

# Lake County School Board Handbook

Created 2015

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*Many of the practices and procedures covered in this handbook are not policies. They are, instead, habits and best practices that we have come to through careful study and experience. As we learn more about how to be a high-functioning school board, we assume that these practices will develop. This handbook represents the best knowledge and resources we have come to so far and an attempt to institutionalize that knowledge to the best of our ability.*

— Lake County School Board 2016

Amy Frykholm, President  
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- 1. Mission, Priorities, and Core Commitments (Strategic Policy- SP-2)**
- 2. Board Member code of Conduct Policy (GP-8)**
- 3. Board Member Covenants Policy (GP-9)**

**Board Policies:**

Here is a link where the rest of the board's policies can be found:

<http://www.lakecountyschools.net/board-of-education/board-policies/>

#### 4. “Birdwalking” Protocol

- We will put times on the agenda and if we're going "over time" at a meeting, we will remind each other of the time.
- We will have a clock where we can see it.
- If we find ourselves talking about an item that isn't on the agenda, someone will ask if the item is important enough that it needs to be an agenda item at a future meeting.
- We will do our best to save our questions and not interrupt someone's presentation, in the hopes that our questions will get answered later on. Also, by keeping the presentation separate from the questions, we can more clearly keep ourselves on track in terms of time.
- We will ask staff to commit to getting us items in advance to review, so that we can do much of our learning in advance and focus our questions. We will commit to reading the material in advance and asking any clarifying questions outside of the meeting.
- We will remind each other to uphold our track record of efficient and effective meetings.

## 5. What is a public meeting?

A public meeting is any gathering of three or more members of the board at which any public business is discussed or at which any formal action may be taken, regardless of whether the meeting occurs by telephone, electronically or in person. These public meetings are open to the public at all times. Chance meetings or social gatherings at which discussion of public business is not the central purpose are not considered public meetings.

### When do boards meet?

Boards meet after providing full and timely notice to the public, which involves posting information regarding the meeting and its agenda at the board's designated posting place in the district at least 24 hours before the meeting begins.

Publicizing meetings in this way meets the requirements of law for those meetings the board schedules as part of its annual calendar, called "regular meetings."

Other board meetings are scheduled as needed throughout the school year. These are called "special meetings," and they have additional notice requirements, including providing a statement of the purpose for the special meeting as well as providing individual notice to each board member.

Boards also meet during "work sessions," which can either be regular meetings of the board or special meetings, depending on how they are scheduled. Work sessions are opportunities for local boards to learn about particular issues, and the board does not vote during these meetings.

In a less formal sense, boards "meet" in social settings, at community events or at educational trainings like CASB's Annual Convention. So long as boards do not use these gatherings to discuss public business or take formal action, the law does not impose its transparency requirements on these gatherings. Some boards, out of an abundance of caution, notify the public of events where three or more board members are scheduled to attend.

### How do boards hold a public meeting?

School board meetings can be very formal or informal, depending on local custom. Generally, boards use

Robert's Rules of Order to maintain a common understanding of board process. The board president leads board meetings, following the board's agenda, which is normally prepared by the board president in cooperation with the superintendent.

The board may amend its agenda by majority vote of board members present during regular meetings or by a unanimous vote of all board members during special meetings. While boards possess the authority to modify the agenda, they should exercise the authority with caution.

Boards have a legal duty to provide agenda information in advance of the meeting where possible. A drastic departure from the stated agenda that results in sudden board action on a matter of great importance is likely to draw sharp criticism from the public and may spark costly litigation.

#### How does the public participate in board meetings?

School board meetings are open to the public and most boards hold public comment periods during those meetings. Maintaining order and a professional environment ensures the public is respectfully heard and protects the board's ability to efficiently accomplish the public's business. (CASB's GavelGuide™ app provides statements you may use as the starting point for crafting your own statements during public comment periods.

#### When can we talk in private as a board?

The board can meet privately, outside the public eye, in very limited circumstances, and even then, most of those conversations must be recorded. The law only provides eight purposes for convening an "executive session" or a private discussion of the board. Moreover, the law articulates very particular procedures the board must follow to enter executive session. These limitations and restrictions do not imply that executive session is frowned upon; in fact, used appropriately, these private discussions are vital to the board's work. Knowing the parameters of executive session will help boards meet the substantive and procedural requirements of the law.

