



BOARD STRATEGIC LEARNING SESSION

NOVEMBER 29, 2022

DEVELOPING GOVERNANCE CULTURE

Campbell, Davis W.; Fullan, Michael. The Governance Core

Highly effective Board are characterized by an atmosphere of professionalism and trust. Trustees treat each other with respect and dignity and seem relaxed and easy with each other. Hard questions are offered to both to the staff and fellow trustees with respect and professionalism. Debate is vigorous but not rancorous.

High performing boards not only function with a shared moral purpose or imperative; they also **govern with a set of principles** that guides their work. These principles become a **framework of governance standards** against which the board can measure itself. They are also a way for the board to communicate **the principles** it has established for its own work with both the district staff and the community. They represent a commitment by the board to high-quality governance and transparency.



Perhaps the greatest challenge to internal board cohesion and a root cause of dysfunctional board governance **is the culture** within which the board operates. Governance culture refers to **what is acceptable and expected in board operations** and **what is not**. As Edgar Schein, one of the field's long-standing authorities on culture, puts it - Campbell, Davis W.; Fullan, Michael. The Governance Core (pp. 109-120).

"As a group works together and faces common problems, it gradually builds common assumptions and the norms of conduct. In other words, the group as a group learns how to cope with its problems of external survival in its environment and to manage and integrate its internal processes. The sum total of this learning, embodied as a set of implicit assumptions that come to be taken for granted, can be thought of as "culture" of that group. One of the main aspects of this culture will be the norms that guide group members' behavior (Schein, 1999, p. 186).

There are three important processes that help Boards in developing the **governance infrastructure** that is essential to fostering and sustain a positive governance culture.

1. **Board adopted governance principles** – boards operate with a shared moral purpose or imperative; they also govern with a set of principles that guide their work.
2. **Norms** – simply descriptions of how trustees treat each other and others. Norms are very important as guides for what is acceptable.
3. **Protocols** – operating rules that provide structure for the work of the board. Protocols are written agreements adopted by the board to define everything from meeting structure to relationships with the staff and community to the scope of the board's responsibilities. According to Harvard University Professor Richard Elmore (2007), "protocols provide a predictable structure to the work. They define roles and responsibilities in discussions, they provide group norms, and they keep work focused on a productive way."



PROTOCOLS

As discussed and agreed to by the Board of Education November 29, 2022

Communication Protocols – E-Mails:

The Board as a whole has a new email: board@sd33.bc.ca that is posted on the SD33 website [here](#).

Community emails will be responded to in a timely manner as follows:

- Email to a single trustee, with cc to all other trustees, no specific addressee in email:
 - The Chair will respond on behalf of the Board
 - The Chair may request more information from Superintendent to include in response
- Email to a single trustee, with cc to a few other trustees, no specific addressee in email:
 - Non-sensitive emails will be shared with the entire Board and then responded to by the Chair
 - Judgement prevails in considering group addressed, but the same group will be cc'd
- Email to single trustee, with cc to all other trustee, a specific trustee is addressed:
 - Addressed trustee responds and cc's all other trustees
- Email to all trustees (board email or sent to all in the "To" line)
 - The Chair will respond
- Email to only a few trustees:
 - Non-sensitive emails will be shared with the entire Board and then responded to by the Chair
 - Judgement prevails in considering group addressed, but the same group will be cc'd



PROTOCOLS CONTINUED

As discussed and agreed to by the Board of Education November 29, 2022

Communication Protocols – E-Mails (continued):

- Email to a single trustee with a specific question or concern and that trustee *is not* the liaison trustee?
 - Trustee may respond, but individually, not on behalf of the Board
 - If the trustee does not know the answer, email Superintendent and CC the rest of the Board of Education. Acknowledge the member's e-mail and let them know you will find out more information and get back to them shortly.
- Email to a single trustee with a specific question or concern and that trustee *is* the liaison trustee?
 - Trustee may respond with their opinion, and will specify this in the email

Communication Protocols – Social Media:

- Personal and Trustee social media pages should be treated as follows:
 - Encouragement to use trustee pages more often to share information, initiatives, celebrate district work and Strategic Plan Stories
 - Consider aligning posts with the Board's Strategic Plan, Ministry of Education & Child Care policies and directions, and decisions of the Board
 - Posts and Responses should represent the whole Board of Education, messages are best to be moved to email and treated as per email protocols
 - Personal and trustee pages should be treated the same and considered public
 - Use discretion and professionalism
 - Opinions on matters or motions that are soon to come to the Board table should not be posted



PROTOCOLS CONTINUED

As discussed and agreed to by the Board of Education November 29, 2022

Communication Protocols – Interviews (Media Outlets & Media Inquiries):

- The Board Chair is the official spokesperson for the Board of Education:
 - **Operational Questions:**
 - Confirm with Superintendent accuracy of information being provided
 - **Governance Questions:**
 - Approved Board Decision – provide info to media based on the decision
 - General topic not addressed by policy or administrative procedures - bring the question back to the Board table for discussion
- General information provided to trustee(s) of community interest should be presented to the Board for discussion
- Statements are preferred to be provided after the Board meeting