



## Holyoke School Board Member Training Manual

2019-2020

*Our mission: Graduate every student prepared with the necessary knowledge, skill and character to find success in life.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide guidance for members of the Board of Education (the “Board”), regarding the manner by which the Board typically operates and carries out the authority delegated to it by law. This handbook is not intended to mandate any process that is binding upon the Board unless that process is otherwise required by law. References to legal authority and/or Board Policies which apply to specific subjects are included as appropriate. This handbook also attempts to provide newly appointed or elected school board directors the resources and foundation that Holyoke School District believes it takes to be a successful school board member. While there are sections in this handbook which guide a member’s actions and behavior by legal mandate there are also other sections in which board members, school administrators, and state wide consultants provide advice given in the spirit of making sure that new board members are successful!

# RESOLUTION ADOPTING HANDBOOK

**WHEREAS**, a clear understanding of the roles, responsibilities and duties of the Board of Education is critical to a well-functioning school system; and

**WHEREAS**, each Board Member is responsible for understanding and properly executing the duties of the office consistent with the Board’s Mission and Core Beliefs; and

**WHEREAS**, an informed and well-functioning Board is essential to effective school district governance, consistency, continuous student achievement, and closing the achievement gap; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board is accountable to the public, must operate in a transparent manner and must hold itself accountable; and

**WHEREAS**, an effective Board requires a common and well understood framework for operations; now therefore be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education approves the attached *Handbook for the Board of Education for Holyoke School District*; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Board staff is directed to post online and publish the Handbook in a convenient format to be made readily available, as soon as feasible, to Board Members, HSD staff, Board candidates, and the community-at-large; and be it

**FINALLY RESOLVED**, that staff for the Board will, in a timely manner, update provisions of the Handbook as appropriate and publish such updates on the Board’s website at [www.hcosd.org](http://www.hcosd.org)

*“A unified effort based on the core value of respect maximizes support of kids and makes boards successful. Excellence has to be the mission of EVERYONE!”*

*Randy Black, CASB Consultant*



## MISSION

*Graduate every student prepared with the necessary knowledge, skill and character to find success in life.*

## Vision

The Holyoke School District provides a positive, safe and stimulating learning environment under the guidance of a knowledgeable and dedicated staff with high expectations for all students. The District offers an innovative curriculum and flourishes due to strong partnerships with parents and the community. The District graduates students who develop into self-sufficient, highly motivated, independent critical thinkers who respect cultural differences, are adaptable to change, have positive self-esteem, and who have secured the necessary skills to succeed as productive citizens.

## Board's Core Values

**Respect-** We value each other's input and we treat each other like we would like to see our students treat each other. We understand and accept that a school board role can be tough, but a very rewarding experience if there is respect at the foundation.

**Integrity-** We must be committed at the highest level that we serve the needs of our students and our community. To operate under any other premise does not serve the true mission of our school district. We must be open and direct in our dealings with our fellow citizens.

**Honesty-** Transparency and fiscal honesty is not the goal but the standard from which we operate and make all of our decisions. Even if honesty is the most difficult route the board is committed to making sure we follow that path.

**Excellence-** We must strive continuously towards personal and organizational best. We expect excellence at all levels of the system and we must demonstrate it always at the board level.

**Listening to Understand-** Communication with our community and with each other is critical and is the bond that holds all of us together. We must be willing to hear our constituents as well as the teachers and students we serve. We must be willing to overcome our own biases to reach the goal of serving our community, our students, and our teachers.

## Authority and Responsibilities of the Board of Education CRS 22-32-110

### School Board Powers and Responsibilities

Powers and mandatory duties of the Board are defined in state statutes.

This Board considers that its most important functions fall into the following categories:

1. **Legislative or policymaking.** The Board is responsible for the development of policy and for the employment of a superintendent who will carry out its policy through the development and implementation of regulations.
2. **Educational planning and appraisal.** The Board is responsible for acquiring reliable information from responsible sources which will enable it to make the best possible decisions about the scope and nature of the educational program. The Board is responsible for requiring appraisal of the results of the educational program.
3. **Staffing and appraisal.** The Board is responsible for employing the staff necessary for carrying out the instructional program and establishing salaries and salary schedules and other terms and conditions of employment, as well as for personnel policies district-wide in application. The Board is responsible for appraising the effectiveness of its staff by providing for regular evaluation.
4. **Financial resources.** The Board is responsible for adopting a budget that will provide the financial basis for buildings, staff, materials and equipment which will enable the district to carry out the educational program. The Board is responsible for exercising control over the finances of the district to ensure proper use of, and accounting for, all district funds.
5. **School facilities.** The Board is responsible for determining school housing needs, for communicating these needs to the community, for purchasing sites, and for approving building plans that will support and enhance the educational program.

6. **Communication with the public.** The Board is responsible for providing adequate and direct means for keeping the local citizenry informed about the schools and for keeping itself informed about the wishes of the public.

7. **Judicial.** The Board is responsible for acting as a court of appeal for school staff members, students and the public when issues involve Board policies and their fair implementation.

## Authority of Individual Board Members

*Outside of the County Commissioners, School Boards have more power than any other governmental group. They set policies that have a direct bearing on the welfare of the citizens in their communities, they can allow or deny what children may learn or not learn, they set budgets in which millions of dollars of taxpayer money is allocated, they can levy taxes, they may conduct hearings which have a direct impact on the right to the pursuit of an education for any student and they employ the largest work force in America-teachers. With great power comes great responsibility.*

State law establishes that power belongs not to individual members of a Board of Education but only to the Board of Education itself. Board Members have authority only when acting as a Board of Education in a legally constituted session, with a quorum being present. The statement

or action of an individual member or group of members of the Board of Education does not bind the Board of Education itself, except when that statement or action is authorized by an official act of the Board.

## **Board Member Code of Ethics**

According to the Colorado Revised Statutes 24-18-105, the following ethical principles for school board members "are intended as guides to conduct and do not constitute violations as such of the public trust of office..."

