

To: Dickinson Public School Board  
From: Tanya Rude, board member  
March 2017  
NSBA March 24-27, 2017 – Denver

I would like to thank the Dickinson Public School board for providing me with the opportunity to attend the NSBA Conference in Denver. For the first time in the 4 other NSBA conferences I have attended, I feel like what was heard might actually be discussed in the district. Thank you!

## ***Friday, March 24***

### **Board's Matter: What School Boards Can Do to Improve Student Performance**

Presented by Dr. Phil Gore TASB-Division Director, Leadership Team Services

Co-Presenter: Dr. Robert Duron TASB -Associate Executive Director, Governance Services

Good boardsmanship, also known as governance, is related to improving student outcomes. Boards should develop action plans to improve student outcomes. Boards should not have student graduation as the goal, but rather strategies for success should be the goal. "Board members matter when their elevating beliefs about student potential, knowledge and skills for good governance, and actions align." Elevating students is saying "All students will achieve here because we are committed to ensuring they do."

The presenter spoke on how to attain action plans. Our Perspectives (which are beliefs, attitudes, and values) weigh how our Capacity (our knowledge, understanding, and skills) works to have Action (which is our engagement, decisions, and monitoring). "Outward results are a manifestation of the mind set and beliefs which are the culture in the district."

As a board member we should have positive curiosity. We should look through the front windshield, like when driving—we don't stay focused on what is behind us, but what is happening in front of us. So, when we work on policy, or goals, focus on the future to make it a different place, and don't look in the past too much. Remember, we are preparing kids for their future not the past. Therefore, we should be making policy on future needs not past performance.

Three studies showed that boards matter:

- The Iowa Lighthouse Research Project showed boards need to understand or know: beliefs matter, set clear expectations, conditions for success, accountability for results, build collective will, and learn together as a team.
- School boards can harm student learning (Tom Alsbury)-Study showed that effects of destabilizing board behavior ultimately results in student achievement decline.
- Governance actions and student achievement (Ivan Lorentzen and Bill McCaw) showed six main points:
  - Superintendent goals focused on student outcomes
  - Communicate expectations to the community
  - Base contract decisions on objective evaluation
  - Collaborate with staff and community on a district plan
  - Base board work on district goals
  - Monitor process toward the goals and the plan

Remember, it is all about the kids! Board agenda should be tied to district plan and student goals. The culture of the district needs to be about improvement. Asking questions can be a turn around question, but don't do "gotcha" questions. As a governing authority, we have to figure out how to move the district in spite of others.

When setting goals, they need to be specific and able to monitor. When setting goals perhaps took for a baseline, a target, the population, and a deadline. When setting goals, there should also be a monitoring system set at the same time. Have periodic reports to see if we are getting there, perhaps quarterly. We could bring the community into heaping kids graduate. The superintendent could bring goals to the board, but in some cases the board may have to be the one setting the goals. A clear and narrow focus will bring change quicker, they are hard and fast expectations for superintendent. Leave strategy to the superintendent, it is his/her responsibility. Goals can be the board responsibility, or at least oversee and ensure it is accomplished.

#### **Action Points:**

- Book Study: "Improving School Board Effectiveness: A Balanced Governance Approach"
- Practice good board governance
- Understand that Perspectives, Capacity, and Action influence the boards decision
- The school board needs to focus on elevating students

## ***Saturday, March 25***

### **General Session**

Keynote address was by Captain Scott Kelly, History-Making U.S. Astronaut & Retired U.S. Navy Captain.

Captain Kelly was not motivated until, as a freshman in college, he read a book called "THE RIGHT STUFF" by Tom Wolfe, at that point he started having a focus.

We are to constantly be making corrections in all aspects of life.

The Hubble telescope shows more stars in the galaxy than grains of sand on the earth.

Flew with Barbara, former teacher, as commander. Then he launches to the space station on a Russian rocket to the

International Space Station (ISS). He spent almost a year on ISS, and science on ISS is what primarily goes on.

Right thing to do is protect for the things that are likely to not happen, while always taking care of the necessary things. It is amazing how quickly things change when we actually work at changes. Doing the hard things in life will make one feel good in the end. Diversity in everything we do is very important for the overall team. We need to be better teammates. Everyone is part of the team. Focus on things we can control. The sky is not the limit.

