

*Adapted from South Burlington School District

What is Policy Governance®?

Policy Governance®, created by Dr. John Carver, is an integrated set of principles and practices that frame the job of any governing board. It outlines the manner in which boards can be successful in their servant-leadership role, as well as in their all-important relationship with management.

The model enables the board to focus on the larger issues, to delegate with clarity, to control management's job without meddling, and to rigorously evaluate the accomplishment of the organization.

How will the focus of the board be affected?

This approach emphasizes community values, well-educated students, systems accountability, and efficient use of administration and board time.

It allows the board to focus on general principles leaving details to the administration. Community involvement is an essential component.

The board sets forth clear expectations for student results and sets executive limitations under which the administration operates. The end goals and executive limitations are set within the parameters of the resources and the values of the community.

What is the Ends Policy?

The ends policy is the statement of student expectations containing district standards. The school board delegates to the superintendent the responsibility for making decisions to achieve these goals.

What is expected of the superintendent?

The superintendent focuses the resources and energy of the district to achieve the student results stated in the ends policy. The superintendent maintains fiscal integrity and protects district assets with fairness and respect for all while operating the district within executive limitations and while keeping the board well informed.

What is the role of the school board?

Board members are responsible for representing their constituents and for promoting the greater good of the community by advancing the expectations set in the ends policy.

The board adopts policies then establishes a monitoring schedule. The board evaluates the evidence provided by the superintendent to demonstrate compliance with policies and reasonable progress toward expected student results. The board can request additional evidence or ask for outside help if needed. The board determines if the evidence is sufficient for compliance and requires a remedial plan if needed.

The annual evaluation of the superintendent is based on these monitoring reports.

The board may retain clearly specified responsibilities.

How is the community involved?

Members of the community are responsible for advising the board of the principles it values. They help the school board determine the expected results of the schools, for whom, and at what cost. The community holds the board accountable by electing board members and approving the budget.

What evidence should be expected to demonstrate adherence to a policy?

The evidence includes enough concrete data to convince the board as a whole of compliance with the policy. The objective is to utilize the least amount of data needed to demonstrate compliance. The reason for this is to ensure the board spends its time on relevant critical data and not extraneous information. The goal is to keep the superintendent focused on student results rather than compiling unnecessary evidence.

If the data is incomplete or inadequate, the board will direct the superintendent to revise the monitoring report and resubmit it.

What if the goals aren't met?

Policy expectations may not be met at any given point for many reasons. The superintendent is obligated to inform the board of material deviations from policy or budget expectations and trends away from established goals.

The board and superintendent must discuss contributing factors. Is time needed for correction? Are adequate resources available? Has there been a misstep? The superintendent is held accountable for corrections regardless of his personal involvement in the problem.

When the board addresses a policy infringement, it is the duty of the superintendent to develop a plan and timeline to regain compliance. When the

superintendent submits a plan, the board determines if it is reasonable and then monitors the implementation of the plan.

Ultimately, the board must decide if the whole policy or any aspect within it is unrealistic or needs revision. If the policy needs to be revised, general principles and not specific details or events are used to work out changes.

How does this approach better serve the community?

The goal is to keep the focus on the mission of education within the community and increase accountability of the superintendent to the board in turn to the community.

The community will have increased opportunities to contribute to significant district dialogue on policy, to understand how to get their questions addressed effectively, and to review monitoring information.

How does a member of the community get a question or concern addressed?

The board has established in policy that every person has a right to expect a timely and appropriate response to a question or concern regarding the district.

Concerns of a personal nature or that involve the day to day operations of the school should be directed to the appropriate teacher or principal. Concerns not addressed at the building level can be brought to the superintendent. If a timely, appropriate response from the superintendent isn't received, individuals may address their concerns to the board.

Policy concerns that address the general welfare of the community or the education of students can be addressed directly to the board by contacting the chair.

What about our strategic plan?

Our strategic plan is a document that guides the work of the superintendent, administration, and staff. They will continue to implement the plan and keep the board informed of progress through monitoring reports. The strategic plan became the responsibility of the administration when the board adopted this approach.

What are board's goals for this year?

The board has its own work to do that is separate from the work of the staff and administration. This year the board goals are:

- a. Finalize policy, with community input, outlining results expected of

students when they graduate.

b. Discuss and decide how to monitor student success.

c. Receive and review monitoring reports for each policy.

d. Evaluate board performance.

e. Keep the community involved and informed.

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