

# Board Work Sessions



**BVSD Board of Education  
Community Engagement Session**

**January 20, 2009 from 5 – 7 p.m.  
Board of Education Room**

- 5 p.m.      **Welcome and Introductions** – *Helayne Jones, BVSD BOE*
- 5:10 p.m.    **Defining community engagement** – *Lesley Dahlkemper, Schoolhouse Communications*
- As a school board member, how do you define community engagement? – *BVSD BOE members and Superintendent*
  - How do CASB and Schoolhouse Communications define community engagement? – *Jane Urschel, CASB*
- 6 p.m.      **An Overview of CASB/Schoolhouse Communications Proposal** – *Jennifer Reeve, CASB*
- 6:15 p.m.    **Your hopes and fears** – *Lesley Dahlkemper, Schoolhouse Communications*
- 6:45 p.m.    **What's next/questions** – *Jennifer Reeve, CASB*
- 7 p.m.      **Adjourn**

**BVSD Board of Education  
Community Engagement Session Notes  
January 20, 2009**

**Goals:**

- **Determine the community's values.** Create an avenue for an on-going conversation with the community about their education values. Are our decisions as a board in line with the community's values?
- **Educate the community about our collective roles.** Inform the community about the role the board, superintendent and staff play in BVSD. How are decisions made? How is input gathered?
- **Define what student achievement means to our community.** Student achievement means different things to different people. Be clear about how our community views student achievement.
- **Prioritize what matters most to our community.** Talk with the community about what priorities are most critical to them in terms of educating our children.
- **Tackle the tough issues head-on.** Don't be afraid to have the tough conversations about racism and prejudice.
- **Revisit the 21<sup>st</sup> century graduate.** Explore whether the community's view of a 21<sup>st</sup> century graduate has changed over the years.

**Best hopes:**

- **Sustainability.** The board and superintendent will leave a legacy of long-term community engagement that is an integral part of the district's decision-making process. There also is an expectation among future school board candidates that community engagement is a critical and on-going part of their board work. Community engagement becomes part of BVSD psyche – "it informs what we do."
- **Effective "feedback loops."** Those community members who participate in community engagement have a clear understanding of how their input was used during the decision-making process.
- **Improved community relationships.** Thanks to an on-going, effective community engagement process, the board, superintendent and the community can talk through the difficult issues in an open, honest way.

- **Clear and agreed upon goals for community engagement.** The board and superintendent are in consensus about what our community engagement goals.
- **Student achievement front and center.** Keep student achievement at the forefront of our work – “it’s our mission.” Potential community engagement question: What does student achievement mean to our community?

**Worst fears:**

- Public will view this as a waste of time.
- Our efforts will be shelved and will not be sustainable.
- We are not held accountable to the public for results.
- We will undercut the work of the district.
- An observation: Consider how much further and faster we could go if we had the community’s trust.
- We fail to share feedback with the community after the community engagement process.
- We won’t reach the silent majority in our community or reach out broadly enough to ensure all voices are heard.
- This is merely window dressing. It makes us feel good but the community doesn’t see the value of the process.
- We hold community engagement meetings here instead of going out into the community to hold the sessions.

**Definitions of community engagement:**

- A process to help the public better understand what the board of education does, what the superintendent does, etc.
- Honest, open and authentic communication with *all* members of our community that is both formal and informal in nature.
- A conversation that results in joint problem solving of issues facing the district.
- Help the public understand the “whys” behind the board’s decision-making process.

- Listen; educate by example; align the board and community's values; build trust; do not ask for a vote on every decision made by the board; and set the tone for the entire organization.
- Learn more about our community's values.
- Diversity of opinion.
- Keep our active customers as part of our support team.
- Provides opportunities to vent.
- Two-way communication that builds relationships.

**Board's role:**

- Ensure community engagement is embedded in our board meetings.
- Hold regularly scheduled meetings with the community.
- Evaluate performance.
- Run ideas past large numbers of our community.
- Engage the public when struggling with major concerns.
- Understand what is happening in the community.
- Serve as a listener and educator.
- Advocate for diversity.
- Leave a legacy of public engagement.
- Lead by example.
- Make ourselves visible.



**Boulder Valley Board of Education  
Community Engagement Work Group Session**

**June 16, 2009 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
Education Center**

- 5 p.m.      **Welcome and agenda overview** – *Jennifer w/ BOE*
- 5:05 p.m.    **Board’s community engagement vision and policy** – *Jane w/ BOE*
- What is the board vision for community engagement including topics on which to engage the community?
  - How will this vision be integrated into board policy?
- 5:45 p.m.    **Community engagement strategies** – *Lesley w/ BOE*
- What’s worked well and not so well?
- 6:15 p.m.    **Community Engagement Advisory Team** – *Jennifer w/ BOE*
- Role/expectations
  - What are we looking for in team members?
- Handout: Early thinking about the team
- 6:45 p.m.    **What’s next?** – *Lesley*
- Review work plan and timeline
- Handout: Updated work plan and timeline
- 7 p.m.      **Adjourn**

**Boulder Valley School District**  
**Board Work Session – June 16, 2009**  
**Facilitators: Jane Urschel & Jennifer Reeve, CASB**

**What is the board' s purpose?**

Thoughts:

- Our goals are broader than student achievement. Goals statement is limiting.
- Broad statement – that goals of board align with goals of community.
- Not necessarily about goals – isn' t it about communication? Is it different than working on goals?

**Statement of board purpose:**

- Define student achievement. Define what success means for district – what is most important – what matters most.
- (Our Community Engagement process may be successful but we may not achieve goals.)
- We are elected to govern district. Community Engagement helps us determine if we are governing effectively.
- Isn' t student achievement what our purpose is? All other things are directed toward student achievement.
- Board' s purpose is to see that the community' s children are educated.
- Why do you need elected citizens on board?
  - to communicate with community
  - to be representative of the public
  - to assure organization' s goals are aligned with public needs

Concern: We have too long communicated organizational goals outward, but not done a good job of listening to the community' s goals.

**Purpose of board is not the same as purpose of district:**

- Unique position of board is to listen to community.
- Have to break down board concept of student achievement.
- We sit between community and staff.
- We must listen to community and interpret district action to community.

Board makes decisions (governs). Community Engagement is a tool for that decision-making.

**The board' s purpose is:**

- To represent the community.

Community engagement must be authentic and genuine.

**How does Community Engagement help board accomplish its purpose?**