#### **Action Point:**

- Remember that the sky is NOT the limit

### **Tech Tips, Tricks and Techniques for Communication that you May Not Know About**

Presented by: Heidi Vega – Arizona School Boards Association –Director of Communications

Co-presenter: Mike Barcia– Arizona School Boards Association –Communications and IT/IS Specialist

The current trend in technology is social networking, with Facebook at the top of the pack at 1,590,000,000 people active with Facebook. Reasons for social networking are: personal, community, and global. As of April 2016, there are 21 worldwide social networks that were ranked by active users in millions. Any way someone looks at it social media might be the next CNN.

When boards are looking to do anything focusing on media, boards and districts should look at: demographic breakdown, identify who is accessing your content, identify different strategies for communicating. Look at SEO's (Search Engine Optimization), make sure you are in the top 5 google searches. One way to do that would be to make the text and the hashtags the same, integrate them for the highest search returns. Keep in mind 80% of the viewers are influenced by what they find in their search. Districts, and any business, should be looking at mobile devices when setting up websites, it is an absolute necessity anymore. Again, 80% of users use a mobile device, don't use an elaborate portal for stakeholders. Make it mobile friendly for everyone. Another important trend to pay attention to: trademark hashtags, trademark it before someone else does.

There are many tools that can be utilized to make a great website that can be engaging, tell a story, and have people paying attention. Tools like infographics, piktocharts, place it/andreamsaid, GIF, and video creation, will help grab attention of individuals to stay on particular websites.

To use tools to make an outstanding website, you should focus on understanding the audience. Google analytics can be used to answer questions about topics on websites, Facebook, etc. Some of the questions one might ask are: who do I want to reach, what cellphone devices, social flow, age range, sex, physically located, popular time for people looking at social media, traffic occurs when and for what? You can also "boost" video on Facebook for \$7.

Strategies that work: make your "friends" feel like insiders – inside news; time your triggers to impact behavior– positive images impact behavior; focus on emotion– top 3 are awe, amusement, laughter; make it public, it's hard to talk about something you can't see; banner for...on auto-signature; you need practical value to stand out–give up pedicure for kids education, or use visual elements to help direct stand out; don't just share information, tell stories; focus on building relationships and awareness vs. "likes" on your page; interact with other feeds in order to connect with people– need the connection with stakeholders; use analytics that you are comfortable with and the tools you are comfortable with; don't use too many video's; social media platforms may change but content may not.

#### **Action Point:**

- Have a mobile friendly webpage that is easy to use for everyone

## **Being a Learning Board in Q2: Using what you learn from the NSBA Conferences to be a High Performing Board Team**

Presented by: Jeffery Cohn, Former Director Field Services IL Association of School Boards

Co-presenters: Dr. Nicholas Wahl, Superintendent of Carmel Clay Schools,  
Layla Spanenberg, President Carmel Clay Schools Board of Education,  
PamKnowles, Vice President Carmel Clay Schools Board of Education,  
Michael Kerschner, Secretary Carmel Clay Schools Board of Education,  
Katie Browning, Board Member Carmel Clay Schools Board of Education

Using Franklin Covey's "The Time Matrix", Carmel Clay Schools Board of Education began focusing on what is meaningful contributions to their school community. Thus, the Q2 (important, but not urgent): Extraordinary Productivity, is really where school boards can be most effective.

For the past 6 years the Carmel Clay Schools Board of Education attended the NSBA Conferences and it allowed for a very positive impact on Carmel Clay Schools, in eight different areas. Each time board members attended the conference they went back to their school and refined their district, starting with the board. Besides some basic areas like their mission and vision statement, they change communication expectations, work on annual planning and evaluation cycle, have legislative priorities, policy committee work, and new board member orientation, all of which are reviewed constantly to improve.

Carmel Clay Schools Board of Education knows that it is essential to understand roles. In order to springboard into areas providing a framework for transparency like constituent confidence, establishing credibility, building trust, and facilitating open lines of communication, the board had to have knowledge of their governance oversight role.

