these factors. In successful districts, boards defined an initial vision for the district and sought a superintendent who matched this vision. Nowhere was this truer than in Sacramento, Calif., one of the case study sites. In 1996, a mayor’s commission concluded that the city schools, beset with high superintendent turnover and other problems, had “a lack of accountability and deplorable building conditions.” A group of individuals focused on progress won seats on the school board, and they quickly bought out the contract of the old superintendent and hired one sharing their views. The new superintendent and board sought input from thousands of community stakeholders and ultimately adopted an action plan with specific achievement benchmarks based on student assessments such as the SAT-9. The board and superintendent also established seven “vital signs” of success, including high rates of kindergarten readiness; a student attendance rate of at least 95 percent; increased proficiency of English Language Learners; and objectives that at least 90 percent of students attain math and reading proficiency and graduate high school. Within four years, the district saw consistent gains in math and reading plus a drop in the disparity between white and Hispanic student achievement.

In contrast to this “moving” district, comparison districts had no such impetus to work toward success. Boards were slow to define a vision and often recruited a superintendent with his or her own ideas and

platform. The differences between the districts only increased over time, as boards and superintendents in high-achieving districts jointly refined their visions over time, assessed district strengths and weaknesses and had all signs of a stable relationship. By comparison, less successful districts featured boards and superintendents that were not in alignment, as the superintendent “may develop solutions without board involvement.” Such boards also may not hold superintendents accountable for goals.

8. Effective school boards take part in team development and training, sometimes with their superintendents, to build shared knowledge, values, and commitments for their improvement efforts.

Board member development and training is a clear theme within this research base. In high-achieving Lighthouse I study districts (2001), school board members said they regularly participated in activities in which they learned together as a group. They cited frequent work and study sessions with opportunities for inquiry and discussion prior to making a final decision. In low-achieving districts, however, board members said they did not learn together except when the superintendent or other staff members made presentations of data.

Other studies focused on this subject as well, sometimes within the context of the responsibilities of an effective superintendent. In the 2006 Waters and Marzano meta-analysis, for example, one key goal for superintendents is to produce an environment in which the board is aligned with and supportive of district goals. The study suggests that supporting board members’ professional development is one of several ways that superintendents can help realize this goal.

In their study on effective governance, Goodman and colleagues (1997) emphasized in detail the importance of formal training for board members. They recommended orientation workshops for new members soon after their election. Their “sample policy statement” on orientation included a commitment by the board and administrative staff to help all new members learn board functions, policies and procedures. Chief responsibility for orientation should reside with the superintendent and board chair, they noted, but this work should include meetings with top administrative personnel to examine services, policies, and programs. As a guide, the report cited policies in Kentucky requiring a specific number of hours of training for board members based on their experience. This ranged from a high of 12 hours of annual training for board members with zero to three years experience to four hours a year for those with at least eight years of board service. Emphasizing the importance of the board/superintendent relationship, the study also recommended that superintendents participate in orientation and development workshops alongside their board members.

Elsewhere, two of the effective districts in the Togneri and Anderson (2003) study utilized formal training and professional development for school board members. In Kent County, Md., the board adopted the Baldrige in Education process, which created a strong working relationship among the central office, board, principal and teachers. In Minneapolis, the school board engaged in the Carver method, which emphasizes the board’s role in establishing goals, setting indicators, aligning resources to goals, monitoring progress, and communicating with the public.

Finally, LaRocque and Coleman (1993) illustrated the value of both formal and informal learning activities for board members. According to these researchers, effective school districts in Canada offered a mixture of learning activities for their board members, or “trustees,” including retreats, special meetings, work

sessions, school visits and even social events. As a result, the trustees had a “willingness to meet regularly with the professionals in the district to discuss what was happening and what should be happening.” This commitment conveyed to staff the importance of district goals and the importance of the staff members’ work in supporting them. In addition, they noted, “The successful boards did not just rely on district staff reports...They obtained information about programs in different ways and from different sources, and sought opportunities to interact directly with administrators and teachers.”

Related finding: Stability of leadership

In the 2002 Snipes et. al study, researchers noted that fast-moving districts had political and organizational stability, as evidenced by low rates of school board and superintendent turnover. Goodman’s research echoed all of these points, concluding two characteristics of high achieving districts were long tenures by superintendents and school board members and regular retreats by senior staff and board members for evaluation and goal setting purposes.

Similarly, Togneri and Anderson (2003) note the long tenure of board members and superintendents in high-achieving districts. “They set their courses and stayed with them for years,” the study said. Among the five successful districts profiled, superintendents in three districts had been at their jobs for at least eight years. In most of those profiled, the majority of board members had been serving in that capacity for 10 or more years. “That continuity allowed superintendents and boards to grow together in their approaches to change and to better understand each other’s work.”

Conclusion

During the past 15 years, a number of research studies have begun to document the value that school boards and their members add to the development of an effective public education system. This fledgling base of research provides a foundation for boards and other policymakers. The research also is timely, since it coincides with a period in U.S. public policy that has focused substantially greater attention on accountability in public education. Much of this research has contrasted boards in low-performing and high-performing districts, thereby providing best practices for new and veteran board members nationwide. While there is a need for additional research—a study on boards in districts with mid-range achievement might be one useful step—it is increasingly clear that board members in high-performing districts have attitudes, knowledge and approaches that separate them from their counterparts in lower-achieving districts.

