



Responsible Office: Office of the Board of Trustees & Superintendent

BOARD POLICY 9050

BOARD OF TRUSTEES' GOVERNING MISSION

PURPOSE

It is the Board of Trustees' mission to serve as stewards of the Washoe County School District ("District") to create an education system where all students achieve academic success, develop personal and civic responsibility, and achieve career and college readiness. The intent of this policy is to outline the basic principles of the governing mission of the Board of Trustees ("Board").

The Trustees shall intentionally commit to governing using the Balanced Governance Model approach. This governance approach is unique and distinguished from other models of governance and is inconsistent with many other governance models (e.g. policy governance, coherent governance, integrated governance, democratic governance).

Balanced Governance: The Balanced Governance Model reinforces the Trustee's role of informed oversight; avoiding any tendency for Trustees to become disengaged and abdicate their oversight responsibilities to the superintendent or, conversely, to engage in over-reach into the management duties of the superintendent or staff. The Balanced Governance Model is distinguished by ensuring a "balance" of governance that discourages micromanagement of the superintendent and District staff while setting out a constructive role for Trustees in monitoring student outcomes more deeply. A board engaging in the Balanced Governance Model is one that strives to not only set and monitor high end-goals for student learning, but is also knowledgeable about the means used to reach those ends. The Balanced Governance Model equips Trustees to better dialogue with community stakeholders, and craft targeted policy language that intelligently oversees formative progress on adopted processes and programs. Required elements of the Balanced Governance Model are described in detail in Board Policy 9051, Board Conduct, Ethics and Operational Protocols. Governance models that do not incorporate all of these required elements would not be consistent with or supportive of a Balanced Governance Model.

POLICY

1. Governance Commitment. The Board, on behalf of the people of Washoe County and for the benefit of the students of the District:

- a. Provides informed oversight to ensure the District achieves appropriate and measurable progress toward fulfilling the District's Values, Mission, Vision, Strategic Goals, Balanced Governance Model Standards, and the advancement of learning for all students; and
 - b. Functions as stewards of District resources.
2. Functional Governance. The Board, as the functional governing body of the District:
 - a. Ensures that student learning is the District's ultimate "bottom line."
 - b. Hires a Superintendent to serve as Chief Educational Leader of the District, works in close partnership with the Superintendent, ensures that clear, detailed Superintendent performance targets are set, and evaluates Superintendent performance against the targets at least annually. Superintendent performance targets and his/her evaluation shall be linked to District Values, Mission, Vision, Strategic Goals, and Balanced Governance Model Standards.
 - c. Establishes and monitors the District's educational, financial, and administrative performance against clearly defined targets.
 - d. Ensures that the District's image reflects transparency and accountability; and relationships with key constituents are meaningful and contribute to the implementation and success of the District's mission.
 - e. Advocates for all students, the District, and public education generally in the legislative arena and other appropriate forums.
 - f. Strives to ensure that the District possesses the financial and other resources necessary to realize its vision and carry out its mission fully in Washoe County.
3. Governing Style. The Board shall govern lawfully with an emphasis on Balanced Governance Model and strategic leadership on behalf of students. The Board is accountable to the people of Washoe County for providing informed oversight to ensure the competent, conscientious and effective accomplishment of the District's Values, Mission, Vision, Strategic Goals, and Balanced Governance Model Standards focused on improved learning for all students. Accordingly, the Board shall:
 - a. Practice balanced governance by cultivating and enforcing a balance between the oversight role of the Board and the administrative role of the

Superintendent. Accordingly, the Board shall use its' knowledge of community needs and their judgment as to the District's progress on the District Values, Mission, Vision, Strategic Goals, and Balanced Governance Model Standards to initiate and/or approve new or revised policy. The Board shall consistently use relevant data and expertise regarding federal, state, contractual, and staff needs, provided by the Superintendent, in initiating and requesting new policy and policy revision and in consideration of policy approval. The Superintendent may also initiate policy and recommend new policy and policy revision to the Board.

- b. Cultivate a sense of group responsibility. The Board shall consider diverse viewpoints from the community and staff but not substitute individual expertise or interests for the judgment of the Board. Similarly, while the expertise of individual Trustees is recognized and may enhance the understanding of the Board decisions shall be made only as a full Board. Individual members of the Board statutorily hold no individual authority and therefore should not be provided, through policy or practice, undue influence on policy and/or program development nor given deference in Board discussion, nor undue influence in Board decision making.
- c. Govern the organization with informed oversight through the careful establishment of broadly written policies, which reflect the needs of the District's students and the community's values and perspectives. The Board's major policy focus shall be on addressing:
 - i. Meeting the educational interests of all students;
 - ii. supporting progress toward the District's Values, Mission, Vision, Strategic Goals, and Balanced Governance Model Standards and improve learning for all students; and
 - iii. locally-defined needs and issues.
- d. Provide informed oversight through the Superintendent ensuring the Board is knowledgeable of administrative and programmatic means of attaining those effects. However, the Board shall delegate the implementation of policy, administrative regulations, and procedures to the Superintendent. By doing so, the Board shall maintain a balanced role with the Superintendent.
- e. Receive information from the Superintendent that reflects the progress or the need for improvement toward the District Values, Mission, Vision, Strategic Goals, and Balanced Governance Model Standards. The Board may craft within policy, tracking and reporting protocols for the Superintendent to ensure quality control and the necessary data to practice informed

oversight. Superintendent or staff reporting to Board during Board meetings shall, at a minimum, follow the Balanced Governance Model tracking and reporting protocols outlined in the Principles of Operation section of Board Policy 9051, Board Conduct, Ethics and Operational Protocols.

