
Improving Board Communication

The School Board approved four standing committees that have driven the Board's work during the 2013-14 school year. The committees are focused on the following areas: Strategic Plan, Funding, Board Effectiveness, and Policy.

One of the goals of the Board Effectiveness sub-committee was to develop more communication strategies to support Board and District goals. In response to the board self-evaluation work at the Winter Work Session this discussion will focus on:

1. Communication issues discussed during the self-evaluation process
2. Communication methods other District use
3. Questions for discussion and next steps

Communication issues discussed during self-evaluation process:

- Balance feedback from specific individuals with needs of all
- Obtain reliable information
- Promote representative voice
- Ensure all heard

Communication methods other districts use:

- Standing advisory committees whose members are by invitation/application. The board creates these committees with specific objectives and reporting requirements. Typically a board member and a district staff member work with the committee. Our audit committee is an example of this type of committee. (Hillsboro)
<http://www.hsd.k12.or.us/Academics/OfficeforSchoolPerformance/FamilyandCommunityEngagement.aspx>
- Scheduled listening session on a topic. Our budget listening sessions are examples. (Montgomery County)
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe/community/participation.aspx>
- Scientific surveys to listen to representative sample of district. (Poway)
http://www.powayusd.com/news/press-releases/2013/pr_12-04-13CommunicationSurvey.pdf
- Regular reports from students and non-administrative staff at board meetings. (ABC Unified)
http://www.abcusd.k12.ca.us/pages/ABC_Unified_School_District/Departments/superintendent/1346863840361718546/Board_Meeting
- Public comment at board meetings
- Extensive use of Student Advisory Board (Washoe County)
<http://www.washoe.k12.nv.us/students/student-advisory-board>
- Short-term advisory committees, akin to BSD task forces or strategic planning effort (Spring Branch)
<http://cms.springbranchisd.com/district/ForParents/CommitteesTaskforces/tabid/28604/Default.aspx>
- Ombudsman or office of constituent services (Prince George's County)
<http://www1.pgcps.org/concerns/>

Questions for discussion:

What is our communication objective?

- How should the board receive information? From whom?
- How do we determine which issues to engage?
- What is the board's role in providing information?