1. A board member "should not acquire or hold an interest in any business or undertaking which that member has reason to believe may be directly and substantially affected to its economic benefit by official action to be taken by an agency over which the member has substantive authority."
2. A board member "should not, within six months following the termination of office, obtain employment in which the member will take direct advantage, unavailable to others, of matters with which the member was directly involved during the term of [office]. These matters include rules, other than rules of general application, which the member actively helped to formulate and applications, claims or contested cases in the consideration of which the member was an active participant."
3. A board member "should not perform an official act directly and substantially affecting a business or other undertaking to its economic detriment when the member has a substantial financial interest in a competing firm or undertaking."
4. A board member is discouraged "from assisting or enabling members of [the board member's] immediate family in obtaining employment, a gift of substantial value, or an economic benefit tantamount to a gift of substantial value from a person whom [the board member] is in a position to reward with official action or has rewarded with official action in the past."

## **School Board Member Conduct**

Public office is a trust created by the confidence which the public places in the integrity of its public officers. To preserve this confidence, it is the desire of the Board to operate with the highest ethical standards.

In carrying out his/her fiduciary duties, a Board member shall not:

1. Disclose or use confidential information acquired in the course of official duties to further increase substantially the member's personal financial interests.



2. Accept a gift of substantial value or substantial economic benefit tantamount to a gift of substantial value which would tend to improperly influence a reasonable person in the position to depart from the faithful and impartial discharge of the Board member's public duties or which the member knows or should know is primarily for the purpose of a reward for official action taken.

3. Engage in a substantial financial transaction for the member's private business purposes with a person whom the member supervises in the course of official duties.

4. Perform an official act which directly and substantially confers an economic benefit tantamount to a gift of substantial value on a business or other undertaking in which the member has a substantial financial interest or is engaged as counsel, consultant, representative or agent.

It shall not be considered a breach of conduct for a Board member to:

1. Use school facilities and equipment to communicate or correspond with constituents, family members or business associates.

2. Accept or receive a benefit as an indirect consequence of transacting school district business

*“Serving as a member of the Holyoke Board of Education is an awesome responsibility and an amazing opportunity. I remember how excited and overwhelmed I felt on my first day as a new teacher, and I assume you may be feeling some of that same apprehension- so much to learn and such an important job! I truly believe that working together, keeping an open mind, following our hearts, and focusing every discussion and decision around the question, “What’s best for our kids?” will allow us to accomplish so much. Thanks for your commitment to the Holyoke School District and welcome to our team of strong administrators, dedicated staff, amazing kids, and caring board members.”*



*Lynn Schneider, Holyoke Teacher 29 Years*

## Helpful Terms and Acronyms

One of the areas that can be overwhelming in any new situation is the terminology that exists in the trade. This extensive list, created by the Colorado Association of School Boards covers a lot of the terms and acronyms you may be exposed to as a school board member and a critical part of the educational community.

**504-** Section 504 of the rehabilitation Act of 1973. A civil rights statute that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability.

**Academic content standards-** The written standards established by Colorado that outline what a student should know and be able to do at each grade level. The state assessment system is based on (aligned with) these content standards.

**Accountability Committees (district and school)-** Committee created by law that includes parents, teachers and administrators. Makes recommendations about budget and school improvement.

**Administrative Unit** - A sufficiently large school district or BOCES that is responsible for distributing special education funds and delivering education services to students with disabilities.

**AFT American Federation of Teachers-** One of two national teacher unions. The other is the National Education Association (NEA).

**Alternative Education-** Schools or classrooms that are designed to serve students who aren't succeeding in the traditional school or classroom environment. Students who are failing academically or may have learning disabilities or behavioral problems may need a different setting. Alternative schools or classrooms may have more flexible schedules, smaller teacher-student ratios, counseling support and modified curricula.

**Amendment 23-** Constitutional change requiring K-12 funding to increase by inflation plus 1 percent from 2001-2011 and by inflation after that.

**AP or Advanced Placement-** The designation of the College Board for college-preparatory courses that high school students can take to earn college credit. Students must master a generally higher level of coursework and pass an accompanying test to earn college credit.

**Assessments-** Tests or other tools that measure students' skills and knowledge. Formative assessments are used by teachers and students so instruction can be adjusted as needed to improve learning. Summative assessments assess the student's overall mastery of the subject matter.

**AYP or Adequate Yearly Progress-** The minimum level of academic performance school districts must achieve each year in reading, math and science on the state-mandated criterion-reference tests (Benchmark exam). Under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), each state sets the AYP gains every school must meet to reach 100 percent proficiency by 2014. Parents are notified if their child's school is not meeting AYP requirements.

**BEST Building Excellent Schools Today-** This is a state matching funds program to provide financial assistance to local districts for K-12 capital construction.

**BEST health plan Colorado Boards of education Self-Funded Trust Inc.-** A multi-employer/employee health benefit program.

**Blended Learning** - Combination of face-to-face and online student instruction designed to offer more personalized and student-centered learning.

**Boardsmanship**- A term to describe the skills school board members need in order to work together effectively and ensure competent governance of a local school district.

**BOCES**- Board of Cooperative Educational Services. BOCES are a group of districts that join together for a better use of funds.

**CAP4K**- Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (SB 08-212). Sets a plan for establishing p-20 standards and assessments.

**CASB**- Colorado Association of School Boards

**CASE**- Colorado Association of School Executives

**CASSA**- Colorado Association of Superintendents and Senior Administrators

**CBA**- Colorado BOCES Association

**CCHE**- Colorado Commission for Higher Education

**CCSSO**- Council of Chief State School Officers

**CDE**- Colorado Department of Education

**CDHE**- Colorado Department of Higher Education

**CEA**- Colorado Education Association- an affiliate of the National Education Association.

**CFT**- Colorado Federation of Teachers- an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers

**Charter School**- A public school operated by a group of parents, teachers and/or community members as a semi-autonomous school of choice within a school district, operating under a contract or "charter" contract between the members of the charter school community and the local board of education.

**Chartering Authority**- The ability of a local board to determine, alone or in conjunction with CDE, whether to open charter schools in the school district.

**CHSAA**- Colorado High School Activities Association

**CIPA**- Children's Internet Protection Act

**Classified Staff**- School district employees who aren't required to have Colorado teaching credentials as a condition of employment. Bus drivers, janitors and cafeteria workers are some members of classified staff.

