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The Scott County School Board: A Case in Group Dysfunction

William J. Heisler[1] and Lesa L. Hanlin[2]

Abstract

Over the past few years, the Scott County School Board has experienced a number of interpersonal and procedural issues during the conduct of its business. In addition to incivility of communication, the board has experienced conflict, challenges to its leadership, and questionable actions on the part of the board chairperson. This case raises a number of questions: What are the problems facing this school board and what can be done to improve its performance? What policies does a school board need and how should they be stated? How should perceived policy violations be handled? How much authority and discretion should a board chairperson have? This case can be useful in graduate courses to generate discussion of proper school board operations and ethical behavior in educational leadership and administration.

Keywords

boards of education, group dynamics, meetings, conflict management, ethics

Case Narrative

The Scott County School Board has been dogged by dysfunction, in-fighting and, at times, personal attacks on fellow members. Early in 2017, one of the newest school board members was elected by the board to chair a newly formed ad hoc committee to "clean up" the Board's dysfunctional interactions. The committee was established to help restore public confidence in the board after it came under

[1]Troy University, Troy, AL, USA
[2]Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, USA

Corresponding Author:
William J. Heisler, Troy University, AL, USA.
Email: wheisler@troy.edu

public scrutiny the previous year for its lack of action involving an ethics issue with the school district Superintendent. As a result of this committee's efforts, in September 2017 the School Board adopted a number of policies to govern Board operations and procedures, including a Board Member Code of Conduct and a Process for Addressing Violations of Policy. Excerpts from these policies are presented in Appendices A and B.

However, issues of civility and conflict have continued to plague the board. As an example, in December 2017, school board member Jane Posniak was presented with a "cease-and-desist" letter for actions detrimental to the board. The letter came from the board chairperson, Jennifer Boudrey. Boudrey, who was fulfilling the term of a previous chairperson who had resigned, stepped down from the chairperson position in January 2018 and Sandy Mandlin-Jones was elected as the new board chairperson. Early in 2018, some board members complained that the Superintendent was not providing information requested by board members. As a result, Jane Posniak filed a state Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to secure school district data. At the beginning of June 2018, Posniak was summoned by Chair Sandy Mandlin-Jones to appear before a closed meeting of the board. No reason for the meeting was given to Posniak in advance. However, that meeting was never held because Mandlin-Jones resigned her Board position in mid-June 2018, citing personal issues. A new chairperson is to be elected at the board's July 2018 meeting.

The Scott County School District

The Scott County School District, located in the South, has an enrollment of about 20,000 students and a graduation rate of 75%. With over 30 schools and an operating budget of over US$300 million, it is the 10th largest school district in the State. Teacher salaries in the district are described as "modest." The average teacher's salary in 2016 was US$48,000. The starting salary for teachers is US$34,500. Turnover is an issue and, from the previous school year, about 12% of the district's teachers failed to return.

In 2017, the district received an overall NICHE rating of "B" and was ranked among the top third of school districts in the State. According to their website, NICHE is a team of data scientists, engineers, parents, and "yinzers" located in Pittsburgh, PA, who analyze public data sets and millions of reviews to produce comprehensive rankings, report cards, and profiles of K-12 schools and colleges.

The Scott County Board of Education

The school district is governed by an 11-member board comprised of individuals elected for 4-year terms on a staggered basis. The school board is currently without a Chairperson as Sandy Mandlin-Jones, who was elected to the position in January 2018 has resigned, citing personal reasons, after only 6 months in the position. She was the third person to hold that position in the past 2 years. Because of the vacancy, the school board currently consists of six men and four women. The board is to elect a new chairperson at its July 2018 meeting.

The Problem With Jane Posniak (A)

Jane Posniak, a member of the school board representing one of the wealthier areas of the school district, is known to be a frequent critic of board leadership and the district superintendent. A former Scott County elementary teacher, she ran for a seat on the school board advocating improved communication between the board representatives and their constituencies. Frequently, she voices her opinion of board actions publicly and often winds up in print in the local newspaper. Most recently, she has been critical of the Superintendent of the school district for ethical issues involving the hiring of his spouse for a top position in the district. She and a minority of other board members have been strong advocates for his removal from that position. Conflicts between the majority and minority members of the school board have been ongoing for the past year.