Based on the studies included in this report, it is clear that school boards in high-achieving districts hold a high, shared vision about the capabilities of both students and staff—they believe that more is possible and are motivated to improve results for students. They are policy and accountability driven, focusing their time and energy on governance-level actions related to student achievement and classroom instruction. They engage in goal-setting processes that can drive action in the district to improve. They align resources—including staff professional development—around those goals. They are data savvy—using data to both diagnose problems and to monitor and drive continuous improvement efforts. They communicate with and engage staff and community and work well together as a team and in collaborative leadership with their superintendents. And, they commit to their own learning, building the knowledge and skills it takes to govern during a period of educational reform.

CENTER FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

In this era of fiscal constraints and a national environment focused on accountability, boards in high-performing districts can provide an important blueprint for success. In the process, they can offer a road map for boards in lower-achieving school districts nationwide.

This report (2011) was written by Chuck Dervarics and Eileen O'Brien. O'Brien is an independent education researcher and consultant in Alexandria, Virginia. Much of her work has focused on access to quality education for disadvantaged and minority populations. O'Brien has a Master of Public Administration from George Washington University and a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology from Loyola University, Chicago. Chuck Dervarics is an education writer and former editor of Report on Preschool Programs, a national independent newsletter on pre-k, Head Start, and child care policy. As a writer and researcher, he has contributed to case studies and research projects of the Southern Education Foundation, the American Council on Education, and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, often focusing on issues facing disadvantaged populations. Dervarics has a Bachelors degree from George Washington University.

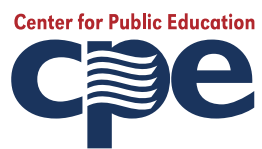
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Avoiding Racial

Students experiencing racism can't wait for schools to move at their own pace and comfort level.

Paul Gorski

In schools committed to racial equity, educators who resist anti-racist measures should feel uneasy, isolated on the outskirts of their schools' institutional cultures. I mean this literally. The educators least invested in racial equity should wonder whether they belong.

Sadly, research shows the inverse tends to be true in many schools, even when leaders claim equity commitments. Often, the educators most adamant about racial equity are cast to the margins of institutional culture. They are the ones feeling isolated, wondering whether

they belong (Kohli, 2018; Picower, 2011). Colleagues call them troublemakers for naming what others refuse to name. Some are shushed or encouraged to adopt a color-blind perspective by equity-skittish leaders. They are accused of being too “political” simply for pointing out conditions that harm families of color. Educators of color who raise these concerns tend to face even greater hostility, as Kohli (2018) documented through the narratives of racial-justice-oriented teachers of color. They often are labelled “militant” or “angry” for telling the racial equity truth.

This is a failure of equity leadership.

A Racial Equity Reckoning

If the most emphatic racial equity advocates feel silenced and less central to institutional culture than their equity-resistant colleagues, what we have from an equity point of view is a sick institution.

Any meaningful accounting of racial inequities in schools must reckon with this reality. Is our commitment real? Why do emphatic equity advocates often face harsher repercussions for their advocacy than equity heel-draggers face for their inaction? Why is taking a strong, impassioned stand on racism interpreted as *deviant* while refusing to take a stand on racism is interpreted as *in a developmental process* (Mayorga & Picower, 2018)?

Are we driven by authentic desires for racial equity? Or are we content with rearranging inequities, hiding them behind multicultural arts fairs and diversity clubs (Au, 2017)?

The disturbing reality is, in my 20 years of experience working with schools and districts on matters of equity and justice, I've found that most initiatives and strategies that pass for "racial equity" efforts in schools pose less of a threat to racism than to the possibility of racial justice. Following Olsson's (1997) accounting of the detours white people follow to protect their privilege and avoid the messy work of racial justice, I call these initiatives and strategies *equity detours*.

The detours vary in scope and nefariousness but share a function: They create an illusion of progress toward

have in common is that they mask racial inequity. They relieve us of the responsibility to name and eliminate the ways racism operates in our schools (Ladson-Billings, 2017). Rather than being paths to equity, they are detours around it.

Four Racial Equity Detours

Described below are four racial equity detours commonly embraced in schools,¹ followed by equity principles that can help educators avoid these detours and build a more transformational racial equity approach.

1 Pacing-for-Privilege Detour

This detour underlies the other detours. It speaks to the situation described earlier, wherein an equity approach coddles the hesitancies of people with the least racial equity investment while punishing people with the most investment.

In too many schools, the pace of equity progress prioritizes the comfort and interests of people who have the least interest in that progress. Professional development in these schools appears designed to accommodate the feelings and fears of white educators in "difficult"

Equity Detours

equity while cementing, or even exacerbating, inequity. They can be more devastating than explicit racism because they do racism's work while consuming resources ostensibly earmarked for racial equity. They are the *anti-anti-racism*.