**CMAS**- Colorado Measures of Academic Success

**CML**- Colorado Municipal League. Represents Colorado's cities and towns.

**Colorado Sunshine Law**- The law states that a gathering of a quorum or three or more individuals of a local board may constitute a meeting. Emailed messages discussing pending actions may also constitute meetings. A private meeting is a meeting where the discussion of public business is not the central topic.

**The Common Core State Standards**- Academic standards set by a coalition of states to establish the common core of knowledge and skills that students should develop in K–12 education so they will graduate from high school prepared for college or careers.

**Community Engagement**- Approach to community problem-solving in which citizens are deeply involved in the process. Citizens come together and consider relevant facts and values from multiple points of view; listen to one another in order to think critically about the various options before them; consider the underlying tensions, tough choices, and varied consequences inherent to addressing public problems; are willing to refine and adapt their opinions and interests; and ultimately seek to come to some conclusion for action based on a reasoned public judgment.

**Consolidation-** Joining two or more school districts or parts of districts to create a single new school district.

**CORA-** Colorado Open records Act requiring that most public records be available to the public.

**CSFP-** Colorado School Finance Project

**CSI-** Charter School Institute, an agency within the CDE that can authorize CSI Charter Schools.

**Curriculum-** The subject matter, skills and processes that are taught so students will achieve identified standards of knowledge and skill. Curriculum is singular and curricula is plural.

**DAC-** District Assessment Coordinator or District Accountability Committee

disaggregated data information that has been sorted according to certain criteria or subdivisions.

For example, test results can be sorted by groups of students who have similar characteristics, such as economic disadvantage, race or ethnicity, disabilities, or Limited English Proficiency.

Teachers and parents can then determine how each group is performing.

**Drop-Out Rate-** The proportion and time at which students leave school before graduating for reasons that may include failing grades, suspension or expulsion, lack of interest, economic hardship, pregnancy, marriage, peer conflict, incarceration, lack of attendance and use of alcohol or drugs.

**ELL-** English Language Learners- Several programs or approaches used to teach english to those who don't speak English as their first language.

**ESEA-** Elementary and Secondary Education Act, aka No Child Left Behind.

**Ex Officio-** Literally meaning "by virtue of one's office," the term refers to the practice that allows a member of an official group, such as a school board, to designate someone to fill a certain role at the group's request.

**Executive Session-** A private portion of a meeting of a school board or other governing body that can be held only for purposes specified by law and from which the general public and press are excluded.

**FERPA-** Family Education Rights and Privacy Act—Federal law governing privacy of student information.

**Fiduciary-** The concept of stewardship, referring to a person or persons having duties, on behalf of others, that require good faith, trust and special confidence. Fiduciary duty is to act for someone else's benefit, while subordinating one's personal interests. The term is often used in conjunction with managing money or property for another, using a very high standard of care. For example, a school board acts as the community's trustee of public funds for the schools and therefore has a fiduciary responsibility for using those funds for the benefit of the community.

**Fiscal year (FY)-** All financial accounts are to be completed by the end of the 12-month period known as the fiscal year, which begins July 1 and ends June 30.

**FTE-** Full-time Equivalent. Refers to a full-time position.

**Gallagher Amendment-** Enacted in 1982 as an amendment to the Colorado Constitution. it set forth the guidelines for determining the actual value of property and the valuation for assessment of such property.

**GED-** or General Education Development Test A nationally recognized measure of high school-level knowledge and skills. Those passing the test earn the GED credential.

**Good Faith-** The duty to act in a fair and equitable manner, without coercion, intimidation or threats of coercion or intimidation.

**GPA-** Grade Point Average

**Grievance-** A formal, written complaint from an employee regarding working conditions or treatment of from another community member.

**GT-** Gifted and Talented. refers to children identified with above-average intellectual potential.

**Home School-** A school conducted by parents or legal guardians for their own children.

**ICAP-** Individual Career and Academic Plan- required for all students by Colorado law.

**IDEA-** Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. A federal law that requires states to provide all eligible children who have disabilities with a free, appropriate public education.

**IEP-** Individualized Education Plan- A written instructional plan for students with disabilities who are designated as special education students under federal law.

**JBC-** Joint Budget Committee. Made up of members from both the house and Senate.

**Mill-** One thousandth of a dollar, a mill is a rate similar to a percentage (a percentage is one hundredth). One mill = .001/\$1, or one tenth of one penny.

**Mill Levy-** A tax rate, measured in mills, representing the portion of a property's value collected by a government entity's tax (called a levy) to fund its budget.

**NSLP-** National School Lunch Program. Formerly known as the federal Free- or reduced-Lunch program, meals that are provided free or at a low cost to children who are determined eligible according to federal guidelines based on family income.

**PARCC-** Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers. The new multi-state testing program Colorado has joined.

**PERA-** Public Employees' Retirement Association. Manages pensions and other benefits for public employees.

**PLACE-** Program for Licensing Assessments for Colorado educators. Usually references an exam.

**Policy-** A general statement a school board or other governing authority adopts to indicate a desired condition, direction or belief.

**Poverty Rate-** The economic level of a school's student enrollment, which is generally determined by the percentage of students who are eligible to receive free or reduced-cost meals.

**PPA-** Per Pupil Allocation

**PPOR-** Per Pupil Operating Revenue

**PPR-** Per Pupil Revenue

**Quorum-** Defined by statute or in the bylaws of a board or other governing body as the number or proportion of members that must be present in order to conduct business. Commonly, a majority of members constitutes a quorum.

**READ Act-** The Colorado READ Act establishes a process for districts to identify K-3 students who read below grade level and work with their parents to provide extra reading support before students reach the fourth grade.

**Referendum C-** Approved by Colorado voters in 2005 to temporarily override TABOR limits on state revenues and allow the state to keep and spend the excess of TABOR revenues it collected for five years.

**RIF-** Reduction in Force. When a teacher's contract is canceled as a result of budget or program cuts.

**S-CAP-** Student Centered Accountability Project. Holyoke School District is helping pilot a new process of accountability and this is a very common acronym in the District.

**SMART-** Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Research-Based, Time-phased. Usually references elements of well-written student learning objectives for kids with and without disabilities.

**SRO-** School Resource Officer

**STAR-** Standardized Test for Assessment of Reading

**State Board of Education-** The regulatory body for public elementary and secondary education throughout Colorado. The board has nine members appointed by the governor for a single seven-year term.

