



Welcome to School Board U

# President's Webinar

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Congratulations!!

You've been elected to lead your school board as  
the President / Chairman

Are you ready for the challenge?



# What will you learn from this webinar?

- ▶ What is leadership and how do effective school board presidents lead?
- ▶ What do the best school boards do?
- ▶ How do you build a strong leadership team?
- ▶ How do effective board presidents plan and preside at meetings?
- ▶ How to handle the tough issues when they spring up.
- ▶ What resources do you have available?

# President's Webinar

My goal is that you  
take away a few  
practical “nuggets” of  
information you can  
use as  
Board President



# Congratulations!!

You've been elected to lead your school board as  
the President / Chairman

Your School Board members see  
qualities in you as a leader. That's why  
they chose you to lead the board.





When I think of the best School  
Board Presidents I know,  
I think of ...

# Best Presidents

- ▶ Strong Leadership Skills / Humble
- ▶ Well-run meetings
- ▶ Collaborator / Listener
- ▶ Works Well with Others
- ▶ Ethical
- ▶ Good Communicators
- ▶ Show Initiative in Solving Problems
- ▶ Well respected in the Community
- ▶ Knowledgeable

A wooden gavel with a three-tiered head and a long handle, resting on a rectangular wooden block. The gavel is positioned diagonally across the frame. The background is a light blue gradient with a large, faint, stylized orange shape in the upper right corner.

Do these leadership qualities  
describe you?



# Leadership is Important

What's your definition of leadership?  
What do effective leaders do?

# Leadership is Important

Wade's definition of leadership:

Take Charge,  
Get Things Done,  
Do It Right

# Leadership is important

Leadership of the board is a significant responsibility. Your fellow board members have elected you to lead them and have shown confidence that you can do the job. So, what does that mean? The president's leadership is more than just running the meetings. The most effective board chairs have the skills to lead, which means they:

- ▶ Treat all board members and administration with **respect**, even when there is disagreement.
- ▶ Hold themselves to a **high standard of ethics** and behavior

# Leadership is Important

- ▶ Run their board meetings **efficiently and effectively**, which requires a great deal of **preparation**, working with the superintendent on developing an agenda and understanding every aspect of the agenda.
- ▶ **Take command** of the meeting, and everyone clearly understands who is in charge without dominating the discussion.
- ▶
- ▶ Provide sound wisdom and careful thought in **finding solutions and compromise** when it's necessary

# Leadership is Important

- ▶ Understand that the most important part of their job is to **keep the best interests of children in mind** and tirelessly advocate for **high expectations of student achievement**.
- ▶ **Work from a vision** of what the school district can be, by working with the board and administration to set clear goals and expectations and hold everyone accountable to meet those goals.



What do the BEST School  
Boards do that makes them  
successful?

# Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards

The National School Board Association looked at several studies on effective school boards. Their meta-analysis in 2019 showed the most effective school boards had 8 fundamental characteristics



# Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards

1. Effective school boards commit to a vision of **high expectations** for student achievement and quality instruction and **define clear goals** toward that vision
2. Effective school boards have **strong shared beliefs and values** about what is possible for students and their ability to learn



# Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards

3. Effective school boards are **accountability driven**, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.
4. Effective boards are **data savvy**; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.

# Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards

5. Effective school boards have a **collaborative relationship with staff and the community** and establish a **strong communications structure** to inform and engage stakeholders.
6. Effective school boards **align and sustain resources**, such as professional development, to meet district goals.

# Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards

7. Effective school boards **lead as a united team** with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and **mutual trust**.
8. Effective school boards take part in **team development and training**, sometimes with their superintendents, to build shared knowledge, values and commitments for their improvement efforts.

# Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards

## Wade's Ninth Characteristic of Effective School Boards

Board members have a visible passion to see ALL young people learn and succeed – THEY LIKE KIDS!

They **celebrate success** wherever and whenever it happens.

Are you invested in your students?

# Building a Strong Board Team

**The best way to build a strong team is to engage it in meaningful work.**

As the Board President, you have the opportunity and responsibility to bring the board together in setting the direction for your district.

