

# **Pendleton School District**

## **SUPERINTENDENT/BOARD OPERATING PRINCIPLES**



### ***Introduction***

As the citizen and executive leaders of the Pendleton School District, it is important for the School Board and Superintendent to work together as a team. Though the roles of each are necessarily different the primary mission of developing the full potential of all learners must be the paramount purpose for each.

The way the Board and Superintendent conduct business becomes a model throughout the District for students, teachers, parents and staff for leadership and problem-solving.

Operating principles define roles, responsibilities, and methods of working together. To assure quality operations, leaders must agree on basic ways of working. Therefore, the Board and Superintendent agree to abide by these principles.

### **Commitment**

- We will expect each other to be committed to the work of leading the Pendleton School District.
- We will maintain regular attendance at meetings. If we are unable to attend the Board President or Superintendent should be notified.
- We will work as a team.
- We will lead by example.
- We will commit to ongoing improvement of ourselves, the Board, and the Board & Superintendent team.
- We will commit to spending time in our schools every month during the school year.
- We will commit to at least one School Board Learning Walk each school year.

### **Judgment and Trust**

- We will trust that the intentions of others are positive.
- We will be truthful, and trust that others are truthful.
- We will have allowance for error.
- We will recognize that each of us may approach problems and challenges in a different manner. This does not make another's approach wrong; just different.

### **Decision-Making**

- The cornerstone of our decision-making will be "What's best for students".
- We will approach Board discussions with an open mind; seeking to understand each other's ideas, perspectives, values and beliefs.
- We will disagree without being disagreeable.
- We will make decisions that are informed.
- We will attack problems and issues NOT people or personalities.
- Once a decision is made by the Board on any issue we will support that decision, in word and action, though we may not agree with the decision.
- The Board will make decisions on policy, budget, direction, etc.
- The Superintendent will make decisions on implementation of policy, operations of the School District, management and direction of staff, etc.

## **Communication "No Surprises!!"**

### **Board and Superintendent**

- Recognize that open communication requires trust, respect and a fundamental belief in goodwill among Board Members and Staff.
- Support each other constructively and courteously.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Focus discussion on issues, not personalities.
- Uphold the integrity of every individual.
- Involve those parties who will be affected by the decision whenever possible and appropriate.
- Enter into problems with an open mind for all individuals involved.
- The Superintendent and School Board will, whenever appropriate and possible, promptly notify one another of events, rumors and issues that are likely to be issues of potential concern within the District and or community.

### **Superintendent**

- The Superintendent will limit surprises to the Board, such as last-minute decisions and additions to the agendas.
- The Superintendent will seek to make communication clear, complete, concise and timely.
- The Superintendent will meet or speak with Board Chair on at least a monthly basis. The purpose of these meetings will be to discuss operations of the District and establish agendas for meetings of the Board.
- The Superintendent will provide a written briefing to the Board of operational highlights on a monthly basis.
- The Superintendent will follow-through on Board questions and requests.
- The Superintendent will, when appropriate, provide full-disclosure to the Board of Directors on sensitive issues, and issues that come before them for decision.
- The Superintendent will share concerns with the Board and/or individual Directors openly.

### **Board**

- The Board will limit surprises to the Superintendent, such as last-minute requests for detailed information or additions to the agenda for which he may not be prepared.
- The Board will communicate Board interests and expectations to the Superintendent clearly and on a regular basis.
- The Board will recognize the impact of large projects on the Superintendent and his staff (opportunity cost) and will reasonably limit such projects.
- Board direction to the Superintendent will come by way of an approved motion, consensus, or through the Board President.
- Concerns of the Board and/or the individual Directors will be addressed with the Superintendent openly, directly and in a timely manner.
- Board members will offer candid feedback to one another, seeking to help one another and the whole team to improve their effectiveness and performance.

# **Superintendent and School Board Roles and Responsibilities**

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## **The Role of the School Board is to:**

- Set policies;
- Prioritize and keep District resources focused on student learning;
- Approve the budget;
- Hire and evaluate the Superintendent;
- Listen to and represent the community;
- Be an advocate for public education;
- Be supportive of students, staff and administration;
- Support participation and involvement in decision-making;
- Direct concerns or criticisms to the Superintendent in a timely manner;
- Support actions taken by the Board and clearly differentiate personal opinion from Board decisions when speaking in the minority.

## **The Role of the Superintendent is to:**

- Provide recommendations and implement Board policy;
- Build a positive environment throughout the District;
- Serve as a resource to the Board;
- Recommend for hire and supervise All District Staff;
- Act as the primary District communicator;
- Provide support, leadership, and vision for the District;
- Bring options and recommendations to the Board;
- Ensure District and staff accountability;
- Be the "day-to-day" decision-maker;
- Manage and delegate the work of the District.

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## **The role of the School Board is not to:**

- Carry out policies or micro-manage;
- Direct any staff other than the Superintendent;
- Create surprises;
- Abdicate Board responsibility;
- Press narrow personal agendas;
- As individuals, make promises that would appear to be binding upon the Board and/or District.

## **The role of the Superintendent is not to:**

- Make policies;
- Create surprises;
- Assume Board responsibilities;
- Press narrow personal agendas;
- Be the sole spokesperson for the Board;
- Discourage open discussion and feedback.

## **Dealing with Citizens and Parents**

- When we hear concerns and complaints we will listen and refer the individual with concerns to the lowest level possible for resolution e.g. the school principal, etc. We will promptly notify the Superintendent if, in our judgment, the concern or complaint is worthy of such notification. The Superintendent will follow-up with Board members on the outcome of referrals.
- When we hear concerns and complaints we will suspend final judgment, recognizing that we may not have a complete picture.
- Individual Directors will represent themselves as individual Board members in dealing with citizens rather than as representing the School Board. The exception to this is when addressing others on issues where there is agreement by the Board (such as direction, policy, elections, etc.).

## **Effective Meetings**

- The Board agrees to share ideas about new programs and new directions with the Superintendent and other members of the Board before presenting major proposals publicly.
- Out of respect for the time of others, Board meetings will begin as scheduled.
- The Board agrees to read all materials, call and ask questions in advance (to allow Superintendent to prepare complete and accurate response), seek clarification and information as needed and when possible, explain to the Superintendent in advance about major concerns about proposals.
- The Board will refrain from holding de facto Board meetings via telephone and/or email.