**STEM-** Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Throughout the U.S., school leaders and educators are being challenged to offer students a rigorous course of study in STEM content and to promote competencies toward careers in STEM fields to ensure that our nation stays strong and competitive in the global economy. Also STEAM includes "arts."

**TABOR-** Taxpayer's Bill of Rights. Provisions in Colorado's Constitution that limits revenues and requires voters to approve tax increases.

**Title I-** The largest federal aid program for elementary and secondary schools. Funding is based on the number of low-income students enrolled in a school. Title I money pays for extra educational services for children who are behind or at risk of falling behind in school.

**UIP-** Unified Improvement Plan. Used to streamline improvement planning components of state and federal accountability requirements. Shifts from planning as an "event" to planning as a component of "continuous improvement." UIPS also provide a mechanism for external stakeholders to learn about schools' and districts' improvement efforts.

**USDOE-** US Department of Education

***“I would encourage new board members to remember something that is attributed to Gandhi: ‘The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.’”***

***Mike Apker***

***25 Years as a School Board Member***



Goal	Description of Goal

## Staff Relationships

In any rural or small community, board members have an active and vibrant relationship with staff. Holyoke School District is a major employer in the Holyoke community as well as Phillips County and surrounding areas. Currently our average take home monthly payroll is near ¼ of a million dollars. On average Holyoke employees have a combined monthly take home of \$247,000. Much of this money is spent in and around Holyoke. Our employees bank here, buy gas here, pay bills here, rent here, and buy groceries and items in our shops and stores. Holyoke School District is a critical part of our community not only because of the outstanding employees we have but also because they are a very important part of the community you were elected to serve.

## Policy Summary

A successful board member conveys district's policies community members and voters of why things are sometimes the way they are. The Board considers policy development its chief responsibility. The Board strives to reflect the community's values in its policies and commits itself to an ongoing effort to engage the community regarding policy-level concerns. The Board develops policies and puts them in writing to provide for the successful, consistent and efficient operation of the district's schools and the high achievement of district students. Policy development shall be aimed primarily toward the continual formation and evaluation of goals and desired end results for students, rather than toward daily district operations.

The Board uses the policy development and codification system of the National Education Policy Network/National School Boards Association (NEPN/NSBA), as recommended by the Colorado Association of School Boards.

This system, while it may be modified to meet needs, is to serve as a general guideline for such tasks as policy research, drafting of preliminary policy proposals, reviewing policy drafts with concerned groups, presenting new and revised policies to the Board for consideration and action, policy dissemination, policy monitoring and the continuous maintenance of the Board policy manual.

The policies of the Board shall be interpreted in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations. As a board member you took the oath to uphold the constitution of the United States as well as the state of Colorado. Therefore, when policies change due to laws or statutes, you are expected to pass and uphold such policies. This is regardless of your political affiliation or your views on social issues. There are nearly 500 policies that help manage, regulate, guide, and assess Holyoke School District's total educational environment. There are over 100 policies dealing with students and student situations alone. While there is no way to know every policy and be clear on every regulation, by knowing and understanding the premise of many of these policies, you will be able to follow issues clearly and have an educated opinion on the policies



we address as the board. Below is a breakdown of the general areas addressed by Holyoke School District in terms of policies.

*There's no way you can learn, memorize or keep track of all the changes that occur in district policy on your own. Trust the district secretary, the superintendent and your fellow board members to provide insight on policy besides just what you read or have heard about. When asked about policies try to respond at a general level and then look up the specifics or ask someone for help. It's almost always better to tell someone you will get back to them on their question rather than try to quote policy off the cuff or from memory.*

## **SECTION A - FOUNDATIONS AND BASIC COMMITMENTS**

Section A contains policies, regulations and exhibits on the district's legal role in providing public education and the basic principles underlying school board governance. These policies provide a setting for all of the school board's other policies and regulations. Included in this section are policies on nondiscrimination, educational philosophy and accountability.

## **SECTION B - SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS**

Section B contains policies, regulations and exhibits about the school board -- how it is elected; how it is organized; how it conducts meetings and how it operates. This section includes policies establishing the board's internal operating procedures as well as policies on board communications and policy adoption.

## **SECTION C - GENERAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION**

Section C contains policies, regulations and exhibits on school management, administrative organization and school building and department administration. It includes the administrative aspects of special programs and system wide reforms such as school or site-based management. It also contains personnel policies regarding the superintendent, senior administrators (management team) and school principals.

## **SECTION D - FISCAL MANAGEMENT**

Section D contains policies, regulations and exhibits on school finances and the management of funds. It includes policies on budget, banking, accounting, purchasing and payroll. Policies on the financing of school construction and renovation, however, are filed in Section F - Facilities Development.

## **SECTION E - SUPPORT SERVICES**

Section E contains policies, regulations and exhibits on non-instructional services and programs, particularly those on business management, safety, building and grounds management, office services, transportation and food services. Also Included are policies on busing, fire drills, vandalism, data management and insurance programs.

## **SECTION F - FACILITIES PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Section F contains policies, regulations and exhibits on facility planning, financing, construction and renovation. It also includes the topics of temporary facilities, school closings, bond campaigns and naming facilities

## **SECTION G - PERSONNEL**

Section G contains policies, regulations and exhibits on all school employees except the superintendent (found in Section C - General Administration). The category is divided into three main divisions: GB contains policies applying to all school employees or to general personnel matters; GC refers to instructional and administrative staff; and GD refers to support or classified staff.

## **SECTION I - INSTRUCTION**

Section I contains policies, regulations and exhibits on the instructional program. This section covers basic curricular subjects, special programs, instructional resources and academic achievement. It includes policies about the school year, school day, grading, graduation requirements, home schooling, school library and media center, textbook selection and adoption, field trips, teaching methods and school ceremonies.

## **SECTION J - STUDENTS**

Section J contains policies, regulations and exhibits on students -- admissions, attendance, rights and responsibilities, conduct, discipline, suspension and expulsion, health and welfare, records, publications and school-related activities.

