



## NORTHEAST WASHINGTON ESD 101 BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT

### Team Operating Principles

#### WHO WE ARE

**N**orthEast Washington Educational Service District 101 *supports educational excellence* by delivering essential, cooperative services to schools and other learning communities.

**E**SD 101 *fosters an internal and external culture of high expectations, support and cooperation* that is valued by the State Legislature, OSPI, SBE, our customers and the general public. We obtain and utilize resources that enable us to research, develop and deliver innovative services that ensure equitable opportunities for student success in all districts.

**W**e work diligently to meet four important *commitments*: Assist schools and other learning communities in preparing students for success; maintaining strong, supportive, mutually beneficial relationships with school districts, schools and other educational partners; providing quality service and value; and blending entrepreneurial imagination and public service commitment.

**E**xternal *communication* with the districts, schools and learning communities we serve is vital to our work and mission, as is internal communication with NEWESD 101 staff. We seek to design programs and services that meet the needs of our “clients” and to increase the awareness, benefits and values of these services and programs.

**S**ervice is the heart of our work and our key strategic focus. We constantly strive to develop, improve and deliver *quality, innovative and effective services* to member school districts, schools and learning communities.

**D**edicated to the fulfillment of our mission to support educational excellence for all children throughout our service region, NEWESD 101 endeavors to assure consistent *funding* for valuable programs and services.

We believe it is fundamentally important that in addition to the above, we also serve as *vision creators* and *collaboration instigators* as we strive to support educational excellence throughout northeast Washington and the State.

#### INTRODUCTION

Successful organizations are the result of effective and dynamic leadership. To assure a quality operation, leaders must agree on basic ways of operating together. Operating principles define the beliefs, values, and methods of working together.

The manner in which the Board and Superintendent conduct their business becomes a model throughout the agency and serves for staff and our “customers” as an example of how problems are solved.

The following principles outline the philosophy of cooperative behavior that has been agreed upon by the Board and the Superintendent in NorthEast Washington ESD 101. As members of the leadership team, we are committed to upholding these principles.

## LEADERSHIP TEAM ROLES

| <b>NEWESD Board</b>   | <b>NEWESD Superintendent</b>   |
|---|--|
| <b>GOVERNS</b><br>Reviews and Suggests What<br>Requests Information<br>Considers Issues<br>Creates, Reviews, and Adopts Policy<br>Approves and Reviews Plans<br>Monitors Progress<br>Hires Superintendent; Contracts with Personnel<br>Approves Evaluation Criteria and Procedures<br>Approves and Reviews Budget<br>Represents Public Interest | <b>LEADS</b><br>Decides How<br>Seeks and Provides Information<br>Provides Recommendations<br>Recommends and Carries Out Policy<br>Implements Vision<br>Reports Progress<br>Supervises Hiring Process and Practices<br>Supervises and Evaluates Personnel<br>Formulates Budget<br>Acts in Public Interest |

## COMMUNICATIONS/COOPERATION AND SUPPORT

Open communication requires trust, respect, and a fundamental belief in goodwill among board members and the superintendent. A sustained commitment to a group, person, or organization survives and is nurtured in an open environment that recognizes the need and right of the parties to construct, express, examine, and synthesize divergent thought. Understanding opposing viewpoints helps us to better represent NorthEast Washington ESD 101’s interests. We accept the challenge of pursuing a common intent through a review of opinion and fact, to an end that is understood and defensible by all. Once a final decision is reached, each member will support the decision. *We fulfill our commitment by:*

- Supporting each other constructively and courteously.
- Maintaining confidentiality.
- Focusing our discussions on issues, not personalities.
- Constructively dealing with disagreement.
- Upholding the integrity of every individual.
- Pursuing thorough understanding.
- Involving parties who will be affected by the decision and solution.
- Expressing our opinions and positions on issues honestly and openly while being sensitive to others’ opinions.
- Avoiding promotion of individual agendas.
- Allowing ourselves and others the freedom to admit mistakes.

The board will give direction to the superintendent in totality through adopted policies or action(s) taken at a board meeting.

If a board member acts outside his/her defined role, the board president or other designated board member(s) will talk with the individual board member regarding the problem.