For example, people who study equity initiatives in schools have tracked educational leaders' tendencies, in the name of equity, either to implement deficit-oriented strategies, such as "grit" initiatives that obscure inequity (Kohn, 2014) or, worse, to build equity efforts around debunked approaches that create more inequity, like the "mindset of poverty." Some educational leaders inexplicably continue to embrace the "mindset of poverty" even though it reinforces racialized stereotypes (Redeaux, 2011)—and despite the fact that research clarified that *there is no such thing as a mindset of poverty* 50 years ago (Valentine, 1968).

What all these types of initiatives and frameworks



conversations about race rather than to advance equity for students of color (Swanson & Welton, 2018). A common “equity” PD framework in these contexts is *cultural competence*—an approach that provides a way to talk about “cultural differences” without having to name or confront racism (Gorski, 2016a; Pon, 2009). Cultural competence is important. But by itself it’s no threat to racism.

The hard truth is, racial equity cannot be achieved with an obsessive commitment to “meeting people where they are” when “where they are” is fraught with racial bias and privilege. Students, families, and educators experiencing racism cannot afford to wait for us to saunter toward a more serious racial equity vision. They cannot afford to wait, in particular, for all white educators to ease into racial equity commitments at a pace of our choosing while they suffer the consequences of our casualness.

In schools committed to equity, the time is *now*. We must prioritize equity over the comfort of equity-reluctant educators. We move on racial justice first by honestly identifying and addressing all the ways racism operates in our schools, and then we bridge the equity hesitators to our equity vision. We refuse to equivocate on racial justice. We find the will to implement, and hold one another accountable to, policy and practice changes *today*, rather than waiting for an elusive consensus.

When I make this argument to education leaders, they often emphasize the importance of staff buy-in. I appreciate consensus-based leadership—but not always when it comes to equity. The school-to-prison pipeline is flowing (Annamma, Morrison, & Jackson, 2014).

The hard truth is that racial equity cannot be achieved with an obsessive commitment to “meeting people where they are” when “where they are” is fraught with racial bias and privilege.

Students who are disproportionately targeted with assignment to special education, harsh applications of discipline policy, unengaging pedagogy, and the sorts of “school reform” initiatives that redistribute access up the privilege continuum don’t need consensus. They need justice.

Start where we need to be: *Equity is neither optional nor negotiable. This is who we are as a school; these are the values to which we will be held accountable.* Our best resources in these efforts are equity-minded educators—the ones accustomed to the shushing. When we make them the center of our schools’ and districts’ institutional identities, we are primed for equity progress.

2 Poverty of Culture Detour

Culture is one important equity consideration. However, although racial identities may inform cultural identities, racial inequities aren’t predominantly cultural misunderstandings. Racism is a tangled structural mess of power, oppression, and unjust distributions of access and opportunity. This mess cannot be resolved with greater cultural awareness alone.

I call this the *poverty of culture* detour in honor of Gloria Ladson-Billings (2006). In “It’s Not the Culture of Poverty, It’s the Poverty of Culture,” she describes the hazards of adopting diversity frameworks built around vague notions of “culture.”

“[T]he problem of culture in teaching is not merely one of exclusion,” she explains. “It is also one of overdeterrmination. . . . [C]ulture is randomly and regularly used to explain everything . . . from school failure to problems with behavior management and discipline” (p. 104).

The result is that we too often attribute educational disparities to students’ cultures. We cannot allow racism-infused misperceptions of *their* cultures to justify *our* failure to create racially just schools. Often, we interpret racial disparities in which students are suspended or expelled, for example, not as the result of racial bias, as research shows it primarily to be (Rudd, 2014), but as a cultural defect in communities of color. So we might attempt to solve these disparities by adjusting the behaviors, mindsets, or emotions of students of color rather than by adjusting educators’ racial presumptions or schools’ inequitable practices.

We cannot fix a problem we refuse to name. If our equity initiatives feature the word *culture* more than the word *racism*, we’re probably off track. If we adopt an approach that obscures racism behind vague nomenclature like *cultural competence* or *the diverse kids*, we might be off track.

3 Deficit Ideology Detour

If we spend any of our equity efforts attempting to “fix” students of color—fortifying their

grittiness, modifying their mindsets, adjusting their emotions—we need a reaccounting, not only of our equity understandings, but also of our equity intentions. These strategies locate the source of educational outcome disparities within communities of color while often ignoring the role of racism—the clearest sign of *deficit ideology* (Gorski, 2016b).

We should be instinctively suspicious of popular educational approaches that often detour us around equity with a deficit approach. For example, presuming we can resolve racial inequities by simply teaching students of color to have grit is like presuming we can resolve climate change by teaching coastal communities to swim faster. It shifts the onus of responsibility away from schools and onto the very youth who are cheated out of equitable opportunity—and who, due to this cheating, often already tend to be quite resilient. It can obscure structural conditions with which marginalized communities contend. What good is grit against curricular erasure or inequitable school policy?

