

Geneseo Community Unit School District No. 228

209 SOUTH COLLEGE AVENUE • GENESEO, ILLINOIS 61254 • (309) 945-0450 • FAX: (309) 945-0445

Mr. Scott D. Kuffel
Superintendent

PREPARING FOR EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE BOARD GOVERNANCE TEAM

Each member of the Board of Education now has a copy of this book by Quinn and Dawson. Mrs. Mickley brought this book to my attention, and I was keenly interested as I read through the book of how much of the procedures and philosophy they shared validated a great deal of our work. Understand from the beginning that I believe our Board of Education has worked diligently to comply with the IASB Code of Conduct, and with the Six Principles of Effective Governance for many years. However, I also believe that this Board of Education has also made a commitment to continual improvement. To that end, I propose to you consideration for the following:

- a. Complete a survey to identify the Core Values that you hold and bring to your work and personal life. This will allow us to participate in Leadership Profile training to help us best understand how we can organize “Board Work”.
- b. Participate in the training to create “Great Work” for the Board and for the District. This will occur in early June.
- c. Read and share in a discussion of the “Good Governance is a Choice” book over the next few months.
- d. Commit to the creation of a 12-month Board Work Calendar

During the Board Meeting on January 12, 2012, I would like for the Board to engage in a Focused Conversation surrounding Board Work. Please be prepared to answer the following questions:

- What is Board Work that you are currently doing? Where are you spending your time as a Board member?
- What is Board Work that you’re not doing? Where are areas that you should be spending your time as a Board member but are not?

Here are a few key thoughts I garnered from Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 of the book that perhaps could stimulate your thinking.

“The challenge for all board members while they are in service to the organization is to create something bigger than themselves, and leave that as a legacy of excellence for those who follow.”

“2: HIGH-PERFORMING BOARDS FUNCTION AT THE LEVEL OF POLICY

Policy-level decision making means controlling decisions without making them, relying on broad, well-conceived policies to convey board expectations to staff about related smaller issues.”

5: HIGH-PERFORMING BOARDS PLAN THEIR OWN WORK

For a CEO to be responsible for determining the work of the board simply makes no sense.

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*But it is the board's meeting, and **the board itself** should be responsible for what goes on the agenda. The best way for the board to plan its own work is to develop an annual work plan, which will drive the content of board meeting agendas. These plans are updated each year when the board conducts its annual planning retreat.*

7: HIGH-PERFORMING BOARDS FOCUS ON OUTCOMES

It isn't unusual to find board meeting agendas consisting entirely of matters related to organizational processes and operational functions, with no attention whatsoever to whether the organization is succeeding in achieving its mission or any of its client-centered goals.

10: HIGH-PERFORMING BOARDS OPERATE EFFICIENTLY

We are fans of timed agenda items, even if the board needs to exceed the allotted times upon occasion. The fact that times are printed on the agenda can call attention to their being exceeded. Boards never should underestimate the power of a deadline.

12: HIGH-PERFORMING BOARDS ARE IN TOUCH WITH THEIR "OWNERS"

The board must maintain some type of ongoing relationship with the owners in order to understand owners' expectations, as well as to assure that the owners understand the effectiveness and the challenges of the organization's work.

*We emphasize that this is a **board** function, not an **individual board member** responsibility.*

I look forward to conversation about what the Board sees as possible action plan steps to continue to propel the Board Governance Team forward into the second semester of 2011-12 and into the 2012-13 school year!