

**Seattle Public Schools**

**Board of Directors**

**Board Self-Evaluation**

**November 2015**

**Introduction**

Under Board Policy No. 1820, Evaluation of the Board, the Board evaluates its own performance each school year, in terms of generally accepted principles of successful Board operations and in relation to its annual goals and objectives.

At the January 21, 2015, legislative meeting, the Board approved a self-evaluation instrument, a self-evaluation rubric, and five specific SMART goals aligned with Policy No. 1820 and the 2014-15 Board governance priorities. The instrument established the Board's expectations for itself for the 2014-15 year and the rubric and SMART goals were developed to align with policy and with the 2014-15 Board governance priorities. All of those documents are available in the Board Office.

The adopted rubric is a maturity model rubric that supports ongoing growth of the Board's work. By outlining increasingly more developed levels of organization, processes, and accountability measures, this rubric guides the Board to improve its decision-making and resulting outcomes.

As described on page 2 of the rubric, four Standards have been identified: Oversight and Governance; Fiscal and Fiduciary Responsibility; Board-Superintendent Relationships; and Board Relations. Specific Indicators accompany each Standard to describe the specific knowledge, skills, and performance involved. At the February 18, 2015, Board Work Session, five specific indicators were chosen as areas of focus for the 2014-15 SMART Goals. It is those SMART Goals that were considered at a November 10, 2015 work session.

Since the adoption of the original Board self-evaluation instrument in November 2013, the timeline for the Superintendent's evaluation has shifted to conclude each November, and the timeline for the Board's self-evaluation has been shifted to align with the Superintendent's.

**Board Performance Evaluation**

The assessment ratings of the Board self-evaluation are based on a four-step system, using the following descriptive evaluation terms: "Distinguished," "Proficient," "Basic," and "Unsatisfactory". Each of the five SMART goals selected for evaluation was discussed at a Board work session held on November 10, 2015. Prior to the work session, Board members were also surveyed about their individual perceptions of the performance on the specific SMART goals, and this feedback from the survey was provided at the work session. Directors met again on November 19, 2015 in an Executive Committee of the Whole meeting for the purpose of reviewing and approving the 2014-15 Board Self-Evaluation Narrative.

In February 2015, the Board determined initial baseline assessment ratings for each area. These are noted below.

SMART GOAL #1-A/Indicator I-C-4 (Code of Conduct, Ethics, and Whistleblower Policies)

The Board collectively considered the baseline ranking in February 2015 to be Basic and the November 2015 target was Proficient -. Individual Director responses to the survey prior to the November 10 work session included rankings of Basic and Proficient.

SMART Goal #1-A focuses on the extent to which the Board sets the tone at the top by aligning Board behaviors with the desired organization culture within SPS. At the November 10 work session, Directors expressed the view that performance has been mixed. Directors noted the fulfillment of the requirements of law and policy, but the lack of a focused review of the Ethics and Whistleblower policies. It was noted that Andrew Medina, Director of Internal Audit and Ethics Officer, will be presenting his Internal Audit Annual Report and Ethics Report at the November 18, 2015, Board meeting. It was also noted that monthly reports are provided to the Audit & Finance Committee in relation to ethics items.

Directors highlighted the annual review of the Board's Code of Conduct as evidence of progress on this goal and noted that ongoing work should focus on a deeper review of the district's Ethics and Whistleblower policies.

Directors agreed to the ranking of **Proficient-**.

SMART GOAL #1-B/Indicator I-E-1 (Collaborative Development, Progress-Monitoring and Course Correction)

The Board collectively considered the baseline ranking in February 2015 to be Basic+ and the November 2015 target was Proficient-. Individual Director responses to the survey prior to the November 10 work session included rankings of Basic and Proficient.

SMART Goal #1-B focuses on the extent to which the Board developed and consistently used a set of talking points to ensure alignment and consistency of message regarding the district's Strategic Plan. At the November 10 work session, Directors expressed that staff had done a good job of connecting the Board to this work, but that Directors needed to become more involved in engaging with the community on the progress or changes to the Strategic Plan. Directors also noted the need to strengthen how the Board ensures accountability for progress on the Strategic Plan. Directors called out that the Board has been attentive and supportive in relation to this work and there has been a tangible process to align the Board's work with the Strategic Plan.

Suggestions were offered to include the Board identifying opportunities to connect the Strategic Plan and the district's work when speaking to the community. Directors also noted how the Board could provide greater support to staff when engaging with the community, and use those engagement settings as an opportunity to connect with more members of the community.

Directors agreed to the ranking of **Proficient-**.

SMART Goal #2/Indicator II-A-2 (Budget Monitoring)

The Board collectively considered the baseline ranking in February 2015 to be Proficient and the November 2015 target was Proficient +. Individual Director responses to the survey prior to the November 10 work session included the ranking of Proficient.