As somebody who attended school having experienced the childhood trauma of sexual abuse and often found myself being punished for the implications of that abuse, I find the growing interest in mindfulness and trauma-informed practices compelling. But too often, these practices are adopted as though they are racial equity initiatives. In some cases, we offer students of color coping mechanisms rather than correcting in-school conditions—like inequitable policy or racially tinged tracking practices—that exacerbate racism's traumas. Our best strategy for minimizing the impact of racism is to eliminate racism. Trauma-informed practices as implemented

in most schools don't do that.

Before we follow the deficit ideology detour, we should ask ourselves some questions. In whose image is school policy and institutional culture crafted? Which students have the most access to higher-order pedagogies, relevant curricula, and a full range of course options? Which students face grinding inequities in and out of school? What do trauma-informed practices look like for students whose primary source of trauma is the racism they experience *at school*?

Equity initiatives should focus on eliminating conditions that marginalize students—never on fixing students of color. If we cannot describe how our efforts are eliminating those conditions, it's time for an equity overhaul.

4 Celebrating Diversity Detour

Recently, while visiting a colleague's classroom to facilitate a conversation about race and poverty, I asked a group of African American and Latinx 10th grade students about their school's upcoming Diverse Friends Day. For one lunch period, they would be forcibly integrated, coerced into celebrating diversity by sitting with classmates racially or ethnically different from themselves—classmates with whom some of them normally wouldn't socialize.

"They mean well, but this activity is racist," Pam shared.²

"I don't know about racist," Tariq responded, "but I don't want to do it."

José added, "A lot of the white students don't like us. I don't want to be forced to hang out with them."

I asked Pam to elaborate on her observation that Diverse Friends Day is racist. "There's a lot of racism in this school," she insisted.

She wondered how disturbing her lunch—the only time she could relax in a predominantly white school—was going to change that. "I think Diverse Friends Day is for white people," she concluded.

Is she wrong? I don't think so, especially in the absence of more serious racial equity efforts, which these students agreed were missing from their school. In my experience, many "celebrating diversity" initiatives are crafted to help white students learn about diversity—not *racism*, but *diversity*—in ways that will be most comfortable for them.

In some cases, students of color are used essentially as props for the gentle diversity education of white students through activities like Diverse Friends Day. This allows white people to opt out of considering racial justice while deriving social and cultural benefits from diversity awareness. It creates the illusion of diversity appreciation while entrenching inequity.

Requiring students of color to participate in these diversity spectacles while failing to attend adequately to inequity can be exploitive. Pam, Tariq, and José didn't need to share lunch with white students to learn about difference, much less how racism operated around them. They developed these insights as a matter of survival. White educators were asking them to celebrate a diversity in which their experiences were invisible. This is one way white privilege persists even in the context of diversity efforts.

Five Principles of Equity Literacy

At this point, I presume readers are thinking, "So what *should* equity efforts look like?" I'm cautious about addressing this sort of question. It may signify a common impulse in

education to grasp for simple strategies to address challenges that are more about ideology and will than strategy. I encourage us to think, instead, about principles that can guide our equity actions.

Here are five *equity literacy* principles (Gorski & Swalwell, 2015) that can help us avoid equity detours and maximize the impact of our equity efforts.

1 Direct Confrontation Principle

The path to racial equity requires direct confrontations with racial inequity—with racism. We start, again, by asking, “How is racism operating here?”

Gather the racial equity advocates in your school, district, and

consequences for students of color if applied by educators who harbor racial bias even if they aren’t intending to be racist? What do you need to change about that policy, or about the racial ideologies in your school or district, to make it equitable?

2 Redistribution Principle

Equity involves redistributing access and opportunity at the most basic institutional level. This includes material access to things like learning materials, technology, healthy food, and even healthcare. It also includes nonmaterial access to higher-order pedagogies, relatable curricula, and equity-conscious teachers.

The idea here is to intimately examine how institutional policies

dress code policy banning items associated with specific racial groups or assessment practices that could mask racial bias? Work with the equity advocates in your school and community to revise those policies and practices *right now*. Then attend to dynamics of institutional culture that resulted in the existence of biased policies to begin with.

3 Prioritization Principle

The only way to redistribute access and opportunity is to prioritize the interests of students of color. Every policy and practice decision should be filtered through this lens: *How will this policy impact families of color? How will it improve conditions for students of color?* Remember that, in inequitable contexts, equality—attending *equally* to everybody’s interests—reproduces inequity. For example, we know that students of color are disproportionately tracked out of “upper-track” classes (Leonardo & Grubb, 2018) and that on average, students in “lower-track” classes have less access to engaging pedagogy and more exposure to control-oriented teaching practices. And because we also know these disparities are driven significantly by racial bias in referral and assessment processes (Faulkner et al., 2014), a racial equity commitment should lead us to abandon traditional tracking methods. We can prioritize the interests of students of color by trading what we perceive as the equality and efficiency of those methods—*efficiency for whom?* we might ask—for a process that eliminates the influence of racism.