In December 2017, the board, by a 7-3 vote, presented a letter to Posniak requesting that she "cease and desist" from "all actions which adversely affect the functions and operations of the District and the School Board." The basis of the request was that Posniak "intentionally, willfully, and knowingly" disclosed matters discussed by the board in executive session to the public and members of the press. The letter went on to say that, while the board agrees that members have a right to disagree with board actions, debate cannot deteriorate into actions which undermine the decisions of the board and result in the loss of public confidence in the board's decisions.

When Posniak questioned who wrote the letter, Boudrey acknowledged having had it prepared. Posniak then responded "Well then, I'll consider the source." The comment was followed by murmurs from some other board members and the few members of the public who had remained in attendance for the meeting. Posniak later apologized for the remark.

Another board member asked why Boudrey had written a letter to Posniak when the board's policy manual lists other options for disciplining a board member such as removing the member from a position of leadership or issuing a formal reprimand. The board's policy regarding violations of policy states that the board will remedy violations of policy by applying "progressive measures." Boudrey responded that she felt it was appropriate given the nature of the offense.

Board Chair Changes Board Agenda Template (B)

At the February 2018 meeting of the board, Carl Ingram, a board member, questioned the disappearance of "New Business" from the School Board agenda template. The "New Business" section had previously allowed board members to introduce topics for discussion on future agendas.

Mandlin-Jones, the board chairperson, stated that she had removed that section on a recommendation made at the state school boards' conference that she attended earlier that month. She said that boards were advised to remove "New Business" because it does not list points of discussion in advance of the meeting in accordance with open records law.

Some board members questioned her authority to unilaterally remove the agenda section and expressed their concern over losing an option to publicly bring up matters of concern. Mandlin-Jones denied that the action was meant to stifle dissension and said the reason for removing the agenda section "seems pretty straightforward to me." However, some members noted that the agenda still contained the "Chairman's Report" section which allows the Chair to speak without listing those points of discussion prior to the meeting.

Ingram said that the real issue is giving board members the same opportunity to speak as the chairperson. He also noted that the new policy for adding items to the agenda is not working. Under the new policy, a member and at least two other board members must submit that request in writing to the board's officers no later than 11 days before the meeting. But the policy for when—and if—that item will appear on an agenda is not clear.

Posniak noted that a request submitted in early February to discuss the board hiring its own legal counsel had yet to be added to the regular meeting agenda. Mandlin-Jones responded that the issue of hiring the board's own legal counsel required more in-depth discussion and would be added to a board work session in April. Posniak concluded "Anything done (in) the work session is done out of the public eye," noting that, while the work sessions are open to the public, the public does not usually attend them. Furthermore, Posniak commented, there is no board policy currently in place to determine what topics end up in work session and which go on board meeting agendas.

Ingram then suggested that a new section called "Future Agenda Suggestions" be added to the agenda. This suggestion created additional murmuring from a number of members who felt that the suggestion would only make meetings longer than they are now, noting that current meetings already last 3 to 4 hr. Ingram then made a motion to add a new section called "District Reports" to the agenda. That motion further frustrated some board members and Mandlin-Jones said that she had never seen a board agenda with "District Reports" on it. She added that the board "is here to serve the entire county, not individual districts. Ingram stated that he was elected by the citizens of his district and that he represented the citizens of his district. The motion was called and failed by a 7-4 vote.

At a subsequent meeting, a proposal was made to consider hiring an "outsider" to run the meetings of the Board that many felt were becoming more contentious and taking too long. Mandlin-Jones had previously investigated the costs of hiring a professional parliamentarian and indicated that the costs could run as much as US$35,000 a year. The Board then considered having Carl Ingram serve in that capacity as some saw him as a "procedure person."

Not everyone readily endorsed Ingram for the role. Jennifer Boudrey, the former board Chair still serving out her term as a member of the board, questioned whether Ingram could be objective. Other board members, including Jane Posniak, came to Ingram's defense and called the former Chair's comments "inflammatory." With Ingram abstaining, the board approved Ingram's appointment by a 6-4 vote. The details of the role were to be determined later by the policy committee of the board.

