

**PROFESSIONAL GOVERNANCE BOARDS
= STUDENT SUCCESS**

NSBA Conference
April 14, 2013

INTRODUCTIONS

Presenters

Gary Brochu
President
Berlin Board of Education

Robert Rader
Executive Director
Connecticut Association of Boards of Education

Why Does Board Governance Matter?

“Mounting evidence in the educational research and ‘best practice’ literature point to the importance of governance policies and practices as essential for addressing persistent achievement issues in schools and school districts.”

Audit - Governance and Management
of the New London Public

What Does the Research Say?

“Board members need to develop sufficient understanding, knowledge and beliefs in order to create the conditions which will ensure that professional educators can grow in their expertise and generate productive change. *There is a need to impact the governance doctrine and assumptions that are driving deliberations of school boards.*”

- Lighthouse

Study

The Importance of Board Culture

“Culture isn’t the most important thing. Culture is the only thing.”

- Jim Senigal, COSTCO CEO

What is Board Culture?

→ Culture is who we are and what we stand for

- our values, our practices,
our identity

→ Culture is both a means and an end

Board Culture is...

Board Culture is a continuous affirmation of values, regardless of circumstance, regardless of challenges.

→ Ultimately, values only matter when they are tested

Board Culture is...

Board Culture is a commitment to the building of a legacy

→ Whether we acknowledge it or not, whether we understand it or not, as education leaders we are in the legacy business

Board Culture is...

Board Culture is ultimately, consciously or unconsciously, a choice

how → A decision as to who we are, we function, how we treat one another, consciously and consistently made

Why Board Culture is Important

The right culture – deliberately chosen and consistently applied – can lead to a self-sustaining professional governance board.

Professional Governance Boards

Seven characteristics of a professional governance board – and a professional board member

→ Always model your desired behavior

- job one of every leadership position is to exemplify the qualities and behaviors that you expect of your organization

Professional Governance Boards

→ Understand your leadership role and responsibilities

- Know what you are responsible for and, more importantly, what you choose (should) not to be responsible for

- Learn to say “no” so that you can say “yes”

Professional Governance Boards

→ Focus and insist on real accountability

- Build in a rigorous and sustainable accountability system
- Understand that delegation is not (nor should it be) abdication

Professional Governance Boards

→ The Board and its members are always prepared

- Prepared for meetings, prepared to intelligently discuss issues, prepared to make decisions, prepared to be hold itself accountable

Professional Governance Boards

→ Govern as one Board

- Deliberate in many voices, speak in one
- Not nine identical members, but nine different individuals committed to the same values, working toward the same goal
- All members share the same definition of success

Professional Governance Boards

- Both the Board and its members are characterized by high expectations
 - For students, for staff, for the system, but most of all, for itself

Professional Governance Boards

- Each individual member assumes personal responsibility for the success of the entire Board
 - Clearly distinguish between responsibility and control
 - Believe that success for individual members can only exist in the context of the Board's success
 - Clarity of vision, clarity of purpose

Board Chair Roles and Responsibilities

Not just a gavel banger



- Works with the Superintendent to develop agenda
- Needs an understanding of Parliamentary Procedure, Open Meeting laws, and district policies

Board Chair Roles and Responsibilities

- Responsible to ensure meetings are “businesslike” – i.e. professional
- Must be willing – with the support of Board members – to control public participation
- Ensure that all Board members have opportunity to participate

Board Chair Roles and Responsibilities

- Chair must be perceived as fair and honest
- Must ensure, with support of Board members, civility, high ethical standards, and a thoughtful, deliberative decision making process
- Provides orientation for new members

Board Chair Roles and Responsibilities

- Responsible for interacting with media as Board spokesperson
- Help members understand that they are part of a leadership team
- Works with dissident members to bring them back onto team, or sometimes just to hear them out

Board Chair and Board Culture

The Board Chair has an important role in developing and sustaining Board Culture

- Has the responsibility to Lead
- Serve as role model for members

Leading Leaders

How does a Board chair lead other leaders (board members)?

- Get to know other members as individuals (Interests drive action)
- What do you know of the lives of other members away from Board?
- Where do your members come from, why are they on Board?
 - Leading Leaders, Jeswald Salawse

The Chair's Indispensible Role

Board Chair is responsible for refocusing the interests of individual members toward a single, shared Board culture.

Building a Board Culture

- **Commit to meaningful professional development**
 - Not optional, but an expectation of membership
 - Designed for Board/district/member
 - Related to the professional development of administrative leadership
 - Part of Board calendar

Building a Board Culture

- **Board goals should include board governance goals**
 - Consider developing metrics for your governance goals

Building a Board Culture

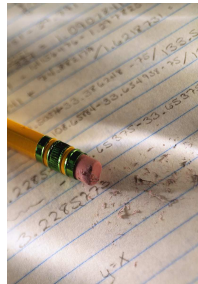
- **Institutionalize Board values and best practices**
 - Consider developing and using a member handbook
 - Insist on an extensive orientation process for new members
 - Mission statement, goals, values as part of Board's regular practice

Building a Board Culture

→ Provide for time and resources to build a culture

- Board retreats and work sessions
- Group attendance at conferences
- Clear meeting agendas of all non-essential items

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS...



CONTACT INFORMATION

Gary Brochu
garybrochu@comcast.net

860.550-5756

Bob Rader
rrader@cabe.org

860.571-7446
