

Summer Issues Seminar- CUBE District Workshops

Friday, July 18, 2014

1-2:30 p.m.

In these sessions, based on district size, district members had the opportunity to discuss with board members from around the country relevant and timely issues facing urban school districts and share best practices and policies that are working. The responses that follow represent a summary of the ideas that were captured by our scribes during the workshops.

Small- Size Districts (under 30,000) | Scribe: Nandi Sekou, US Virgin Islands

1. What policies or practices do you have in place to assure unity of purpose and vision for your board? For example, how do you organize your annual or semi-annual retreat to be most productive? What board operating practices are most effective for resolving conflict?
 - Cheryl McCarthy, Juliet Township, Il-follow strict adherence to the strategic plan, it provides the vision and all decisions are made on that basis.
 - Resources are allocated based on this. One to one initiative and very real document used
 - One district in Arizona had two board members recalled. Implementing retreat once a quarter. Looking for superintendent. Re-doing mission vision and goals. Meet hours on weekend to bond and figure out direction. Do trainings.
 - Caroll Turpin, Pontiac, Michigan- strategic plan form year to year and budget is centered around the SP
 - Ohio School Board Association – trying to reach out to other districts to set goals. Do not have strategic plan
 - Hayward, CA has mission, vision, and goals. Do have strategic plan. Funding has changed. Has to show that academics are in line with county and sp in order to receive funding. Has to be aligned and sent to state to receive funding. Needs stability in terms of superintendent.
 - Pennsylvania - One retreat a year to focus on goals and vision.
 - Harvey Illinois #152 has a meeting in June called swat. Do analysis on a monthly basis. Has a 3million surplus
 - Kathy Beck, River Trails, IL – has closed sessions to resolve conflicts.
 - Made a pact that focus and goal is the children. Did board self evaluation. Opened up their eyes.
 - Mustafa Brent, East Orange New Jersey – Board is appointed and therefore there is hardly any conflict because their ideas are aligned with the Mayor who appoints.
 - Betty Thompson, Phoenix, AZ – there are 5 on the board and they put everything to a vote.
 - Angela McNair, Erie, PA – Conflict with outsourcing substitute teachers. The board president emailed and asked everyone to be respectful of everyone’s opinion.
 - Annette Walker, Hayward, CA – through policy. Refer to board policy whenever there is a conflict.
 - Do not allow the public to be disrespectful to anyone. Video tape sessions and therefore people are very respectful.

2. What policies are in place to address the burgeoning future student diversity – particularly the significant increase in second language students? Similarly, how are you addressing the shortage of racially and ethnically diverse teaching staff? How has your district addressed school climate, specifically to support inclusion?
- Daniel Hernandez, California - 90 plus Latino created coordinator positions to assist.
 - No, have not addresses ethnic diversity, but is seeking to hire students who have graduated from their schools.
 - Regina Holley , Pittsburgh, PA– did two major programs. Hinds Fellowship program African American males pursuing a degree in teaching. Have three future educators of America club. Students interested in teaching participate in this club and are mentored. Have a teacher center in their districts where students can learn how to become teachers. They are growing their own.
3. Glenn Singleton talked about courageous conversations about race and ethnicity at the April meeting. How is your board taking the lead to encourage your district and your community?
- Phoenix AZ – Looking at race as an advantage rather than an issue. Limit curriculum around Mexican American issues which was blocked by the courts. Board is trying to bring back some of that curriculum. Through CUBE and Singleton took tools back to district and started to have the conversations to see what they wanted to accomplish. Got 52% of ELL students reclassified.
 - Anne Riley, Schenectady, NY - Students of color were being suspended at a higher rate. Have goal that race and disability will not be predictors of success. Do a racial justice report card even if they get a D. Talking about it has forged a change in her district. Need to discuss things that are important to your board and make them a priority.
 - Cheryl McCarthy, Juliet Township – has a speaker’s bureau. Take the workshops out to the community at places where people go. Went to different organizations also. Open up schools to make them available to community organizations also.
 - Made in Hayward – Reached out to the Rotary and various organizations. Started marketing campaign to change their own perception of who they are. Created their own image. What do we share in common? Use an asset model rather than deficit model.
 - Brought in hometown hero to attract parents and people in the community to attend workshops. Had a great turnout.

Mid-Size Districts (30,000-60,000) | Scribe: JulieMarie Shepherd, Aurora, Colo.