Policy for Obtaining District Data (C)

At the May 2018 meeting of the board, some board members complained about having problems gaining access to district data from the Superintendent. According to the board policy,

> Members may request information from the Superintendent. If the information sought does not exist and must be created or developed, or if responding to the information will take substantial staff time, then the Superintendent shall notify the Board of the request such that the Board Chair may determine whether the Superintendent, or his/her designee, shall respond to the request.

Jane Posniak stated that she had previously filed a state FOIA request for district information on enrollments because she was stymied by the Superintendent and the previous board Chair in getting the information about the district she represented. Another board member stated that his request for information was treated as a FOIA request and he was quoted a charge of US$500 to obtain the data.

School spokesperson, Tom Fisher, denied that the Superintendent is trying to make it difficult for any particular board member to get information. He continued "If it's a simple question from an individual board member, the Superintendent responds to all board members with the information."

The Vice-Chair of the board, Ruben Wright, responded that board members should follow the policy prescribed for gaining data and not submit FOIA requests. He added, "And requests should be directed to the Superintendent, not to staff members or to the district's FOIA officer."

Carl Ingram then asked if, under the policy, requests for information that involve substantial staff time could be approved by the board Chair alone or if the requests have to come before the entire board for a vote. Ingram stated that he asked the question to determine if the Chair could veto a request on his or her own, without bringing the matter to the attention of the full board at a public meeting. Posniak responded that the previous Chair had told her that the Chair could make the decision. Asked where that was stated in the Policy Manual, Boudrey, the former Chair, said that it was an "unwritten policy" that had been previously communicated to board members. No board member recalled receiving such a communication.

Herb Ackerman, Chairman of the board's Policy Committee, concluded "there is definitely confusion over the proper policy. The Policy Committee will have to look at that at its next work session."

The Posniak Letter Revisited (D)

At the May 2018 meeting of the board, in response to a question from a member of the board, staff attorney Dwane David disclosed that the Scott County Board of Education had paid approximately US$2,500 to outside counsel for preparation of the three-page cease-and-desist letter presented to Jane Posniak in December. David went on to say

that he knew nothing of the use of outside counsel until he was queried about it after the fact by Posniak.

Jennifer Boudrey, who was still the board Chair in December, said that the decision to use outside counsel was made by the board leadership. However, only she and two other Board officers made the decision. She said she didn't consult David because he had to work with all board members and she didn't want to place him in the middle of the situation.

Posniak responded by calling the decision "way out of line." She went on to point out that there is no provision in the policy manual that allows board officers to unilaterally approve hiring outside counsel. In fact, she noted, last October "you sent out an email informing board members that they cannot hire outside legal counsel without first bringing it to the board for a decision unless the board member wanted to pay the expense from their personal funds. Yet, that's exactly what you did!"

Boudrey replied "It's the kind of decision that the Chair can make. It's not specifically prohibited by the policy manual."

Later that month, Mandlin-Jones, the current Chair, announced the formation of an ad hoc committee to discuss the issue of using outside counsel. The initial meeting was scheduled for early June but was canceled due to scheduling conflicts. The meeting was rescheduled for the last week in June but was subsequently canceled due to the resignation of the Chair, Mandlin-Jones.

Posniak Summoned to Closed-Door Meeting (E)

In mid-June 2018, Jane Posniak was informed that the Scott County Board of Education officers had called for a private, closed-door meeting with her to discuss a "serious matter" that "negatively impacts the board and district." However, she was not told the nature of the matter. In response, Posniak requested that the meeting be held in public. However, Mandlin-Jones said that the "private meeting" was in line with School Board policy.

The policy manual calls for progressive action against a school board member who is considered to have committed a substantial or egregious violation of policy. It states that the first step to address the violation is the following:

> If a Board member perceives a fellow member violated the Policies or regulations of the Board, that member may address his/her concerns with the member who is perceived to be in violation. Alternatively, the member may refer the concern to the Board Chair. If the Board Chair is suspected of the violation, the concern would be referred to the Vice-Chair. The purpose of this step is to attempt to resolve any perceived violations at the lowest possible level involving the fewest number of individuals.

