



# On The Same Page!

## A Board Handbook

Dr. Cecelia Adams, Toledo City Board President  
Steve Horton, OSBA School Board Services Consultant



# A board handbook?

Yes!.....Why not a board handbook?



Why not a board handbook?



# What is the importance of a handbook?

- Important statement of policy
- Minimum expectations
- Organizational stability (everybody needs to play by the same rules)
- Sets an example of transparency for the community
- Sets a foundation for good board self-evaluation



# A matter of board governance

A poor governance team is hard on the community!

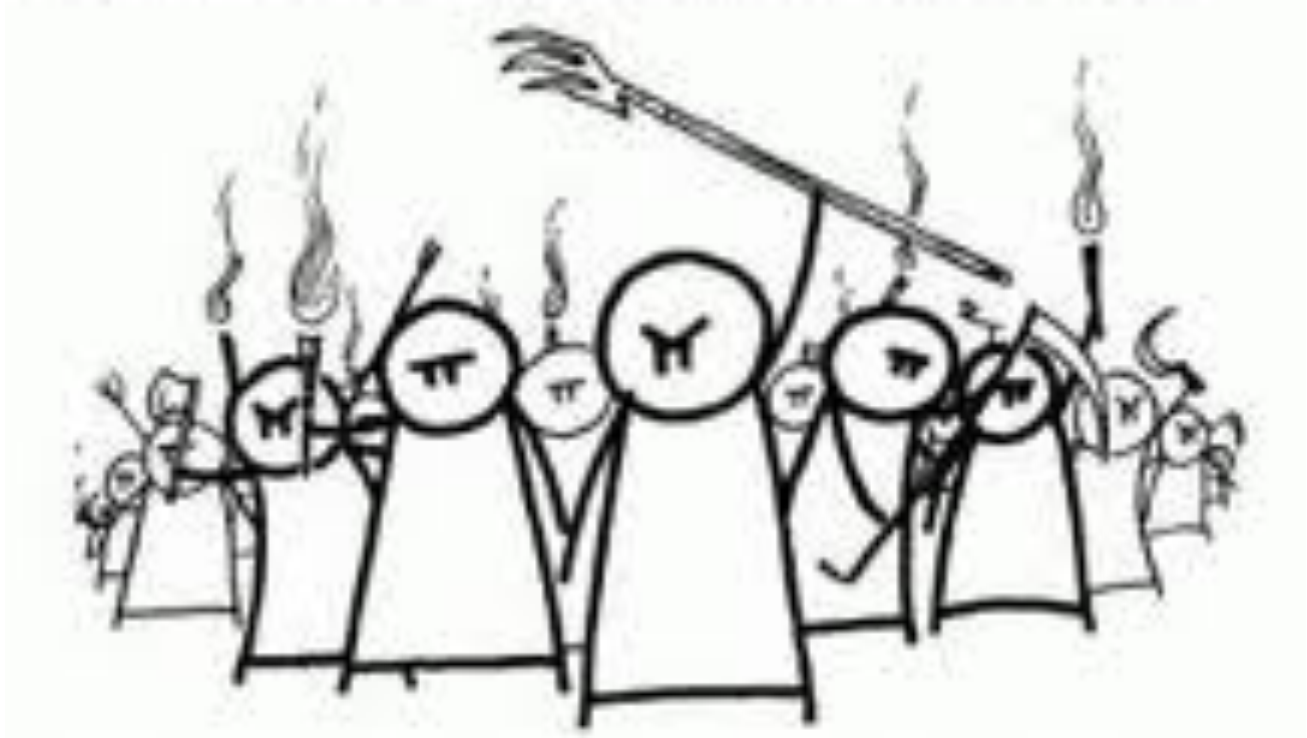


The community will believe what it sees!





# Why invite the angry mob?





# Stop fighting fires!



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Let me get this straight...You're on the police department, but you spend most of your time putting out fires? How fascinating!



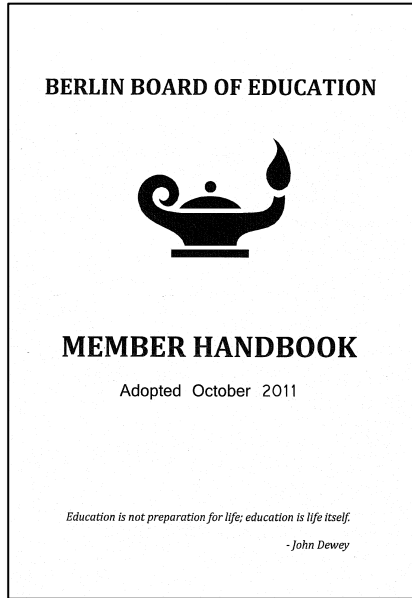
# Set a culture of good work

- A handbook offers a beginning for training
- It is an excellent opportunity for orientation
- Work to control the dynamic of new family members
- It is potentially an education tool for the community