#### Steps to convene in executive session

1. The board president announces the topic of the executive session and the specific citation to the statute authorizing the board to meet in executive session.
2. The board president identifies the particular matter to be discussed in as much detail as possible without compromising the purpose for which the executive session is authorized. In crafting this announcement, the board president may factor in how much the public already knows about the particular matter and provide additional detail when describing the topic to be discussed consistent with this public knowledge. This information should be incorporated into the board motion to convene an executive session. The following is a sample motion:

I move that the board of education convene into executive session to discuss/review  
----- pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-6-402\_\_ [see list of permissible topics for the precise  
statutory reference].

3. The board votes whether to convene in executive session. Upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the quorum present, the board then goes into executive session. The board may determine which individuals will be invited to join members of the board in executive session.
4. The discussion during executive session cannot stray from the matter(s) stated at the onset of the executive session.

5. The board is not allowed to adopt any proposed policy, resolution, regulation or take any formal action in an executive session.
6. If the board wishes to confer with its attorney during an executive session and it did not specifically announce its intent to do so prior to convening the executive session, the board should return to public session, make an additional topic announcement citing the statutory authority for conferring with its attorney, and vote on whether to convene in executive session for this purpose.

For more comprehensive topics and learning opportunities related to school board work, visit our [Learning Center](#)

## **6. Role of Board Members**

The board, if it is to work effectively, must develop some mutual understanding among its members. It is advisable for the members to establish for themselves some ethical standards of operation that each would expect the others to observe. Board members have individual convictions and ideas, and they will not always be in agreement on issues that come before the board. If these differences are allowed to create animosities, the work of the board can be seriously hampered.

Each member of the board has an equal right to be heard on matters of concern to the board. Each has an equal responsibility to do a fair share of the work, to follow the policies adopted by the board and to accept his or her share of the criticism when the board is under fire. The board must work as a team and take credit or blame as a team.

It is the collective challenge of the board and of its individual members to always bear in mind that an individual school board member has no individual authority. The board may only take action, make decisions and direct district operations as a full board acting in its corporate role. The board is responsible for adopting policies that establish how the district is to be operated and the results that are to be achieved. It is through its policies that the board provides direction to the administration.

However, it is not the responsibility of the board or of individual board members to carry out administrative functions or become directly involved in the operations of the schools or district. A board member who attempts to exercise individual authority over the administration or other staff quickly undermines the superintendent's authority and the board's own ability to effectively govern the district. In some circumstances, a board member acting outside his or her board role could lose immunity or insurance protections.

### **Speaking for the Board**

An individual board member does not have the right to speak for the rest of the board unless specifically authorized by the board to do so. This authorization can be implied, as when talking to the public about decisions the board already has approved. Or it can be direct, as when the board asks an individual member (usually the president) to issue a public statement about the district or a particular position taken by the board.

A board member should exercise care in writing letters to the editor and in making statements to the press. The member should not attempt to predict future actions of the board. If the matter about which the member is expressing an opinion has nothing to do with education, it is advisable to refrain from signing as "Member, School Board." When writing or speaking about something related to education, a member should be scrupulous about stating that the opinions expressed are his or her own and not the board's unless the board has previously taken a stand on the issue.

### Meeting with groups

A school board member may occasionally be asked to meet with a group of parents, taxpayers, staff members or special interest group to discuss a particular issue. The issue may be one that involves considerable controversy.

On such occasions, it is advisable to exercise a degree of discretion. Consider discussing your intent with the superintendent or board president before committing to meet with the group. The group should clearly understand that the member speaks for himself or herself, not for the board. Unless the board has taken some kind of action on the issue, it is advisable to avoid making statements that reflect upon the board's attitude toward the question. The member also may wish to avoid statements that could mistakenly imply that he or she intends to serve as the group's champion when the issue is before the board. Whether the board member agrees or disagrees with the group's point of view, the group needs to know that what the member says must not be looked upon as a commitment of the entire board.

A board member has a continuing obligation to hear various points of view, consider all sides of a question and then vote his or her convictions when the time comes for board action. Sometimes when members have made advance statements or commitments, they find it difficult to fulfill this obligation.

