

# A Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce Education Division Presentation – March 10, 2017

2016-17 SCHOOL YEAR



Futures beyond  
what they  
can imagine!

**INSPIRE  
EQUIP  
IMAGINE**



# School Board Governance: A Behind-the-Scenes Look

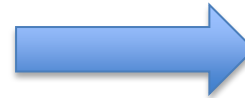
**Kristin Tassin**  
**Fort Bend ISD Board President**





## Perception vs. Reality

“Pencils and toilet paper” - Do we really impact the quality of education and student achievement?





# Board's Purpose: Governance & Oversight

- **U.S. Supreme Court** - education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments.
- Epitomizes representative and participatory government— citizens elected from their community making decisions about educational programs based on community needs, values, and expectations.
- School boards are entrusted by the public to translate the needs of students into policies, plans, and goals that will be supported by the community.
- **Guardians of the public trust** and ultimately responsible for the success or failure of local public education.
- Policies dictate the standards and philosophy by which schools are run and the criteria used to judge whether they are being run well.
- **Board serves as the advocate for educational excellence for the community's youth and puts those interests first.**



# Board Roles & Responsibilities: Advocacy

- Local
- State
- Federal





# Board Roles & Responsibilities

Ensure creation of a vision and goals for the district and evaluate district success

- Created in 2013
- Vision & Planning committee
- Goals embedded in supt's evaluation updated annually

Adopt policies that inform district actions

- Comprehensive policy review in 2015 to date (42 updated in 2016-present)
- Unbiased curriculum, curriculum development, district philosophy, discipline, truancy, class ranking, etc.

**FORT BEND ISD** *policy changes*

Created by Heidi Best

Fort Bend ISD regularly updates its board policy manual and student code of conduct. Both documents outline the rules and procedures for district employees and students. This is a selection of policies changed in both documents between April and July.

<p><b>KINDERGARTEN DISCIPLINE</b></p> <p>Administrators will refer to the district's Disciplinary Alternative Education Program.</p> <p><b>WHY?</b> The board of trustees did not want to have kindergarten students in need of extra attention away from their peers.</p> <p><b>WHY?</b> I think this board has been pretty vocal that we don't want any child in OASD unless we have exhausted all remedies, but particularly kids that are very young.</p>	<p><b>REPORTING CRIMES</b></p> <p>The language is clarified to say when the campus behavior coordinator, school administrator or FBI/SD employee report crimes and suspected criminal behavior to law enforcement or the district attorney. The language is clarified to say under what circumstances criminal activity is reported, and parents are notified of arrests or suspected criminal activity.</p> <p><b>WHY?</b> The board acknowledged that the existing policy allowed for too much interpretation. The district came under fire this spring for the handling of a student who produced a counterfeit bill at Elgin High.</p> <p><b>WHY?</b> We had a lot of conversation when the counterfeiting came out... The board has expressed many times that we want to make sure that our parents are kept involved.</p>
<p><b>STUDENT SEARCHES</b></p> <p>Students' personal property or vehicle, or school property used by the student, including desks and lockers, can be searched by district staff if the district has reasonable suspicion of a rule violation or criminal activity. Searches can be unannounced, blanket, random and performed by nonaggressive staff only.</p> <p><b>WHY?</b> The policy was amended to require reasonable suspicion in order to search lockers in light of students' privacy rights.</p>	<p><b>ETHICS VIOLATION REPORTING</b></p> <p>The District Ethics hotline may be used for reporting of suspected violations, especially if the reporting party wishes to remain anonymous. The telephone/web hotline is operated by an independent third party who will report incidents to FBI/SD's legal and human resources departments. Employees are prohibited from engaging in or soliciting romantic relationships or sexual contact from students or minors.</p> <p><b>WHY?</b> The policy needed to be updated to align with current district practices.</p>
<p><b>STAFF INVESTIGATIONS</b></p> <p>Employees who resign or refuse while under investigation, or who resign or refuse in order to avoid termination, are ineligible for re-employment with FBI/SD.</p> <p><b>WHY?</b> The board of trustees agreed with FBI/SD staff's recommendation.</p>	<p><b>DEFINING HARASSMENT</b></p> <p>Harassment of a student, district employee, officer or volunteer based on actual orientation identity is prohibited. Dating violence is a prohibited form of harassment.</p> <p><b>WHY?</b> The language needed to be updated and aligned with the board's policy.</p>

