

# Lines of Communication Between Authorizers and PSA Boards

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**IF YOU WANT TO GO FAST, GO ALONE.  
IF YOU WANT TO GO FAR, GO TOGETHER  
AFRICAN PROVERB**

RON SCHNEIDER, FSU CSO ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

NEIL BECKWITH, MDE PSA UNIT CONSULTANT

# DISCUSSION POINTS

- 1. BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S ROLES
- 2. AUTHORIZER'S ROLE- CHARTER CONTRACT/POLICIES
- 3. COMMUNICATION CONNECTIONS AND ISSUES- PSA BOARD, VENDORS, AUTHORIZERS, STAKEHOLDERS, MDE, MEDIA, ISD, LAW ENFORCEMENT/LEGAL CONTACTS
- 4. COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS- WHO, WHEN, HOW
- 5. LEARN FROMS, PITFALLS, WATCH OUT FORS

THIS IS AN INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION- WITH EACH SCREEN-SHARE YOUR OWN EXAMPLES, HORROR STORIES, SOLUTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, QUESTIONS, LET ME TELL YOU- DON'T EVER DO....., LEGAL REMINDERS, HELPFUL POLICES, ETC.

# PSAs FREQUENTLY LOOK AT COMMUNICATION 3 WAYS



# BUT, WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU FORGET THE 4<sup>TH</sup> LEG



# FOUR LEGS ON THE CHAIR

## ***ANY OF THE LEGS CAN CAUSE A PROBLEM WITH THE CHAIR***

- AUTHORIZER
- PSA BOARD
- ESP/VENDORS
- PUBLIC STAKEHOLDERS- ESPECIALLY WITH DIFFERENT VISION, PURPOSE, EXPECTATIONS, UNDERSTANDING, OPINIONS, ETC.
- DON'T FORGET ABOUT INFORMING LAW ENFORCEMENT/LEGAL COUNSEL!!
- **IF POOR COMMUNICATION HAPPENS- WRITTEN, ORAL, TIMELY, ACCURATE, WEBSITE, PUBLIC COMMENT, MEDIA, POLICIES, PROTOCOLS, ETC. FROM OR TO ANY OF THE LEGS- THE CHAIR GOES DOWN! IS THE CHAIR WOBBLY IF ONE OR TWO LEGS ARE TOO LONG OR TOO SHORT? DOES ONE LEG CONTROL TOO MUCH OF THE COMMUNICATION?**

# BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S (BOD) ROLES

- AUTHORIZER'S VIEW IS MILES AWAY, BOD VIEW FROM 1000 FEET, ESP CENTRAL OFFICE 100 FEET, BUILDING LEADER 10 FEET, TEACHERS 1 FOOT, STUDENTS AT GROUND LEVEL
- BOD MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THEY HOLD THE DISTRICT AND BUILDING CODES- NO ONE ELSE!
- PUBLIC LEADERSHIP TEAM- ***DEFEND ALL DECISIONS/PROTOCOLS (INCLUDING COMMUNICATIONS)*** TO PUBLIC AND AUTHORIZER, POLICIES/PRACTICES, FOLLOW MANDATES, ETC.
- SET THE TONE OF THE PSA- MISSION/VISION/STRATEGIC PLANS, ETC. ***AND ENSURE PROGRESS!***
- ***COMMUNICATE WITH AUTHORIZER- FORMAL (COMPLIANCE/FIELD REPRESENTATIVE) AND AS NEEDED (PROACTIVE, BEFORE THE DRIP BECOMES A WATERFALL)***



# Relationship With the Authorizer

- The status of the authorizer in your PSA.
- The authorizer's role is oversight. What does that mean?
  - The authorizer answers-"How do you know it is getting done"?
  - The board, usually through the BD President answers-"Who does it and how"?
- Defined by the Charter Contract and all applicable law.
  - Compliance
  - Bylaws
  - Amendments
- Charter contracts have required elements and goals based primarily on financial stability, student achievement, and compliance to law.
  - The PSA HAS OWN BUDGET, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND REQUIREMENTS
- Contracts/vendors/relationship with the authorizer

