

Getting Our Board On

Hi Board, I'm looking forward to rendezvousing with you all on *Sunday, the 7th at 8:30am* in the *Lobby of the Marriott Long Wharf*. We're going to have to be productive (i.e., only a few min. of schmoozing), since our meeting ends at noon!

I'm going to consider this meeting the first of our new Board Cycle (in our Governance Policy, we state that our Board Cycle starts the last day of September). I figure we're close enough. So congrats, we've finished our first cycle! Let's really push this next cycle, and get our Board where it needs to be – truly governing DREAM.

That said, there are two items that I think would be good for us to tackle first, and one piece of old business we should review and continue to move forward:

In-a-nut-shell Agenda

Executive Director's Report (30 min. MAX, or else Board wrath)

New Business:

- 1) **Annual Agenda**
- 2) **Policy: Board/Staff Linkage**

Old Business

- 1) **Member Recruitment**

Annual Agenda: Our Board Cycle starts with the creation of an Annual Agenda. As we develop our first Annual Agenda, we should keep in mind our 4 general responsibilities:

- 1) Provide linkage to DREAM's ownership
- 2) Develop and enforce explicit governing policies
- 3) Assure Executive Director performance
- 4) Assure Board performance

We should make sure that the items we put on our Annual Agenda are Board responsibility and not staff responsibility. We will also have to prioritize, of course, and should factor in both the importance of an item as well as any necessary precursors to our ability to tackle it. Above everything, we need to have somewhat-solid policy down on paper before we can really dive into the other 3 general responsibilities. The close adherence to and continual critique of easily accessible policy is our fundamental role (we can't evaluate Jon or ourselves, or provide linkage to DREAM's ownership unless we really know what we're doing!). And we're close to having that basic foundation. After dealing with Board/Executive Linkage this meeting, we can explore the really fun policy (Executive Limitations and Ends). Ooooooo. Ends policy will be the most engaging piece of policy for us throughout the year (and throughout DREAM's existence), as it directs what DREAM does. It will need to be modified as DREAM grows and our kids' and families' needs change.

As we go about brainstorming Agenda items, I think we should consider our education as Board Members in addition to the action we need to take on items. Here are the items that come immediately to mind. I'm not going to try to fit them into a time-frame until we have it all out on the table:

- 1) Provide linkage to DREAM's ownership
 - a. Our Education
 - i. Visit program sites, talk to parents, children, and mentors
 - ii. Review surveys and evaluations already done by DREAM
 - iii. Stay updated through newsletters and website
 - b. Our Action
 - i. Create link and accountability to ownership
 - ii. Become ambassadorial to the ownership
 - iii. Write article for newsletters
- 2) Develop and enforce explicit governing policies
 - a. Our Education
 - i. Read John Carver's two books
 1. Boards that Make a Difference
 2. Reinventing Your Board
 3. Stay abreast of governing methodology through email lists, BOD newsletters, etc.
 - b. Our Action
 - i. Create Board/Staff Linkage policy
 - ii. Create Executive Limitations policy
 - iii. Create Ends policy
 - iv. Review and update policy on a regular basis, especially Ends
- 3) Assure Executive Director performance
 - a. Our Education
 - b. Our Action
 - i. Evaluation
 - ii. Plan for replacing Jon
 1. Ask Jon to create instructions for his responsibilities as ED
 - iii. Approve Budget and plan for sustainable cash flow
 - iv. Approve strategic plan
- 4) Assure Board Performance
 - a. Our Education
 - b. Our Action
 - i. Elect new Board Chair
 - ii. Member recruitment
 - iii. Self-evaluation

Once we have an agenda together, we should divide and conquer by taking on responsibility to prepare, in-depth, for various agenda items.

Board/Staff Linkage: We, the Board, govern DREAM by delegating the responsibility of carrying out our Ends to the Executive Director. We then hold the Executive Director accountable to accomplish those Ends with our restrictions on means by evaluation and a tight link to ownership. Check out the enclosed draft, and come with comments, additions/subtractions, etc.

Member Recruitment: I'd like to keep the wee bit of momentum we have for member recruitment moving forward. Please bring any updates you have concerning the people you were approaching as well as any additional names!

So, please bring to the meeting your thoughts on agenda items, your comments, criticisms, and improvements on the enclosed Board/Staff Linkage, and an update of your own progress on Member Recruitment (and energy to keep this one moving).

Dream,

Mike