

The Potosi School District

Board Member Candidate Information

Three Key Elements of Working Together

1. How we deal with change
2. How we deal with conflict
3. How we reach our potential as a governance team

The Board and Superintendent Governance Team

- a. Without each other, little works.
- b. Asking their opinions prior to a recommendation is key to making them a part of the decision.
- c. Most boards do not want to be a "rubber stamp."
- d. The superintendent's prerogative only exists if the board supports it.
- e. Note the importance of "team," not the superintendent vs the board.
- f. Board members must remember that they are not the education "experts" which is why they hire a superintendent.
- g. Superintendents must remember that board members must understand the educational direction being charted long before the recommendation is made. They must be a part of the journey.

Why Boardsmanship is Different Today

1. Business does not value service or volunteer work.
2. Board member elections/appointments have become too politicized.
3. Criticism about public education is a constant topic in the media.
4. 24/7 media attention, whenever anyone makes a mistake is a firestorm.

Effective Schools Philosophy

- A. Instructional Leadership
- B. Clear and Focused Mission
- C. Safe and Orderly Environment
- D. Climate of High Expectations
- E. Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress
- F. Positive Home-School Relations
- G. Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task

Quality Concepts

- A. Reduce variation in the system to produce a more consistent result.
- B. Go slow at first so you can go fast later on.
- C. Do it right the first time and eliminate re-work.
- D. 20-80 rule - Focus on 20% of objectives that produce 80% of results.
- E. In God we trust; all others bring data.
- F. Plan-Do-Check-Act.

The Most Difficult Things To Learn About Board Service Include:

- a. Learning to publicly acknowledge that you have no power and authority as an individual board member; that only the board as a whole can make policies and decisions for the school district.
- b. Recognizing the difference between setting policy (the board's job) and administering the schools (the superintendent's job).
- c. That you represent the students. Your decisions must be made in the interest of the total school system and not solely for special groups or interests.
- d. Learning how to respond to the complaints and concerns of citizens, school administrators, and other staff.
- e. That change comes slowly.
- f. That you must think deeply and sometimes accept a reality that is contrary to your own beliefs.
- g. That effective boardsmanship means being able to hold the minority viewpoint when voting on a given issue; then openly supporting the majority vote in your community.

Basically, the responsibilities of all school boards fall into three main categories:

1. Policy Making – A board can adopt policy upon the recommendation of the superintendent, but the final decisions on policy cannot be delegated. A board delegates the implementation of policies to the superintendent.
2. Hiring a Superintendent – A board is responsible for recruiting, hiring, and evaluating the performance of the superintendent, who will carry out the board's policy. Unless otherwise specified, a board exercises daily supervision and control primarily through its chief administrator and does not deal directly with individual staff members employed to assist the superintendent in implementing board directives.
3. Planning, goal setting, and appraisal – This vital leadership role of a board cannot be delegated. Each board member must establish the current and long-range educational plans and programs for its district.

Other Activities:

- a. Financial resources – In consultation with the superintendent, a board is responsible for approval and adoption of an annual budget that will provide the financial basis for the district to be able to carry out educational programs.
- b. Staffing and appraisal – The board delegates the tasks of recruiting, hiring, evaluating, promoting, and disciplining staff to the superintendent.
- c. Establishing procedures for the operation of the board.
- d. Electing board officers.
- e. Approving the annual school calendar.
- f. Determining who will be on board committees.
- g. Establishing and maintaining effective board-superintendent relations.
- h. Periodically reviewing and evaluating board operations and performance.

Don't forget work ethic and other professional expectations. This means:

1. Doing your homework before board meetings.
2. Making every attempt to attend all board meetings.
3. Devoting sufficient time, thought, and study of proposed actions.
4. Working with the rest of your board to establish effective board policies by which the superintendent can administer the schools.
5. Approach your role with honesty, trust, fairness, integrity, and objectivity.
6. Base your decisions on the available facts, data, and good judgment. Refuse to surrender that judgment to hearsay, individuals, or special interest groups.
7. Respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged.
8. Keep an open mind so that you can accept and evaluate new concepts.
9. Listen objectively to constructive criticism.
10. Know the difference between personal influence and factual persuasion.
11. Maintain a sense of humor.
12. Learn and practice the art of compromise.
13. Don't avoid confrontation merely to improve your chances for reelection.
14. Strive for teamwork.
15. Do not undermine the authority of the superintendent or intrude into the sphere of responsibility that properly belongs to the school administration.

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