

SUPERINTENDENT/BOARD/STAFF RELATIONSHIPS AND EXPECTATIONS PROCEDURES

Superintendent/Board

The Board shall:

- Select the Superintendent and delegate to him/her all administrative powers.
- Adopt policies for the operation of the NWESD 189 and review administrative procedures.
- Adopt NWESD 189 goals to provide direction for programs and operation.
- Support staff decisions, providing they are consistent with the Board's mission and policies.
- Support the Superintendent in his/her efforts to provide the required "core services."
- Review and approve cooperative agreements which benefit member district students.
- Approve the annual budget.
- Employ staff upon the recommendation of the Superintendent and authorize the allocation of certificated and classified staff time.
- Hold teachers' institutes and school directors' meetings, as it deems appropriate and necessary.
- Approve payment of vouchers and payroll and review monthly fiscal reports.
- Authorize employee bonds.
- Appoint and support the Regional Committee on School District Boundaries, as needed.
- Continue to learn and develop skills as a Board member through participation in AESD and other local, state, or national organizations.

The Superintendent shall:

- Serve as chief executive officer of the NWESD 189.
- Recommend policies or policy changes to the Board and develop procedures which implement Board policy.
- Provide leadership in the development, operation, supervision, and evaluation of programs and operation.
- Establish and nurture participatory decision making within the NWESD 189.
- Facilitate development of various NWESD 189 publications.
- Prepare and submit the annual budget.
- Recommend candidates for election.
- Make recommendations to meet staff needs to provide quality services to member districts and their students.
- Recommend payment of vouchers and payroll.
- Prepare monthly fiscal reports.
- Recommend criteria for evaluating staff.
- Continue to learn and develop skills as a Superintendent through participation in WASA and other local, state, or national organizations.

Board/Administration/Staff Operating Principles

The most effective way to operate and supervise the dynamic, growing Northwest Educational Service District 189 (NWESD 189) is through close cooperation between the Board of Directors, the Superintendent, and the staff. Each group plays a different role, and each role is essential to the success of the NWESD 189 team and the services provided member districts.

Cooperation and respect come about among team members when a climate of trust has been established. It is maintained through understanding and a shared commitment to an agreed upon set of professional characteristics, which have been included in the *Operating Principles* described in this document. In addition, the personal characteristics of humor, understanding, honesty, acceptance, flexibility, and responsible and ethical behavior are critical to the success of the NWESD 189 and the achievement of our *Mission*.

To achieve, within the legal and financial limits of the NWESD 189, quality services and programs for each student, the Board pledges to strive toward excellence in performance and expects the same from each individual who works at the NWESD 189.

Board Directors and administrators have an obligation to provide educational leadership. Member districts, OSPI, and the State Board of Education expect the best in planning, decision-making, communication, and educational expertise. However, all policies, procedures, and decisions must be gauged and tested against two fundamental beliefs: 1) *School districts exist for kids* and 2) *NWESD 189 exists to serve member districts and assist with accountability issues, thereby serving kids*.

Principles for Board/Administration/Staff Relations (NWESD 189 Operating Principles)

The following philosophical ideas, operating principles, and behaviors, when adhered to by all, will create an open, productive environment for a team (consisting of Board members, administrators, and staff) approach to NWESD 189 operations:

1) Positive Approach

Each member of the NWESD 189 team is charged with the responsibility of working with the other team members to find the best way to meet the needs of the students and member districts we serve. An open, positive, problem-solving atmosphere toward designing, implementing, and assessing plans to achieve the goals of the organization is critical and shall be provided.

2) Cooperation and Support

To develop an effective team process, each team member must recognize the strength of our individual diversity and must support and cooperate with team members, collectively and individually.

This vital process will encourage the most creative and productive work. Each team member has some responsibility in the areas of policy and direction; each requiring support and information from all others to carry out these responsibilities. Contributing to the success of the ideas, activities, and products of other team members helps to assure success for individuals as well as for the success of the whole.

3) **Loyalty**

Cooperation, support, and loyalty do not mean there will be agreement on every issue; dialogue, divergent thinking, and debate will encourage the best decisions.

Each team member has the responsibility for being loyal to the NWESD 189, to each member of the team, and to our Mission and Vision.

4) **Accountability**

Members of the NWESD 189 team are expected to use professional judgement and are accountable to each other, member districts, OSPI, and the State Board of Education for the decisions made and for the quality of their work.

The NWESD 189 needs assessments will provide information about how member districts perceive the effectiveness of the NWESD 189's services and programs. Goals are then developed based upon the needs assessment data. The Superintendent is accountable to the Board of Directors for the achievement of the *NWESD 189 Goals*. The Superintendent and all staff positions are evaluated, in part, relative to assuming personal responsibility in the accomplishment of these Goals.

5) **Development**

Excellence is achieved through exemplary staff, administrators, and the Board of Directors. Each team member will be assisted in planning for personal skill development, to include the skills necessary for good interpersonal communications. Each team member, however, will also take responsibility for self-development, as well as aid in the development of others.

6) **Initiative**

Each team member brings a unique perspective, viewing NWESD 189 services and programs from different vantage points. It is essential, therefore, that team members take the initiative to communicate with each other, for it is only through communication that we can work together to accomplish our goals and solve our problems.

7) **Communication**

Channels of communication must be established between each group of the NWESD 189 team and must remain open to provide for the flow of information throughout the agency.