4 Equity Ideology Principle

Equity is a lens and an ideological commitment. No strategy can help us cultivate equitable schools if we’re

Although racial identities inform cultural identities, race is not culture. Racial inequities aren’t predominantly cultural misunderstandings.

community and map the ways—big and small, implicit and explicit—that racial inequities persist. Examine policy, curricula, and discipline practices. If you struggle to identify how racism is operating, invest time to learn how to do it. When I work with educational leaders committed to acquiring an equity lens, I find simple prompts like these can provide opportunities for meaningful practice:

- What is one practice in your school that focuses on fixing students of color rather than fixing the conditions that marginalize them? How can you reshape that practice for racial equity?
- What policy might have harsher

and practices provide some students more access and opportunity than others. It may mean re-examining how school practices are crafted in relation to students’ lived experiences and whether institutional policy and culture are responsive to the interests of the most marginalized students.

For example, as we examine behavior policies, we might ask ourselves whether we’re cognizant of the depth of racial bias associated with how educators tend to interpret behavior and dole out behavior referrals.

Policy handbooks are another good place to start. Study your school’s policies line by line. Might any perpetuate racial inequity—like a

unwilling to understand how racism operates. Professional development opportunities related to equity should emphasize the ideological work required to more deeply understand the dynamics of racism in society and schools. Then we can draw on those deeper understandings to build our practical approach for eliminating racism.

5 #FixInjusticeNotKids Principle

Effective equity efforts focus not on fixing students of color, but on eliminating racist conditions. If we find ourselves, in the name of equity, adopting initiatives meant to improve educational outcomes by adjusting mindsets or cultures in students of color, it's time to reconsider our efforts.

Do We Have the Will?

Implementing a transformative racial equity commitment is difficult, especially if we face significant resistance. Of course, it's not more difficult than navigating racism, which many students, families, and educators of color endure. I cling to hope that most of us want racial equity. The question for those of us who find the detours alluring is whether we have the will to align our actions with our philosophies. My hope is that, by considering the detours and principles discussed here, we can find ways to strengthen our equity efforts and create schools that deliver on the basic ideals of equity and justice. 

¹This is not an exhaustive list, but gives a few examples.

²All student names are pseudonyms.

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GUIDING QUESTIONS

➤ Do you think your school or district engages in any equity detours? How might you reexamine such initiatives in light of Gorski's equity literacy principles?

➤ Do you agree with Gorski's point that schools “must prioritize equity over the comfort of reluctant educators”? What would this mean in your school or district?



Paul Gorski (gorski@edchange.org) is the founder of the Equity Literacy Institute (equityliteracy.org) and EdChange. He helps educators across the United States and internationally strengthen their equity and justice efforts and is author, coauthor, or coeditor of more than 10 books, including *Reaching and Teaching Students in Poverty* (Teachers College Press, 2013) and *Case Studies on Diversity and Social Justice Education* (Routledge, 2013).

CABRILLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

DRAFT EQUITY STATEMENT

(July 6, 2021)

The Cabrillo Unified School District Governing Board is strongly committed to promoting the idea of educational equity as a powerful guiding principle to bring about academic excellence for all students.

Equity is the *targeted allocation of resources based on critical unmet needs* so students may develop to their full academic and social-emotional potential. These resources may include adequate funding; rigorous and culturally meaningful curriculum, instruction, and enrichment; technology; family engagement; and social-emotional and other specialized support services.

Academic outcomes in school districts (including CUSD) have long been predictable due to a variety of student characteristics such as race, ethnicity, home language, national origin, family income, ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, family educational attainment, religion, and immigration status.

While achievement gaps in public education can be attributed to complex societal and historical factors, **in CUSD we firmly believe that *all students can succeed* if given the support they need and deserve.**

As leaders in our community, we are accountable for championing CUSD's commitment to equity by guiding strategic district actions and leveraging community partnerships so opportunity gaps disappear.

This focus on equity represents a paradigm shift to a student-centered, data-based approach that values collaboration, continuous improvement, and commitment to work required for success for all students. **We regard all learners as having promise. We pledge to help all students achieve to their potential.** When all our students are empowered to choose their own paths to thrive in college, career, and life (rather than paths being pre-determined or predictable based on individual or family characteristics), then we will know we are successful in achieving our district mission of serving 'every child, every day.'

Policy 0415: Equity

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 09/12/2019 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 09/12/2019

The Governing Board believes that the diversity that exists among the district's community of students, staff, parents/guardians, and community members is integral to the district's vision, mission, and goals. Addressing the needs of the most marginalized learners requires recognition of the inherent value of diversity and acknowledgement that educational excellence requires a commitment to equity in the opportunities provided to students and the resulting outcomes.

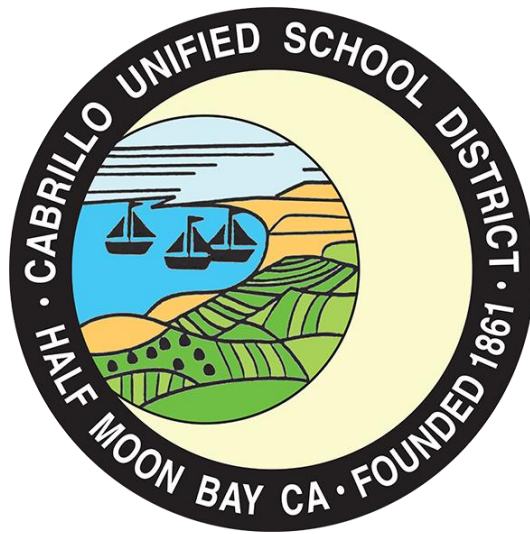
In order to eradicate institutional bias of any kind, including implicit or unintentional biases and prejudices that affect student achievement, and to eliminate disparities in educational outcomes for students from historically underserved and underrepresented populations, the district shall proactively identify class and cultural biases as well as practices, policies, and institutional barriers that negatively influence student learning, perpetuate achievement gaps, and impede equal access to opportunities for all students.

