

Board Member Questions and Answers

Prior to the Oct. 16, 2023, Policy Committee Meeting

Please note: Questions and comments that don't have responses were deemed more appropriate for board discussion.

4. First Read of Budget Policy

Budget Management (page 2 of the budget policy): Why have we had to approve emergency expenditures in the past but no longer have to? What changed? We should have to keep it as "approved by the board."

It was recommended by legal counsel that the language be changed only for emergency situations when purchase is needed before the board meets again.

Budgeting Approach (page 2): This paragraph is heavy on words. I feel it needs to be rewritten. What does "school types" mean? Take out the word "and" after "school types" and replace with a comma. Who are we talking about when it's said, "those with the greatest learning needs"? Does it mean gifted students, honors & AP students, those taking dual credit classes, EL/bilingual students, those who are FRL students, McKinney/Vento students etc.? There are many different learning needs that our students have. Isn't this true? Who knows best what the learning needs of our students are?

School types - elementary, middle, high school, K-8, community schools, etc.

Finance Committee (page 3): Why the change from the Board appointing to the board president appointing?

You are right. This should say board. The statute (§22-8-12.3) says: Each local school *board* shall appoint at least two members of the board as a finance subcommittee to assist the board in carrying out its budget and finance duties.

2nd sentence-Before the words "external monitoring" add the word "an".

Thank you

Financial Reports (page 3): Second sentence should read: Financial reports are provided to the board to help formulate policies that serve students' needs and help improve student outcomes as outlined in board goals and in the district's strategic plan.

Thank you

Why are most of the financial reports being moved to a consent calendar? On pg 14 it says "the board approves expenditures that exceed...\$500,000" so we are to approve on consent with no discussion? What if a BAR is more than \$500,000 we approve with no discussion? Often we need to hear how grants are improving academic outcomes, but if this is on consent we won't hear how anything is working? How are we then doing our job as board members and making sure the administration is being held accountable to the taxpayers, our community and especially to our students and families? We are to almost blindly approve most finance agenda items without the discussion for our constituents to hear? What items on the finance agenda will not be on consent? Besides consent agenda items what other agenda items will require action? Will much of what's on the finance agenda be mostly informational items, consent agenda items, not action items?

For efficiency's sake, it is recommended that reports be included on the consent agenda *when possible*. Board members will have an opportunity to submit written questions in advance of the meeting (which, once answered, are posted for the public to see.) Board members may ask that the items be removed from the consent agenda and discussed during the meeting.

What is the difference between the role of the full board and an appointed finance committee. How would the full board have access and participation in thorough discussion.

From New Mexico Statutes § 22-8-12.3 (Local school board finance subcommittee):

Each local school board shall appoint at least two members of the board as a finance subcommittee to assist the board in carrying out its budget and finance duties.

The finance subcommittee shall make recommendations to the local school board in the following areas:

- financial planning, including reviews of the school district's revenue and expenditure projections
- review of financial statements and periodic monitoring of revenues and expenses
- annual budget preparation and oversight
- procurement
- serve as an external monitoring committee on budget and other financial matters.

The policy explicitly calls for parent, student and community voice, along with school leaders and central office teams. Where is the voice of school-based educators?

We could add something like the following to this section:

As part of the budget development process, the superintendent and designees will share the communities' priorities, including that of **school-based educators**, with the board based on input that may be gathered in various ways, such as in-person or virtual hearings, and online surveys. In response to the board's fourth and fifth guardrail requiring the inclusion of parent, legal

guardian, student, and community voice and engagement in school and district operations; **its fifth guardrail requiring staff voice and support**; and in compliance with state law, the superintendent or designees will present the board with a pare a budget draft that considers public input for board review during the spring. The board will not approve an operating budget that fails to demonstrate that community input was solicited.

5. Consider Adoption of the Guardrails for the Board

- Guardrail 1: I question how we will not "act on assumptions". How is this even possible?
- Guadrail 4: Could read: "The board will not be bound by individual board member's words or actions not authorized by the board majority."
- Guardrail 5: Are we talking about staff time beyond their work day? Is that the cost we are talking about, as staff is paid for their work day? Are we talking only about our board staff, or all staff who help answer our questions or help our constituents? As we are not APS employees how do we expect to get answers, support for our students, families, constituents and school staff without the staff providing the board with the support needed to do our job?

6. Consider Approval of the APS Board of Educaiton Governance Manual

Theory of Action (page 6 of the governance manual): That does culturally sustaining mean? How can individual teachers maintain each student's culture? Which is it "rigorous" or "grade level instruction"? At "grade level" can be rigorous for some students but not for others, correct?

This language came directly from the [Strategic Priorities](#) in the Emering Stronger Strategic Plan as suggested language for the Theory of Action.

Code of Conduct (page 10 of the governance manual):

- Rewrite first sentence. Maybe: To preserve the confidence entrusted to us as public officials, the board commits itself to ethical, professional and lawful conduct, proper use of authority and appropriate decorum.
- 2: Remove the second sentence. "Disclosing of all gifts regardless of value" is near impossible to do. Quite often we receive pens, notepads, coffee mugs, books etc. and to disclose this every single time to board services and then to each of our fellow board members would be very diffucult. There are times we don't even know or remember who we received these from.
- #4: "Appear to inflence" based on what or on whose perception? If you are going to include businesses then you must include unions. If unions aren't added please remove this.