You likely have a strategic plan, a school improvement plan, a vision and mission statement, superintendent goals, and board goals.

Do these important policy statements really drive your work as a board? Are they living documents or just words on paper?

# Building a Strong Board Team

## **What can a school board do to emphasize student achievement?**

The question the board should be asking is, “How are the children doing? Are they learning at a high level?”

We are in the business of teaching children.

1. At your next goal-setting meeting, ask administrators to share data that gives the board a high-level view of student progress. Many schools already have instructional teams that review student progress anyway, so now bring the board into the conversation so they are at least aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the academic program.
2. Have a standing agenda item where the board hears updates on student progress at various times of the school year.
3. Ask administrators to report on major assessment outcomes to the board.
4. During budget talks, ask questions about how much funding is going towards targeted instructional goals.





# Building a Strong Board Team

## **How to promote healthy deliberation of the board team**

*Healthy Discussions = Good Decisions*

- ▶ The board president has a unique opportunity to ensure the board makes sound and thoughtful decisions.
- ▶ Your job is to facilitate rich, deliberative discussions among board members as they weigh issues.
- ▶ Thoughtful discussions build commitment to important decisions.
- ▶ Not everyone has to agree, but we do need to respect others' right to their opinion.

# Building a Strong Board Team

## How to promote healthy deliberation of the board team

### *Healthy Discussions = Good Decisions*

- Healthy debate and deliberation during the board meeting will result in good decisions for your school
- Your job is to get people to listen to one another truly. Look at all sides of an issue and see the benefits of each before making a decision.
- Encourage board members to keep an open mind and allow it to be influenced by new information.
- Rushing decisions increases the chances that a decision will come back to haunt the board. If a poorly conceived decision is made, it will become clear that, in its haste, the board was asleep at the wheel. Not only will your board have to correct the situation, but your public credibility will be eroded.



# Building a Strong Board Team

## **Board President and Superintendent's relationship.**

Build Trust, Communicate, Solve Problems together:

- Help the superintendent identify what information and details the board needs to make good decisions and to ensure that board members are getting sufficient information on issues in advance of board meetings or actions. Ask for relevant facts and additional data when needed on behalf of the board.
- Help your superintendent keep the board well informed enough on small issues that members hear no surprises from others: they hear it first from the superintendent or you.

# Building a Strong Board Team

## **Board President and Superintendent's relationship.**

Build Trust, Communicate, Solve Problems Together:

- Urge board members to relay to the superintendent all concerns, problems, issues, and information relating to board or school issues.
- Ask board members to use board policy for handling complaints so that citizen or staff concerns are relayed to the superintendent or to the person immediately responsible for solving the problems.
- Deal with problems by starting with the superintendent. You and your superintendent set the tone and direction for the school system. The better your communication, the better your combined leadership.

# Planning and Presiding at Meetings

## **Planning the Agenda**

The agenda is the "road map" for effectively conducting a meeting. The superintendent may prepare a draft agenda to review with the board president, or the two may meet first to discuss the agenda.

Board presidents should always be involved in preparations for the upcoming board meeting.

# Planning and Presiding at Meetings

## Planning the Agenda

The superintendent needs to prepare the board president by providing complete background information before the meeting. However, this process occurs, it's important that the board president:

- ▶ Know the reason each item is on the agenda.
- ▶ Be able to predict problems that might arise from an agenda item.
- ▶ Estimate how much time each agenda item might take.
- ▶ Know what, if any, board action is required for each item.

# Planning and Presiding at Meetings

## Planning the Agenda

- Know what reports the superintendent and staff members will make.
- Know what recommendations the superintendent will make.
- Prioritize order and placement of items on the agenda so that important items are ensured attention.
- Identify routine items to be placed on a consent agenda.
- Clarify how the public will participate in the meeting.
- Identify celebrations and recognition of staff, students or community to occur at the meeting.