### Conflict of interest

Public office is not to be used for the profit, gain or private interest of any individual. To maintain public confidence in the office and to prevent the use of public office for private gain, it is important for members of the board of education to publicly disclose any potential conflict of interest.

The board is required to adopt a policy relating to conflicts of interest for its own members. [C.R.S. § 22-32-109(1)(y).] A board member who has a personal or private interest in any matter proposed or pending before the board shall disclose that interest to the board, abstain from voting on the matter and refrain from attempting to influence other members of the board. [C.R.S. § 24-18-109(3)(a).] State law creates a narrow exception allowing a board member with a conflict to vote if the board member has made specific disclosures.

Those situations that present a potential conflict of interest for a member of the board of education generally are those in which a board member will derive a private financial benefit from board actions. Members of the board of education should familiarize themselves with the board's conflict of interest policy and state laws on standards of conduct.

### Handling complaints

The opportunity to hear complaints or expressions of concern about district operations will confront every board member. Of course, the member will wish to listen with courtesy

and sincerity, but generally speaking, it is advisable to refer the person to the superintendent or administrator who has responsibilities in the area of concern. It is rarely advisable for the board member to assume direct responsibility for a problem, particularly when student or staff relations are involved.

While board members should reflect what is heard from the community during board policy discussions, usually board members can best serve their patrons' immediate needs by telling them whom to call about their concerns. A discussion among board members with the superintendent about the process of handling complaints is worthwhile. Maintaining good public relations is essential to the well-being of the district. This is an area of board operations that should not be overlooked. For more details, see Community Relations & Community Engagement.

#### What if I have questions about our board's compliance with law?

If you are concerned about the legal implications of an upcoming issue before your board, approach the superintendent and board president with your concerns. The board's attorney may have already provided advice about how to proceed, the attorney may be attending the meeting to confer with the entire board, or perhaps no one has yet reached out to the attorney, and your reminder may spark that connection.

If the board action that worries you is one the board took in the past, then again, the first person to approach with your concern is either the board president or superintendent. The objective of that conversation is to raise the issue promptly so that the board's attorney can provide timely counsel to the board on how to move forward.

The board may seek legal advice on any matter, but the most common topics of conversation between the board and its attorney involve personnel, contracts and civil rights. Because the attorney represents the interests of the district, not individuals, the attorney's analysis may not please every board member. Nevertheless, the board as a whole is the client, and it accepts or rejects the attorney's advice in the same way the board takes any other action--by majority rule. Members who disagree with the board's legal position remain bound by attorney-client confidentiality and executive session privilege and may not divulge the content of those privileged conversations. Board members with personal legal questions should seek advice from their own private attorneys.

## 7. Legal obligations of Board

Local school districts are creatures of statute, formed by the law and subject to the law. Individual board members are held accountable to the electorate, but the district itself is held accountable by the state through the district's accreditation. Thus, to ensure local schools remain accredited, boards must comply with state law. Understanding these obligations helps boards define the important role they play in the education of students in their communities.

### What does the law obligate boards to do?

The state legislature passes laws governing the system of public schools in Colorado. Each school board plays its part in implementing those laws at the district level. The duties of local school boards can be distilled into the following list:

- Hold regular and special meetings in public
- Adopt policies and regulations for the efficient administration of the affairs of the district
- Adopt conflict-of-interest policies for board members
- Ensure that "effective educational programs are carried on in the schools of the district, and textbooks for any course of instruction or study in such programs are prescribed"
- Adopt the school district calendar
- Provide instruction about the use and effect of alcohol and controlled substances
- Educate children with disabilities
- Adopt a student discipline and conduct code
- Adopt a student publications code
- Enforce the school attendance law
- Employ all personnel required to maintain district operations and carry out the educational program
- Implement a licensed personnel evaluation system
- Adopt a salary schedule or salary policy
- Keep complete and accurate financial and accounting records
- Protect public deposits in authorized investments and depositories
- Adopt a budget for each fiscal year
- Certify necessary tax levies to the county commissioners.

