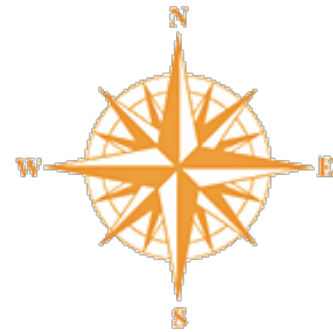


Board Leadership

Presented to the
Montclair Board of Education
June 10, 2013



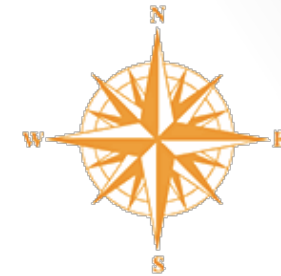
How we lead

Board leads by Governing the System-Providing Oversight and Creating a Shared Vision and Goals
(the what)

Superintendent leads by Directing the System
(the how)



Governance



- Mission, Vision, Core Beliefs, Theory of Action
- District Goals and Plans
- Board meetings
- Policy development
- **Constituent service***
- **Administrative Oversight***

* Most difficult areas to stay above the governance and administration line

Governance Challenge

- The line between governance and administration is blurred
- High stakes issues: children, community values, taxpayer money
- Diverse Responsibilities: Set district mission/vision and goals, approve district plans, set policy, oversee management, approve and manage budgets, judicial functions (grievance, tenure, student cases), Superintendent evaluation
- Multiple Relationships: Other board members, Superintendent, district employees, MEA leaders, parents, business and civic leaders, elected officials, journalists

Role of the Board President

- Build positive relationships among Board members
- Keep the Board focused on major issues
- Build consensus
- Solve governance problems
- Maintain a positive working relationship with the Superintendent
- Speak with Board members who cross from governance into administration
- Spokesperson for the Board

Board Member Relationships

The Board only has power as a body - therefore:

- Recognizing that diverse viewpoints enhance decision making is important
- Treating each other with courtesy and respect is key
- Understanding that once the board has made a decision, all members of the board support the decisions of the board.

Relationships: Union Leaders

- Important to recognize that the leadership of the MEA represents the interest of their union members
- MEA member interests are sometimes not going to align with the decisions/interests of the board.
- Remember that both serve to meet the needs of all children in Montclair.

Relationships: Journalists

- Board Policy outlines that the board president and superintendent speak on behalf of the board
- No comment on administrative issues, ongoing scandals, controversies, unfortunate events
- Refer other questions to the Board President and Superintendent

Relationships: Parents

- Be accessible, friendly and responsive
- Be consistent- utilize the chain of command
- You can not solve their problem – that is the job of administration
- It's really ok to say “that is not my role”

Relationships: Superintendent

- No relationship is more important
- Keep the focus on students
- No superintendent is perfect – The Board is responsible to help the superintendent be successful
- At the root of this relationship is trust
- “Many critics look to exploit the slightest crack in this relationship”

Governance: Policy Development

Policy provide a uniform framework for all stakeholders and for the board's decision making.

Policies can precede or follow District Goals and Plans

- Precede if they require strategic plans for implementation or guide the strategic plan
- Follow if they are required to implement a strategic plan

Governance: Policy Development

- Collaboration between the Board and Superintendent - but the Board has the “final say” on policies.
- Regulations to implement policy are an administrative function
- Board can request the Superintendent prepare policies for their review
- Superintendent can request the Board consider the development of policies

Governance: Routine Policies

- Establish and Maintain stability
- New Superintendent and/or new Board : Policy audit to be sure the policy manual is in order

Governance: Policy Criteria

Balancing Act

- Focus on ends not means, desired results
- Deal with processes only when absolutely necessary allowing for flexibility in implementation
- Provide enough clarity so the administration knows the Board's intent
- More than a goal - but not an operating manual
- Be only as specific as necessary

Governance: Policy Oversight:

Monitor Implementation and Effectiveness

- Make explicit how implementation will be measured and reported
- Make explicit how and when policy will be evaluated for results

Governance: Constituent Service

Constituent service means helping constituents receive the services the system is suppose to provide, not attempting to make the system do what it is obligated to do.

It is best to agree on predetermined protocols to help constituents solve their own problems and then, if this fails, bring problems to the attention of the Superintendent

Once in the hands of the administration, the administration must address the problem, provide Board members with a report on the disposition of the problem, and provide the Superintendent with periodic analyses of complaint patterns for the purpose of system improvement

Governance: Constituent Service

Administration must solve constituent problems:

- Suggested solutions from a Board member to any district employee or the Superintendent can be interpreted as an instruction for a specific action to be taken. Suddenly, and though inadvertently, the Board has crossed over to making administrative decisions.

Governance: Constituent Service

- Trying to solve problems is the most common mistake made by Board members. However the positive intentions, however beneficial in the short-term, the long-term consequences are profoundly negative.
- Micromanagement sows confusion among district employees, disrupts administrative systems, and weakens the Superintendent's control of the district. A weak Superintendent cannot effectively implement Board policy or be held accountable for administrative failures.

Governance: Constituent Service

Why do Board's micromanage?

- Constituents want them to
- Board members think if they don't, nothing will change
- Superintendents who fail to direct, invite it

Governance: Constituent Service

- Micromanagement does not make things better. It makes the administration dysfunctional and for every problem a Board member solves, two new ones pop up
- If Superintendents are not directing, Board members need to insist they put effective administrative systems into place or ultimately, face termination

Governance: Constituent Service

Role of the Superintendent:

- Make certain district administrative systems work and follow clear protocols for constituent complaints
- Educate the public to first turn to the administration for solutions (can take time)
- Require a response from the Board when Board members “go off the reservation.” The Board must police itself.

Governance: Administration Oversight

- Periodic monitoring of business and academic performance indicators(monthly financials, quarterly goal updates on student achievement)
- Periodic reviews of major administrative systems (personnel, special education ...)
- Periodic reviews of internal audit procedures
- Annual external financial audits

Governance: Administration Oversight

Board members should understand:

How the system is structured

How major processes work

How decisions are made

Performance measures

**** * It is a board member's responsibility to ask....**

Governance: Administration Oversight

Board Role:

- Suggest alternative or additional performance measures
- Point out deficiencies in administrative procedures
- Outline timelines and formats for Board reports

Governance: Administration Oversight

Board Expectations:

- Confident that they understand how the system works, the internal checks and balances that are in place, that performance measures are being collected, and when they will receive a clear and transparent report
- With this relevant information the Board will know how well systems, policies and programs are working, where administration should concentrate its efforts, where resources are needed, about trends that indicate future problems

Governance: Oversight

Board Expectations:

- All data must be accurate, timely and relevant
- Reports must be easily understood - Lengthy budget documents, financial statements and evaluation reports are by themselves of little value
- Reports must have comparative, longitudinal, and relevant data that is accurate, timely and formatted visually for easy comprehension - anything less is insufficient

Board Leadership

- Board members are representatives, they cannot ignore public opinion but they are also trustees who have been given the authority to lead and lead they must.