The Board shall make decisions with a deliberate awareness of impediments to learning faced by students of color and/or diverse cultural, linguistic, or socio-economic backgrounds. To ensure that equity is the intentional result of district decisions, the Board shall consider whether its decisions address the needs of students from racial, ethnic, and indigent communities and remedy the inequities that such communities experienced in the context of a history of exclusion, discrimination, and segregation. Board decisions shall not rely on biased or stereotypical assumptions about any particular group of students.

The Board and the Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement policies and strategies to promote equity in district programs and activities, through measures such as the following:

1. Routinely assessing student needs based on data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and socio-economic and cultural backgrounds in order to enable equity-focused policy, planning, and resource development decisions
2. Analyzing expenditures and allocating financial and human resources in a manner that provides all students with equitable access to district programs, support services, and opportunities for success and promotes equity and inclusion in the district. Such resources include access to high-quality administrators, teachers, and other school personnel; funding; technology, equipment, textbooks, and other instructional materials; facilities; and community resources or partnerships.
3. Enabling and encouraging students to enroll in, participate in, and complete curricular and extracurricular courses, advanced college preparation programs, and other student activities
4. Building a positive school climate that promotes student engagement, safety, and academic and other supports for students
5. Adopting curriculum and instructional materials that accurately reflect the diversity among student groups
6. Providing and/or collaborating with local agencies and community groups to ensure the availability of necessary support services for students in need
7. Promoting the employment and retention of a diverse staff that reflects the student demographics of the community
8. Providing district staff with ongoing, researched-based, professional learning and professional development on culturally responsive instructional practices
9. Conducting program evaluations that focus on equity and address the academic outcomes and performance of all students on all indicators

The Board shall regularly monitor the intent and impact of district policies and decisions in order to safeguard against disproportionate or unintentional impact on access to district programs and achievement goals for specific student populations in need of services.



CABRILLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Governance Handbook, August 2019

Governing Board

Sophia Layne, President
Kimberly Hines, Vice President
Lizet Cortes, Clerk
Mary Beth Alexander, Member
Freya McCamant, Member

Superintendent

Dr. Sean McPhetridge

This handbook reflects the governance team's work on the creation of a framework for effective governance. This involves ongoing discussions about unity of purpose, roles, norms, and protocols that will enable the governance team to perform its responsibilities in a way that best benefits all children.

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EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE—CSBA

There are three dimensions to the effective governance of any organization. The actions of an individual, a group coming together to govern, and the performance of governance responsibilities by the group.

In a school district, the board and superintendent work together as a governance team. For a governance team to work together effectively, members need to (1) Maintain a Unity of Purpose, (2) Agree on and govern within appropriate roles, (3) Create and sustain a positive governance culture, and (4) Create a supportive structure for effective governance.

Effective governance tenets encompass the basic characteristics and behaviors that enable governance team members to effectively create a climate for excellence in a school district and maintain the focus on improved student learning and achievement.

Governance – A Definition

School district governance is the act of transforming the needs, wishes, and desires of the community into policies that direct the community's schools.

UNITY OF PURPOSE—CSBA

Unity of Purpose is a common focus, overarching goals, and the values and beliefs governance team members share about children, the district, and public education that help them transcend their individual differences to fulfill a greater purpose.

OUR DISTRICT'S MISSION

The mission of the Cabrillo Unified School District - an exemplary learning community committed to valuing our distinct cultural identities - is to develop critical thinkers and socially responsible citizens who actively participate in their individual learning and development and are fully prepared to embrace their next challenge. We accomplish this by utilizing our unique natural resources and engaging the entire Coastside community and its partners in providing a rich and academically rigorous curriculum in a safe and nurturing environment.

We believe that...

Education is a partnership between student, family, school, and community
Each individual deserves the opportunity to reach their potential
High expectations promote success
Knowledge creates opportunity
Learning is a lifelong process that enriches the quality of life
Flexibility provides opportunity and promotes innovation
The well-being of the individual is essential to learning
Everyone has the right to be treated with respect
Education is essential to our democratic society
Accountability guides continuous improvement
Leadership embraces responsible change
Excellence is worth the investment
Everyone has the right to be safe
Diversity enriches society
Everyone can learn

OUR GOVERNANCE TEAM'S UNITY OF PURPOSE

What we are proud of in our district:

- Great teachers, staff, students, and families
- CUSD is microcosm of California
- Kids graduate with a sense of balance
- Diversity as strength of district
- Tight knit community
- Family orientation in community
- Support of schools from community
- Different paths for student success
- Understanding of different needs for students
- Location, natural/outdoor resources, and ocean
- Diverse community – diverse resources
- Airport, harbor, downtown

