

***Frazee-Vergas School Board Manual  
Frazee-Vergas School District #23***



**DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT**

*The mission of the Frazee-Vergas Public School District is to provide quality education by promoting a safe and respectful environment which encourages the development of individual potential for lifelong learning in a diversified society.*

**FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSE**

*To ensure high levels of learning for all students!*

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<u>Page</u>
School District Goals .....	2
School Board Goals & Supporting Objectives/Measures 2015-18 .....	3-5
Role of the School Board .....	6
Role of the Superintendent .....	7
School Board & Superintendent Relations .....	7
A Board Member’s Approach to the Job .....	8-9

# School District Goals

## ***High Student Achievement***

- Providing high quality instruction and educational opportunities for all students.
- Providing an individualized and safe learning environment for students, staff, and families.
- Providing 21st Century technology & skills for students and staff.

## ***Effective Leadership***

- Annually review and approve district goals.
- Providing leadership opportunities for all stakeholders.
- Proactive, clear, and consistent

## ***Efficient Operations***

- Optimizing the full potential of our financial resources.
- Optimizing the full potential of our human resources.
- Proactive facilities management plan.

# Frazee-Vergas School Board Goals & Supporting Objectives / Measures 2015-2018

## **Goal #1: Consistently Focus on Student Achievement and Wellbeing for All**

We, the Frazee-Vergas School Board, will support and promote opportunities, programs, and initiatives that will improve/increase the preparation of all students for college and career readiness, technology infrastructure, 1:1 initiative, and student achievement levels.

### Objectives:

- ❑ Support initiatives to increase the student achievement levels.
- ❑ Support the PLC journey (Staff Development), encouraging each member of our instructional staff, through collaborative PLC teams, to continue to incorporate the use of the PLC cycle and focus on the 4 essential questions of learning to maximize student achievement.
- ❑ Continue to support funding for an eportfolio system allowing career exploration activities and individual graduation plans to be developed and collected for students and their parents.
- ❑ Support funding for future technology initiatives.
- ❑ Support and build on current Anti-Bullying initiatives.
- ❑ Utilize the Frazee-Vergas K-12 Technology Committee as advisors.

### Measures:

- ❑ WBWF presentation must be given each **fall** providing updated information on student achievement and the status of our PLC journey.
- ❑ Counselors will provide **biannual** updates on the eportfolio system and Anti-Bullying initiatives to the school board.
- ❑ Information Technology Coordinator will present a “State of District” technology address **biannually**.
- ❑ Staff from selected grade levels and/or departments will provide an **annual** update on “Blended Learning” within their classrooms..

## **Goal #2: *Build Trust and Strengthen Productive / Focused Relationships***

We, the Frazee-Vergas School Board, will provide opportunities that encourage strong relationships with all stakeholders to create an environment that fosters support for the district's students, personnel, programs, and initiatives.

### Objectives:

- ❑ Continue to listen to students through the Student Council Retreat Process.
- ❑ Support Community Education programs and offerings i.e. Latch Key program to build connections with our public.
- ❑ Support the enhancement of the use of technology for external communication (Skylert, Website, etc...)
- ❑ Support initiatives that will get the Community into the School more - Let our senior citizens know they have free admittance into school events, promote our volunteer program, etc...
- ❑ Communicate a consistent and positive message that highlights the strengths of the District Programs and Personnel.
- ❑ Continue to listen to staff through the Meet & Confer process.

### Measures:

- ❑ Student Council Advisor and student(s) will present **annually** to the School Board.
- ❑ Community Education Coordinator will present **biannually** a "State of District" community education address.
- ❑ ECFE Coordinator will present **annually** a "State of District" ECFE address.
- ❑ Special Education Coordinator will present **annually** a "State of District" Special Education address.
- ❑ Activities Director will present **triannually**, respective to fall, winter, and spring activities.
- ❑ Acknowledgement of highlights in the Hornet Pride section of the School Board Agenda along with initiating an **annual** "Above and Beyond Team".
- ❑ Meet & Confer will be held **tri-annually** with minutes available to all staff.

### **Goal #3: *Build Overall Health and Stability***

We, the Frazee-Vergas School Board, will continue to ensure that the budget provides for the needs and programs of all students in the district, maintaining fiscal responsibility while providing safe, healthy, and clean facilities.