# Planning and Presiding at Meetings

Agendas must be posted at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. It's the law



# Planning and Presiding at Meetings

- ▶ Call to order
- ▶ Pledge of Allegiance
- ▶ Roll call, quorum established
- ▶ **Open Forum** or Public discussion
- ▶ **Academic Progress Update**
- ▶ Approve Agenda and make changes if necessary.
- ▶ Any conflicts of interest from board members on agenda items.
- ▶ **Good news or student or staff presentations.**
- ▶ **Consent agenda** (Minutes, Financial Report, Bills, etc)
- ▶ Unfinished business items
- ▶ New business
- ▶ Committee and Administrative reports
- ▶ **Executive session if necessary (Cite Statute)**
- ▶ *Any action items from executive session.*
- ▶ *Adjourn.*

# Planning and Presiding at Meetings

## Open Forum

Allowing the public time to speak is an important part of the meeting. However, it is your responsibility to make sure Open Forum is conducted in a way that is civil and protects the rights of everyone in attendance.

Highly recommended having a policy on the protocol of Open Forum:

- ▶ Do not let patrons discuss, students, school personnel, or families in any way.
- ▶ Do not allow rude or offensive language or behavior
- ▶ Set a time limit for each speaker
- ▶ Be sure the rules of the open forum are either printed for everyone to see or are read by the President before the time to speak.
- ▶ Do not respond to speakers. Refer them to the superintendent after the meeting if they have questions.



# Planning and Presiding at Meetings

SDCL 1-25-1 “The official meetings of the state, its political subdivisions, and any public body of the state or its political subdivisions are open to the public unless a specific law is cited by the state, the political subdivision, or the public body to close the official meeting to the public.”

All school board business MUST be done in public with a few exceptions.

# Planning and Presiding at Meetings

Failure to comply with SDCL 1-25-1 could result in consequences from the Open Meetings Commission. The responsibility to meet the law falls on the School Board President.

# Planning and Presiding at Meetings

## Executive Session

Even though state law precludes any board discussion or action outside of a school board meeting, and that all board discussions and actions must be made in public, some issues would not be appropriate to be discussed in public. State law prescribes specific situations in which a board may discuss topics in closed session. SDCL 1-25-2 describes those situations:

1. Discussing the qualifications, competence, performance, character, or fitness of any public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee.
2. Discussing the expulsion, suspension, discipline, and assignment of the educational program of a student.

# Planning and Presiding at Meetings

## Executive Session

3. Consulting with legal counsel or reviewing communication from legal counsel about proposed or pending litigation or contractual matters.
4. Preparing for contract negotiations or negotiating with employees or employee representatives.
5. Discussing marketing or pricing strategies.
6. To discuss or implement school safety measures.

# Planning and Presiding at Meetings

## Executive Session

- The process to enter and exit executive session is also specific.
- A vote is required to go into executive session. (Motion, second, majority vote). In that motion the specific statute and subsection, must be referenced in the motion (i.e., move to go into executive session pursuant to SDCL 1-25-2 (1) or “for personnel, pursuant to SDCL 1-25-2 (1). It is appropriate to move into executive session for more than topic.
- The motion would list the subsections, ie. Move to go into executive session pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1 (X) and (X).

# Planning and Presiding at Meetings

## Executive Session

- The board then moves into executive session in a private area, or dismiss those in attendance in the board room, so no observers may be present or hear the board deliberations.
- The board may invite anyone into executive session to hear testimony if needed. It is recommended the superintendent is present during executive session too, unless the discussion is related to the superintendent and would not be appropriate.



# Planning and Presiding at Meetings

## Executive Session

- No other topics may be discussed in executive session, and all topics, other than those listed, must be discussed in public during the regular board meeting.
- Only the topic(s) for which the motion was made may be discussed in closed session. Board chairs must not allow or invite other topics to be discussed at that time. It would be a violation of open meetings law.
- Minutes of the discussion should not be taken.
- Once the discussion is concluded the board chair simply closes the executive session ( no motion is required, as official actions are not taken in executive session), and the board moves back to their regular board meeting.
- If an action is required following the executive session, all motions must be made in public. Official action must be made in an open meeting, and the vote recorded in the minutes.