### What does the law permit boards to do?

Beyond the legal requirements imposed on boards to keep the schoolhouse doors open, the law provides a list of powers boards may exercise as public bodies:

- Acquire, take and hold real personal property; sell or lease property
- Sue and be sued
- Purchase and construct buildings
- Provide furniture, equipment, library books "and everything needed to carry out the educational program"
- Determine which schools will be operated and fix the attendance boundaries of each school
- Furnish transportation for pupils
- Provide for the free use of textbooks
- Charge tuition and fees reasonably necessary for textbooks and expendable supplies
- Exclude books determined by the board to be of an immoral or pernicious nature
- Suspend, expel and deny admission to students for statutory reasons
- Employ a chief executive officer
- Adopt policies related to all aspects of employment
- Adopt a mission statement for the school district making safety a priority for each public school.

Many school boards also include student achievement as a main focus of their mission statement. In general, the mission statement establishes a guiding vision for what the schools should achieve, and gives the entire school district a focus point and common goal to be accountable to the community.

- Discharge or otherwise terminate the employment of all personnel, subject to the Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act
- Enter into master agreements with school employees
- Issue tax-anticipation notes
- Issue bonds after an election

### Advisory Committees

There are times when the board may find it advisable to establish a citizens advisory committee to student and make recommendations with respect to a special problem. Boards often find that such committees can be helpful in such areas as the district budget, considering the need for new facilities, supporting a bond election or providing input when decisions must be made about controversial issues.

Lay councils comprised of influential citizens and representatives of various community groups have brought about improved community understanding of the schools in many instances. The citizen committee members should be chosen by the board to represent a cross section of the community. If the committee is not representative, it cannot be effective. Citizen committees usually attract people who have an active interest in the schools. As they work with the board and become more conversant with its problems, they may become oriented to

public education and stand ready to defend the district from unwarranted attack.

Experience has shown that it is best for citizen committee members to be advised at the outset about the committee's role and function. Members should know the committee will be asked to report its findings and make recommendations, but it is the board's responsibility to make final decisions. Problems occasionally arise when the board decides it cannot accept a committee recommendation. Therefore, it is imperative that the members know that the board will give serious consideration to the committee's input, but the members also must know that the board cannot commit itself to accepting all of the committee's recommendations or delegate its decision-making responsibility. For its part, the board must ensure follow-through with committees.

The people who are called upon to serve on citizen committees often develop a continuing interest in the school. Indeed, many who have served on such committees later have become members of the board.

There may be other advisory committees that state or federal law requires a district to form. The board must grant to these committees the planning, implementation or evaluation of any programs or projects as required by law. The district personnel evaluation council and the district accountability committee are examples of such groups.

#### What does the law forbid boards to do?

As arms of the state, school boards are government entities and are bound by the limitations on government set forth in the U.S. Constitution. This means that local boards cannot abridge the civil rights of students, personnel or others. Qualified immunity, which shields public officials from liability for actions that violate an individual's civil rights, does not apply if a reasonable person in the official's position would have known that the action violated clearly established law.

## **8. Preparation to serve on the School Board**

Anyone who plans to run for the school board should acquire a basic understanding of the school district, including:

- purpose (what are the schools trying to accomplish)
- organization (who does what?)
- finance (income and expenses)
- government (state laws and regulations and local school board policies)
- board procedures (how business is conducted)

A great board candidate understands the proper relationship of the school board to the state, the community and the superintendent--and the proper relationship of the individual board member to the other members of the board.

In preparation for board candidacy, he or she will:

- attend board meetings to learn how the board functions
- make an appointment with the district superintendent to learn more about the district and to discuss challenges and problems facing the board
- browse through the CASB website and visit your school district office to read as much as possible about the nature of school board work and the laws affecting schools.

## 9. Structure of Lake County Board of Education

\*\* Note: We do not follow what is listed below but may want to consider\*\*

### Board President

Chosen: Elected by majority of the board.