Information about employees, negotiations, and other confidential areas discussed in Board of Directors' executive sessions will remain completely confidential. Information given in confidence, particularly when planning and exploring alternatives, must also remain confidential. Team members should state in advance whatever they consider to be confidential information so others understand and appreciate the request.

Effective interpersonal communication requires a healthy work environment with high levels of trust and respect for individuals and for the Agency Mission. To achieve this trust, messages must be open, straightforward, and honest. No one will ever knowingly deceive another.

It is far easier to communicate praise than criticism. However, each group within the team must learn to communicate both praise and criticism as well as learn to be praised and criticized. Criticism and self-criticism bring personal and organizational growth.

Personal slurs and snide comments are counter-productive to good group process and are not acceptable in a healthy working environment where good communication is the expectation.

In any diverse organization, rumors will arise. Team members are expected to help reduce rumors by checking out the facts and then informing those involved.

Channels have been established to provide continuous formal ways for all team members to communicate with each other. There are also innumerable informal channels used to keep people informed. These channels should also be nurtured, and there are a few ground rules for using these channels to make sure that information is correct and consistent.

- The Superintendent and the Board of Directors will make deliberate attempts to share relevant information and data with all team members.
- Information about events in the NWESD 189 should be provided by those closest to the situation. For example, if a Board Director needs information about school budgets, the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Compliance should be contacted. However, if a Board Director needs or wants information on plans, position, or opinions about the NWESD 189, he/she should contact the Superintendent directly.
- When an individual Board Director is contacted by staff or member district representatives, each Director has agreed to the following procedures:
 - A) Hear out the individual's concern.
 - B) Ask if the issue has been discussed with the person immediately responsible.
 - C) Inform the individual that the Board has agreed to a process for resolving concerns and conflicts, including proceeding to the next level(s) of responsibility up to and including the Superintendent.
- Only the Superintendent or his designee is to contact the NWESD 189's attorney, should one be used. If a Board Director feels the need to talk to legal counsel, he/she is to contact the Superintendent who will arrange for all meetings. The Board chair may contact the District's legal counsel in reference to the Superintendent's contract/evaluation.
- It is important to keep the Superintendent and the concerned supervisors informed of unusual happenings as quickly as possible. Administrative team members will keep NWESD 189 staff informed of unusual happenings which could affect their areas of responsibilities.

- Each member of the team is to respond to requests within a reasonable length of time. When responding to a request, administrators should specify a date by which information will be available. Subsequently, if the request cannot be acted upon within that time period, the administrator should communicate to the person requesting information about progress toward obtaining that information. The Board will officially respond to recommendations and request within two (2) Board meetings; one for discussion clarification and then a second for considered action.

The Superintendent is responsible for communicating the official NWESD 189 position to the media. There will also be occasions when the Board Chair communicates the official NWESD 189 position. Board members may certainly state personal positions, as long as they make it known they are not speaking for the Board or NWESD 189.

If there is any doubt about Board Directors contacting employees of the NWESD 189, the Superintendent should be contacted first. Questions about operations, direction, etc., should be directed to the Superintendent.

Board Directors may praise employees, but criticism is to be channeled through the Superintendent's office.

When a team member finds himself/herself in disagreement with another team member, a one-to-one meeting with that person will be arranged to confront the disagreement. When the session ends, the disagreement will remain a private matter.

Discussions at meetings and debate over issues should be open and honest. Once a final team decision is reached, however, each member has the responsibility to support the decision and aid in the implementation.

NWESD 189 Board agendas must be open and on the table for meaningful dialogue to occur. Information upon which decisions are to be made, with accompanying alternatives, will be given to the Board, or other groups in the position of making a decision, in a timely manner so that appropriate input and analysis can take place prior to the time of the decision. Surprises at meetings are counter productive. If a Board Director or team member is unable to support an item at the Board meeting, the Superintendent should be informed in advance. If a team member is unable to support an item at any other meeting, they should take the initiative to communicate his/her input during the meeting. Nothing productive comes from silence when something needs to be said.

8) **Decision Making**

There is a workable formula for making decisions and solving problems which is to be followed:

- **Define the situation requiring a decision.**
- **Gather the facts.** No decision will solve any problem without a full understanding of the situation and an analysis of the facts.

- **Involve representatives who are affected.** The fact-finding process is a good way to involve people in gathering data, becoming knowledgeable, and becoming committed to the solution.
- Once the facts are in and the representatives involved, **analyze the data.** This analysis will vary greatly depending upon the particular situation. In some cases, it may be useful to call in people with expertise in specific areas to help analyze the data and prepare suggestions for solutions.
- **Propose three or four alternative solutions,** including at least one solution which does not require additional funding. Each alternative should list the advantages and disadvantages of that particular solution or alternative.
- Once the group has looked closely at alternatives, it should then **make a recommendation.** This recommendation should include a discussion and documentation of the process used to arrive at the recommendation. Each team member has the responsibility to support the decision and aid in its implementation.
- The decision-making process does not end with the decision or plan. Once the decision is made, it **must be communicated to those who are affected.** The decision then must be put into operation and responsibilities assigned. Plans must also include **systematic review and evaluation procedures,** including dates by which future decisions regarding continuation, modification, or discontinuance must be made.

9) **Good Sense**

This document is a powerful tool to aid in maintaining positive working relationships and processes to make wise decisions. Good sense also dictates that all members of the team must strive toward making consistent, impartial, and fair judgments in all situations. Combining information, involvement, and good sense will result in making the best decisions for the NWESD 189 and its member districts' students.

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