



# **Governance Compact**

Gobles  
Public Schools

**Board of School Trustees**

Developed  
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Gobles Public Schools

# GOVERNANCE COMPACT

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This Compact sets forth the intentions of the Board of School Trustees of the Gobles School Corporation to devote its full energies to its unique governance responsibilities and create an environment in which the Superintendent and other employees of the District know what the community expects of them and vigorously pursues those expectations to the very best of their abilities.

# Gobles Public Schools Focus and Alignment

## SLOGAN

- Team Gobles

## CORE BELIEFS

- The needs of the student come first.
- The district and schools will provide a healthy, safe, respectful, and nurturing learning environment.
- The organization values learning as a priority and challenges ALL in the school community to continuous improvement.
- The success of each student is a shared responsibility of students, families, schools, and the community.
- Everyone will demonstrate fiscal responsibility in support of our mission and vision.

## MISSION STATEMENT

- Create a culture of deliberate excellence.

## VISION

- Every graduate will be future ready for personal success, college and career, and the global marketplace.

## PROFILE OF A GRADUATE

- Ready for Personal Success
- Ready for College and Career
- Ready for The Global Marketplace

## STRATEGIC PLAN

### OPERATIONAL GOAL 1 - LEADERSHIP

#### Targeted Objective 1 – Leadership Behavior

##### Strategy 1:

- Informed and Current
- Strategic and Systemic
- Fair, Legal, Honest, and Ethical
- Adaptive and Resilient

#### Targeted Objective 2 – Culture

##### Strategy 2:

- Values, Beliefs, Principles and Delivery
- Language, Traditions, Celebrations, and Stories

#### Targeted Objective 3 – Vision for Learning and Achievement

##### Strategy 3:

- Mission and Vision
- Goals and Expectations

### OPERATIONAL GOAL 3 - PROCESS

#### Targeted Objective 1 – Community Building

##### Strategy 1:

- Board Relations
- Leadership Team Relations
- Internal and External Stakeholder Relations
- Communications and Media Relations

#### Targeted Objective 2 – School and District Improvement

##### Strategy 2:

- Collaborative Inquiry
- Systematic use of Multiple Data Sources
- Data Systems
- Aligned Improvement, Monitoring, and Reporting

### OPERATIONAL GOAL 2 – SYSTEM ALIGNMENT

#### Targeted Objective 1 – High Quality and Reliability

##### Instruction

##### Strategy 1:

- Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum
- Research Based and Differentiated Instruction
- Standards Based Assessment and Feedback
- Technology to Expand Learning Opportunity

#### Targeted Objective 2 – Safe, Effective School Operations

##### Strategy 2:

- Policies and Laws
- Systems, Processes, and Programs
- Fiscal and Material Resource Management
- Human Resource Management
- Non-Instructional Technology

### OPERATIONAL GOAL 4 – CAPACITY BUILDING

#### Targeted Objective 1 – Human Development

##### Strategy 1:

- Professional Learning
- Leadership Development
- Adaptation and Innovation
- Performance Evaluation

#### Targeted Objective 2 – Contextual and Political

##### Strategy 2:

- Contextual and Political Awareness
- Education and Advocacy

# I. BOARD PROCESSES

## GOVERNANCE

As the corporate entity charged by law with governing the school district, the Board of Education sits in trust for the entire community. In the essential governance capacity, the Board holds the School District accountable for achieving results for all learners at an appropriate cost, and for avoiding unacceptable choices, conditions and activities.

The Board will seek always to:

1. Govern with a focus on the future, on results, and on continuous improvement;
2. Encourage collective decision making and diversity in viewpoints;
3. Respect the distinction between Board and Superintendent roles, and
4. Pursue rigorous and continual improvement of its capability to define values and vision.

## THE BOARD CONVENES THE COMMUNITY

As trustee for the community, the Board continually defines, re-defines, and articulates district ends. This task requires the Board to maintain an ongoing two-way conversation with the entire community. The purpose of the conversation is to allow the Board to hear and understand the community's educational aspirations and desires, to advocate effectively for continuous improvement, and to inform the community of the district's performance. Evidence that this conversation is taking place will include the following:

1. Stakeholder representation on approved committees;
2. Use of surveys for broader community input as needed;
3. Frequent publication of student achievement data;
4. Frequent publication of progress towards improvement goals.

## BOARD JOB DESCRIPTION

The Board of Education represents the public interest in maintaining education programs that best serve the aims of the community and the state. The Board is primarily responsible for determining what the community wants from its public schools and what it is willing to pay.