SMART Goal #2 focuses on the extent to which the Board implemented an annual budget monitoring system. At the November 10 work session, Directors asked if the variance analysis and impact assessment had been implemented and it was noted that the work was done through the Audit & Finance Committee. Those discussions included impacts to the district's budget and working to prepare responses to those impacts beyond the control of the district.

Directors noted it would be more accurate to use the word "monitoring" in the place of "creating" to increase clarity and this could be a different way to frame this work for the next year. Directors also discussed the monthly distribution to the Board of the district's financial statements and the depth of understanding of the topic amongst the Directors. It was noted that the financial statements are also reviewed in both the Audit & Finance and Operations Committee meetings.

Directors agreed to the ranking of **Proficient**.

#### SMART Goal #3/Indicator III-A-2 (Procedures & Communication)

The Board collectively considered the baseline ranking in February 2015 to be Basic and the November 2015 target was Proficient-. Individual Director responses to the survey prior to the November 10 work session included rankings of Basic and Proficient.

SMART Goal #3 focuses on the extent to which the Board improved delegation of authority and responsibility to the Superintendent. At the November 10 work session, Directors discussed the progress the Board has made from previous behaviors and improvements in understanding their roles and in reconciling diversity of opinions. Directors noted it took time for them to understand the governance tools and how to use them to bring about change for which Directors are looking.

Directors discussed the Board's rights and responsibilities and how to work within a transparent, collaborative and constructive framework to accomplish their work. Directors also noted looking at how to fulfill legal obligations within district dynamics and other delegations. Directors noted progress on this goal but that this work could be included in future professional development.

Results on this goal varied by individual Director. Most are very good at understanding the delegation of authority documented in Board policies while others micromanage when they do not agree with a decision. Not all Directors appear to feel bound by the Communications Protocol or respect the confidentiality of executive sessions. The Board has not yet found a mechanism to enforce the Code of Conduct, confidentiality agreements, and the Communications Protocol.

For the coming year, Directors discussed how they can be assigned to specific goals and provide quarterly check-ins to track the work towards accomplishing the goal, including using a collection of evidence. It was also noted that the Board and Superintendent should work together in bringing about change Directors wish to see in the district, through the use of governance tools and training.

Directors agreed on a ranking of **Basic+**.

#### SMART Goal #4/Indicator IV-A-2 (Public Engagement)

The Board collectively considered the baseline ranking in February 2015 to be Basic and the November 2015 target was Proficient -. Individual Director responses to the survey prior to the November 10 work session included rankings of Basic and Proficient.

SMART Goal #4 focuses on the extent to which the Board increased its engagement with underrepresented groups and community members, including families with language and other communication barriers. At the November 10 work session, Directors noted the work done in this area was encouraging in helping to understand how the district's community relations, community partnerships, and family engagement work. Directors called out the work by staff in regards to the Neighbor-2-Neighbor program that was used during the Bell Times process and how it increased the connection with families.

Directors discussed how there are some groups to which the Board and district has ready access and the need to work with staff to engage the populations who are not as inclined to reach out to the Board by email or to attend district meetings, so they are not typically heard from. Directors highlighted work being done by some district schools and how Directors could support and participate in that work to increase the effectiveness of the engagement.

Directors spoke to the limited resources available to conduct this work in a broad and meaningful way, so some work in this area may have to be focused within that limitation.

Directors agreed on a ranking of **Basic+**.

#### SMART Goal #5/Indicator IV-C-1 (Continuous Improvement)

The Board collectively considered the baseline ranking in February 2015 to be Basic and the November 2015 target was Proficient. Individual Director responses to the survey prior to the November 10 work session included rankings of Basic and Proficient.

SMART Goal #5 focuses on the extent to which Directors increased their understanding of the racial and ethnic challenges facing the school district and ensured continuous improvement of its cultural responsiveness. At the November 10 work session, Directors spoke about the different trainings and discussions that were conducted toward the completion of this goal (March 7, 2015 Board Retreat, March 11, 2015 work session, and September 30, 2015 work session), and that there is still more work that can be done in this area. Directors noted the amendments proposed by Directors to the Superintendent's 2015-16 proposed SMART Goals highlight the different perspectives in this area.

Directors emphasized that while the work completed has been a good step forward, the next steps need to include a deeper exploration of targeted universalism and other achievement gap closing strategies, the research, and their impact on all historically underserved students.

Directors agreed on a ranking of **Proficient-**.

#### NEXT STEPS

The Board will be meeting in a work session on December 16, 2015 to select the Board Self-Evaluation SMART Goals for 2015-16 and they will be brought to the Board for consideration as part of the January 2016 Board meetings.