

OVERSIGHT OR OVERSTEPPING

ASBA

Arkansas School Boards Association

2016 New Board Member Institute

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Board Governs

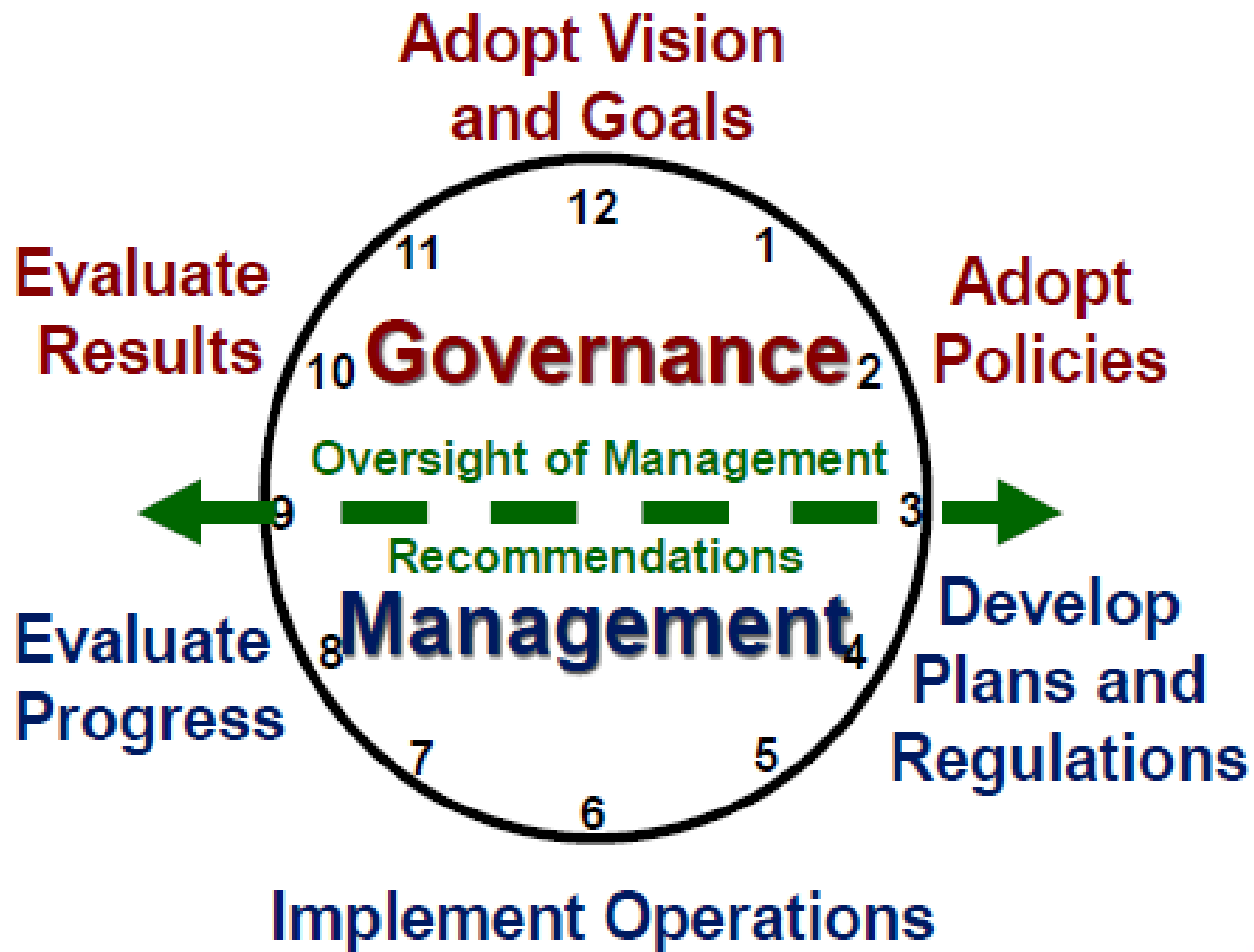
Superintendent Manages



- Determines vision/mission
- Chooses/evaluates CEO
- Adopts policy
- Assesses district results

- Develops the plans, systems, programs, procedures, people to accomplish desired goals
- Monitors these for effectiveness and desired results
- Adjusts these as needed

The Governance Clock



WHAT IS OVERSTEPPING?

When a school board or an individual school board member steps:

- Out of the school board's governance and oversight authority
- Into the superintendent's district management authority

WHAT IS OVERSTEPPING?

When a school board or an individual school board member:

- Tells the superintendent or staff how to do their jobs
- Does the job of the superintendent or the staff
- “Checks on” progress outside of the designed monitoring and reporting systems

THE IMPACT OF OVERSTEPPING

- The undermining of the authority of the superintendent
- The undermining of trust between board members and between the superintendent and board members
- Dissention between the board and the superintendent
- Staff and/or community confusion – unclear chain of command

WHY DOES OVERSTEPPING HAPPEN?