# AUTHORIZER'S ROLES

- CHARTER CONTRACT- CREATE AND MANAGE
- REMEMBER TO KEEP THE AUTHORIZER'S BOARD HAPPY AND INFORMED
- KEEP POLICIES CURRENT
- PROVIDE BOOTS ON THE GROUND- FIELD REPS, SCHOOL SUPPORT, TRAININGS, OTHER CHECK UPS- FACILITIES, CHRI/CERTIFICATION, ETC.
- OVERSIGHT PROCEDURES- COMPLIANCE, DESK AUDITS, PHONE CALLS, DATA REVIEWS, TEAM VISITS, ETC.
- COMMUNICATE- OVERALL SCHOOL PERFORMANCE CONNECTED WITH REAUTHORIZATION, REMINDERS, COMPLAINT FOLLOW UPS, ASSESSMENT RESULTS, SCHOOL SUPPORT PLANS, ETC.
- COMMUNICATION ROUTINES ARE A CRUCIAL PART OF BOD TRAINING



# VENDORS- PSA BOD ACTIONS/COMMUNICATIONS

- AUTHORIZER'S LEGALLY (& LOGICALLY) REQUIRED CONTRACT ACTIONS
- SEPARATE & CLEARLY UNDERSTAND CHARTER AND VENDOR CONTRACTS- TERMS, LENGTHS, RFPS, BOARD CONTROL
- FULL SERVICE VS PARTIAL SERVICES
- DID THIS BOARD ORIGINALLY SELECT THE ESP VENDOR?
- CONTRACT REVIEW, MODIFICATIONS, SERVICES PROVIDED, WHO EVALUATES, COSTS PER SERVICE, CONTRACTUAL PERFORMANCE METRICS THAT CLEARLY IMPROVE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
- HOW DO YOU EVALUATE OTHER VENDOR SERVICES? ESP AND OTHER VENDORS
- WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU CHANGE A MAJOR VENDOR? AUTHORIZER'S PERSPECTIVE, PERSONNEL, PUBLIC FUNDS PURCHASED ITEMS, WHO OWNS WHAT, FACILITY-MAINTENANCE-REPORTING-TECHNOLOGY, ETC. ISSUES

# MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

- WHAT DO THE HEADLINES SAY?
- **GEORGE'S SCHOOL SERVICES ESP LISTED AS A PRIORITY SCHOOL**
- **GEORGE'S SCHOOL SERVICES ESP STUDENTS SCORE LAST ON THE MSTEP TEST**
- **GEORGE'S SCHOOL SERVICES ESP TEACHER SLAPS STUDENT**
- **GEORGE'S SCHOOL SERVICES ESP BOARD BEING INVESTIGATED FOR MISUSE OF PUBLIC FUNDS**
- **NO, NO, NO!! THEY REPLACE GEORGE'S SCHOOL SERVICES WITH THE NAME OF YOUR PSA**
- BOTTOM LINE- THE BOARD OWNS THE OUTCOMES, DATA, AND DECISIONS!!!!
- AND, THE BOD AND ESP AND AUTHORIZER MUST COMMUNICATE THE INFORMATION TO STAKEHOLDERS!!

# MEDIA AND LEGAL COMMUNICATIONS

- IS THE BOD TRANSPARENT IN MEETINGS AND RELEASES
- ERRORS OF OMISSION THAT COME BACK TO BITE THE BOD- WHEN IS IT BETTER TO BE PROACTIVE WITH AN ISSUE AND WHEN DOES THE BOD KEEP QUIET AND **HOPE!!** (DO YOU KNOW THE FACTS, PRIVACY ISSUES, CLOSED SESSIONS, RUMORS, ETC.)
- DOES THE BOD ISSUE MULTIPLE STATEMENTS OR RESPONSES TO MEDIA OR AUTHORIZER QUESTIONS? IS THE PROTOCOL TO HAVE **ONE** SPOKESPERSON?
- LEGAL REFERRALS/REPORTS, LAW ENFORCEMENT CONTACTS, LEGAL COUNSEL, ETC.- ERR ON SIDE OF CAUTION, EASIER TO HEAR A “NOT A LEGAL PROBLEM” RATHER THAN A “WHY DID YOU NOT REPORT THIS?”
- COMMUNICATION FORMATS- LETTER HOME AFTER SCHOOL INCIDENT, PRESS RELEASE, BOD MEMBER(S) INTERVIEWED (ONE BOD RESPONSE), PARENTS INTERVIEWED, ARTICLE AFTER A MEETING, SOCIAL MEDIA, PUBLIC MEETING, ETC. HOW DO YOU CHOOSE?