Term: 2 years

Duties:

- Presides over board meetings
- Speaking (or appointing another board member to speak) in public on behalf of the Board
- The President of the Board ensures the integrity of the Board's processes and normally serves as the Board's official spokesperson.
- Monitor Board behavior to ensure that it is consistent with its own rules and policies and those legitimately imposed on it from outside the organization.
- Conduct and monitor Board meeting deliberations to ensure that only Board issues, as defined in Board policy, are discussed.
- Ensure that Board meeting deliberations are fair, **open**, and thorough, but also efficient, timely, orderly and to the point.
- Chair Board meetings with all the commonly-accepted power of that position as described in *Robert's Rules of Order* and in accordance with law.
- Make all interpretive decisions that fall within the topics covered by Board policies on *Governance Process* and *Board/Staff Relationship*, except where the Board specifically delegates portions of this authority to others, using any reasonable interpretation of the provisions in those policies.
- Refrain from making any interpretive decisions about policies created by the Board in the *Ends* and *Executive Limitations* policy areas.
- Refrain from exercising any authority as an individual to supervise or direct the Superintendent.
- Represent the Board to outside parties in announcing Board-stated positions and in stating decisions and interpretations within the areas delegated to the President, delegating this authority to other Board

members when appropriate, but remaining accountable for its use.

- Sign all contracts authorized by the Board.
- Sign all official Board reports.
- In the absence or inability of the President, the Vice President has all of the powers and duties of the President.

Notes:

- Votes on all issues as part of the alphabetical roll call vote required by law
- President and the Superintendent work together to build the agenda for the board meetings.

### **Vice-President**

Chosen: Elected by majority of the board

Term: 2 years

Duties:

- In the absence or inability of the president, the vice president shall have and perform all of the powers and duties of the president

### **Secretary**

Chosen: Elected by majority of the board

Term: 2 years

Duties:

- Notifies each board member of all special meetings
- Keeps and preserves minutes of each meeting
- Publishes and posts all notices of election, as required by law
- Acts as custodian of the district seal
- Attests any written contract to which the district may be a party when the contract has been authorized by the board, and affixes the seal thereto
- Performs other duties as assigned by the board

### **Treasurer**

Chosen: Elected by majority of the board

Term: 2 years

Duties:

- Accounts for all moneys belonging to the district, or coming into its possession and reports thereof when required by the board.
- Signs, in writing or facsimile, all warrants, orders or checks drawn in payment of the lawfully incurred and properly authorized obligations of the district.
- Bears legal responsibility for administering receipts and disbursements and taking care of accounting processes.
- Performs other duties as assigned by the board.
- One person can hold the position of secretary and treasurer simultaneously.
- In the absence or inability of the treasurer, the board officer designated by the president (since there is no assistant treasurer or other custodians appointed by the board) shall perform the duties.

