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MEMO

TO: School Board Members
FROM: Ronald S. Saari, Interim Superintendent
DATE: February 19, 2025
RE: Definitions of School Board Meetings

SUMMARY:

1. School Board Meeting (Regular Meeting):

- Purpose: Conducts official District business, including voting on policies, budgets, contracts, and other key decisions.
- Frequency: Scheduled regularly (e.g., monthly or bi-monthly).
- Outcome: Official decisions are made, and votes are recorded in meeting minutes.

2. Special Board Meeting:

- Purpose: Addresses urgent or time-sensitive issues that cannot wait until the next regular meeting.
- Frequency: Called as needed, often on short notice.
- Outcome: Official actions can be taken, similar to regular meetings, or they can be informational only.

3. Committee Meeting:

- Purpose: Focuses on specific areas like finance, curriculum, or facilities, allowing for detailed discussions and recommendations.
- Frequency: Scheduled regularly or as needed.
- Outcome: Committees make recommendations but do not have authority to make final decisions.

4. Board Workshop:

- Purpose: Provides an informal setting for in-depth discussions, presentations, or training on specific topics (e.g., strategic planning, policy review).
- Frequency: Scheduled as needed.
- Outcome: No formal decisions are made, but the board may develop consensus or provide direction for future action.

5. Board Retreat:

- Purpose: Focuses on long-term planning, team-building, goal-setting, or self-evaluation in a more relaxed environment.
- Frequency: Typically annual or bi-annual. Some can occur quarterly.
- Outcome: Often results in strategic priorities or action plans for the board's future work.



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6. Committee of the Whole (COW):

- **Purpose:** Involves the entire board working together as one large committee to discuss specific issues in detail.
- **Frequency:** Scheduled as needed for topics that benefit from full board input before formal action.
- **Outcome:** No binding decisions are made, but the board may reach consensus or prepare items for formal voting at a future meeting.

CONCLUSION:

While most boards of education (BOE) follow the above types of meetings definitions, the WCSD BOE will need to be clear with how we want to function regarding the types of meetings and their purposes.

While we currently schedule our regular monthly meeting on the third Wednesday of each month, we also schedule a "Workshop" meeting on the first Wednesday of each month. As we experienced last week, there may be times where we have to schedule a special meeting. It is my understanding that the Board previously used a committee structure, and have moved away from committees in favor of using "Workshop" meetings instead.

The purpose of this agenda topic is to provide clarity to administration and to ensure that our governance team (board members and superintendent) have the same understanding regarding the definitions of our Board meetings. The above language lists six different types of meetings and includes the typical purpose, frequency, and desired outcomes.

In my short tenure as your interim superintendent, I see our "Workshop" meetings as being a second business meeting in the month. That may not have been the intent, but if we continue with "Workshop" meetings, I suggest two different options:

A.) Use the Workshop meeting for in-depth discussions, presentations, or training. No decisions will be voted on. However, the Board can develop consensus to provide direction for the future.

B.) Use the Workshop meeting as a Committee of the Whole (COW) that focuses on committee topics. These could be Finance, Curriculum and Instruction, Building and Grounds, and Policy related.