1. The Board is the link between the School District and the community at-large.
2. The Board will maintain written governing policies that clearly define and describe:
  - a) Board Processes: Specifications for how the Board develops, implements, and monitors its own work.
  - b) Board-Superintendent Relationship: How authority is delegated and its proper use monitored; the Superintendent's role, authority and accountability.
  - c) Limitations on Executive Authority: Constrains the Superintendent's authority by establishing the boundaries of prudence and ethics within which all executive action must take place.
  - d) Ends: Vision.
3. The Board will assess the Superintendent's performance.
4. Board decisions will be based on clear data, including monitoring information.
5. The Board will adopt a district budget with revenue and spending parameters and a system for monitoring financial performance.
6. The Board will assess its own performance.

*Also see: Board Policies 0120 Board Powers and Philosophy, 0130 Board Functions, 0140 Board Membership, 0150 Board Organization, 0160 Board Meetings, and 0170 Board Duties*

## **PRESIDENT'S ROLE AND LEVEL OF AUTHORITY**

1. In addition to the duties and responsibilities imposed upon the office by the state law, the President of the Board of School Trustees is empowered by the Board to ensure that Board behavior is consistent with its own rules and those legitimately imposed upon it by law. Specifically, the President will strive to ensure that:
  - a. The Board will deal only with those issues, which according to Board policy; clearly belong to the Board to decide, not those falling within the purview of the Superintendent.
  - b. Deliberations will be fair, open, and thorough, as well as efficient, timely, orderly, and to the point.
2. The authority of the President is limited to making decisions that fall within the topics covered by the Board's policies on Board Process and Board-Superintendent Relationship, except where the Board specifically delegates portions of this authority to others.
  - a. The President is empowered to chair Board meetings within the rules of order adopted by the Board and the commonly accepted duties of that position (e.g., ruling on motions, recognizing speakers).
  - b. In the absence of specific Board directions to the contrary, neither the President nor any other member of the Board has authority to alter Board policy or to supervise or direct the Superintendent.
  - c. The President may represent the Board to outside parties in announcing Board-state positions, decisions and interpretations.
  - d. The President may delegate this authority, but remains accountable for its use.

*Also see: Board Policies 0163 Presiding Officer, 0171.1 Duties*

## **COMMITTEES**

The Board may choose to have committees of the Board.

Board committees are distinguished from committees created under the authority of the Superintendent, regardless of whether Board members sit on the committee. The only Board committees are those which are created by the Board, responsible to the Board and which meet standards set forth below:

1. Board committees will be used in an ad hoc capacity. Board committees, when used, will be designed to reinforce the wholeness of the Board's job and so as never to interfere with the Superintendent's delegated authority. Unless otherwise provided in Board policy, a committee ceases to exist as soon as its task is complete.
2. Board committees are advisory only and may not make decisions, take or authorize staff action, or substitute for the full Board's deliberative process on any decision or action to come before the Board.
3. Board committees are to help the Board do its job, not to help or advise the staff. Committees ordinarily will assist the Board by preparing policy alternatives and implications for Board deliberation. In keeping with the Board's broader focus, Board committees will normally not have direct dealings with current staff operations.
4. Board committees may not speak or act for the Board except when formally given such authority for specific and time-limited purposes. Expectations and authority will be carefully stated in order not to conflict with authority delegated to the Superintendent.
5. Board committees cannot exercise authority over staff. Because the Superintendent works for the full Board, he or she will not be required to obtain approval of the Board committee before an executive action.
6. Board committees are to avoid over-identification with organizational parts rather than the whole. Therefore, a Board committee which has helped the Board create a policy will not be used to monitor organizational performance on that policy.

*Also see: Board Policy 0155Committees*

## **BOARD MEETING AGENDAS**

The Board will develop and follow an annual agenda which (a) completes an annual re-exploration of ends policies and (b) continually improves Board performance through continuing education and attention enriched input and deliberation.

The Superintendent and the Board President will construct meeting agendas that provide an orderly method of conducting Board business. All members of the Board are invited to place items of appropriate Board work on the agenda. The Board may vote to remove an item from the agenda that it deems not to be appropriate Board work.

The Board will Develop and publicize reasonable rules for members of the public to address the Board.

Every Board policy adopted by the Board shall be promptly included in the written Board policy manual.