What we like to accomplish as a team:

- Inclusion
- Advocacy
- Improve curriculum and communication
- Balance long term goals and short term needs
- Build structure for safe schools
- Set direction for superintendent and let the Superintendent manage that work
- Build trust in district and community
- Renew CUSD's parcel tax
- Use the Board as resource to accomplish goals
- Create/renew facilities master plan
- Work better as Team regarding the Board's role in response to public
- Identify risks/gaps – Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) as part of balance
- Work on closing the achievement gap
- Representing all students/families
- Staying on message and united as Board
- Articulation of different pathways to success – Academics/Career Technical Education (CTE)/VAPA
- Bringing awareness to families regarding how to support student success
- Increased communication re: successes
- Defining bigger long – range goal
- Correcting misinformation
- Transparency and trust

HOW WE CAN SUPPORT EACH OTHER

Citizen oversight of local government is the cornerstone of democracy in the United States. The role of the trustees, who sit on locally elected school boards, is to ensure that school districts are responsive to the values, beliefs, and priorities of their communities. Boards fulfill this role by performing five major responsibilities. These are setting direction; establishing an effective and efficient structure; providing support; ensuring accountability; and providing community leadership as advocates for children, the school district, and public schools.

These five responsibilities represent core functions that are so fundamental to a school system's accountability to the public that they can only be performed by an elected governing body. Authority is granted to the board as a whole, not each member individually. Therefore, board members fulfill these responsibilities by working together as a governance team with the superintendent to make decisions that will best serve all the students in the community.

The board carries out these responsibilities in each of the following job areas: Setting the District's direction, student learning and achievement, finance, facilities, human resources, policy, judicial review, collective bargaining, and community relations and advocacy.

The superintendent assists the board in carrying out its responsibilities in each of the job areas and leads the staff toward the accomplishment of the agreed upon district vision and goals. The following page provides more detail on how the board performs its governance responsibilities in each job area. It's important to remember that boards who inadvertently get involved in staff functions undercut their ability to hold the superintendent accountable for the results of those efforts.

The Board can support the superintendent in fulfilling his role by providing:

- Time to plan and work with staff to execute successfully
- Regular check-ins, whether in person, by phone, 2-on-1, etc.
- Clear understanding of roles
- Clarity regarding shared roles
- Realistic expectations with outcomes developed/understood as governance team shared work
- Authorization to do and enact strategies/tactics to achieve the overarching district/Board goals

The Superintendent can support the Board by providing:

- Transparency
- Honest (timely communication)
- Knowledge of best practices
- Listening to us/community
- Follow through
- Responsive (email, other)
- Leadership by example – shared values
- Repair relationships
- Proactive information regarding sharing/planning
- Share current trends/ education philosophy
- Facilitating formation of board common values/beliefs:
 - Act on them
 - Disseminate thru district
- Effective and efficient decision making

The Board members can support each other by:

- Avoid personal accusations fracturing the board
- Protocols for responding to public – including follow-up (common understanding) how we interact with public
- Shared messages + FAQ (proactive + reactive)
- Common action – allow debate/differences of opinion
- Informal coffee time (with respect to Brown Act)
- Board professional development - book club (open meeting)
- Mentorship/support – new board member training (onboarding)
- Include in board communication updates (i.e., past and future external meetings)

GOVERNANCE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES—CSBA

We agree with the responsibilities of school boards as described below by the California School Boards Association:

Set the direction for the community's schools

- Focus on student learning
- Assess needs/obtain baseline data
- Generate, review, or revise setting direction documents (beliefs, vision, priorities, strategic goals, and success indicators)
- Ensure that an appropriate inclusive process is used to develop the above listed documents
- Ensure that these documents are the driving force for all district efforts

Establish an effective and efficient structure for the school district

- Employ and support the superintendent
- Establish a human resources framework that includes policies for hiring and evaluating other personnel
- Oversee the development of and adopt policies
- Set a direction for and adopt the curriculum and require data-producing assessment systems
- Establish budget priorities, adopt the budget, and oversee facilities issues
- Provide direction for and vote to accept collective bargaining agreements

Provide support through our behavior and actions

- Act with professional demeanor that models the district's beliefs and vision
- Make decisions and provide resources that support mutually agreed upon priorities and goals
- Uphold board-approved district policies and support staff implementation of board direction
- Ensure a positive working climate exists
- Be knowledgeable enough about district efforts to be able to explain them to the public

Ensure accountability to the public

- Evaluate the superintendent
- Monitor, review, and revise policies
- Serve as a judicial and appeals body
- Monitor student achievement and program effectiveness and require program changes as indicated
- Monitor and adjust district finances and periodically review facilities issues
- Monitor the collective bargaining process

Act as community leaders

- Speak with a common voice about district priorities, goals, and issues
- Engage and involve the community in district schools and activities
- Communicate clear information about policies, programs, and fiscal condition of the district
- Educate the community and the media about the issues facing students, the district, and public education
- Advocate for children, district programs, and public education to the general public, key community members and local, state, and national leaders

AGREEMENTS TO FACILITATE GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP

Governance Team Norms and Protocols:

The Governing Board of the Cabrillo Unified School District is entrusted by the community to uphold the Constitutions of California and the United States, to protect the public interest in schools, and to ensure that a high quality education is provided to each student.

