



Iowa City Community School District

Educational Services Center

Stephen F. Murley Superintendent of Schools

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**RETREAT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
IOWA CITY COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT, COUNTY OF JOHNSON, STATE OF IOWA
BOARD OFFICE, 509 S. DUBUQUE ST. IOWA CITY, IA 52240
9:00am, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2011**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Karla Cook, Tuyet Dorau, Patti Fields, Sally Hoelscher, Jeff McGinness, Marla Swesey and Sarah Swisher

Also Present: Jim Hyatt

Call to order: 9:00am

The Need for a Systematic Approach to Board Governance

Hyatt stated the purpose of this session is to forge an effective working team of board members and to discuss and agree upon characteristics (underlying principals) of effective boards.

What is the job of the Board? What should it produce?

The board creates expectations, standards and criteria for itself and for management and is the link between what the community wants and desires and what the School District produces (the District produces results, not process). The Board is accountable to the community; the Superintendent is accountable to the Board.

What are the characteristics of an effective Board member?

Directors discussed their ideas about how an effective board speaks and acts. That discussion included a process for decision making which includes the willingness to listen to all parts of an issue, the ability to make informed decisions, to have a process to assemble all the pieces, and to seek out stake holders and listen to them and elicit their values.

The Board broke down the definition of the district mission statement : *The mission of the Iowa City Community School District is to ensure all students will become responsible, independent learners capable of making informed decisions in a democratic society as well as in the dynamic global community; this is accomplished by challenging each student with a rigorous and creative curriculum taught by a diverse, professional, caring staff and enriched through the resources and the efforts of families and the entire community.* They broke down their definition of a well-educated student and considered the need for owner input into their discussions of well-educated.

Groups vs. Individual Authority: Speaking with One Voice

Hyatt stated the Board must speak as one, not as individual members. Individual Board members have no authority unless they are given authority by the entire Board. The one-voice principle doesn't require or imply unanimity. Differences among the Board are not only respected, but encouraged. Rarely will a vote be unanimous. Board members who lose a vote

must accept that the board has spoken and that its decision is now to be implemented. The board should not present conflicting messages to its ownership or its staff.

Expressing Board Expectations and Values

The Board discussed expectations and values for the Board itself, their officers, their committees, and individual Board members. Those expectations and values include respecting differences, listening with open minds, making only those decisions the Board should make with a global prospective and without abdicating. They discussed the difference between efficient (doing the job right) and effective (doing the right job). Expectations of the Superintendent were discussed as well as those of staff operations along with the role the Board plays in those expectations.

Monitoring the Fulfillment of Board Expectations

Hyatt summarized that monitoring the fulfillment of Board expectations comes down talking to the boss, creating solid, written expectations of performance (board and management), delegating authority at board and staff levels (and respect it – One Voice) and monitoring the fulfillment of Board expectations rigorously.

The meeting adjourned.