- #5-Rewrite: Board members are subject to the New Mexico Governmental Conduct Act and will, in all instances, conduct themselves with the highest professional and ethical standards and not violate federal, state, or local laws.
- #7: Rewrite: As required by law, school board members will publicly disclose all campaign contributions, will abide by the campaign finance reporting schedule and comply "with campaign finance disclosure and reporting requirements as outlined in the Campaign Reporting Act and the Campaign Finance Rule".

Page 16:

#1: Does this mean that hard copies will no longer be provided? If that is the case I'd like to add to the last sentence: "All documents will be sent digitally or as hard copies, if requested by any board member."

The board office is happy to provide printed copies of documents upon request for pick up. The office would like to move away from delivering documents to board member homes because that isn't an efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

#7: Please rewrite and simply say: Any item listed on a consent agenda may be removed for a separate vote at the request of any board member. Robert's Rules of Order, which we say we follow, says an agenda item can be removed at any time from the consent agenda. If this is the case, then how can we say an item will have to be removed "up to four days before the meeting"? Yes, according to the OMA an agenda must be posted 72 hours before a meeting and nothing can be added to the agenda after that, but items can be removed up until the agenda is approved, correct? If so consent agenda items are then removable at anytime according to Robert's Rules of Order correct? It is our job to listen, and our constituents don't stop asking questions 4 days before a meeting so are we then to ignore those questions that come in the day of the meeting about a consent agenda item? That is wrong on so many levels!

The district's SOFG coaching recommends that agendas not change once they are posted for transparency's sake. The board office is making every attempt to get draft agendas to board members well in advance of meetings (the goal is 14 days), so they can request that an item be removed from the consent agenda before it is posted.

I feel strongly that the Board Policy portion of the Policy Review is not ready for board approval and public consumption. I strongly recommend that we consider this copy a first complete draft and that we give ourselves more time to revise and edit at least one more time.

I have networked with community people from a broad spectrum and whom I trust to provide feedback on the language of the board policy. Their feedback suggests that we take more time to revise the document. Below is what I garnered thus far from their feedback:

First, the policies listed on the first/third page (first of Ad Hoc's draft; third page of the BOE office's revised draft which I will reference henceforth) are not clearly delineated between community directed and board directed.

For example, the first two policies need to be introduced with language that expresses something like the following:

Page 3

“By way of Community Engagement Events, the community identified for the board its vision and values. Based on these conversations, the board developed the following 2 policies:

- The Goals policies focus on the direction the ~~board~~ the community board wants the board to lead the school system. Because schools only exist to improve student outcomes, the Goals section is concerned with the outcomes the community wants [“to see” removed] for its students. The Goals section includes the vision and goals of the community.
- The Guardrails policies focus on the rules [clearer for the lay person instead of the protections] the board puts in place for the superintendent to follow [delete: regarding unacceptable circumstances...too vague!] in pursuit of the goals. Because the board must represent not only the community’s vision but also its values, the Guardrails section [delete: is concerned with] identifies behaviors that the superintendent may not engage in because they would violate the community’s values. [DELETE the following bc it is too esoteric: “The Guardrails section includes the theory of action and guardrails” We the community don’t care about this bureaucratic language]”

Please clarify that the following refers to board guidelines necessary to carry out the community’s vision and values.. For example...

“In order for the board to carry out its duty to the community’s vision and policies, the board developed the following policies for itself: desire”

The Delegation policies focus on how the board delegates authority to the superintendent to implement policies and to oversee staff in that process. The Delegation section includes the extent and nature of the superintendent’s evaluation. The board evaluates the superintendent on the implementation process.

The Governing policies focus on how the board as a whole and board members individually conduct themselves. The Governing section includes board guardrails, conflict of interest, and procedures for meetings, communications and community engagement procedures.

Page 4: Goals Policies

The board makes big assumptions about what the public knows. For example:

“The public is not aware of the Yazzie Martinez case. Clarify who the third graders and eighth graders in the Yazzie Martinez case are, please.”

This comment reveals that the board is too free wielding with vocabulary and assumptions. We do not have this wording right. We need to slow down and preface our Goals Policy with a teaching moment: explain the Martinez Yazzie lawsuit briefly and add an expanded explanation in an appendix and an explanation as to why we have included African American students. This will help make sense of this reference.

Goal 3 may need explanation in the appendix as well

Goal 4 was much appreciated because they understood it!

Page 5: Guardrail Policies

What are wraparound and support systems? Include in the appendix. The public does not know what these are.

Please define equitable vs equal. Again, the public does not understand.

In Guardrail 3 what does differentiated mean? Modified?

Page 6:

“What the heck is Theory of Action!?” I suggest we remove this. It does nothing for our district and engendered nothing but criticism and frustration from my community readers.

Page 6: Delegation Policies

The Albuquerque Public Schools Board of Education ~~believes that vision, goal setting, goal monitoring, and the legislation of policies are essential functions of a board and that the execution of the policies should be~~ articulates the public’s vision, sets goals, monitors goals and creates policy. The execution of policies is the function of the superintendent. Therefore, the board ~~will~~

instructs the superintendent through written board policies that represent the visions and values of the community and ~~will~~ actively monitors results of the policy execution.

I will not belabor the revisions and suggestions. Suffice it to say that this document is not ready for approval. It MUST make sense to our intended audience: parents and community members.

7: Consider Archiving Non-Required Board Policies and Transferring Responsibilities to the Administration

7.1: EC Energy and Water Conservation

Good news that the goals in this policy have been met and agree that it is an administrative responsibility, but wondering if there are ongoing goals that are being worked on.

The WECC Committee is meeting and reestablishing their goals.