Southern Region Leadership Conference

BOARD BEHAVIOR MATTERS

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Any road you are on is good enough if you don’t know where you are going.
What does a good board look like?

Seasoned Board Member - Retreat
Have you ever observed a school board meeting from a poor performing school district?

We have. 262 of them.

It’s not pretty.

We Learned: The more negative a school board behaved, the lower the student achievement in their district.
Is your board ATTRACTIVE?

Success is something you attract.
If you want to attract quality people, you have to be quality yourself.
Won’t attract great superintendents if you aren’t attractive.

GO TO WAR FOR TALENT.
Did you know that your system is perfectly designed to get the results you are getting?

Your organizational structure must be aligned with the right things.
Do You Address The Elephants in The Room?
ACCOUNTABILITY PLANS are here to stay.

What do you see coming?
• Uniform Curriculum- Uniform Delivery

• No new ideas!!!

• Reform comes from within.
How Many of You Talk to Yourself?
• 60,000 thoughts per day.

• 57,000 of those thoughts are the same thoughts you had YESTERDAY.

• Difference in a RUT and a GRAVE.
95% of our thinking is turned over to our SUBCONSCIOUS.

We turn things over to autopilot.

When we are good, we tend to do that more often. Keeps us from being great.
MY FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY COMBINED WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF YEARS.
• A board is a place where VERY COMPETENT individuals can come together and form a very incompetent board.

• Does your board have a VISION?
Many think boards are a thing of the past.

What do you think?

You will be evaluated soon, so the question is “who will do it”.

“School boards in high-performing districts are significantly different in their knowledge and beliefs than school boards in low-performing districts. And, the difference appears to carry through among administrators and teachers throughout the districts.” *Iowa Association of School Boards*

- It seeps into the blood stream of an organization.
Run From The Naysayers (Nuts)
Beware the Energy Vampires
Stress Tip

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If you truly want to improve 'Employee Morale' inside your workplace, spend more time encouraging and practicing harmony across the organization instead of developing and tolerating toxic silos and cliques.

- Ty Howard
CEO and Editor-in-Chief of MOTIVATION magazine

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more training is not a solution for low morale in the workplace
Would you like to work with this board?

- Obsessed with trivia concerns
- Short-term focus
- Reactive stance
- Review, rehash, redo staff work
- Driven by single agendas
- Consistent split votes
- Grandstanding
- Playing to the audience
- Violating confidence
WHAT PREVENTS BOARDS FROM PERFORMING BETTER?

- Lack of clear focus
- Role confusion
- Multiple and competing drivers of actions
- Useless policy
- Reactive orientation
- “Fix-it” mentality

The end result? Inability to make a difference!
• How do you want your fellow board members to perceive you?

• ANSWER THIS: Do you believe this system can go to the next level?

• What will it take?
Did you know that your system is perfectly designed to get the results you are getting?

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How Does Your Board Stack Up?

- If I asked you if you were a high performing board member, what would you tell me?

- Our research in four states proved that board self-evaluations were not accurate.

- Who wants to admit they are not effective?
• This caused my research to take a new twist.

• Actually see board meetings in action. Lots of fun.

• What did we see?

• In fact..........................
Not Paying Attention
anger
1. eyebrows down and together
2. eyes glare
3. narrowing of the lips

fear
1. eyebrows raised and pulled together
2. raised upper eyelids
3. tensed lower eyelids
4. lips slightly stretched horizontally back to ears

contempt
1. lip corner tightened and raised on only one side of face

disgust
1. nose wrinkling
2. upper lip raised
Recent research showed that 88% of the board members in districts being taken over by the state rated their performance highly successful.
David Lee’s (2014) ground-breaking research with school boards revealed a direct link between board member behaviors and student achievement. Compared to high & medium performing school districts, low performing districts’ board meetings were less orderly; spent less time on student achievement or plans for relevant academic district improvement; did not listen respectfully and attentively to the person speaking; had board meeting members advancing their own agenda; had less good working relationships among the governance team; had less board members relying on the superintendent for advice/input; had one member, other than the board president, stand out for taking a lot of time; and were not acting on policy items as much.
Conclusion

- More **training** is not the answer.