- f. Maintain a professional relationship with District leadership, faculty and staff. All Board member requests for significant information, data or reports, reporting community or staff complaints or concerns, and requests for substantive staff assistance shall be made through the Superintendent or his/her designee.
 - i. Detailed descriptions of routine versus significant and substantive requests are found in Board Policy 9051, Board Conduct, Ethics and Operational Protocols.
- g. Communicate through the Superintendent for the purpose of requesting the compilation of reports or significant information, and for reporting staff or community concerns and complaints. The choice between contacting the Superintendent directly or the Superintendent's designee to the Board of Trustees shall be determined by the Board member.
- h. Hold the Superintendent responsible for acting on and communicating timely updates to Board members regarding requests for information or reports of community or staff concerns.
- i. Handle concerns over Trustee/Superintendent communication, the timely implementation of policy, administrative regulations, and procedures, or complaints from the staff and community, with the Superintendent through one or more of the following:
 - i. The Balanced Governance Model Progressive Response process described in the Principles of Operation section of Board Policy 9051, Board Conduct, Ethics and Operational Protocols.
 - ii. The Progressive Formative Evaluation process described in the Formative Superintendent and Board Performance Assessment section of Board Policy 9080, Hiring and Monitoring Superintendent Performance.
 - iii. The use of a Balanced Governance Model Strategic Team and Organizational Monitoring System as described in the Principles of Operation section of Board Policy 9051, Board Conduct, Ethics and Operational Protocols.
- j. Govern with excellence in matters such as attendance, preparation for

meetings, policy-making principles, respect of roles, adherence to the Balance Governance Model standards, and personal adherence to the Balance Governance Model Individual Board Member Characteristics.

- k. Observe governance policies scrupulously while they are in force. Board members shall be encouraged to follow their governance policies through the following:
 - i. Publicly discuss Board ethics, conduct, and operations protocols during a Board meeting annually as described in the Conduct and Ethics section of Board Policy 9051, Board Conduct, Ethics and Operational Protocols.
 - ii. The Board President's compliance with and enforcement of clear, written meeting protocols as described in Board Policy 9110, Meeting Protocols.
 - iii. Board members who fail to follow governance policies, either during or outside of a Board meeting shall be addressed using the process as described in the Governance Progressive Response section, Board Policy 9051, Board Conduct, Ethics and Operational Protocols.
- l. Engage in continuous Board development including the orientation of new Board members in the Board's governance process and organization of the District. New Board member orientation shall occur before the new member's first Board meeting. Seated Board members shall receive on-going, training in effective governance, at least annually, as described in Policy 9062, Orientation and Continuous Education of the Board of Trustees.
- m. Take accountability for its own performance as a governing body, setting detailed governing performance targets and regularly monitoring the Board's performance against the targets. The Board shall conduct a review of their annual self-assessment and external evaluation results at a special meeting annually as described in Board Policy 9062, Orientation and Continuous Education of the Board of Trustees. Governance policies shall also be reviewed and revised at this meeting, as needed.
- n. Ensures that Board members are engaged in the governing process and that the governing skills of each Trustee are systematically developed.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. Through its Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Core Beliefs, the Board of Trustees strives to eliminate the achievement gap by ensuring every student is challenged academically.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES & ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

1. This policy reflects the goals of the District's Strategic Plan and aligns with the governing documents of the District, to include:
 - a. Board Policy 9051, Board Conduct, Ethics and Operational Protocols
 - b. Board Policy 9055, Officers and Duties of the Board of Trustees
 - c. Board Policy 9060, Annual Goals, Objectives and Evaluation of the Board of Trustees
 - d. Board Policy 9062, Orientation and Continuous Education of the Board of Trustees
 - e. Board Policy 9080, Hiring and Monitoring Superintendent Performance
 - f. Board Policy 9090, Student Performance Growth
 - g. Board Policy 9110, Meeting Protocols
2. The following documents are associated with this policy:
 - a. Budget
 - b. District-wide Accountability Report
 - c. Department Reports
 - d. Superintendent Evaluation Manual

REVIEW AND REPORTING

1. The Governing Mission of the Board of Trustees shall be reviewed annually.

REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision	Modification
1/29/2008	1.0	Adopted
9/24/2013	2.0	Revised: converted to new Board Policy template

10/25/2016	3.0	Revised: number changed from 9001; inclusion of language related to Balanced Governance Model
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