# Planning and Presiding at Meetings

## Parliamentary Procedure

### Keep it simple, follow basic protocol

- ▶ Steps in Motion
  - ▶ The motion is stated and seconded.
  - ▶ President restates the motion.
  - ▶ Discussion.
  - ▶ President restates the motion and then the vote is taken.
  - ▶ President announces the outcome of the vote.



# Planning and Presiding at Meetings

## Parliamentary Procedure

### Scenario #1

President: "I would entertain a motion to adopt policy ABC"

Board member 1: "I move that we adopt policy ABC"

President: "Is there a second?"

Board Member 2: "Second"

President: "Is there any discussion?"

Board members debate the merits of the proposed policy. The President does not hear anyone asking to speak, so he/she says,

President: "Hearing no further discussion, we will now vote on the motion to adopt policy ABC". All in favor say "aye", all opposed, "nay". Secretary will call the roll.

President: "The motion passes on a 5-0 vote".

# Planning and Presiding at Meetings

## Parliamentary Procedure

### Scenario #2

President: "I would entertain a motion to adopt policy ABC"

Board member 1: "I move that we adopt policy ABC"

President: "Is there a second?"

Board Member 2: "Second"

President: "Is there any discussion?"

Board Member 3: "Mr. President, I move we amend the policy by striking line 4 that begins, "after the first incident..."

President: "Is there a second?"

Board member 4: "Second"

President: "Is there any discussion on the motion to amend?"

# Planning and Presiding at Meetings

## Parliamentary Procedure

### Scenario #2

Board members discuss the amendment. Once the discussion is finished the President says,

President: “Hearing no further discussion, we will vote on the amendment. The motion to amend reads, strike line 4 starting where it begins, “after the first incident...” “ Is everyone clear on the motion to amend? All in favor say “aye”, all opposed, say “nay”.

President: “The motion carries on a vote of 3 – 2”

President: “ We will now return to the motion to adopt policy ABC, as amended”

Board members debate the merits of the proposed policy. The President does not hear anyone asking to speak, so he/she says,

President: “Hearing no further discussion, we will now vote on the motion to adopt

policy ABC as amended”. All in favor say “aye”, all opposed, nay”. Secretary will call the roll

President: “The motion passes on a 5-0 vote”.

# Planning and Presiding at Meetings

It's your job to instill public confidence in your board meetings.

Failure to have an efficiently run meeting gives the board a nonprofessional appearance and provides an open invitation to chaos.

The board needs to be credible before the public. Poorly run meetings do not give you credibility.

# Handling the Tough Stuff

Sometimes we have to do the  
**HARD THINGS**

That's what Leaders Do

That's why you were elected

# Handling the Tough Stuff

Peace is not the absence of conflict,  
it is the ability to handle conflict by  
peaceful means.

Ronald Reagan



# Handling the Tough Stuff

Sometimes you need to be the Dad.

There will be situations when you have to police your Board.

Watch for open meeting issues, emails going back and forth, talking about executive session, board members acting as the board, not following chain of command or taking on personnel matters.

Need to be respectful in dealing with your colleagues, but firm.





# Handling the Tough Stuff

What will you do when you are called upon to be the spokesperson for the board? You will be called to give advice on advocacy issues and talk to your representatives.

Prepare yourself for these situations

# Handling the Tough Stuff

## Personnel Issues:

The board president will sometimes need to lead the board in dealing with difficult issues regarding district employees. Remind the board that some basic rules need to be followed:

- The only employee the board hires and terminates is the superintendent. The board approves contracts for all other employees on the recommendation of the superintendent.
- Personnel matters are the responsibility of the superintendent. The board president must ensure that the board knows that any investigations or personnel issues must be conducted and resolved by administrators or outside counsel -not the board or individual members.

