

Shared Values Statement Exercise

Set up the room with an easel in the corner and a few markers for note-taking. Set up a table with chairs around it so that everyone can see each other. Bring sticky notes and additional markers, so there are enough for each board member. Have printed copies of three different governing policies for each participant.

Step 1: Start by framing the conversation. Review the Shared Values section from Chapter 9 and discuss why this work is valuable to your district. These are shared values, which means we're trying to find where the board's values align/intersect. Just because something doesn't make it to the final cut doesn't mean it's not important, just that the board doesn't agree as a whole.

Step 2: Give everyone five sticky notes and a marker.

Step 3: Spend 20 minutes or so, allowing board members to reflect on their core values and write one on each sticky note. If anyone needs additional stickies, that's okay.

Step 4: Go around the room, with each board member reading one core value and placing it on a wall near the front.

Step 5: Group the stickies by theme/value as much as possible, eliminating outliers.

Note that this can be tricky because someone wrote these down for a reason. A moderator helps by neutralizing personal history and objectively narrowing the values list. After Step 5 is also a good time to take a break if emotions are getting high.

Step 6: Work each themed value-set into short phrases/taglines.

Step 7: Create a single statement that ties the themed phrases into a cohesive structure.

Step 8: Review each policy on the printed sheets against the shared values statement to see how it holds up in practice. Check to see that the new shared values statement doesn't conflict with the district's mission or vision.

Step 9: Each board member signs their name to the statement, demonstrating support.