Source: fortbendisd.com/boardpolicies



# Board Roles & Responsibilities

**Hire a superintendent to serve as the CEO of the district and evaluate the superintendent's success**

- Hired in 2013.
- Two formative evaluations
- Annual evaluation
- Leadership competencies
- Updated annually

**Approve an annual budget consistent with the district vision**

- Competitive principal, teacher & staff raises
- Staff increases
- Programs focused on student achievement: EDGE, literacy, co-teach





## Board Roles & Responsibilities

**Communicate the district's vision and success to the community**

- FBiSD magazine (66% of population have no kids in school)
- Web site
- Social media
  - New FB page
  - Twitter
- Community presentations
- Listening Tour
- Joint meetings with cities







# Characteristics of Good Governance

Vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision

- Core beliefs and commitments
- Goals & Priorities
- Profile of a Graduate
- Vision & Planning Committee



Strong beliefs and values about what is possible for students, their ability to learn, and the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels

## Core Belief 1

All students can reach their full potential.





# Characteristics of Good Governance

**Accountability-driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement**

- New Superintendent transition
- Managed curriculum
- Annual TAPR reports
- Quarterly assessment reports
- Supt evaluation includes student achievement goals

**Collaborative relationship with staff and the community; strong communications structure to inform and engage stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals**

- Community engagement
- Team buildings with our entire executive team
- Listening Tours
- FBISD magazine
- Social media





# Characteristics of Good Governance

Data savvy; embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement

- Quarterly assessment reports



Provide resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals

- Embedded professional development
- Support: Instructional coaches, Compliance coordinators
- EDGE, literacy expansion, CTE
- 86% of FBiSD budget is salaries and benefits



# Characteristics of Good Governance

**Lead as a united team with the superintendent, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.**

- Team building
- Social interaction/relationship building



**Team development and training, sometimes with superintendent, to build shared knowledge, values and commitments for improvement.**

- TASB SLI Conference, Winter Governance & Legal Seminar
- NSBA Conference





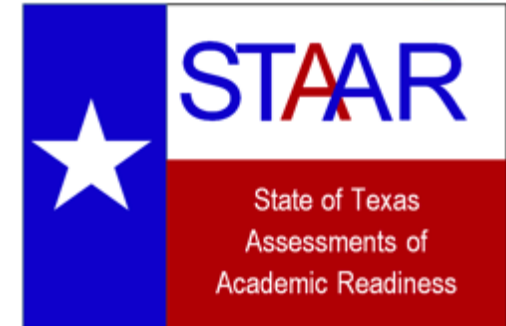
# Barriers to Local Governance: Financial Barriers



- **Un- and under-funded mandates** – GT, special education, SB 507, bilingual, open records requests, reporting requirements, etc.
- **Property Tax Myth**
  - Property value increases DO NOT fund education in FBISD and may not fund Texas education at all
  - The state benefits from property value increases
  - FBISD taxpayers fund 64% of public education while state funds 36%
  - “Robin Hood” & recapture (Chapter 41)
- **Outdated funding formulas**
  - No change since the 1980’s
  - Plus a \$45 million reduction in funds in FBISD in 2010 that has not been replenished



# Barriers to Local Governance: Accountability Barriers



- **Mandated Curriculum (TEKS):** “mile wide, inch deep”, fast-paced, limits creativity or innovation in instruction
- **STAAR Test:** high-stakes, does not take into account individual needs of the student, no modified testing
- **A-F Rating System:** not simple but complex and difficult to understand, stigmatizing for students, based primarily on one test on one day with a single standard





# “Rubber stamp” Board or Good Governance?

- **Building consensus**
- **The process**
- **We work HARD!**
  - 48-52 meetings per year
  - Trainings
  - Advocacy
  - Committee meetings
  - Administrative meetings
  - Community engagement
  - School dedications
  - Groundbreaking ceremonies





# “Rubber stamp” Board or Good Governance?

- We work **HARD!**
  - School events
  - 11 graduations in 2 days
  - Charity events
  - Community Events







# FBISD Board: The Road to Excellent Governance

2004: CRSS Case Study on FBISD Board

2012: Superintendent and 12 executive level positions leave FBISD; 11 Trustees turnover in the previous six years

2013: Board President Jim Rice leads hiring of new Superintendent, Charles Dupre

2017: FBISD Board is HEB Excellence in Education Board Finalist