# Handling the Tough Stuff

## Personnel Issues:

Remind the board that some basic rules need to be followed:

- When and if an employment issue comes before the board, the board must be able to make an impartial judgment on the case. The board has a legal obligation to be the judge and jury. If the board is prejudiced against the employee and has prior knowledge and has made a judgment, then the employee isn't getting a fair process. You want to make sure that all employees have a fair hearing before the board.
- Discussions and decisions must be based on facts -not rumors or personal opinions. Allow the process to work and administrators to investigate and deal with issues with the employee.

# Handling the Tough Stuff

## Strategies to handling conflict?

- ▶ Find the root cause of the conflict.
- ▶ Once the cause is identified, work to find common ground
- ▶ Common ground can lead to finding consensus on a solution
- ▶ Finding solution must involve all parties to meet their needs as much as possible
- ▶ Try to diffuse the emotion of the situation
- ▶ Express your thoughts and feelings respectfully, use “I” statements, not “you”.
- ▶ Focus on the issue, not the person

# Handling the Tough Stuff

## Handling Community Conflict and Controversy

- **Hot-button issues** (e.g., curriculum content like sex education, religious issues, or book bans)
- **Balancing polarized viewpoints** among parents, students, and staff
- **Public outrage** or backlash at meetings or on social media
- Managing **civic discourse** while maintaining order and transparency
- People need to be heard to manage conflict.

# Handling the Tough Stuff

## Superintendent Relations

- **Hiring or firing a superintendent** (especially amid political or public pressure)
- Evaluating superintendent performance fairly and consistently
- Navigating **disagreements** between the board and superintendent while maintaining trust and professional respect



# Handling the Tough Stuff

## Budget and Funding

- Managing **budget cuts**, layoffs, or school closures
- Addressing disparities in school funding and resource allocation
- Justifying bond issues, tax increases, or opt outs
- Be prepared to respond to the public about funding issues



# Handling the Tough Stuff

## **Board Dynamics and Governance**

- Dealing with **board member conflicts**, power struggles, or ethical breaches
- Keeping the board focused on **policy over micromanagement**
- Ensuring **open meetings law compliance**

# Resources

ASBSD website has a host of resources for board members and board chairs at [www.ASBSD.org](http://www.ASBSD.org)

Download the ASBSD President's Handbook under Documents

<https://asbsd.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/ASBSD-Board-President-Booklet.pdf>



Heath1.html

# Who Do You Call? ASBSD Services

Heath Larson – ASBSD Executive  
Director, general information,  
advocacy issues

How do you find out more?  
Contact Heath Larson,  
[hlarson@asbsd.org](mailto:hlarson@asbsd.org)  
605-773-2500



# Who Do You Call?

Wade Pogany

[wpogany.DEC@gmail.com](mailto:wpogany.DEC@gmail.com)

605-222-0889

# Final Thoughts

At the end of your school board term and the conclusion of your time as President of the Board, how will people remember you? The answer to that question **will define the kind of leader you are**. Boards need strong leadership, not just someone who can run a meeting. John Maxwell once wrote about leadership, when he said “leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less”. You have been given the title of Board President, now what will you do with it? **How will you influence those who have put their trust in you?**

# Final Thoughts

**What will your legacy be?** Will you be viewed as a **collaborator** working collectively with your fellow board members to govern the school district? Will you be viewed as one who had a **vision** for what the school district should look like and worked to make that vision a reality? Will you be seen as someone who **got things done**, and put a **positive mark** on the district? Will you **show respect** to your colleagues and **build the trust** necessary to lead them? Will the community see you as someone who **listened and the solved problems** of the school district in a competent, and effective way? Will people view you as a Board Chair who **cared about children** and the best interest of their education?

**Take time to think about what kind of leader you want to be, and be that person.**



# Leadership is Important

Take Charge,  
Get Things Done,  
Do It Right





Thank You Tyler

Thanks to Tyler Pickner,  
Communication Director for ASBSD,  
for producing this webinar

A wooden gavel with a multi-tiered head and a long handle, resting on a rectangular wooden block. The background features a soft, stylized rainbow arching across a light blue sky. The scene is set on a reflective white surface.

Good luck and have a  
Great Year!