- Boards in low-performing school districts have to radically change the way they do their business.

- They have to **govern** differently.

- Thus, Behavioral Governance was born.
Knowing Doing Gap

- Why do so much education and training, management consulting, and business research and so many books and articles produce so little change in what managers and organizations do?”

- “Each year, more than $60 billion is spent on training in and by organizations, particularly management training.”

- “Regardless of the quality of the content, the delivery, or the frequency of repetition, management education [training] is often ineffective in changing organizational practices.”

(Pfieffer & Sutton. The Knowing Doing Gap. 2000, pp. 1-2)
Are you ready?
LET'S DO THIS TOGETHER

COME JOIN ME
Seven Signs of a Great Board Meeting (Dr. David Lee)

- The leader takes control and professionally advances the agenda
- The meeting flows well and is productive
- No one monopolizes discussions
- The majority of the meeting deals with achievement issues
- Everyone listens attentively when others are talking
- There are no visible signs of dissatisfaction with other board members
- The public would take pride in the board accomplishments
• People don’t leave bad school systems, they leave bad bosses.

• They leave flawed leadership.

• Bad leadership runs off your great teachers and administrators.
You are not expected to be experts. You can be overwhelmed at all the jargon, technical language, and policies.

Texas Board- Straight Lines
• My research reveals that board members get overwhelmed with all they have to do, and this can often paralyze productivity.

• Key to high achievers is they shrink the work of the boards.
What Jumped Out From The Research:

- Main function of a board is policy and budget. Constituents are demanding more and more of your time.

- There is a growing disconnect between boards and superintendents.

- Board Presidents are allowing board meetings to become *show time* for fellow board members.
Boards want, and demand, change. BUT, they don’t want FACES put to that change. Change, but do it with things like they are. They want change around the edges.

When boards stabilize, good things happen.

Low performing communities want QUICK fixes and super human things done and they pressure board members to get it done -- and failure is the result.
The 3 P’s

- POWER
- POLITICS
- POWER STRUGGLES
• Board members **MIRROR** the behavior of the communities they represent.

• **ACTIONS** are connected to high performance, not values or beliefs. Boards believe it, but have to act it out.

• Board members are often absent from training. Those who need it the most think they don’t need it.
• It is the board’s responsibility to GOVERN. Individual board members do not. A superintendent is bound by what the board says, but never by what an individual board member says.

• There must be a bond between the superintendent and the board. Must TRUST each other.
We do know that LEADERSHIP MATTERS.

We do know that GREAT TEACHING MATTERS.

We now know that POSITIVE BOARD BEHAVIOR MATTERS.
• Some people inside your system don’t believe your goals can be achieved.

• Some don’t care if you fail. It takes the spotlight off them and what they do, or don’t do.

• They can blame YOU.
Dance of the Lemons
Guaranteed Not To Get You To The Next Level

Fig. 1: The Dance of the Lemons

The Dance of the Lemons
A sour but true tale of teaching public school

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• What will you be remembered for?

• Me, too, leaders will fade away.

• Pepper Rogers
Why do you want to be re-elected or appointed?

Act as though you don’t care if you will be back on the board next year... It is only then, and only then, will you be at your best.
• If training could fix us, we would have no problems.

• Great board governance is MUCH more than that. How you implement what you know.

• That is hard to teach.
Don’t yield to special interest groups. (Naming stadium). They will force you to make bad decisions and make you look bad.

Ego– Amigo

Speak with ONE VOICE-not a collection of voices.

That is your armor against your distractors.
Never take your foot off the accelerator
• Clone your bright spots.

• Look for your inch pebbles

• Great teaching is the cheapest form of school improvement. Any other program is merely supplementary and if intended otherwise, you will be sadly disappointed.
• If you can’t be first in a category, find a category you can be first in.

• Look at the things you want to focus on through a straw, not at 10,000 feet.

• Mediocrity is expensive.
- Your school system is perfectly designed to achieve the results you are getting.

- You need FEEDBACK to take you to the next level of performance.

- Pavarotti - Saved 2 seats at every performance.
What’s keeping you from greatness?

Sometimes the thing that is holding you back...

...is all in your head.
When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.
Thank You!

For more information on board training and research, please email:

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