# The Berlin model



*“We aspire to boring professionalism”*

- Gary Brochu, Berlin Schools president

*“The expectation is that to be a professional Board, it acts respectfully and responsibly to each other as well as to the staff. Hopefully, it will be **institutionalized**.”*

- Robert J. Rader, executive director of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education





# According to Brochu

- It is best to have a single author (think Thomas Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence)
- Involve all the board members in the book's creation
- A well written handbook reinforces good board culture



# According to Brochu

- The book allows an orientation for new members
  - *Don't wait until they are elected*
- It provides “cover and support”
- It provides the board's agreed upon rules versus a single member



# The Berlin Handbook design

*1. Preamble*

*2. Mission, Goals, and Core Values*

*- Deliberate in many voices but govern as one*

*3. Description of Board Committees*

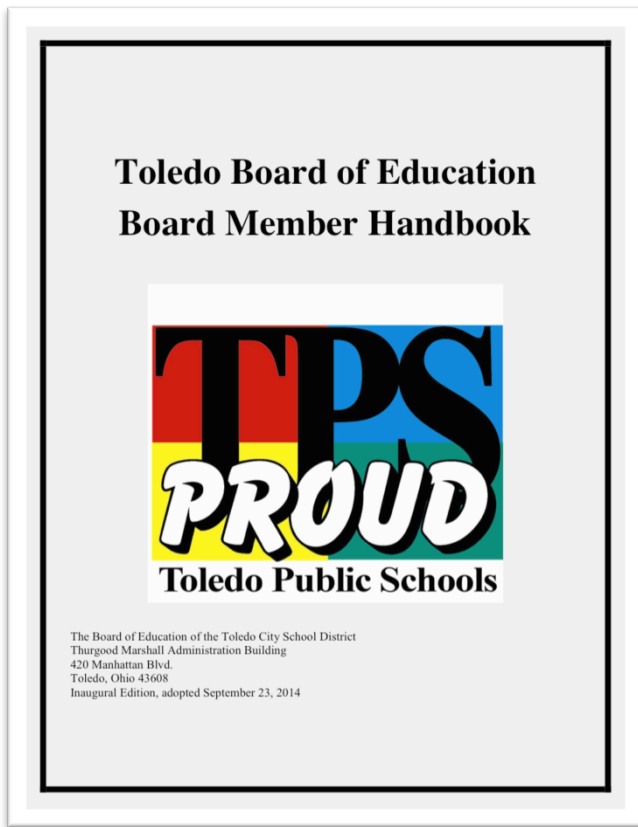
*4. Board protocols, roles, and responsibilities*

*5. Board meetings*

*6. Glossary of organizations, terms and acronyms*



# The Toledo Handbook



Dr. Cecelia Adams

- *Toledo Public Schools Board President*

Keith Wilkowski

- *Former General Counsel to Toledo Public Schools, Current Vice President, Buckeye CableSystem*



# The TPS Board Handbook – Long in the Making!

- Talked About for Years
- Active Board Member Involvement in its creation for more than 6 Months
- The Parable of the Three Frogs



# So What's a Handbook?

- According to Webster:
  - 1: a book capable of being conveniently carried as a ready reference : manual
  - 2 : a concise reference book covering a particular subject



# What Goes In It...Depends On What You Want Out Of It

- Some quick facts and figures every Board Member should know:
  - We have how many schools?
  - We have that many teachers?
  - Our budget is what?
  - We have how many mills?





# What Goes In It...Depends On What You Want Out Of It

- A Few History Lessons:
  - Public education – a great story to tell
  - District's first school building
  - District firsts and notable alumni
  - Enrollment over the years



# What Goes In It...Depends On What You Want Out Of It

- Rules of engagement:
  - Board Member term of office
  - Oath of office
  - Compensation and expenses
  - Filling vacancies
  - Board officers
  - Committees



# What Goes In It...Depends On What You Want Out Of It

- Rules of the (sometimes rocky) road:
  - Public meetings
  - Rules of procedure – (and who put Mr. Robert in charge anyway?)
  - Public records
  - Privacy of student records



# What Goes In It...Depends On What You Want Out Of It

- Levies and campaigns:
  - Rare it is for a Board Member not to go through a levy campaign
  - Know the rules
  - Avoid dumb mistakes that result in bad press for the district



# What Goes In It...Depends On What You Want Out Of It

- The Board's Policy Manual
- The Board's Policy Manual
- The Board's Policy Manual

Yes – it's that important – the place  
you can find further information



# Want more information?

## Download the complete documents

Toledo's Handbook: <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/17346/>

Berlin's Handbook: <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/53800/>

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