## **SECTION K - SCHOOL-COMMUNITY-HOME RELATIONS**

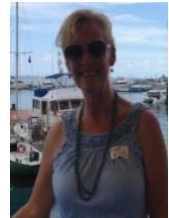
Section K contains policies, regulations and exhibits on parent and community involvement in schools. Except for policies concerning education agencies, statements on public sector relations with school districts also are located in this section. Policies found in this section include parents' rights, public information and complaints, community use of school facilities, advertising in the schools and public information and communications.

## **SECTION L - EDUCATION AGENCY RELATIONS**

Section L contains policies, regulations and exhibits on the school district's relationship with other education agencies including other school systems, regional or service districts, private schools, colleges and universities, education research organizations and state and national education agencies. This section also contains policies on student teaching, charter schools and BOCES.

*“In my opinion the most single important thing a school board member can know and contribute is to know his or her district's policies.”*

**Kathy Shannon, Chief Legal Counsel  
Colorado Association of School Boards**



### **Shared Leadership**

Over the years, Holyoke School District has implemented a system of shared leadership which could be a strong model for any district in the state. Shared leadership has really helped Holyoke School District accomplish our goals. One of our core beliefs is that it is valuable to have input from people who are directly impacted by budget, policy and instructional decisions. We know that good communication leads to a more productive work environment, and therefore have established groups focused on district priorities so that they can communicate with colleagues on the various topics affecting all of us. We honestly believe that not one of us is as smart as all of us and that we want to maximize all the ideas and human resources of Holyoke School District to not only empower our employees, board members and community stakeholders but to make the best district possible for our students. We believe that this

attitude creates an open and transparent organization that builds trust and confidence which provides people access to information and allows them an opportunity to ask questions about the things they care about in our school district.

While this is a worthy cause and might sound like it takes a lot of time, most committees meet once a month with little work to do outside of the regular meeting schedule. It's truly worth the time and effort. As a board member, you encouraged to sit on one or two of these committees for representation. Below are the committees with descriptions for each committee.

*“The board’s role is to do the following: 1) decide; 2) delegate; and 3) check-up.”*

Dr. Jane Urschel

CASB’s Deputy Executive Director



### **Superintendent's Advisory Committee**

The Superintendent Advisory Committee provides an opportunity for direct access to the superintendent on a variety of issues that impact the working environment of all staff members in the district. These conversations will inform the superintendent's thinking and provide information that can be shared out through the representatives. Questions, ideas, suggestions, concerns, and solutions are encouraged in this venue.

### **Standard of Excellence Team**

The Standard of Excellence Team serves in an advisory capacity to the District Administration to collectively determine a measuring stick for performance in the school district and monitor progress toward that goal. The Standard of Excellence Team will also serve as the District Accountability Committee. Specifically, the Standards of Excellence Team will provide input and advise the District Administration on issues including, among others:

1. Monitor student achievement against a recognized status measure
2. Monitor student achievement against a recognized growth measure
3. Measure perceptions of parents, students, and staff
4. Monitor all aspects of the organization for efficiency, agility, and results
5. Report annually to the BOE on the district's progress in all areas

### **Leadership Team**

The Leadership Team is responsible for leading the development and approval of curriculum, creating and supporting the annual professional development plan, and providing administration with a teacher perspective as well as demonstrating leadership in all other matters that directly impact planning, teaching, and assessment in the district.

### **Budget/Facilities Committee**

The Budget and Facilities Committee (BFC) is established for the purpose of gathering input and sharing budget and facility related information with employees and the community. Budget and Facilities Committee members will become knowledgeable regarding Colorado School Finance, familiar with facility needs, and take an active role in the district's budgeting process. The Budget and Facilities Committee serves in an advisory capacity only and will make recommendations to the Board of Education (BOE) on budget/facility priorities.

### **District Technology**

The Technology Advisory Committee (TAC) shall assist with the school district's development, integration, testing, implementation, support, and use of new concepts and technologies as they

affect learning, management, and productivity of staff and students. Specifically, the TAC will provide input and advise the Technology Director on issues including, among others:

1. Identification, development and assessment of new technologies;
2. Review existing practices and technologies;
3. Development of training plans;
4. Review related policies and administrative directives;
5. Review and development of technology plans;
6. Identify and development of technology-based resources.

### **Staff Support & Wellness Committee**

The purpose of the Staff Support & Wellness Committee is to promote healthy habits among staff and students. The efforts of the committee will lead to increased student achievement as through reduced absenteeism of teachers and students. The committee's goal is to make an impact on staff and students that will stay with them throughout their lives. The committee will also serve a critical link between the superintendent and staff regarding issues of morale, social functions and the impact of 7 Mindsets.

### **Meeting Structure-**

Board meetings are very similar in structure from one meeting to the next. The agenda at Holyoke School District is designed to address specific issues as well as general operating issues. Those specific issues which require a vote by the board are under Action Items while those which deal with the day to day operations as well general administrative actions are under the consent agenda. As your years progress on the board, you will begin to feel that there is a certain similarity between meetings and the months in which they are occurring. This is due to the largely regulatory and reporting obligations of the school board as well as the guidelines for budget development and legislative sessions. A general calendar that shows probable topics for every meeting during the current school year that is also color coded to match the specific goals of Destination 2019 is attached at the end of this document.

### **Communication Protocols**

One of the critical components of being a successful board member is communicating successfully. Communication occurs in a variety of forms as a school board member. As a functioning member of a healthy board, it is critical that you communicate effectively during school board meetings. As a representative for your constituents it is critical that you communicate effectively to the population at large. Chances are, since you were willing to run for a position on the school board, you yourself are a good communicator. Nevertheless, the other side of communication is being a listener and since there is only one of you and hundreds

of constituents, parents, teachers and students, you will spend that majority of your time not talking, but listening.

One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another person has to say. Demonstrating this habit is critical in order to be a successful board member due to the fact that many times, the conversations you're listening to may be confrontational, controversial, or collaborative. Depending on how you listen, and especially how you respond to what you've heard these conversations may quickly change from productive to highly unproductive in a short amount of time.