The board will provide the superintendent input and/or feedback on his performance on an ongoing basis.

The superintendent will let the board know as soon as possible of any major issue that may arise which could be problematic for the agency.

The board president will be the official spokesperson for the board. The superintendent will be the official spokesperson for agency operations.

## **JUDGMENT AND TRUST**

The complexities of operating an educational service district cannot be fully addressed in policies, procedures or operating principles. Working with people and handling difficult and controversial issues on a daily basis requires good judgment, common sense and a strong trust relationship between board and superintendent. Every complaint cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved; every issue or concern will not be foreseen. For these reasons trust in each other, allowance for error, and team efforts to address problems are a key part of an effective school district operation. We will approach these situations with the belief the other person is working in good faith with good expectations.

## **DECISION MAKING**

The identification and evaluation of alternatives, awareness of short- and long-term consequences, appreciation for the needs of the group, as well as individuals, and sensitivity toward collective action are essential to the decision-making process.

In order to formulate and execute sound decisions, we agree to:

- Resolve problems at the lowest level possible.
- Provide for input from all concerned when possible.
- Use a decision-making style appropriate to the situation.
- Engage in respectful deliberation as decisions are made.
- Reevaluate the effectiveness of the decision when appropriate.
- Communicate decisions that are made with clarity.

Using this process, we recognize that a decision may sometimes be superseded by a higher level of authority. When this occurs, the rationale will be communicated to those involved before releasing the information.

## **LISTENING/COMMUNICATION**

Listening expresses our concern for others by showing an interest in not only the information but also the other person. Active listening benefits each party and is a key to effective communication. We should take sufficient time to summarize and paraphrase what we have heard.

A healthy climate for communication requires trust, respect and a fundamental belief in the goodwill among team members. Messages need to be open, honest, and tactful. We work to minimize misunderstandings and reduce conflict. We strive for mutual understanding and support.

As a board/superintendent leadership team, we make the following commitments:

- Keep the tone and demeanor of discussions professional by avoiding defensiveness and personalized anger.
- Demonstrate that we have recognized the other's point of view.
- Share information with all people affected in a timely manner.
- Communicate attendance or non-attendance at scheduled agency/association activities, beyond regular board meetings.

## BOARD MEETINGS

*With the foregoing principles in mind, our Board meetings reflect the following:*

- Every effort will be made to provide changes/corrections to the published Board minutes to the superintendent's administrative assistant or the superintendent *in advance of* a Board meeting and, in most cases, will not be addressed at meetings. All board members with changes will call the superintendent's office prior to the board meeting. Updated copy of the minutes will be provided to each board member and to the public as needed.
- Board agendas will be developed as a partnership between the board president and the superintendent. The board president and the superintendent will review the agenda in detail prior to the board meeting. Board members requesting items for the agenda will contact the superintendent or board president with the items prior to the meeting.
- Board meeting agendas are intended to include timely topical presentations from staff, providing the Board with needed information that supports recommendations related to initiatives or current programs.
- Board meeting agenda and background material on agenda items will be provided electronically to all board members by the Friday before the Tuesday board meeting.
- Board members will review all material provided and seek clarification or additional information as needed prior to the board meeting. Board members will discuss proposals they have concerns about with the superintendent and/or board president *prior* to the board meeting.
- Board members requesting information from staff at board meetings will do so through the superintendent. All items addressed to the board for action or discussion by staff will be given in an objective fashion explaining both the positive and negative aspects of the decisions. If board members feel "rushed" or feel they do not have enough information, the board member will request a "table" or postponement until such time as adequate information is presented.
- Open, honest and respectful discussion of issues, ideas and positions on proposals is expected.
- Once a final decision has been made on a proposal, board members and superintendent will individually and collectively, publicly support successful implementation.
- All discussions that occur during executive sessions are privileged and shall not be shared with anyone unless it is the express decision of the board to do so.

**Individually, and collectively, we commit to and support the NEWESD 101 Board/  
Superintendent Team Operating Principles.**

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Board Chair

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Date

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Board Vice Chair

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Date

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Board Member

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Date

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Superintendent

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Date