

**School Boards
and
Democracy
at the Local Level**

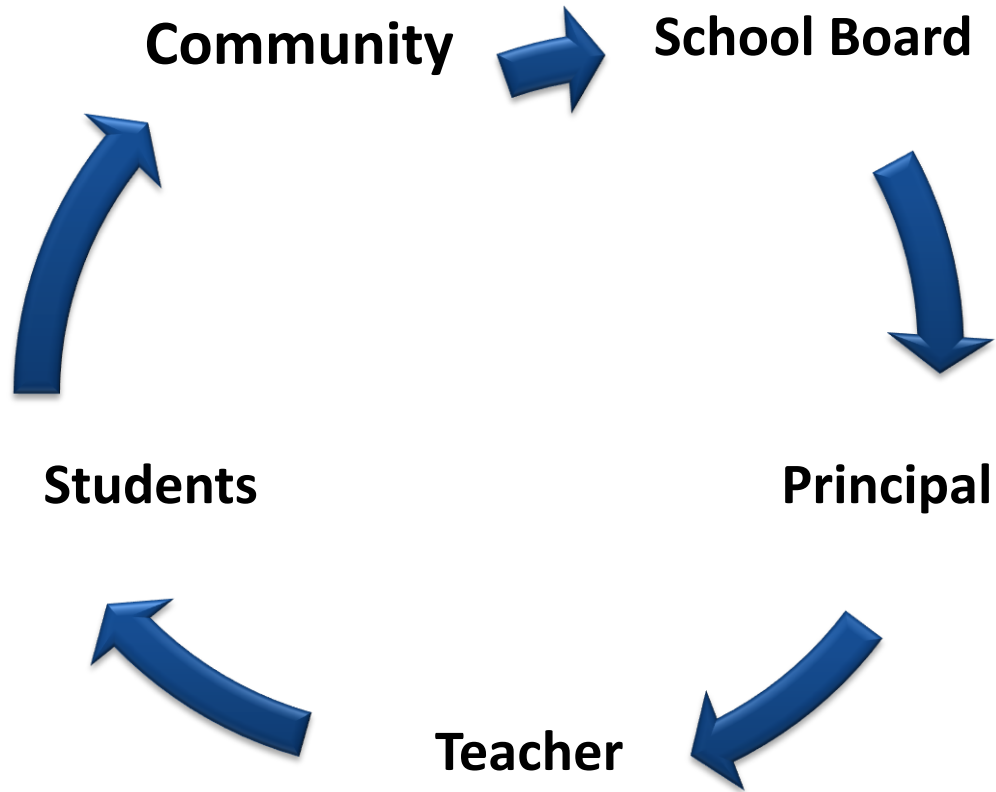
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Cornerstone of Democracy
is
Citizen Oversight

School Boards in the U.S.

- Largest category of elected public officials in the United States
- 100,000 citizens are members of their local school boards.
- Local governance within limits

Cycle of Relationships



Structure within School Boards

- Number of members 3, 5, 7
- Criteria for membership to be determined
- Term limits staggered

School Board: Tasks

- Sets direction
- Communicates

Areas of Accountability

- Policy
- Community
- Student Achievement
- Budget
- Self Evaluation

Leadership Roles

- School Board – sets policy
- Principal – runs the school

Transparency: School Board Meetings

- Open School Board Meetings
- Closed School Board Meetings

Transparency: Public Record

- Written Policies
- Minutes of Board Meetings
 - Open meetings
 - Closed meetings

Rationale for Written Policies

- Fosters stability and continuity
- Furthers transparency
- Provides clear direction

Public Participation at Board Meetings

Policy

- It is the policy of the Board to encourage public participation at its meetings.

Background

- Public participation is very important to the successful function of the _____ School
- The Board wants to carry out its business with the benefit of public input and expertise.
- It also wants to keep the public informed and up-to-date on what is happening in the school.

Persons who may address the Board

1. Any District resident
2. School staff members, students and parents
3. Individuals who have been requested by the ...Board to present a given subject
4. Persons who are directly affected by matters on the Board agenda
5. Others at the discretion of the Board

Complaints about Instructional Materials

Policy

It is the policy of the _____ School to provide for fair and impartial review of any complaint about instructional materials used by the District.

Implementation

- 1. The Principal will develop procedures to implement this policy.
- 2. All complaints will be reported to the Principal, whether received by telephone, letter, or in personal conversation.
- 3. The Principal or his or her designated representative will contact the complainant to discuss the complaint ...and attempt to resolve it informally by explaining the philosophy and goals of the School District and/or the library media center.
- 4. If the complaint is not resolved informally, ...

Effective School Board Members

- Keeps student learning and achievement as primary focus;
- Values, supports and advocates for public education
- Keeps confidential matters confidential
- Understands that authority rests with the Board as a whole, not with individuals

References

- National Organizations
 - National Charter Schools
 - Nationalcharterschools.org
 - National School Board Association
 - www.nsba.org
 - School Board Transparency
 - www.schoolboardtransparency.org
- State sites – Vermont www.vtvsba.org