The Board and Superintendent must function together as a governance leadership team in order to effectively meet district challenges. Agreed upon behaviors, or norms, and operating procedures, or protocols, support consistent behaviors and actions among team members. The purpose of Cabrillo Unified School District governance team agreements is to ensure a positive and productive working relationship among board members, the superintendent, district staff, students, and the community. The following norms and protocols were developed for and by the members of the governance team and may be modified over time as needed.

POSITIVE GOVERNANCE TEAM CULTURE—CSBA

Culture is the positive or negative atmosphere created by the way people in an organization treat each other. Teams have unwritten (implicit) or written (explicit) agreements about how they will behave toward each other and other individuals. These behavioral ground rules, often called norms, enable teams to build and maintain a positive culture or shift a negative one.

Because the community elects school board members to set and monitor the direction of the school district, and the district superintendent translates all efforts into action, it is vital that the board and superintendent have a respectful and productive working relationship based on trust and open, honest communications.

OUR MEETING NORMS

We agree to: (* indicates more than one member selected the norm)

- Focus on the best interests of our students **
- We will listen actively to all ideas/ We will listen openly without preparing responses
- All team members will offer their ideas and resources
- We will stay focused on our goals and avoid getting sidetracked
- Everyone's opinions count/ We will be open to the ideas of others
- When we have a difference of opinion, we will debate the facts of the situation and avoid personalities/ We will address process – not personalities *
- We will be supportive rather than judgmental
- Learn from the past while focusing on the present and the future *
- We will seek to verify all information is available to all Board members

STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES TO SUPPORT EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE—CSBA

Effective governance teams discuss and agree on the formal structures and processes used by the trustees and the superintendent in their functioning as a team (e.g., processes or structures for agenda setting, set-up of board room and table, agenda structure, handling complaints or concerns from the community, bringing up a new idea). These agreements about how groups will operate are often called protocols.

STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES TO SUPPORT EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE—OUR PROTOCOLS

The following protocols are suggestions to support and promote the effectiveness of our governance team;

Issue	Protocol
Self-evaluation of the governance team effectiveness	We will schedule workshops annually to review governance team agreements and processes.

Issue	Protocol
Voting no	- Each trustee respects the right of other trustees to vote “no” on an issue. - But everyone agrees it is a courtesy to the team to explain the reasons for the “no” vote either during deliberation or before casting the vote.

Issue	Protocol
Visiting schools	- Visits are encouraged. - As a professional courtesy, trustees will call the superintendent/principal ahead of time to arrange the visit. - Trustees will also be cautious about encroaching on the learning environment. To assist in this matter, the superintendent will ensure principals and teachers know that a teacher does not need to interrupt his or her lesson when a board member visits a classroom.

Issue	Protocol
Handling concerns from the public and staff	- When someone brings an issue or complaint to us, we will listen carefully, remembering that we are only hearing one side of the story. - We will paraphrase for understanding. - We will review the conversation. - And then direct the person back into the system at the appropriate place. - We will report the conversation to the superintendent so that he/she may follow-up as appropriate. - We will not listen to or discuss issues that may come before us in our judicial role. That information will be provided to all board Members at the appropriate time, during the hearing.

Issue	Protocol
Individual board member requests for information	• When an individual board member requests information, it will be provided to all board members. • An individual board member will – insofar as possible – work to let the superintendent and staff know ahead of time when a request for information will be made in public so the staff can be prepared to provide a thorough answer. • Individual board members will self-monitor to ensure one person's request for information does not divert an inappropriate amount of time from staff efforts to achieve district goals.

Issue	Protocol
Individual board member requests for action	• The only authority to direct action rests with the board as a whole, when they are seated at a board meeting. • A majority vote sets such direction. • Individuals may request action by bringing up a new idea, explaining their interest in a particular course of action, and working to get a board majority to support moving in that direction.

Issue	Protocol
Board meeting management	• We understand that board meetings are meetings of the board held in public, not open forum town hall meetings. • We will keep this in mind as we conduct our meetings, allowing the public to provide input at the time allotted to ensure the multiple voices of the community inform board deliberations. • However, when the board deliberates, it will be a time for the board to listen and learn from each other, taking the public input into consideration, not a time to re-engage with the public. • We will consistently abide by our formal processes relating to this issue so that all persons are treated fairly and equally. • We will review our policies, bylaws, and protocols relating to board meeting management (e.g., time limits on input from members of the public), revising or reaffirming them as appropriate.

SIGNATURE PAGE

We have reviewed and agreed to the aforementioned governance team norms and protocols in order to support a positive and productive working relationship among the Cabrillo Unified School District Governing Board, superintendent, staff, students, and the community. We shall renew these agreements annually.

Affirmed on this _____ day of _____, 2019

Sophia Layne, Board President

Kimberly Hines, Vice President

Lizet Cortes, Clerk

Mary Beth Alexander, Trustee

Freya McCamant, Trustee

Dr. Sean McPhetridge, Superintendent