Workshop for Creating Protocols
(How we do business)
(Structure and process agreements about how we operate)

Issue (Issues often relate to the following areas: • Effective Meetings • Board/Board Relations • Board/Superintendent Relations • Board/Staff Relations • Board/Community Relations)	Do we have a concern in this area?	Our governance team's agreement on how we will handle this	Do we need a written protocol?	Do we need a policy? (If this is a big enough issue in the district that staff and the general public need to know how we are handling it)

Worksheet for Creating Protocols (Continued)

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Board room layout				
Seating arrangement at the board table				
Placement of the superintendent and staff in the board room				
Developing the board meeting agenda				
Structure of the board agenda				
Placing something on the board agenda				Bylaw required by law
Using meetings as strategic leadership tools				
Getting questions answered about items on the agenda before a meeting				
Public input at the board meetings				Bylaw required by law
Deliberation at board meetings				
Informal board reports at board meetings				

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Allowing the majority vote to set the direction for the school district – how we act when we aren't in the majority				
Bringing agenda items back for further discussion				
Explaining no votes				
Board meeting management, length of meetings				
Sharing expertise				
Bringing up new ideas				
Impacting the district agenda				
Requesting information from staff				
Individual board member requests for information				
Individual board member requests for action				
Handling complaints from the community				Uniform Complaint Policy required by law
Handling complaints from the staff				

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Addressing concerns of the community				
Role of the president				
Use of committees				
Use of study sessions; scheduling of study sessions				
Confidentiality				
Role in public				
Board/board communications				
Board/superintendent communications				
Board/staff communications				
Visiting schools				
Self-monitoring of governance team effectiveness				

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Supportive Structures and Processes — Protocols

Effective teams discuss and agree on the formal structures and processes used by the board and superintendent in their functioning as a team (e.g., processes or structures for agenda setting, set-up of board room and table, agenda structure, visiting schools, handling complaints or concerns from the community, bringing up a new idea); how governance teams operate, how they do business. These agreements about how groups will operate are often called protocols.

Developing Protocols

To develop effective working relationships the governance team should come to agreement on how they will conduct business. The following seven steps provide a process that team members might follow when developing such agreements.

If the topic area is fairly straightforward and will cause minimal controversy among members of the team, Step Three could be eliminated or handled very quickly through a whole group discussion.

If a topic is volatile or team members have emotional involvement in the issue, Step Three provides a process that allows each team member to state his or her own perspective in a safe and open environment without interruption or argument. After each person's viewpoint is charted, elements of the protocol can be developed that take into consideration all of the opinions that were stated.

Some governance teams record their protocol agreements in a Governance Handbook. This is a relatively informal mechanism reflecting agreements reached by consensus. When protocols are maintained in a Governance Handbook, governance team members are able to access them easily for review and/or revision. Depending on the topic, however, the governance team may agree that the protocol should be formally adopted into the 9000 Series of Board Policy: the Board Bylaws. Because Board Bylaws require formal action by the board in order to make revisions, *Step Seven is an optional step* that requires thoughtful discussion by the governance team.

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Developing Protocols

Step 1 **State the Protocol Topic:**
Define the topic that requires an agreement about how governance team members will handle the issue or situation.

Step 2 **Agree on the Guiding Principles:**
Identify the shared core values and beliefs that serve as a backdrop for the governance team's thinking about this topic.

Step 3 **Identify the Situation from Each Person's Perspective (If Necessary):**
Allow each team member to speak -- one at a time without interruption -- to:
  A. Name the realities of the situation that cannot be changed. *(Truths)*
  B. Identify the issues for each team member, district personnel, district functions, and community interaction. *(Issues)*
  C. Identify the potential benefits and disadvantages that a protocol could produce for team members, district personnel, district functions, and community interactions. *(Benefits/Pitfalls)*
Subsequent team members should not agree or disagree with other team members, but should speak from their own perspective. It is helpful for responses to be charted as each person speaks so the identified perceptions can be considered as the elements of the protocol are developed. (Sample chart below)

TRUTHS:	ISSUES:	BENEFITS:	PITFALLS:

Step 4 **Suggest the Elements of the Protocol:**
Depending on the preference of the team, work as a whole group or in pairs to brainstorm the elements that the protocol should contain in order to honor the truths, satisfy the issues, and take into consideration the identified benefits and pitfalls.

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Step 5   Agree on the Protocol:

Agree on the Protocol Title, write down the guiding principles that governance team members agree should serve as the foundation for the protocol. Agree to the elements that will be included in the protocol and write them in the proper sequence. (Sample format below.)

Protocol Title:	
Guiding Principles: *We believe:*	**Protocol:** *We agree to:*

Step 6   Monitor, Evaluate and Review the Protocol:

Determine when and how the protocol will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed by the governance team. (For example, the governance team may agree to review all protocols whenever a new member joins the team.)

Step 7   Formally Adopt the Protocol (If Desired):

Formally adopt the protocol and add it to the Board Bylaws section of Board Policy.

Date Protocol Developed: _____

Date Protocol Adopted: _____