#### Objectives:

- Ensure the budget adequately supports the district's mission and goals to the best of our abilities.
- Continue to seek grants and partnerships that are aligned to improving student learning.
- Develop and sustain a strategy to continually maintain, improve, and enhance District Facilities.

#### Measures:

- Review budget reports and make appropriate adjustments, as needed.
- Develop a Facilities Management Plan.

## **Role of the School Board:**

As the entity legally charged with governing a school district, each school board is responsible to its community to govern efficiently and effectively. This obligation imposes some fundamental duties on the board.

### **Mission**

The board, with community input, envisions the educational future of its community and then formulates the goals, defines the outcomes, and sets the course for its district. An effective board:

- Provides direction through its planning and goal-setting efforts and by evaluating progress toward goal achievement.
- Develops a well-crafted district mission statement, goals, and outcomes that enable the board to monitor district performance and evaluate success.
- Ensures that the district mission, goals, and outcomes are articulated in written board policy, reflected in every part of the organization, and mirrored in the budget planning and implementation efforts.
- Uses clear, focused, attainable, and measurable goals and outcomes to make sure gains in student achievement are being made.

### **Structure**

To achieve its mission, the board establishes a structure and hires a superintendent to accomplish that mission. An effective board:

- Creates an organizational structure and environment in which all students are provided the opportunity to attain their maximum potential.
- Selects and employs one person — the superintendent — as the district’s chief executive officer to lead and manage the district and holds the superintendent accountable for district performance and compliance with written board policy.
- Evaluates the superintendent’s performance and its own performance annually.
- Delegates the authority to the superintendent to recommend and evaluate all district staff within the standards established by written board policy and subsequently acts on the superintendent’s recommendation(s) at its meeting(s) as required in statute.
- Accepts ultimate responsibility for the care, management, and control of the district.
- Understands that the day-to-day operations of the district will be conducted by the staff.

### **Accountability**

The board is accountable to the community for constantly monitoring the conditions affecting the district as a whole. An effective board:

- Has a duty to itself and the community to determine whether the authority delegated to the superintendent is being used as intended.
- Uses data and other indicators as the basis for assessing progress toward district goals and compliance with written board policy.
- Recognizes the distinction between “monitoring data” (data used by the board to address accountability) and “management data” (data used by the staff for operations).

## **Advocacy**

The board advances its mission by focusing on student achievement, partnering with the community, and being proactive in addressing issues that affect education on local, state, and national levels. An effective board:

- Uses ongoing, two-way communications to build trust and support among community, board, superintendent, staff, and students.
- Focuses on community-wide concerns and values that best support student achievement rather than being overly influenced by special interests.
- Utilizes a system of public relations that allows it to formalize the flow of information into and out of the district.

## **Conduct and Ethics**

The board, as a whole, provides leadership to the community on behalf of the district by conducting its business in a fair, respectful, legal, and responsible manner. An effective board:

- Takes full responsibility for its activity and behavior.
- Encourages its members to express their individual opinions, respect others' opinions, and vote their conscience.
- Speaks with one voice after reaching a decision.
- Spends its time on board work rather than staff work.
- Provides for orientation and ongoing training for all board members.
- Follows its established policies, including the chain-of-command, by directing people with concerns to the appropriate staff.
- Sets an example of respectful and civil leadership.

## **Role of the Superintendent:**

School boards employ a superintendent to lead and manage the school district. The superintendent is an ex officio, nonvoting member of the school board and the chief executive officer of the school system. The superintendent's duties and responsibilities are derived largely from three sources: in statute, his/her employment contract, and his/her job description.

Superintendents are responsible for the management of the schools, the administration of all school board policies, and are directly accountable to the school board. The superintendent must annually evaluate each principal assigned responsibility for supervising a school building in the district. Also, the superintendent may delegate responsibilities to other school district personnel, but shall continue to be accountable for actions taken under such delegation.

## **School Board and Superintendent Relations:**

School boards and superintendents with a positive working relationship are better positioned to focus on the school board's priorities for the school district and its students. An understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities and a clearly written employment contract, job description, and performance evaluation are components of an effective School Board-Superintendent relationship. Ultimately, the relationship begins with the selection and employment of the superintendent.