### **Holyoke School Board Effective Listening Skills**

- **Give Your Full Attention to the Individual-** If it is during a board meeting, direct eye contact is the best method, especially if someone is standing in front of the board. Avoid texting during a presentation or citizen statement; employ non-verbal processes such as nodding and leaning forward in your seat.
- **Avoid Interrupting-** Listen to understand and process, not to talk next. Once a person is done speaking give a pause and then respond. If you are in a group, avoid side bar conversations with other board members while you're supposed to be listening. Understand that it can be very intimidating for some people to stand in front of the board and present in public so if they make misstatements, or have long pauses while they are trying to get a point across, be understanding and supportive.
- **Respect the Right to Share-** You're an elected official and our fellow citizens have the absolute right to share their viewpoints as long as they are not harmful towards others and follow meeting protocols. Parents have the right to share concerns, employees have the right to be heard and your fellow board members have the right to have a different point of view from your own. Hear them out. Sometimes a different point of view can even help clarify on where you stand on an issue.
- **Repress Emotional Responses-** There will be times in which you will have very negative communication with other board members and especially members of the community. Try to repress angry responses and negative feedback. If an individual becomes too hostile or negative during a presentation in front of the board the board president has protocols in which to end the discussion and move on.
- **It's OK to Respond With-** "I'll have someone get back to you on this issue." Many times, you will hear complaints or comments about something you may not know about or be able to respond back appropriately with the right information. It's ok to tell someone you'll get back to them.
- **Always Try to End Conversations on a Positive Note-** Remember, even speaking positively about a negative topic tends to make people feel better and create a more positive communication experience.

*“Don’t be myopic, give every voice a chance to be heard, be willing to communicate openly and honestly and don’t be afraid of other people’s opinions.”  
Dr. Jeff Tharp, Former Holyoke Board President*



*While local roles for board members are important, the role members can play at a regional and state level is significant as well. Advocacy is a big part of being a school board member. We need to be a voice at the regional and state level so that policy makers can understand and gauge the effectiveness of their actions. Laws, policies and funding all impact Holyoke students on a daily basis. Our responsibility is to make sure that our students have a voice in that process.*

**Advocacy:**

There are several organizations that advocate for students that you have access to as a school board member or through your superintendent. While each organization may have a different focus many times they come together and create a unified front in order to present legislation, counteract legislation, question CDE Rule Making, and advocate at a state level for all students, teachers and staff on a variety of levels. Here is a list and brief description of student advocacy organizations in Colorado:



## **Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB):**

*Mission: Advancing excellence in public education through effective leadership by locally elected boards of education.*

The Colorado Association of School Boards was established in 1940 to provide a structure through which school board members could unite in their efforts to promote the interests and welfare of Colorado's 178 school districts.

CASB represents and advocates for more than 1,000 school board members and superintendents statewide to groups both within and outside the K–12 education community. CASB provides services, information and training programs to support school board members as they govern their local districts. Membership benefits and solutions are designed to enhance school board effectiveness and help board members increase their knowledge, boost their efficiency and connect with their communities.

CASB also cultivates relationships with dozens of governing bodies and other education stakeholders — at both the state and national level — to ensure a unified and effective voice and presence on behalf of its members. The association is guided and governed by a 22-member board of directors comprised of school board members representing [12 CASB regions](#) across the state. <http://www.casb.org/site/default.aspx?PageID=1>

**Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE)** The mission of CASE is to empower Colorado education leaders through advocacy, professional learning and networking to deliver on the promise of public education.

CASE will inspire visionary leadership for education by:

- modeling the highest moral and ethical behavior
- fostering a positive environment for high student achievement
- providing personal and professional development
- serving as a strong and influential voice for education leaders
- facilitating communication among education leaders

The Association shall in every way possible provide for and promote the best interest of public education, its leadership and service to its members.

In addition to the privileges and service provided to its individual members, the Association may provide services to associated school systems and related agencies by contract or through institutional fees. <http://www.co-case.org/>

**Colorado Rural Alliance (CRA)** The purpose of Colorado Rural Alliance is to provide advocacy for rural schools as well as be a voice at the capitol for small school districts. Rural Alliance continues to bring rural issues to the forefront in Colorado politics and how the Colorado Department of Education establishes rules based off of legislative initiatives.

### **Colorado School Finance Project (CSFP)**

Founded in 1995, the Colorado School Finance Project's (CSFP) mission is to compile, collect and distribute research-based, non-partisan information and data on topics related to school finance for state and local policy makers. <http://cosfp.org/>

### **The Budget**

The annual budget is the financial plan for the operation of the school system. It provides the framework for both expenditures and revenues for the year and future years and translates into financial terms the district's educational programs and objectives of the district. Colorado school districts are required to operate on a July 1–June 30 fiscal year. Generally, the board delegates to the superintendent overall responsibility for annual budget preparation, budget presentation and budget administration. As part of this responsibility, the superintendent should provide a budget preparation calendar that ensures the district meets all the deadlines established by law. The budget must be presented in a summary format that is understandable by a layperson. Many school districts choose to include staff and community input in the budget preparation process.

As part of the process, each school-level accountability committee must make recommendations to the principal relative to priorities for expenditures of district funds by the school. The information from school-level committees is shared with the district accountability committee. All of this information is taken into consideration on a district-wide basis as the budget is prepared.

It is the board's responsibility to review the proposed budget in open session, make such changes as it may deem necessary and adopt a budget and appropriation resolution prior to the end of the fiscal year. After adoption of the budget, the board may review and change the budget with respect to both revenues and expenditures at any time prior to Jan. 31 of the fiscal year for which the budget was adopted. If money for a specific purpose other than property taxes becomes available to meet a contingency after Jan. 31, the board may adopt a supplemental budget for expenditures not to exceed that amount. Once adopted, the budget becomes the plan and legal authority for receiving and spending money.

For an excellent visual representation of issues facing the state of Colorado's budget when it comes down to state income click here: <http://bellpolicy.org/content/12-charts>

*A school board's most important tasks are policy making and budgeting. In terms of budgeting the board needs to address what goals and initiatives they and their constituents wish to achieve and incorporate in an annual budget. Understanding funding mechanisms, having goals, and being aware of fiscal limitations are critical for any school board to function as a team. A good budget begins with sound estimates and well supported budgetary assumptions. While Holyoke School District has a budget and facilities committee it is ultimately the school board and superintendent who are responsible for setting budgets, spending money and maintaining sound fiscal policy for the district.*

#### **District Funds:**

Colorado law requires that district money be deposited and disbursed through specified funds. The general fund, special building fund and bond redemption fund are specified in law. Expenditures for day-to-day district operations are accounted for in the general fund. This includes all transactions not accounted for in another fund. Although the law provides that expenditures for certain purposes may be made out of other district funds, money may be expended out of the general fund for any purpose for which the board is authorized to expend money. In other words, money in the general fund may be budgeted and spent for any lawful purpose. The revenue for satisfying bonded indebtedness obligations, both principal and interest, is deposited in the bond redemption fund. The fund may include subsidiary accounts for each obligation of bonded indebtedness.

