Board / Superintendent Team Operating Agreements

Why Working Agreements Matter

1. Provides clarity regarding the manner in which the team will work together
2. Builds / maintains respectful relationships
3. Manages / clarifies expectations
4. Builds trust
5. Improves communication
6. Helps to navigate change and conflict

Concepts Commonly Found in Working Agreements:

1. Communication Protocols & "No Surprises"

- **The "No Surprises" Rule:** Neither the board nor the superintendent springs unexpected issues or questions on each other during public meetings.
- **Questions in Advance:** Board members review packets early and send complex or technical questions to the superintendent prior to meetings.
- **Emergency Alerts:** The superintendent promptly notifies the board of crisis situations or major events before they become public news.

2. Role Boundaries & Governance vs. Operations

- **Superintendent as Chief Executive:** The board sets policy, budget, and outcomes; the superintendent manages daily operations and staff.
- **One Employee:** The board acts as a whole to manage its sole employee (the superintendent), and individual directors do not direct staff.
- **Complaint Routing:** Public or staff complaints are directed to the superintendent rather than investigated by individual board members.

Concepts Commonly Found in Working Agreements:

3. Public Representation & "One Voice"

- **Authority in the Boardroom:** Individual board members hold no legal authority outside of official, convened board meetings.
- **Designated Spokesperson:** The Board Chair or Superintendent serves as the official media and community spokesperson.
- **Unity After the Vote:** Directors debate openly before a vote, but respect and support the majority decision once cast.

4. Board Meeting Logistics & Behavior

- **Agenda Setting:** A clear, predictable process determines how items are added to the meeting agenda.
- **Airtime & Etiquette:** Directors practice active listening, speak concisely, and ensure equal opportunity for all members to weigh in.
- **Executive Session Privacy:** Strict adherence to state laws regarding the confidentiality of private executive sessions.

Concepts Commonly Found in Working Agreements:

5. School Visits & District Engagement

- **Campus Visits:** Board members notify the superintendent or principal in advance before visiting schools.
- **Community Ambassadors:** Directors actively champion the district's vision, budget, and goals throughout the local community.

6. Team Dynamics & Annual Review

- **Private Feedback:** Interpersonal issues or critiques are handled privately rather than aired in public meetings.
- **Annual Review:** The board regularly evaluates its own performance, the superintendent, and these operating agreements..

Working Agreements Discussion

What agreements would the Corbett Board / Superintendent Team benefit from if they were in place?

Working Agreements Review: With A Partner

Review the example of the Core Working Agreements that have been shared with you

Use your knowledge of the current functioning of the board / superintendent team to identify those elements that you would like to see in your working agreements. Mark these items with your highlighter.

Core Working Agreements Example

Be prepared to share out

Next Steps

Based on the patterns that have been identified and the discussion that has occurred, board leadership and the superintendent will do the following:

a. Create working agreements
b. Formally adopt working agreements