## **A Board Member's Approach to the Job**

1. **Be prepared to participate responsibly.** Do your homework; come prepared to work; remember that sometimes the work is to listen; agree and disagree as your values dictate; accept that the group decision is legitimate even if it's not your personal choice. It is not acceptable to have opinions and not express them.
2. **Represent the ownership, not a single constituency.** You will understand and /or identify with certain constituencies (parents, neighborhoods or communities, special ed., etc.), but you **MUST** remember that being a board member means serving in trust for the entire ownership. There's no way seven people can provide a spokesperson for every constituency or legitimate interest, so in a moral sense, you must stand for them all. You can be **FROM** a constituency, but you must not let yourself **REPRESENT** it.
3. **Remember that your identity is with the ownership, not the staff.** It's easy to identify with staff as you probably will have more discussions with them about issues than you will with the ownership. But you must remember that your job is to serve in trust for the ownership. "Be a microcosm of your ownership, not a shadow of your staff."
4. **Be responsible for group behavior and productivity.** You are responsible for not only yourself, but the group. If the group doesn't do the job, meddles in administration, breaks its own rules, you also bear that responsibility personally.
5. **Honor divergent opinions without being intimidated by them.** You are obligated to express your honest opinions on issues, and so are each of the other board members. Encourage your colleagues to speak their opinions and listen to them carefully and respectfully. But don't allow yourself to be intimidated by louder or more insistent board members.
6. **Use your special expertise to inform your colleagues' wisdom.** If you have special expertise (law, accounting, construction, etc.), remember that you are **NOT** personally responsible for decisions relating to that area. Use your expertise to help inform your colleagues, but don't assume sole responsibility for those decisions. Also, remember that you are not on the board to help the staff or even advise them with your special expertise. If you wish to offer your help as an expert, make sure that all parties know you are acting as a volunteer, not a board member, and remember that accepting your help is a staff prerogative, not yours.
7. **Orient to the whole, not the parts.** Train yourself to examine, question, and define the big picture. That's your job as a board member - not the minutia or details.
8. **Think upward and outward more than downward and inward.** There is a great temptation to focus on what goes on with management and staff instead of what difference the district should make in the larger world. The latter is a daunting and awesome task, but it's board work - governance!

9. **Don't tolerate putting off the big issues forever.** As daunting and awesome as the big decisions are, they are the board's to make (i.e., What are our core values and beliefs about education in our community: Based on those, where do we put our resources? Early childhood or high school science, etc.) If you don't, you're abdicating your authority. Your inaction is a decision. If you don't act, someone else will by default.
10. **Support the Board's final choice.** No matter which way you voted, you are obligated to support the board's choice. This doesn't mean you have to pretend to agree with it. You may maintain the integrity of your dissent. But what you support is the legitimacy of the choice even though you don't agree. For example, you will support without reservation that the CEO must follow the formal board decision, not your recommendation or position.
11. **Don't mistake form for substance.** Don't confuse having financial reports for having sound finances or having a public relations committee for having good public relations. Beware of the trap of having procedures rather than substance.
12. **Don't expect agendas to be built on your interests.** The board's agenda should not be a laundry list of individual member's interests, but a plan for taking care of the governance of the district. Being an owner trustee is very different from seeing the organization as your person possession. The board's job must be designed to insure that the right of the entire ownership is faithfully served in the determination of what the district should accomplish.
13. **Squelch your individual points of view during monitoring.** Your own values count when the board is creating policies. But when you monitor the performance of the superintendent or the success of programs, etc., you must refer to the criteria the board decided, not what your opinion was about those criteria. And as you review the criteria, your monitoring should not be whether things were done the way you would have done them, but whether they were done within the parameters of policy.
14. **Obsess about ends.** Keep the conversation focused on benefits, beneficiaries, and costs of benefits (which ends for which people at what cost?) Talk with the other board members, staff, and the public about these matters first and foremost. When the board's focus is on ends, it assures administrator accountability for means.
15. **Continuously ask yourself and the board, "Is this board work?"** The deliberations of the board must add value. They must deal with fundamental, long-term issues that require the wisdom and decision-making of a diverse groups of individuals who look at the whole - not just pieces of the issue du jour.

*MSBA - Adapted from the works of John Carver*