It was later disclosed to Posniak that the meeting was in response to a fellow board member's concern that she had offended a district staff member.

Posniak said that she was not informed of the specific nature of the complaint against her and was wary of going into the meeting unprepared based on being

"blindsided" previously with the cease-and-desist letter. Her request for the meeting to be made public resulted in an email from Mandlin-Jones stating that the Board officers believe this is a serious matter and that the board should consult an outside counsel before proceeding. In response, three other board members have said via email that they believe the entire board should be informed of the nature of the matter before voting on whether to engage outside counsel.

Board Chair Mandlin-Jones Resigns (F)

Before any further actions could be taken, at the end of June, Sandy Mandlin-Jones submitted her letter of resignation to the board citing personal reasons. A new Chairperson is to be elected at the Board's July 2018 meeting.

Questions for Discussion (A)

1. Are there legal or ethical issues related to Jane Posniak's disclosure of items discussed in an executive session of the board to the public? To the press? If yes, what are they?
2. Was Jennifer Boudrey, the school board chairperson at the time, within her rights to prepare the "cease and desist" letter to Posniak? Why or why not?
3. What other actions could Jennifer Boudrey have taken to address the concern regarding Posniak's disclosure of items discussed in a board executive session?

Questions for Discussion (B)

1. Did the then board chair, Sandy Mandlin-Jones have the authority to remove "New Business" from the School Board agenda template because it did not list points of discussion in advance of the meeting (in accordance with open records laws)? How much control should a board chairperson have over setting the agenda for board meetings?
2. Should the topic of the board hiring its own legal counsel be discussed in a work session or a public session?
3. Was the vote to elect Carl Ingram, a board member, to serve as parliamentarian appropriate? What is the significance of the "details of the role" being determined at a later date? What other alternatives could have been pursued as a way to improve Board interactions and demeanor?

Questions for Discussion (C)

1. Was the filing of a FOIA request (by Jane Posniak) appropriate to obtain information on school district enrollments? Why or why not?
2. What school district information or data should be shared with members of the school board? Is there any information or data that should be withheld?

3. How did the incidence of "unwritten policy" play into this section of the case? Should a board have and operate by unwritten policies? Why or why not?

Question for Discussion (D)

1. Who is right with regard to the issue of hiring outside counsel to prepare a cease and desist letter? Jane Posniak, who claims there is no policy to allow board members to unilaterally approve hiring outside counsel, or Jennifer Boudrey, who claims it was the kind of decision the Chair can make because it is not specifically prohibited by the policy manual? What is the reasoning behind your decision?

Questions for Discussion (E)

1. What is your opinion of the way in which the issue was handled regarding the board member's concern that Posniak acted inappropriately and offended a district staff member?
2. How else might the issue have been addressed?

Questions for Discussion (F)

1. Will the election of a new board chairperson resolve the issues of incivility and conflict affecting the Scott County School Board? Why or why not?
2. What alternatives can you suggest that could aid the school board in becoming more productive?

Teaching Notes

Synopsis

This case is about school board dysfunction, school board policy, ethics, conflict management, and the degree of latitude and discretion of the Chairperson of the school board. The school board is plagued with infighting, disagreements, poor communication, retaliation, and an inability to work together for the common good of students and the school district.

Audience

This case was developed for graduate students enrolled in educational leadership, instructional leadership, principal preparation, or school policy coursework. The case provides students with the opportunity to consider a number of important educational leadership issues including school board procedures, policy, ethics, school community, group dynamics, conflict management and resolution, and school law.

When assuming a principalship or superintendency, there is a complex relationship to navigate between school personnel and the school board. The National School Board Association's Center for Public Education, through its research,

posted a report in January 2011 listing "Eight Characteristics of an Effective School Board." The Scott County School Board case revolves around Characteristic 7: "Effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust" (National School Board Association Center for Public Education, 2011). The National School Boards Association (NSBA) also regularly conducts and publishes research through its Center for Public Education (CPE). They are interested in qualities of school boards who oversee high performing districts. See Appendix B for the complete list of effective characteristics.