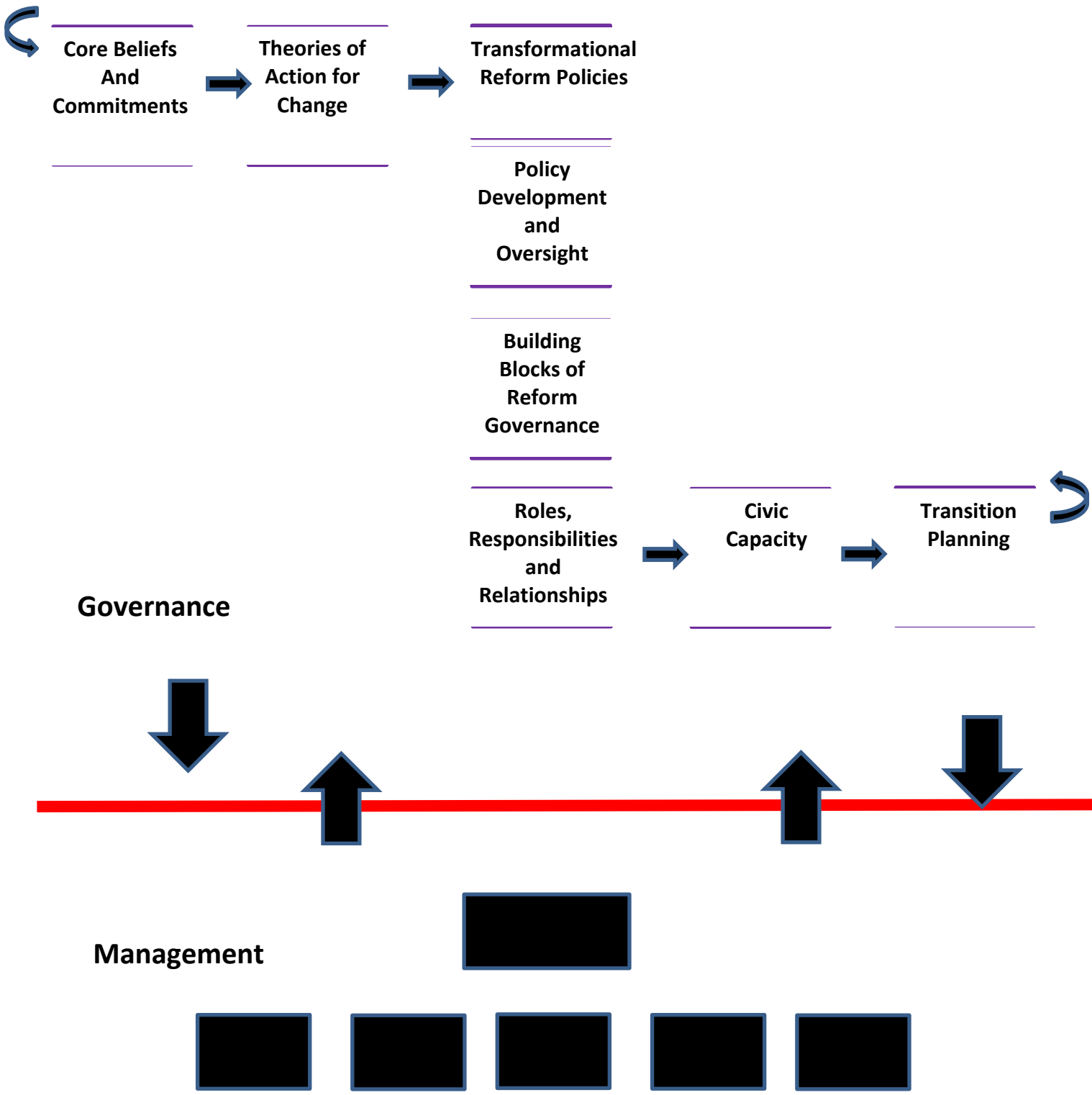
\*\*Information taken from CASB Leadership book and Board policy regarding President's role.

## 10. Information about Colorado Revised Statutes

Colorado Revised Statutes: This book of state laws is provided to the Board once it is updated after each legislative session. The CASB legislative updates will also alert us to key laws that may impact us--and they will notify the Board secretary if there are any policies they feel we should update to reflect new laws.

Center for the Reform of School Systems: This is the organization that the Lake County School District worked with to develop a results-based governance model (which CRSS calls "reform governance"). This website has some information about this model, descriptions of workshops the organization can *offer*, and opportunities to take webinars.

11a. The Red Line



## 11b. Functional and Dysfunctional Teams

### Characteristics of Functional and Dysfunctional Boards

Functional Boards	Dysfunctional Boards
The board is focused on a clear set of beliefs, a plan to carry them out, and constant monitoring.	The board cannot agree on goals and process or continues to pile on new work or change the work after the primary work is set.
The board is focused on improving student achievement for ALL students.	The board has an unfocused agenda that wastes time on unimportant, peripheral issues. Non-student achievement issues dominate board meetings.
The board sets clear expectations for the superintendent and provides constructive feedback.	The board hires a superintendent with unclear expectations and then changes its mind frequently.
Differences occur, but they are never personal in public.	Disagreements get personal, and constant bickering is common.
Members work together to represent the whole district; they do not play interest group games.	Members represent special interest groups or only certain areas of the district.
The board does its work through the superintendent.	The board plays to other district staff and goes around the superintendent.
Board members let the administration make the management decisions.	Board members try to influence management decisions.
The board operates in the open and involves the community in the decision making of important issues.	The board avoids transparency and prefers to make big decisions behind closed doors.
The board communicates as one body and works with the media in an ethical manner.	Board members use the press to criticize and demean other board members or undermine the superintendent.
The board conducts short, efficient board meetings with discussions that are respectful, orderly, and to the point	The board conducts long, drawn-out board meetings that involve unprofessional behavior and repetitious comments on petty issues.
The board establishes a process to orient new board members, provides continuous training, and builds collaboration.	The board has no coherent orientation for new board members and no investment in training or team building.