### **Action Points:**

- Establish guiding principles,
- Strategic plan and action plan timeline
- Establish Board-Superintendent Communication Expectations

## **Training Educators: Innovative Implementation of technology to Increase Student Achievement**

Presented by: Dr. Robert Pappalardo, CLC-CEO

Co-presenter: Meara Verna, Connected Learning Consultants,  
Carrie Shaw, Connected Learning Consultants,  
Teresa Schaefer, Connected Learning Consultants

Connected Learning Consultants (CLC) has a mission they claim is simple: "We believe that every student in every school needs to acquire today, the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills necessary to compete in the global marketplace of tomorrow."

The key to having engagement being essential and using technology as the tool, is targeted staff development. By not having textbooks in schools it makes the teacher and the students dig deeper to get the information they need. By incorporating technology in the schools it engages students, but that requires staff professional development.

Key premise in changing the culture to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, is to understand that today's classrooms are attended by digital natives that are awaiting the teacher to meet them at their instructional level. Since the students are natives to technology, it will keep students engaged instead of checking out mentally because they are unable to use technology.

Technology becomes the tool and allows the students to focus on the unknown areas of academia. We have to train teachers to make changes in the classroom, and challenge students to connect skills they know.

For proper PD, there should be differentiated PD opportunities for teachers. By having targeted PD, there is coaching along with real time classroom observations to become aware of opportunities for growth for all. PD needs to be customized and rooted in theory and practical experience of transitioning to digital learning environment. Districts need staff to buy in to making the change and have differentiated PD. Differentiated teaching is not desired, mainly because it is change and they have to learn new things.

CLC's conclusion: Technology facilitates differentiated teaching (DI); targeted staff development will increase both student and teacher engagement helping to reduce the achievement gap, ongoing coaching of teachers after staff development training is necessary; growth for all stakeholders is essential.

### **Action Points:**

- Provide differentiated technology teaching to staff and provide technology coaches

### **Flexible Learning – Maximize Student Potential and Increase Your Bottom Line**

Presented by: Ms. Lisa Giguere, Fox Chapel Area School District - Director, Western PA Summer STEM Academy

Co-presenters: Ms. Randi Leonard, Fox Chapel Area School District - Online Learning Coordinator

Mr. Michael Hower, Fox Chapel Area School District - Senior/Lead Principal

Fox Chapel Area School District was losing kids to charter schools and on-line schools. There is approximately 2.5 million students annually nationwide going to charter schools. This does not include special education. Students attend other school options for various reasons, but regardless of the reason, the district incurs the cost. Cost per student differs in each state, each district.

Virtual schools deliver all curriculum and instruction via the Internet and electronic communication, usually asynchronously with students at home and teachers at a remote location. Enrollment in full-time virtual school has increased dramatically since 2000.

The National Education Policy Center's annual report states: "Our findings indicate that district operated virtual schools and blended schools, as well as virtual schools and blended schools operated by nonprofit EMO's, or no EMO at all, are more likely to perform better. They are much smaller, and they have substantially lower teacher to student ratios."

([Http://nepc.colorado.edu/files/publications/RN-Miron%20Virtual%20Schools.pdf](http://nepc.colorado.edu/files/publications/RN-Miron%20Virtual%20Schools.pdf))

Having gathered the information on virtual schools, the Fox Chapel Area School District decided to start a few classes on-line to see how things would go. So, they established an On-line Coordinator. Over time the on-line coordinator has built up a program that works hand in hand with teachers in their district, and the students who once had gone somewhere else for their education have come back to the district. They now offer flexible scheduling high school for all courses, and for cyber only courses. Fox Chapel Area School District has also began an accelerated math course for the elementary students who already know the elementary math.

For Fox Chapel Area School District, the flexible learning program decreases external enrollments; retain district funds; increase student opportunities, professionally and academically; meet individualized learning needs; and maximize student learning potential. Concerns were that teachers lose their job-they realized it didn't happen as they used a memorandum of understanding, and it actually may add more staff, all faculty are in house-they don't have to figure out how to do online as well. The district realized some musts: school board has to stay committed; it was fazed in so teachers could see it working; flexibility allows students to come in to a classroom, as needed; teachers make sure students will do well on state tests-students take AP tests together.