In this fund, the revenue from each separate tax levy is held in trust to satisfy the obligations of bonded indebtedness for which the levy is made. Revenue remaining in an account after all obligations have been satisfied shall be transferred to another account in the fund that still has outstanding obligations. If all obligations of the bond redemption fund have been satisfied, the board may transfer the balance in the fund to the general fund.

The board must select a third party custodian to administer this fund, unless the county treasurer maintains the accounts and funds of the school district. This third party custodian is responsible

for making payments from the bond redemption fund, for administering the fund and for investing the moneys as provided by law and upon the direction of the school district. The board determines the amount to be maintained in its capital reserve fund. [C.R.S. § 22-45-103; 22-54-105.] Money received from gifts, donations and tuition receipts also may be deposited in this fund. The money in this fund may be accumulated from year to year and used when needed. Expenditures are limited to long-range capital outlay expenditures and may be made only for the following purposes:

- Acquiring land, making improvements, constructing structures or adding to existing structures and acquiring equipment and furnishings
- Alterations and improvements to existing structures
- Acquiring school buses or other equipment
- Any installment purchase agreement or lease agreement with an option to purchase for a period not to exceed 20 years and any lease agreement without an option to purchase
- Any software licensing agreement
- Acquiring computer equipment

The board, through adoption of an appropriate resolution, must authorize expenditures from the fund. The law requires that the resolution set forth in detail the purpose of the expenditure and the estimated total cost and location of the project. It is advised that boards look closely at the detailed provisions of the law before authorizing capital reserve fund expenditures.

Unencumbered moneys in this fund may be transferred to a fund or account within the general fund by action of the board.

### **Public School Finance Act of 1994:**

The major allocation of state funds for financing schools comes through the Public School Finance Act of 1994. [C.R.S. § 22-54-101 et seq.] Under this act, state and local general fund revenues are distributed to school districts on a per pupil basis. Each district's per pupil funding amount includes a base per pupil amount and additional amounts or "factors" based on characteristics unique to the district, such as cost of living and district enrollment. Funding is also provided to districts for at-risk pupils.

The total amount of funding received by a district under the School Finance Act—state aid and local property tax—is frequently referred to as "total program." The state and local sharing under the Finance Act is intended to offset vast disparities in local school districts' ability to raise money from local property tax.

Local tax rates against property are always computed in mills. A mill is one-one thousandth of a dollar of taxable value (.001). For example: One mill produces \$1 in tax income for every \$1,000 of the assessed (taxable) value of the property it is levied against. A mill levy is the rate of

taxation based on dollars per thousand of taxable value. About 30 years ago, local taxes actually funded the bulk of total program funding. However, since that time, a complex interplay between several state statutory and constitutional tax and spending laws has significantly limited the amount of revenue generated by residential property tax. The state aid provided to a school district is intended to make up the difference between the amount of the total program funding set by the Finance Act and the amount raised by local property taxes. State aid varies from district to district to ensure that each district, regardless of local property values, receives the total program funding set by the formula in the Finance Act. While the school finance act is a massive law, there are some central concepts:

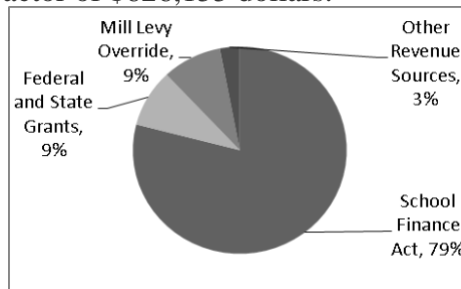
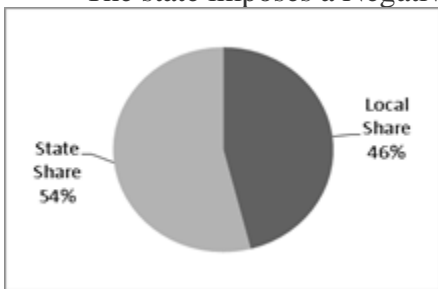
- A procedure to count pupils on Oct. 1 within the school district budget year.
- An allowance for school districts with declining enrollment to average the last five years of enrollment to permit districts to plan and implement any cuts in staff and facilities.
- Authority for school districts to collect revenues in addition to the amounts specified in the School Finance Act, if local voters approve. Voter approval is subject to limitations on when the elections may be held, the language that must appear on the ballot and specified caps on the additional amounts that may be raised.

Information Taken from CASB

### Facts about Holyoke School District Budget:

For salary schedules and all district audits, please look at the district webpage. Click on menu, and look under district information for classified and certified salary schedules and financials.

- Holyoke School District has an Assessed Valuation of \$76,762,245.
- Holyoke has an Equalized Mill Levy of 27.00 mills
- Holyoke Property Tax pays 1.8 million dollars for our school district.
- Specific Ownership taxes account for \$233,321.00
- The state of Colorado funds Holyoke School District with \$3,140,464.00 in state funding.
- The state imposes a Negative Factor of \$626,155 dollars.



## **Student Assessments and Achievement:**

Holyoke School District participates in a number of assessments that determine teacher effectiveness, student learning outcomes, pre and post assessments and progress monitoring. The state of Colorado is currently involved in a controversial test known as PARCC. There has been serious push back around PARCC testing due to the fact that it takes up a very large amount of time throughout the school year. In response, the state has trimmed down these testing times.

