



Report of the Office of Board Governance

Dr. Tina Owen-Moore – December 2024

The Office of Board Governance (OBG) submits, with grateful appreciation for all those contributing to its efforts, the following report of OBG activities in the months of November and December.

Media Relations

An important part of our work in the Office of Board Governance is preparing communications for the Board and public. This often includes interactions with the media. Our office responds to records requests, facilitates responses to constituent concerns, answers questions, and coordinates communications from the Board to the media and from the media to the Board. Over the past couple of months, we have taken several actions to ensure we are working collaboratively and responsively with our media partners. Here are a few of those actions:

- **Fast Facts:** In collaboration with the Kane communications team, we developed a *Fast Facts* document that can be shared with the press and community each week (depending on the need) highlighting facts around important topics impacting the district and its schools.
- **One-on-One Conversations with Media Partners:** This month, we have been meeting one-on-one with individual news reporters to understand how our office can better support their needs and to share information about how the Office of Board Governance operates, so that we can work better together. Our goal is to be quick, transparent and responsive as we work to build a trusting and collaborative relationship with these partners and with the community.
- **Collaboration with District Communications Team:** We have been meeting weekly with the District Communications team and have partnered with them on several projects, including adding our Fast Facts updates to the District webpage, getting access to a platform for digital newsletters, and continuing to update the staff, families and community regarding the superintendent search process.

DPI and Compliance

Our Office continues to participate in weekly meetings with DPI to help facilitate communication between the Board, DPI, the Office of Accountability and Efficiency, and Office of the Superintendent and participates in a second meeting with the Board President, Interim Superintendent, and Senior Director of the Office of Accountability and Efficiency. Together, these meetings help to keep open the lines of communication between the offices of the district.

Legal Matters

The Office of Board Governance is the Board's liaison in legal matters concerning the district. In October, the Office of Board Governance worked in collaboration with the City Attorney and independent legal counsel on several matters, including a motion to Quash/Dismiss Petitioner's Writ of Mandamus in lieu of Answer pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 802.06. (This is related to the Writ of Mandamus that was filed demanding the District hire 25 School Resource Officers, which the District does not have the authority to do.)

Events and Activities

Our Office helps Board members to host events and facilitates Board member attendance at many of the District events, including sharing invitations, coordinating calendars, and posting notices of a potential quorum when needed. Here are a few of the highlights from the month:

- **Community Meeting on the Topic of School Safety:** This month, our team worked with Director Leonard and the District Advisory Council to host a public engagement session on the topic of school safety.
- **Holiday Events and Activities:** The months of November and December are filled with activities and events across the District. Board members have attended coat giveaways, concerts, ribbon cutting ceremonies and more this holiday season.

Superintendent Search

On December 17th, 2024, the Board met with HYA to identify a slate of candidates to interview from amongst the 33 applications that had been submitted to date. At this meeting, the Board decided to reopen the candidate application window with the hopes of deepening the slate of candidates. The Board's goal in doing so is to ensure that they will be able to interview a strong pool of highly qualified candidates who can meet the district's unique needs at this critical moment. The Office of Board Governance will work with HYA to revise the timeline for candidate interviews, previously planned for January 11th, 2025, and to reschedule the "days in the district" for finalists.

Policy Review

On December 16th, we will have our kickoff meeting with the team from Neola, during which we anticipate setting up a plan for the work to review and revise all the district's policies. This will be a collaborative effort of the Office of Board Governance, the Office of Accountability and Efficiency, and the Office of the Superintendent. Director Zombor, who chairs the Legislation, Rules and Policies Committee, will also attend this meeting.

One Big (Office) Goal = Digital

In our office, our one big team goal for the year is to find and implement greater digital efficiencies in the Office of Board Governance. We have made some great gains along these lines, including:

- We are now an early adopter of SharePoint, which provides great benefits for collaboration, document retention, and cybersecurity. We continue to reduce our printing footprint and reduce the complexity of our filing systems, by transitioning to electronic filing.

- We have moved our monthly Board newsletters, and other communications, to a digital format that integrates nicely in email and allows Board members to include information relevant to their districts. You can see an example of President Herndon’s first digital newsletter [here](#).
- We worked with Technology to install a screen in our conference room for collaborative meetings and presentations, drastically reducing the need to print meeting material.
- We are now in the process of moving to digital notebooks to improve efficiency and reduce waste.

Of course, none of these changes are simple tasks. They require learning how to use new technologies, building new habits, and communicating in new ways. Our office is enthusiastic and committed to this new way of doing things.

The Office of Board Governance provides support — in cooperation with, but independent of, the Superintendent and the Chief Accountability Officer — to the Milwaukee Board of School Directors in effectively and efficiently governing the District. This support includes, but is not limited to:

- reviewing and proposing policy;
- conducting fiscal analyses;
- preparing communications for the Board and public;
- fulfilling statutory or other legal requirements;
- preparing meeting notices and agendas for the meetings of the Board and its Committees;
- serving as the Board's secretary, clerk, and parliamentarian; and
- maintaining records of the Board's actions.

The Office provides coordination among the Board, the Office of Accountability and Efficiency, and the Superintendent's office.

The Office, by providing the Board with the most independent information available, assists the Board in its function of establishing district goals, priorities, rules, and policies.