- The board or the board member does not accept the authority of the superintendent
- The board and the superintendent team has no shared understanding of how the team members define and implement the separate, yet interdependent, leadership roles of the board and the superintendent

WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

- The board or the board member does not have the information from the superintendent needed to effectively perform the appropriate governance or oversight roles
- The superintendent is not performing his/her job to the satisfaction of the board

WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

- The trust level between the board and the superintendent is low or non-existent
- Some piece of the larger school district system is not accomplishing the results expected by the board

OVERSIGHT OR OVERSTEPPING

Question:

How many school board members does it take to change a light bulb?

OVERSIGHT OR OVERSTEPPING

Answer:

None.

The board's job is to say "Let there be light."

The superintendent's job is to choose the best light bulbs and delegate a staff member to install them.

Then, the board determines if the light shines bright enough.

TESTING OUR SKILLS

Your Instructions

Stand Up – Oversight

Sit Down – Overstepping

PERSONNEL – OVERSIGHT OR OVERSTEPPING

- The school board and superintendent develop a profile of the type of principal they want in the district.
- The superintendent posts a principal position and receives applications.
- One board member asks if the superintendent will interview an acquaintance of the board member.

PERSONNEL – OVERSIGHT OR OVERSTEPPING

- The superintendent completes the application & interview process and brings to the board a recommendation for hiring. The board rejects the superintendent's recommendation and insists the superintendent promote another employee.

COMMUNICATION— OVERSIGHT OR OVERSTEPPING

- The board adopts a new policy on communicating with the community
- The board encourages the superintendent to keep them informed about what's happening in district with a variety of methods
- A couple of board members tell the superintendent to develop a social media strategy and campaign to keep the community informed

COMMUNICATION– OVERSIGHT OR OVERSTEPPING

- A board member continues writing their personal blog
- The board member often writes in the blog about things happening in the district
- Sometimes the board member writes about board decisions in the blog
- A few times the board member has criticized board decisions in the blog

COMMUNICATION— OVERSIGHT OR OVERSTEPPING

- The board president talks to the board member about the blog and suggests changing its content or discontinuing it

PERSONNEL – OVERSIGHT OR OVERSTEPPING

- The school board asks to review the hiring policies of the district during the hiring process before the opening of a new elementary school
- Board members ask the superintendent about how many people have submitted applications for the principal's job

PERSONNEL – OVERSIGHT OR OVERSTEPPING

- Board members ask the superintendent about how many people have submitted applications for teaching positions
- Two board members ask for permission to “sit in” on the interview process for principal.
- They also ask for permission to “sit in” on the interview process for teachers
- The president explains to them that this is against the current hiring policies

PERSONNEL – OVERSIGHT OR OVERSTEPPING

- The members request that the hiring policies in question be changed to allow board members to “sit in” on staffing interviews
- They request that the hiring policies be placed on the next board agenda
- At the next board meeting the policies are discussed and the board decides to not make changes to the current hiring policies

FACILITIES – OVERSIGHT OR OVERSTEPPING

- The board participates in a strategic plan process which includes construction, maintenance and the use of facilities.
- With the district strategic plan in mind, the board approves the facilities master plan.

FACILITIES – OVERSIGHT OR OVERSTEPPING

- When the facilities master plan is presented to the community, several community members express anger at closing their local school.
- One board member meets with a group of community members to listen to their complaints.
- She helps them to organize a protest of the plan.

COMPLAINTS – OVERSIGHT OR OVERSTEPPING

- The board has approved a policy that dictates the process for grievances by employees.
- One board member receives a call from a district employee complaining about his supervisor. The board member advises the employee to follow the grievance procedure outlined in policy.

COMPLAINTS – OVERSIGHT OR OVERSTEPPING

- The employee calls again and says he is afraid to lodge a formal complaint because he is afraid of pay back. The board member listens at length and tells the employee he will handle it.
- The board member contacts the employee's supervisor and asks questions to get more information about the situation.

COMPLAINTS – OVERSIGHT OR OVERSTEPPING

- The board member discusses the situation with two other board members.
- One board member calls the superintendent to direct the superintendent to look into the situation and report back to the board.
- The employee follows the grievance procedure and the board reviews the actions in a Personnel Hearing with all members present.

FINANCES – OVERSIGHT OR OVERSTEPPING

- The board hires an independent auditor and approves the audit report which finds two areas of noncompliance in the district's record keeping.
- The board directs the superintendent to look into and correct the two areas and report back to the board.

FINANCES – OVERSIGHT OR OVERSTEPPING

- Based on the audit report, one board member goes to the chief financial officer and asks the CFO to walk her through all the internal procedures in place so she can feel confident in the CFO's competence.
- The board member publicly criticizes the CFO.
- The board requests the superintendent to review the internal audit procedures and correct them if necessary.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. What can your board and superintendent do to ensure clear lines of responsibility so that overstepping doesn't become an issue?
2. Can a superintendent overstep too? What are some examples?
3. **OTHER QUESTIONS**



AS ALWAYS,
FOR ASSISTANCE

Call: 800-482-1212

E-mail: arsba@arsba.org