To find out about the testing requirements click on this link:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/cmasfactsheet>

*Governing our public schools is one of the most important responsibilities a citizen can undertake – thank you for your work to ensure students in Holyoke reach their greatest potential! As a statewide policy organization, the Colorado Children’s Campaign often leans on local community leaders, including school board members, to inform our agenda. Take advantage of opportunities to communicate the needs of your community and advocate for strong public schools at the state level! At the same time, remember that your primary role is to set a clear vision and measurable goals for the district, adopt policies that will fulfill those goals, evaluate the success of the district and superintendent against those goals, and communicate the district’s progress and challenges to the community. Piece of cake!*

*Leslie Colwell*

*Vice President K-12 Initiatives*

*Colorado Children’s Campaign*



## Information Links Page

These links provide information on certain topics that may be interesting to you as a board member or that may highlight the issues you'll face during your time on the school board:

**Drop out Statistics for the state of Colorado-** Interactive map that shows drop out statistics, achievement and other data for all school districts in the state of Colorado and how Holyoke compares.

<http://www2.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/dropoutdatamap2014.asp>

**Communications Office CDE-** Great source of fliers and information on a variety of topics such as testing, graduation requirements, and legislation.

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/tools>

**Colorado Academic Standards-** This page details the academic standards for each subject and grade level.

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/coloradostandards-academicstandards>

**School Finance 101-** A very readable document that provides a solid general background regarding school finance.

<http://www.casb.org/Domain/131>

**Rural Agility Project-** A page that outlines the initiatives that Holyoke School District took to file for the state's first waiver in the teacher evaluation process. This discusses the big picture of waivers that will be a major topic in Colorado's education environment.

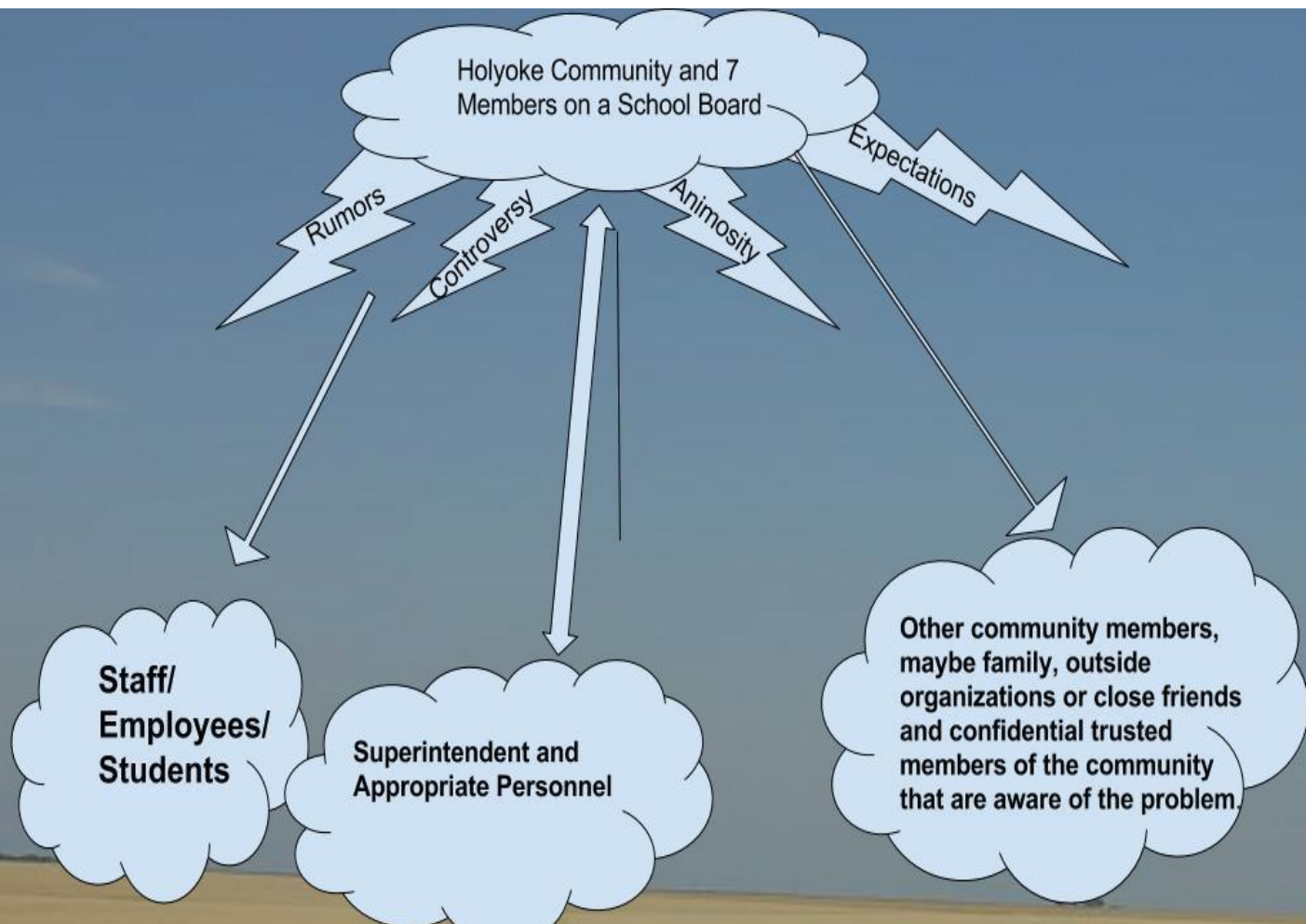
<http://www.casb.org/Domain/133>

**What Makes a Nightmare Sports Parent and What Makes a Great One-** Nice article from CHSSA regarding a philosophy around how schools and parents should view sports and specifically how they can provide a positive experience for their child in athletic programs.

<http://www.coloradojuniors.com/admin/ParentsNighmare.pdf>

**CHSSA- Colorado High School Sports Association-** A good website for general information regarding athletics at the high school level.

<http://www2.chsaa.org/>



- May be viewed as hostile.
- May not know about issue.
- May be involved.
- Perceived as nose-y.
- May give a different perspective.
- Will continue rumors and controversy
- Not obligated to you for employment/eval

- Accountable to the board.
- Familiarity with him/her in terms of time and philosophy.
- Has legal resources, advocacy and board policy backing actions.
- Has a team of people to use to make accurate decisions.
- Evaluated by the board

- Keeps the problem/issue out of the system and perpetuates it while dragging it out.
- May be violating employee confidentiality.
- Makes board appear ineffective.
- May be talking the talk but not walking the walk.
- May appear that board member is avoiding conflict.
- No accountability.