Learning Objectives

After analyzing this case and completing the recommended activities, students will be able to:

1. Identify policy issues in a narrative
2. Assess the behavioral and ethical actions of the school board members and chairpersons
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of a school board
4. Recommend future actions for improving school board operations, including conflict management processes
5. Analyze the role of the school district superintendent in school board processes
6. Interpret the place of policy and ethics in academic administration

School Board Culture and Dysfunction

Much research has been done on what comprises an effective school board. A NSBA exists. The "NSBA represents state school boards associations and their more than 90,000 local school board members," (National School Board Association Center for Public Education, 2018). The NSBA's mission is "to be the premier advocate for public education in America, through our work in the legislative, legal and public arenas" (National School Board Association Center for Public Education, 2018).

Some state school board associations have developed their own benchmarks for success for their boards. In Washington State, for example, the Washington State School Directors' Association Board of Directors developed benchmarks for school boards that include five core principles, none of which address school board culture and dysfunction. (Washington State School Directors' Association, 2009). However, under Standard 1 (Provide responsible school district governance), Washington State includes the benchmarks of "conducting board and district business in a fair, respectful, and responsible manner" and "working as an effective and collaborative team" (Washington State School Directors' Association, 2009). While this case does not

originate in Washington State, most states have similar benchmarks and indicators for their school boards.

Unfortunately, the situation with the Scott County School Board is not isolated. The American School Board Journal reports in an article entitled "The Cultured Club" (Eadie, 2009) that "we know a positive board culture when we see it" (Eadie, 2009, p. 42). The article goes on to propose that the solution to a dysfunctional board is "structure and process" need "to be updated so that new attitudes and commitments could be translated into concrete governing results. In other words, the governing architecture" needs to be "modernized" (Eadie, 2009, p. 43). However, all dysfunctional behavior is not structurally determined. Board leadership also needs to be skilled in conflict management and meeting management techniques.

This case presents an opportunity to evaluate events that have occurred and analyze the previous conflict for policy violations and the ethics of authority and discretion. It also provides the backdrop for considering the path forward to creating a new board culture through conflict management techniques that can be applied to a multitude of situations where group dynamics are less than adequate.

So why does board culture matter? Dawson and Quinn suggest that "a school board's most critical responsibility is to safeguard the public's trust in public education" (Dawson & Quinn, 2004, p. 28). Clearly, that is not happening in Scott County. The article goes on to say that with increasing frequency, instances of rogue school board members are popping up, eroding the public's trust. They provide nine suggestions for improving board culture (see article for full descriptions).

1. Resolve to govern as a body, not individuals.
2. Develop a board member code of ethics.
3. Ensure that individual points of view are heard.
4. Encourage rigorous and frank dialogue with the public.
5. Don't ignore bad behavior.
6. Consider public censure.
7. Reaffirm the board's role in relation to the staff.
8. Be strategic and speak the truth.
9. Recruit citizens of high ethics and integrity to serve on the board. (Dawson & Quinn, pp. 29-31).

Conflict can be constructive or destructive. There are clearly complex destructive conflict issues permeating this school board. "Conflict management is viewed as containing three major interrelated events: (a) perceiving/experiencing unacceptable conflict, (b) diagnosing the sources of the conflict, and (c) intervening" (Kilmann & Thomas, 1978, p. 60). While the Board in this case study has experienced the first event, perceiving/experiencing unacceptable conflict, they have yet to move through the second and third stages of diagnosing the sources of the conflict and intervening. "Organizational conflict must not necessarily be reduced, eliminated, or avoided, but

managed to reduce its dysfunctional outcomes and enhance its functional outcomes" (Rahim, 2011, p. 204).

According to Rahim (2002), "A diagnosis should indicate whether there is a need for an intervention" (p. 206). He goes on to say,

> Interventions are designed (a) to attain and maintain a moderate amount of substantive conflict in non-routine tasks at various levels, (b) to reduce affective conflict at all levels, and (c) to enable the organizational members to select and use the appropriate styles of handling conflict so that various situations can be effectively dealt with. (Rahim, p. 206)

Examples of intervening strategies include training, raising consciousness, and managing interactions (Kilmann & Thomas, p. 62).