*Also see: Board Policies 0166 Agenda, 0167.3 Public Participation at Board Meetings*

## **BOARD MEMBER CODE OF ETHICS**

Each member of the Gobles Public Schools ascribes to the following code of ethics:

A school board member should honor the high responsibility, which his membership demands:

- By thinking always in terms of “children first.”
- By understanding that the basic function of the school board member is “policy-making” and not “administrative,” and by accepting the responsibility of learning to discriminate intelligently between these two functions.
- By accepting the responsibility along with his/her fellow board members of seeing that the maximum of facilities and resources is provided for the proper functioning of schools.
- By refusing to “play politics” in either the traditional partisan, or in a petty sense.
- By representing at all times the entire school community.
- By accepting the responsibility of becoming well informed concerning the duties of board members, and the proper functions of public school.
- By recognizing responsibility as a State official to seek the improvement of education throughout the State.

A school board member should respect this relationship with other members of the Board:

- By recognizing that authority rests only with the board in official meetings, and that the individual member has no legal status to bind the board outside of such meetings.
- By recognizing the integrity of his predecessors and associates and the merit of their work.
- By refusing to make statements or promises as to how he/she will vote on any matter which should properly come before the board as a whole.
- By making decisions only after all facts bearing on a question have been presented and discussed.
- By respecting the opinion of others and by graciously conforming to the principle of “majority rule.”
- By refusing to participate in irregular meetings such as “secret” or executive sessions which are not properly announced and which all members have not been properly notified.

A school board member should maintain desirable relations with the Superintendent of schools and his staff:

- By striving to procure, when the vacancy exists, the best professional leader available for the head administrative post.
- By giving the Superintendent full administrative authority for properly discharging his professional duties, and also by holding him responsible for acceptable results.
- By acting only upon the recommendation of the Superintendent in matters of employment or dismissal of school personnel.
- By having the Superintendent present at all meetings of the board except when his contract and salary are under consideration.
- By referring all complaints to the proper administrative office and by discussing them only at regular meeting or properly announced executive session after failure of administrative solution.
- By striving to provide adequate safeguards around the Superintendent and other staff members to the end that they can live happily and comfortably in the community and discharge their educational functions on a thoroughly professional basis.
- By presenting personal criticism of any employee directly to the Superintendent.

A school board member should meet his responsibility to his community:

- By attempting to appraise fairly both the present and future educational needs of the community.
- By insisting that all school business transactions be on an open, ethical and above-board basis.
- By vigorously seeking adequate financial support for the schools.
- By refusing to use his position on a school board in any way whatsoever for personal gain or personal prestige.
- By refusing to discuss personnel matters or any other confidential business of the board in his home, on the street, or in his office.
- By winning the community's confidence that all is being done in the best interests of school children.

*Also see: Board Policy 0144.2 Board Member Ethics*

## **PROCESS FOR ADDRESSING BOARD MEMBER VIOLATIONS**

The Board and its individual members are committed to faithful compliance with the provisions of the Board's policies. In the event of a member's violation of policy, the Board will seek remedy by the following process:

Step 1-First, conversation in a private setting between the offending member, the Board President, and one other board member.

In the event the Board President is the offending member, the Board Vice-President will hold the meeting with one other board member present;

Step 2-Second, discussion between the offending member and the full Board.

## **BOARD MEMBER DEVELOPMENT**

Individual Board member development opportunities, which ensure good governance and model life-long learning, will be equally available to all Board members. Board members are encouraged to take advantage of development opportunities. The Board will provide new Board member orientation in addition to those opportunities provided by the Superintendent and outside sources.

## **BOARD SELF EVALUATION**

The School Board will conduct an annual self-evaluation using MASB resources (no later than May 31 of each year).

## **II. BOARD /STAFF RELATIONSHIP**

### **BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP**

The Board employs one person – The Superintendent – and that person works only for the Board and is held accountable for the performance of the entire school district. The Board delegates authority to the Superintendent to pursue district ends. The Board/Superintendent relationship is based on mutual respect for their complementary roles.

Only decisions made by formal Board action are binding on the Superintendent.

1. Decision or instructions of individual Board members, officers, or committees are not binding on the Superintendent except in rare instances when the Board has specifically authorized such exercise of authority.
2. In the case of Board members or committees requesting information or assistance without Board authorization, the Superintendent may ask for a board review of requests that require, in the Superintendent's opinion, a material amount of staff time or resources or that is disruptive or unreasonable.

### **BOARD/OTHER STAFF RELATIONSHIP/ACCOUNTABILITY OF SUPERINTENDENT**

The Superintendent is the Board's only link to the operational organization of the school district; all authority and accountability of staff, as far as the Board is concerned, is considered to be the responsibility of the Superintendent.

1. The Board will never give instructions to any employee other than the Superintendent.
2. Except as required by law, the Board will refrain from evaluating any staff other than the Superintendent. On all other personnel matters brought before it in compliance with the law, the Board will expect recommendations for action from the Superintendent.
3. The Board will monitor evaluation processes and other personnel practices to ensure compliance with legal requirements and Board policies.