# VENDORS- AUTHORIZER'S ACTIONS/COMMUNICATIONS

- ESP POLICIES- CURRENT, WORKABLE, COMMUNICATED TO BODS, ENFORCED ASAP- WELL GEORGE IS A GOOD GUY LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS- KICKING THE CAN!! **FOLLOW LEGAL AND CHARTER CONTRACT LANGUAGE AND contradictions!**
- VENDOR CONTRACT REVIEW- CAN DISAPPROVE, MUST REVIEW, GET LEGAL OR FINANCIAL OR BEST PRACTICE ADVICE- DO NOT BE TOO PROUD TO ASK OTHER AUTHORIZERS!
- CHECK PAST PERFORMANCE OF THE ESP'S OTHER SCHOOLS!!
- QUESTION ANY CONCERN WITH PSA BOD
- CREATE AN ESP EVALUATION PROCEDURE- **BODS** MUST BE MANDATED TO DO A LEGITIMATE, OBJECTIVE AS POSSIBLE, DEFENDABLE ESP EVALUATION BASED ON CSO GOALS/MEASURES
- ***CLEARLY COMMUNICATE CSO ACADEMIC, FISCAL, FACILITY, LEADERSHIP/STAFFING, ETC. EXPECTATIONS TO BOTH BOD AND ESP***

# Does The BOD have “lines in the sand?” Have They Told the ESP?

- How ineffective does a staff member assigned to your school need to perform?
- When do staff members actions (or lack of) create PR, moral, legal, etc. issues?
- What does a building leader need to do before the Board demands removal?
- FSU CSO designates your PSA as a “Red” School Support School- do you add clearer expectations for your ESP?
- The School Reform Office (or MDE) designates your PSA as a Priority School- does that change your strategic plan, increase the academic expectations/goals, etc.?
- The Board discovers the same ESP services can be provided by other reputable management companies at a savings of 10%, 25%, 50%?
- FSU “extends” your charter contract with some real concerns, do you put out an RFP for services, modify your ESP contract, or, “hope for the best”?
- How seriously do you complete and discuss your ESP Evaluation?
- Do you view your ESP based on results and realities or by the personalities involved?
- How many stakeholder complaints get your attention, or at least make the Board investigate the issue(s)?

# COMMUNICATION REMINDERS

- STAKEHOLDERS- MANY TIMES JUST NEED TO BE HEARD. WHEN NO ONE RETURNS THEIR CALL THE PROBLEM PERCULATES UNTIL IT BOILS! WHY NOT DEAL WITH IT BEFORE IT GETS HOT?? DRIP OF WATER VS. A FIRE HOSE! THE PERSON MAY DISAGREE BUT ALSO DROP IT AT THAT LEVEL!
- WHEN THERE IS TRUST AND GOOD PROCEDURES- COMMUNICATION IS A MULTI-STREET SYSTEM- KIDS WITH TEACHERS/PARENTS, PARENTS WITH TEACHERS/PRINCIPAL, TEACHERS WITH KIDS/PARENTS/PRINCIPAL, PRINCIPAL WITH CENTRAL OFFICE (ESP?)/BOARD, ESP WITH BOARD/AUTHORIZER, BOARD WITH PARENTS/ESP/AUTHORIZER, AUTHORIZER WITH BOARD/ESP
- AT EVERY LEVEL- ADDRESS THE PROBLEM ASAP- EVEN WHEN IT IS UNPLEASANT, DOCUMENT AND INFORM OTHERS AS NEEDED (I DID MY BEST BUT I THINK THE ISSUE IS COMING TO YOU!!)

# COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

- BOARD MEMBERS MUST BE TRAINED HOW TO INTERACT. WHAT IS YOUR CHAIN OF COMMAND? WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN:
- BOD MEMBER AT SCHOOL AND STUDENT SHARES A COMPLAINT
- BOD MEMBER GETS A PHONE CALL OR EMAIL FROM PARENT
- BOD MEMBER HAS A CONCERN WITH A STAFF MEMBER
- BOD MEMBER HAS A CONCERN WITH THE BUILDING LEADER
- BOD GETS A COMPLAINT DURING PARENT COMMENT AT MEETING
- AUTHORIZER GETS A PARENT OR STAFF COMPLAINT
- COMPLAINTS- NEED TO CATEGORIZE: COMMON SENSE ISSUE, LEGAL ISSUE, SAFETY ISSUE, VENDOR CONTRACT ISSUE, CHARTER CONTRACT ISSUE, POTENTIAL PR ISSUE, TISSUE ISSUES TO YOU BUT MAJOR FOR THE OTHER PERSON, ONE PERSON REPRESENTING MANY (OR CLAIMING)



# COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

- POLICE/FIRE DEPT/INSPECTOR ISSUES- COMMUNICATION FROM BOD TO AUTHORIZERS- TIMELY- AS SOON AS YOU KNOW THE FACTS/ISSUE BE PROACTIVE- SAY THIS IS WHAT WE KNOW NOW, WILL ADD INFO
- STAFFING ISSUES- NEW BUILDING LEADERS, EEM UPDATES, CONTACT INFO, ETC. THE BOD NEEDS TO COMMUNICATE WITH AUTHORIZER
- NO AUTHORIZER WANTS TO HEAR ABOUT CHANGES/ISSUES SECOND HAND OR AFTER THE MATTER IS HOT OR A FIRE HOSE!
- BOD AND ESP SQUABBLES- AUTHORIZER MIGHT NEED TO STEP IN TO MEDIATE, i.e.- YOU SAID YOU WERE LETTING FSU KNOW, YOU SAID YOU WOULD HAVE THIS DONE BY YESTERDAY, I WAS TOLD SOMEONE AT YOUR PLACE TOLD THE MDE BLAH BLAH BLAH, ETC.
- HOW DO YOU HANDLE- BOD MEMBER IN SCHOOL REGULARLY, SHARES OPINIONS W/STUDENTS, MAYBE NOT BOD OPINIONS!, BOD/ESP/PARENTS COMPLAIN TO AUTHORIZER



# WHAT DRIVES YOUR COMMUNICATIONS/DECISIONS?

- DISCUSS ISSUE AND LOOK FOR SOLUTIONS THAT REACH THE STUDENT LEVEL- SAFETY, SOCIAL SKILLS/BEHAVIORS, ACADEMIC OUTCOMES, PUBLIC RELATIONS, ETC.
- CHECK FORS- AUTHORIZER, MDE, BOARD POLICIES, LEGAL, ISD, SRO, MISSION/PURPOSE, INITIATIVE, ETC. **REQUIREMENTS AND MANDATES**
- FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS?
- SHARING THE INFORMATION WILL HELP THE BOD DEFEND A DECISION.
- ***AUDIENCE IDEAS, EXPERIENCES, DON'T DO THIS, WHAT WOULD YOU DO WHEN.., ADVICE, ETC.***

# NON-NEGOTIABLES, LEGAL, ETHICAL MANDATES

- YOU DIRECT THE BIG PICTURE OF A PUBLIC SCHOOL AS **ONE BODY**
- YOU ARE A PUBLIC BOARD AND MUST FOLLOW ALL “PUBLIC” MANDATES
- YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MILLIONS OF PUBLICLY FUNDED DOLLARS
- ONLY A PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD CAN HOLD DISTRICT AND BUILDING CODES
- YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAME ACTIVITIES AS ANY OTHER SCHOOL BOARD WITH A FEW EXCEPTIONS **BUT YOU NEED TO DEFEND WHY YOU EXIST**
- THERE IS ONE TOP-TO-BOTTOM RANKING LIST FOR ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- YOU ARE A NON-TAXING ENTITY
- YOU HIRE AND CONTRACT WITH VENDORS
- YOU MUST KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON WITHOUT MICROMANAGING
- YOU NEED HELP FROM LAWYERS, ACCOUNTANTS, ACADEMIC GURUS, ISD, CONSULTANTS, TECHNOLOGY VENDORS, MDE, FSU, ETC.

# CLOSING

- REMEMBER TO COMMUNICATE THE GOOD THINGS TOO!! BOTH DIRECTIONS- CSO TO PSA AND PSA TO CSO
- MEDIA RELEASES, BOD MEETING PRESENTATIONS, OPEN HOUSES, MARKETING INFORMATION, ACADEMIC SUCCESS, ETC.
- RARELY DO WE SEE COMPLAINTS ABOUT A BOD COMMUNICATING TOO MUCH!!!! **IF THE INFO HELPS YOU TO DEFEND A DECISION- SHARE IT!!**
- REMEMBER THE AFRICAN PROVERB FROM THE BEGINNING OF TODAY? IT IS EASIER AND QUICKER TO JUST TAKE CARE OF THE ISSUE YOURSELF AND NOT SHARE IT WITH OTHERS OR EVEN TO NOT TAKE CARE OF THE CONCERN AT ALL, VERY QUICK. BUT, IF YOU WANT TO GO FAR YOU MUST COMMUNICATE AND WORK WITH OTHERS IN A TIMELY MANNER!
- QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS AND FUN!!
- RON SCHNEIDER- [ronaldschneider@ferris.edu](mailto:ronaldschneider@ferris.edu) 231-349-1459
- NEIL BECKWITH- [beckwithn@Michigan.gov](mailto:beckwithn@Michigan.gov) 517-241-4833