Ethical considerations also play an important role in board operations. As Dawson and Quinn (2004) point out, a school board's most critical responsibility is to protect the public's trust in public education. They also contend that rogue board members are eroding the public trust. This case provides an opportunity to question if the public disclosure of board actions by a board member works to strengthen or weaken the public's trust. While some may contend that airing the board's "dirty linen" may work to erode public trust, others may see such disclosure as a path to creating greater transparency which, in turn, could strengthen the public's confidence in the board. Whether or not such disclosure is a violation of board policy and warrants disciplinary action is another issue worth pursuing. The article, "Making Choices: A Framework for Making Ethical Decisions, 2018" included in the references, provides guidance for analyzing ethical issues such as those raised in the case.

School board culture plays a large role in the success of a school district. It does not develop by accident. Boards must be intentional about creating a culture that is effective, ethical, mitigates conflict, and serves the mission they are called to perform.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. What policies should the board review?
2. What policies are missing that should be written?
3. Should the school superintendent have become involved? If so, when, and what actions can he or she take?
4. What sort of professional development, training, consultation, or conflict resolution activities would you recommend for this board? Describe specifically how the activities would serve to diagnose the source of the conflict and/or what intervention strategies could be incorporated.
5. Would any of the School Board members have grounds for a lawsuit? Explain.
6. Should the school board attorney have stepped in at any point? If so, when, and to what end?

7. Is there any correlation between school board effectiveness and student achievement?

Recommended Student Activities

1. Create an onboarding/mentorship program for new Board Members.
2. Develop a rubric to assess the Board's progress on Characteristic 7 of The Eight Characteristics of an Effective School Board ("Effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust").
3. Develop a series of teambuilding and/or conflict resolution activities to recommend to this Board.
4. Read "The Eight Principles of Ethical Leadership in Education" (Lynch, 2015). While these are written for school administrators, they can be applied to school boards as well.
   A. Rank order the eight principles based on how they apply to this case, with the most impact ranked as number one.
   B. Select three of the principles and describe in depth how each relates to this case. Provide suggestions for how each could be applied.
   C. Create two more principles of ethical leadership that should be added to this list and explain why they should be included.

Appendix A

Partial Scott County Board Member Code of Conduct and Process for Addressing Violations of Policy (Only Sections Pertinent to Case are Included)

Policy 2.4—School board meetings
V. Board member expectations.

A. At Board meetings, Board members shall:

7. Support the Chair or presiding officer in facilitating an orderly meeting.
8. Communicate openly and actively to avoid surprises, and listen attentively to speakers.
9. Practice respectful body language, tone and expression

B. At Board meetings, Board members shall not:

1. Interrupt or speak over another Board member
2. Engage in separate communications when discussion or debate is ongoing
3. Engage in other disrespectful or disruptive conversations

VI. Executive sessions

E. Board members and all others attending executive session shall not disclose matters discussed in executive session.

Policy 3.4—Board member code of conduct. The Board commits itself and its members to ethical, businesslike, and lawful conduct including appropriate decorum.

III. To build trust among members and to ensure an environment conducive to effective governance, Board members will:

A. Focus on issues rather than personalities;
B. Respect decisions of the full Board;
C. Exercise honesty in all written and interpersonal interactions, never intentionally misleading or misinforming each other;
D. Recognize the positive and negative aspects of dissent and refrain from public criticism of the motives, thinking, and philosophy of other members but make their own view clear when in disagreement with a publicly stated opinion of the Board.
E. Not publicly disparage the superintendent, staff, or other board members;
F. Make every reasonable effort to protect the integrity and promote the positive image of the system and one another;
G. Never intentionally embarrass each other or the school system; and
H. Model courteous conduct that is inclusive, respectful, and timely at all times during their public service
V. Members shall maintain confidentiality appropriate to sensitive issues and information that otherwise may tend to compromise the integrity or legal standing of the Board or the BCSD, especially those matters discussed in executive session
XI. Members will respect decisions of the Board and will not take actions which undermine those decisions.
XII. Members will not publicly express individual negative judgments about the Superintendent or staff performance. Such judgments shall be expressed in executive session.
XIII. Members may request information from the Superintendent. If the information sought does not exist and must be created or developed, or if responding to the information will take substantial staff time, then the Superintendent shall notify the Board of the request such that the Board Chair may determine whether the Superintendent, or his or her designee, shall respond to the request. All information provided pursuant to this paragraph shall be provided to all Board Members.