Districts in attendance: Tacoma, WA; Aurora, CO; Buffalo, NY; Rochester, NY; Ft. Wayne, IN; Baton Rouge, LA; Jersey City, NJ; Atlanta, GA; Lincoln, NE; Akron, OH

1. What policies or practices in place to ensure unity of purpose/vision for board?
 - Annual self-evaluation tool to hold members accountable
 - Can provide good information, but have to be careful that it does not turn into personal attacks on individual board members.
 - Completing self-evaluation anonymously online and then bringing in an outside facilitator to review and discuss.
 - Board recently adopted Policy Governance and as part of this, created a new strategic plan and all matters raised at board meetings are expected to relate directly back to strategic plan. This has helped limit one-offs and “pet projects”
 - Balanced scorecard for evaluation. Keeps board and administration focused on what is most important. Regularly revisits score card to ensure that metrics are most relevant and appropriate. Board has brought in Don McAdams multiple occasions to facilitate work sessions and retreats
 - “Unity of purpose” is a challenge! Board has come together around common purpose and role. State of crisis brought board together—the realization that BOE members often outlast the superintendent and therefore have to have the long-term commitment to serving students and creating change.
 - Policy governance model, but still a high level of struggle around reaching agreement on what should be on agenda and one board member who tends to dominate conversation.
 - Make a point to limit in-fighting between board members in public forums.
 - Televised board meetings, but for public comment period, it is not televised so as not to give speakers a platform to grandstand.
 - During multi-day retreats, first day is board and staff, but second day is board only.
 - Focus on goal setting
 - Board hires its own attorney separate from the district counsel. This has been helpful in diffusing difficult and contentious conversations regarding superintendent salary.
 - Once agreement is reached, superintendent contract is reviewed page-by-page in public meeting and made available on website for easy access and transparency.
 - When you’re spending this much time with other human beings,—you need to make a point to get to know them on an individual level. It isn’t workshops or retreats that make a board function effectively, but individual relationships. One of the best ways to have an effective board is to get to know board members as fellow humans who you can share common ground with.
 - Reminder that we have kids counting on us to get along, treat each other with respect so that we can get work done.

2. What policies are in place to address future diversity among students? Addressing shortage of racial and ethnically diverse teaching staff? School climate?
 - Tacoma, WA equity policy language similar to St. Paul
 - Redoing school climate survey to better address issues and collect data
 - Implementation of PBIS
 - Recognition of importance of social emotional development and have begun developing metrics to track this
 - Create equity office that reports directly to the board (Rochester)
 - Conducted an equity audit (Atlanta)
 - A division of Equity in Learning—make sure you’re discussing equity AND learning at the same time— not separate or standalone “topics”
 - Comes back to the board understanding its role and having a strong working relationship with the superintendent and is able to proactively direct superintendent to take up these issues

3. How is your board taking the lead to encourage your district and your community to discuss equity issues?
 - One City One Book initiative –just adopted *The Pact* and used it as a book study and discussion about how the City is supporting student success and role that everyone plays
 - Partnership with University to have these conversations community-wide
 - Getting business support and buy-in
 - Focused conversations on white privilege

Large-size (60,000 and over) | Scribe: Katy Presas-Garcia, Brownsville, Texas

1. What policies or practices in place to ensure unity of purpose/vision for board?

- Set of norms revisited to see if it works. Board handbook for Baltimore County presented in the Baltimore Retreat. Try to listen to each other, try to follow the norms recognize President Role
- Norms, the President is the Spokesperson.
- Washoe County Board change as new Board Members come on Board after change comes the norms change the team becomes weak. Dysfunctional Board causes the friction and don't follow norms.
- Censure a Board Member depending on Policy and Depending what is taken into consideration Depending on the duties of the Board.
- Board to follow procedures even when new Board Members come on Board need to understand
- Governing Board, the Texas State Board Association reviews all Districts Policies and approve
- After the State reviews the Policy is sent to the District for Approval.
- Baltimore goes by the Calendar and update policies constantly, review of language and use Ad Hoc.

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- Mono Cultural issues looked at closely, enrollment, school choice process
- You get to select your school, Special Education 1 yr plus expectation IEP designed differently
- 1 yr plus allows students to catch up. Why hold back students who have the potential of taking AP Classes.
- Changing policy so our districts can be able to reach out to students who are not prepared for the Pre-AP Classes. Memphis it is called teaching to the Middle
- Boards need to accept equity and start accepting the serious issues. Board Members are not focusing on the real issues.

3. How is your board taking the lead to encourage your district and your community to discuss equity issues?
- Equity issue Poorest Teachers getting poorest students, getting data to review where students are being placed so parents know what is happening.
 - Equity can also be getting better teachers for students who are in social economic disadvantage. Why should students get teachers who are not highly qualified? The students deserve the best of the best.
 - If you don't pay teachers well you get what you pay for. Teachers are not prepared to teach ELL
 - Understand ELL and know what children need.
 - ½ hour extra Collaboration time to train teachers, accountability plan to show the improvement
 - Teachers get an extra 10% in pay, the state of California is helping fund for the additional time.
 - Districts are adding extra time for students in need of improvements