#### **Action Points:**

- Establish an on-line program based on flexible scheduling using current district teachers
- Establish an accelerated math curriculum for elementary students

### **Googlicious**

Presented by Jim Spellos, President of Meeting U.

The speaker has a mission to help people become more productive and comfortable with technology. During his presentation titled "Googlicious", Mr. Spellos showed different ways Google has changed in the past years and how it works with newer technology. Ultimately, he emailed a document he created called "Google Cheat Sheet"- Cool web tools and services offered by (and about) Google."

### **Using Board Self-Assessment to Take Your Board's Performance to the Next Level**

Presented by: Colleen Miller, Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) - Director of leadership Development Services

Co-presenter: Tricia Lubach, WSSDA - Leadership Development Training Specialist

The Washington State School Boards Association established in 2011 a board self-assessment, which is based on five Washington School Board Standards. " By analyzing data as a team leads to rich and productive discussions among board members." The boards use the information to: "examine their own practice, as individuals and as a board; as a basis for conversations as a team; learn how to use data to inform practice; goal setting; and longitudinal data allows benchmarking and tracking of progress over time."

The questions are based on the Washington State School Board Standards, which is a framework for effective governance. With "high performing school boards: provide responsible school district governance; set and communicate high expectations for

student learning with clear goals and plans for meeting those expectations; create conditions district-wide for student and staff success; hold school district accountable for meeting student learning expectations; and engage local community and represent the values and expectations they hold for their schools.”

The self-assessment tool is based on standards and benchmarks for success. Each benchmark has indicators for evaluation. Washington State School Board’s Association has established a process to assist in making everything fairly easy, and they have suggested protocols for discussion. Washington State School Board’s Association joined with Dr. Evan Lorentzen and Dr. Bill McCaw in a study that was first done in Montana. The results were the same between both states: “Boards that govern districts with high student achievement scores behave quite differently from boards that govern districts with low student achievement scores. More specifically, the practices of effective boardsmanship, as detailed by the assessment, have a strong correlation with high student achievement.”

“Benefits of Board Self-Assessment: boards learn to use data appropriately; data informs goal-setting; boards become more discerning about their own behavior and practices; board can engage in problems of practice; and linked to boards of distinction awards that elevate effective boards.”

**Action Points:**

- Establish a board self-assessment and incorporate it into board calendar

**Governing Differently: Lessons from Districts with High Student Achievement**

Presented by: Dr. Ivan Lorentzen, Flathead Valley Community College - Professor of Psychology (ret.)

Co-presenter: Dr. Bill McCaw, University of Montana - Professor

There are five guiding questions that should be asked of every board, all five questions result in student success. The board has roles that need to be prioritized, of the 8 roles from 2002 to 2010, the one that moved up in priority ranking was “improving student learning across the board”, according to Hess & Meeks-2010-board members ranked student achievement second issue of concern. The position that NSBA takes is “board members’ primary agenda is raising student achievement and engaging the community to attain that goal.”

The presenters for this session focused on how “schools function best with separate but overlapping formal roles” in the area of community engagement, board governance, and superintendent district leadership. Effective boardsmanship goes hand in hand between those areas with collaboration.

With the study between Montana and Washington State, they realized five priorities that board standards need to have. Those priorities are: #1- holding the district accountable, #2- high student expectations, #3- responsible school district governance, #4- engage the local community, and #5- create conditions district-wide student and staff success. The presenters went through each priority and talked about what the board should work on first/focus on the most. They almost gave step-by-step guidelines for each priority, some are more significant than the others, but we still need to expect the other ones as well. School Districts need to address the prioritized standards by developing a district plan, also known as a board or superintendent plan. The district plan is in place to ensure that the district strategic plan is accomplished, supported with resources, and focused on high student achievement.

Some ways to govern differently that focus on student achievement are to have a calendar that promotes boardsmanship and change agenda to promote success more, which pushes us to the Q2 square. Examples of both have been obtained for future conversation.

**Action Points:**

- Book study: “Improving school board effectiveness: a balanced governance approach”
- Have a district plan
- Set a monthly calendar showing/promoting effective boardsmanship
- Have an agenda that promotes effective boardsmanship