Policy 3.5—Process for addressing violations of policy. In the event of a member's willful and continuing violation, the Board will remedy violations of Policy and/or regulation by applying the progressive measures described below. If a

Board member commits a substantial or egregious violation, the Board may apply one or more measures described herein deemed an appropriate response to the violation:

A. Conversation in a private setting between the charged member and the Board Chair, Board Officers, or other individual member
B. Possible removal from any leadership or committee positions to which the charged member has been appointed or elected
C. Public censure of the charged member of the Board.
D. Public accountability of the charged member of the Board.

Policy 3.1—Board–superintendent relationship. D. Requests from the Board for substantive information shall be made to the Superintendent and not to individual members of the SCSD staff. Should the Superintendent determine that an information request received from an individual Board member or Board committee requires a material amount of staff time or is unreasonable, the Superintendent is expected to see that the request is referred to the full Board for authorization.

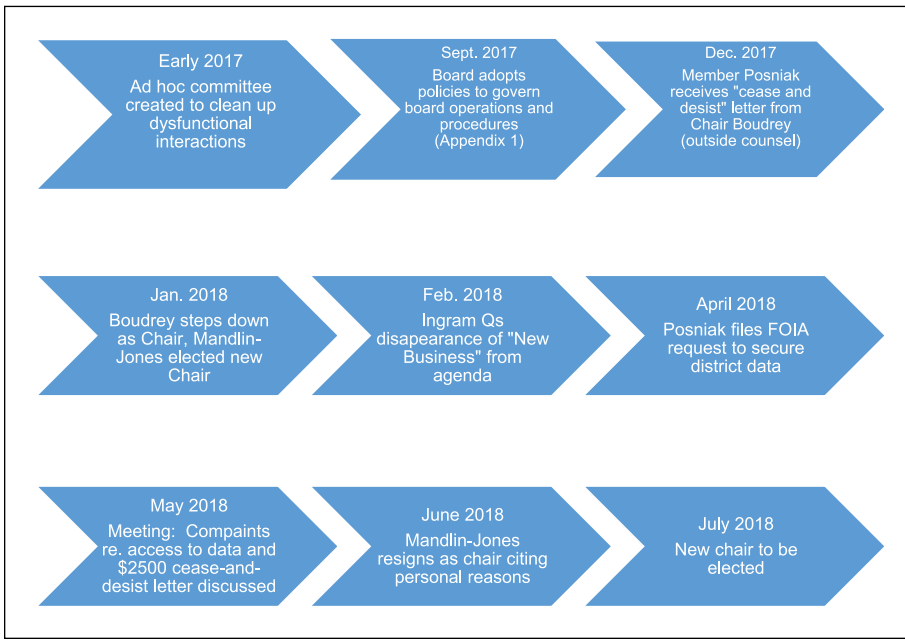
Appendix B

Eight Characteristics of an Effective School Board

1. Effective school boards commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision.
2. Effective school boards have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn, and of the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels.
3. Effective school boards are accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.
4. Effective school boards have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.
5. Effective boards are data savvy; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.
6. Effective school boards align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.
7. Effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.
8. Effective school boards take part in team development and training, sometimes with their superintendents, to build shared knowledge, values, and commitments for their improvement efforts.

Appendix C

[Source; William J. Heisler, Timeline of Key School Board Events, 2018.]



Source: National School Board Association Center for Public Education (2011).

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Author Biographies

William J. Heisler, PhD, is a professor, an associate chair, and the director of the MSHRM program for the Sorrell College of Business. He has taught previously at the University of Notre Dame and Wake Forest University and served for 20 years in industry in a variety of managerial and executive positions in human resources.

Lesa L. Hanlin, EdD, is the executive director, Roanoke Regional Initiatives. In this role, she is a key member of the Outreach and International Affairs leadership team and serves as the chief administrator for the Virginia Tech Roanoke Center and the Center for Organizational and Technological Advancement. Prior to her experience in higher education, she was a secondary school teacher and principal.