

MINUTES OF THE
ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION of SCHOOL BOARDS
POLICY GOVERNANCE WORKSHOP

Presented to the Board of Education
Riverside School District No. 96
on Monday, June 15, 2009
Double Tree Hotel
DuPage County, Oak Brook, Illinois

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION of SCHOOL BOARDS POLICY GOVERNANCE WORKSHOP

The IASB Policy Governance Workshop was presented to the Board of Education, District 96, Riverside, Illinois, Cook County, on Monday, June 15, 2009, at 12:00 p.m. in the Cermak Room at the Double Tree Hotel in Oak Brook, Illinois.

09-53 Board President Mrs. Nancy Jensen called the meeting to order at 12:25 p.m. and on roll call, the following members were recorded as being present:

Mrs. Nancy Jensen
Mrs. Jennifer Leimberer
Mr. Giles McCarthy (arrived at 12:30 p.m.)
Mrs. Mary Ellen Meindl
Mr. James Schraidt
Mrs. Mary Stimming
Mrs. Hareena Wakely

Absent: None

Also present were: Dr. Jon Lamberson, Superintendent and Board of Education Secretary, Susan Moorhead.

Jeffery Cohn, IASB Field Services Director, presented an overview of the day's agenda and asked those present for their expectations of the workshop. The following topics were mentioned:

- Saving time on the learning curve for new Board members.
- Clarification of the Board and Superintendent's roles and responsibilities.
- Articulation of the Board's communication protocol and expectations.
- Identification of methods that can be used to monitor the District's performance.
- Articulation of Board processes including goal setting and strategic planning.
- Understanding how the Open Meetings Act applies to Board committees.
- Identification of items on which the Board would like regular updates from the Superintendent.

Mr. Cohn noted that one goal of today's workshop is to determine if District 96 Board members have agreement on some common board process questions such as:

- Placing items on the agenda
- Asking questions about upcoming agenda items
- Communicating with members
- Communicating with staff
- Visiting campuses
- Responding to complaints
- Communicating with the media
- Communicating with the public
- Orienting new members
- Conducting closed sessions
- Participating during public forums

He commented that the school district's mission statement should express the educational values and beliefs of the community and should serve as the foundation for the Board's governance work. He encouraged the Board to have "temporal vision" with one eye focused on the present and the other eye looking toward the future. He further noted that members of the Board sit in trust for all, and that effective Board members are willing to "pull away from the action on the dance floor and ride the escalator up to the balcony" to gain a big picture perspective of the district overall. In an effort to help those "in the balcony" get to know one another better, he asked the group to describe their first encounter with District 96.

Following this discussion, Mr. Cohn addressed the topic of, *The Board and Superintendent – Roles and Relationships*. A foundation of trust and good communication can be based on a model where the Board focuses its attention on the *Ends: mission, vision, beliefs and policy* and the Superintendent and staff focus on the *Means: action plans, objectives, regulations and procedures*. He noted that the development of a well functioning Board takes time as the team evolves through the various stages of forming, storming, norming and performing. Governance is intended to eliminate the storming phase allowing the group to move toward norming and performing.

Mr. Cohn asked the group to consider the School Board and Superintendent roles in terms of a "governance clock" where the Board's role and responsibilities lie above the clock arms and the Superintendent's role and responsibilities lie below the clock arms. In this model, a time of 2:45 represents a district where the Board and Superintendent roles are clearly defined and trust exists between the two so that one does not dip above or below the line into the other's area of responsibility. Several Board members commented that in their view it is not necessarily negative if the Board and/or the Superintendent dip slightly below or above the line into each other's area of responsibility.

The discussion then turned to the subject of District 96 Board Committees and a possible Committee of the Whole structure. Mrs. Leimberer noted that it is difficult for many parents to attend the Education Committee meetings that begin at 5:00 p.m. Mrs. Jensen encouraged the group to consider a committee structure that would accomplish the most in the least amount of time.

Mr. Cohn commented that strong Board/Superintendent relationships exist in districts where the Superintendent clearly understands the Board's ends and the Board feels comfortable with the Superintendent's means of achieving those ends. Mrs. Wakely noted the District's goals for Dr. Lamberson are stated in Section 3:10 of the Board Policy Manual.

Mr. Cohn presented a 7-step *Annual Planning Cycle* model to provide the Board with a framework to evaluate the Superintendent's performance as well as their own on an annual basis:

1. Board and Superintendent agree on goals for the year – done at the beginning of the school year.
2. Administration creates “action plans”.
3. Superintendent is given authority and resources to reach goals. Superintendent creates goals for his/her own work.
4. The Board evaluates its own processes and effectiveness – done midway through the school year.
5. The Superintendent completes a self-evaluation of work & progress toward goals.
6. The Board evaluates Superintendent's performance in light of the progress goals.
7. The Board evaluates progress toward district goals & changing internal & external realities – done at the end of the school year.

Dr. Lamberson commented that some goals are designed to be accomplished within a year, and others over a three or four year period. He further noted that the District's last strategic planning session took place four years ago, and that the Board might consider a strategic planning process to set long-term goals.

Discussion took place regarding Board members' use of email. Mr. Cohn reiterated information stated in the District 96 Board Policy manual that “a Board member may discuss District business in person or by telephone or by email with only one other Board member at a time but shall not facilitate interactive communication by discussing District business in a series of visits with, or telephone calls or emails to, Board members individually.”

Conversation occurred regarding Board member visits to District 96 schools. By consensus the Board agreed that any Board member wanting to visit a District 96 school should contact Dr. Lamberson who will contact the building principal to arrange a school tour guided by an administrator or delegated staff member.

Brief discussion took place regarding Board member responses to complaints. Mrs. Jensen referred the Board to Sections 2:140: *Communications to and from the Board* and to Section 2:260: *Uniform Grievance Procedure* in the Board Policy Manual. She further noted that members of the media should be directed to Dr. Lamberson or herself for comment.

In his final remarks, Mr. Cohn reminded the Board to speak with one voice, that “no Board member or subset of the Board of Education has the authority to act or speak on behalf of the Board without the consent of the Board” and to respect the policies that

the Board agrees to. He also encouraged them to consider their legacy as Board members helping District 96 go from “good to great.”

09-54 There being no further business or reports, a motion was made by Mr. Schraidt, supported by Mrs. Leimberer, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Seven
Nays: None
Absent: None

The time was 5:10 p.m.

Recorded: June 15, 2009

Approved: August 18, 2009

Board Secretary

Board President