## 11c. Board Roles and Superintendent Roles

### Board Roles and Superintendent Roles

Board's Role	Superintendent's Role
Make policy.	Implement policy.
Hire the superintendent.	Manage the day-to-day operation of the district.
Develop organizational goals.	Coordinate the development and implementation of strategic plans to meet organizational goals.
Adopt an annual budget.	Prepare an annual budget based on priorities discussed with the board.
Delegate to the superintendent responsibility for all executive functions. Avoid handling any administrative details, even when a constituent asks for assistance. Refer the constituent to the appropriate administrator.	Provide the board with recommendations on all problems and issues under board consideration. Use discretionary judgement in situations not covered by board policy, but report significant decisions to the board.
Approve personnel appointments and terminations recommended by the superintendent.	Recommend personnel appointments and terminations.
Provide financial and management oversight by assuring financial integrity and operational efficiency.	Manage district spending and operations.
Require the superintendent to provide regular reports concerning progress and management of the district.	Keep board members fully and accurately informed about the district.
Evaluate the superintendent.	Ensure the evaluation of staff.
Reach out to the community to advocate for the district.	Establish and maintain good public and media relations for the district.

## **11d. Scenarios for Board Practice**

### **Exploring the Governance-Management Line Activity Scenarios**

#### **Scenario 1:**

Board member Mike Smith makes an appointment with the superintendent, goes to her office, and says, “Madam Superintendent, I’ve been hearing a lot of complaints from principals and parents about the performance of this area superintendent in my part of town. I really think you need to move her to another part of the district or into central office because there is so much discontent about how this person is performing her job.”

#### **Scenario 2:**

Board member Jones calls the superintendent one day and says, “Mr. Superintendent, I want an update on the contract negotiations that are going on right now for the sale of the Main Street property. What’s the status of offers, and how are negotiations going?”

#### **Scenario 3:**

**Board member Enders goes to the board president and says, “Mr. Chair, I would like to put an item on an upcoming board agenda to reconsider our district policy of not naming schools after people who are still alive. Would you please do that?”**

#### **Scenario 4:**

Board member Beazley, during a regular board meeting, says: “Madam Superintendent, I just returned from a conference where they were talking about a new bilingual education program that has gotten great results in other districts. I have a lot of information about that program, and I would like you to put it on the agenda for our next meeting so we can consider adopting it for our district.”

#### **Scenario 5:**

School board member Ketchum arrives unannounced at a school one day, steps into the principal’s office, and requests a tour of the building.

#### **Scenario 6:**

A board member calls up the superintendent and says, “I just had breakfast with a group of civic leaders, and there is a lot of anxiety about your upcoming recommendations to the board regarding the timing of a bond proposal. I just wanted to share this information with you and give you a heads-up, in case you haven’t heard this already in your circles.”

**Scenario 7:**

During a vote to approve the admission process for the district's Talented and Gifted program, board member Dawson complained that screening students based solely on test scores was not fair for a child like his who does not test well. He asked to amend the motion to require the superintendent to develop a multiple data-point process.

**Scenario 8:**

Heritage City School Board, operating in its judicial capacity, is meeting to hear a grievance from a teacher with a medical problem that requires her to use the bathroom often. The teacher has filed a grievance because the principal has assigned her to a classroom far away from the bathroom despite her request to be near one. At the grievance hearing, board member Shilling makes a motion to sustain the grievant and require the principal to reassign the teacher to a classroom near the bathroom. Shilling's motion is approved by the board. ***(Contextual notes: State law gives principals the right to make teacher assignments. Also, the district has no policy requiring principals to take teachers' medical conditions into consideration when making placements.)***

**Scenario 9:**

Board member Hernandez called the superintendent to day he had received a tip from a trusted parent that the principal and several teachers at Taft Elementary School were falsifying test results on the state exam. "I want you to investigate," he told the superintendent.

**Scenario 10:**

During its regular monthly meeting, board member Smithers raises his hand and says, "Mr. Superintendent, I'm very concerned about bus safety in our district. I'm hearing stories about reckless driving and busses are not being adequately maintained. I want to know what your perception is and what your plans are for dealing with this issue?"