### **MONITORING SUPERINTENDENT PERFORMANCE**

Superintendent's job performance will be monitored systematically and rigorously against the Board's specified expectations of the Superintendency – organizational accomplishment of the Board's Ends and organizational operation within the boundaries established in the Board's Limitations on the Superintendent's authority.

The Board will view organizational accomplishment of the Board's Ends policies and compliance with the Board's Limitations on the Superintendent's authority as successful Superintendent performance.

1. Monitoring will assess the degree to which Board policies and goals are being carried out. Information that does not contribute to this purpose is not considered monitoring data.
2. The Board will acquire monitoring data on Ends and Means Limitations policies by one or both of the following methods:
  - a. By internal report, through which the Superintendent reports compliance and accomplishments to the Board
  - b. By direct Board inspection, through which the Board assesses compliance with the appropriate policy criteria and goal attainment.
3. The standard for compliance shall be whether the Superintendent has made a reasonable interpretation of the Board policy and goals being monitored. The Board will make the final determination as to whether a Superintendent interpretation is reasonable.
4. All policies and goals, which instruct the Superintendent, will be monitored at a frequency and by a method chosen by the Board. The Board may monitor any policy an any time by any method, but ordinarily will depend on a schedule and method as adopted by the Board.

The Board appointed Policy Committee will meet with the Superintendent to review sections of the policy manual according to a Board adopted schedule. Recommended changes will be brought to the Board for review and amendments.

In conjunction with the conclusion of the Board's annual planning cycle, the Board will conduct a formal summative evaluation of the Superintendent. The summative evaluation will be based upon data derived during the year from monitoring Board policies and goals on Ends and Means Limitations. A written composite evaluation document will be prepared by the Board. The Superintendent will have the opportunity to review the document before meetings with the Board in executive session. The report will be signed by the Superintendent and the Board President.

The evaluation document will consist of:

- a. A summary of the data derived throughout the year from monitoring the Board's policies and goals on Ends and Means Limitations.
- b. Conclusions relative to whether each end has been achieved or whether reasonable progress has been made toward its achievement.
- c. Conclusions relative to whether the Superintendent has properly operated within the boundaries established in the Means policies.
- d. When necessary, an improvement plan addressing any insufficient progress toward meeting the ends.
- e. When necessary, an improvement plan addressing any deficiencies in operation within the boundaries of the Means Limitations policies.
- f. A summary of the Superintendent's strengths and weaknesses relative to achievement of the Ends policies and operation within the boundaries established in the Means Limitations policies.

All employment decisions regarding the Superintendent remain within the sole and continuing discretion of the Board.

### **III. MEANS LIMITATIONS**

#### **ADHERENCE TO VALUES**

All actions of the Board, Superintendent, and Staff are expected to be made with respect to articulated core beliefs.

- The needs of the student come first.
- The district and schools will provide a healthy, safe, respectful and nurturing learning environment.
- The organization values learning as a priority and challenges ALL in the school community to continuous improvement.
- The success of each student is a shared responsibility of students, families, schools, and the community.
- Everyone will demonstrate fiscal responsibility in support of the mission and vision.

#### **LIMITATIONS ON SUPERINTENDENT'S DISCRETION**

The Superintendent shall not cause or knowingly condone any practice, activity, decision or organizational circumstance which is either imprudent, illegal, or in violation of commonly accepted business and professional ethics.

1. With respect to interactions with students, parents, and community members, the Superintendent shall not cause or knowingly condone conditions, procedures, or decision which are unsafe, disrespectful, undignified, unnecessary intrusive, or which fail to provide appropriate confidentiality and privacy.
2. Budgeting any fiscal period or the remaining part of any fiscal period shall not deviate materially or compromise from Board Ends priorities, risk jeopardy or fail to be derived from a multi-year plan.
3. The Board will not be uninformed. Information and advice to the Board will have no significant gaps in either timeliness, completeness or accuracy.
4. No Compensation and benefits for employees, consultants, contract workers, and volunteers shall be established which are not internally consistent and externally comparable.
5. With the respect to treatment of staff, the Superintendent shall not operate without written personnel procedures which clarify personnel rules, comply with applicable laws and provide for effective handling of grievances, as appropriate or as required by law or contract.
6. Equal educational opportunities shall be available for all students without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, ethnicity, language barrier, religious beliefs, physical and mental handicap or disability, economic and social conditions, or actual or potential marital or parental status.