**Scenario 11:**

During a board workshop, board member Smith asks the superintendent, "What do you think of our district's policy on nepotism?"

**Scenario 12:**

Board member Martinez meets with the superintendent one day and says, "I think we should consider launching a major district initiative around incentive pay for teachers. I wish you would start educating the board about this in preparation for eventual action."

**Scenario 13:**

Board member Grouse is known for grilling staff during board meetings, asking them tough questions about various data and practices in their departments.

**Scenario 14:**

Board member Johnson has a popular magnet school in his neighborhood where admission is first-come, first-served for the limited spaces. Parents, who have been camping out for days before the deadline to get their children enrolled, have implored the school superintendent to install portable toilets at the site because the closest public bathroom is miles away, but he has adamantly refused, saying it not in the budget. Johnson, who believes the parents have a legitimate request, orders the superintendent to get portable toilets installed, explaining that the media has already contacted him for a comment.

## 11e. Policies

### What is a policy?

A policy is a board-approved document that outlines goals, standards, or principles to guide or prescribe actions and constrain behavior by district employees, students, or others who interact with the district.

### The board's job is to:

Develop policies in support of improved performance.  
Align policies, practices, and resources.  
Monitor implementation and results.

### Why are policies important?

**For compliance:** Policies ensure that school districts are adhering to state and federal laws.

**For effectiveness:** Policies help school districts to function efficiently and effectively.

**For sustainability:** Policies can help to endure that reform efforts endure over time, despite changes in leadership.

**For Reform:** Policies can also be powerful levers for transforming school districts.

### Reform or Transformational Policies

These are designed to fundamentally change the system. Intended to dramatically improve district performance and eliminate the achievement gap.

### Examples of High-Potential Reform Policies

- Academic Standards
- Assessments and Accountability
- Teacher Quality
- School Leadership
- Pupil Assignment
- Resource Allocation
- District Charter Schools/Diverse Portfolios

## 11f. Board Self Evaluation

### Goals for Board Self-Evaluation

- Develop a formal , written, annual board self-evaluation process and timeline that promotes effective governance of the district for high student achievement.
- Develop a board self-evaluation instrument that reflects the governance team's core beliefs and commitments and will align with the district data dashboard and the superintendent evaluation.

When it comes to performance evaluations, it's not just about the superintendent...Nothing has a greater impact on the superintendent's performance than the performance of the board.

In this era of accountability, superintendents, administrators, teachers, students and support staff are all evaluated...why shouldn't board members also be evaluated?

### Why Boards should self-evaluate

- The board is responsible for defining success for the district.
- Board self-evaluation is a critical component of a culture of accountability in the district.
- Board self-evaluation provides the opportunity for constructive dialogue about district progress at the highest level of the district.
- Self-evaluation provides the opportunity for the governance team to critically assess its performance.
- A self-evaluation provides an opportunity to identify ways to improve.

Board self-evaluation: " A rare occurrence" Approximately 76% of school boards in the country do not formally evaluate themselves. The lowest level of self-evaluation is in the largest U.S. school districts ( over 25,000 students).

### Board Discussion Workshop

First, the school board as a whole should meet in a workshop setting to discuss and confirm the intent of a formal, written board self-evaluation, which is to improve district governance for high academic achievement.

### Questions to Consider

- Should the written self-evaluation be public or private?
- What will the board do with the written results of the self-evaluation? Have a discussion at a board retreat? Have a facilitator?
- What are the media implications in your district of formally committing to a board self-evaluation?
- Will the board elicit feedback from constituents?

As part of the self-evaluation discussion, review existing district policies and documents, such

as:

- Core beliefs
- Board governance
- Board ethics
- Board meetings and committees
- Board procedures and/or protocols
- Strategic plan
- Board duties
- Constituent service
- Data dashboard
- Superintendent evaluation

Remember:

- Develop a board self-evaluation process and instrument that improves district governance and is **developmental, not judgmental**.
- This is an evaluation of the effectiveness of the **board**, not individual board members.
- The board self-evaluation should be **constructive, not destructive**.