

Board Speaks as a Whole

Trustees make a difference by contributing to overall board effectiveness. Trusteeship is not an individual act – it is expressed by being a valuable member of a team of people, who together comprise the legal unit that governs a district.

Trustees have authority only when they are meeting as a board. The board as a whole is the legal governing unit. Trustees contribute their collective talents, skills, and backgrounds to their boards, but have no individual power or authority. Individual trustees have no authority to direct any college staff, should make no statements representing the board (unless they are reports of adopted board positions and policy), and should support board decisions once they are made.

Effective governance of a community or technical college requires trustees work together to be a cohesive unit. Community and technical college boards should consider many points of view and sources of information when making policy decisions, but should seek consensus to the fullest extent possible for the good of the district.

- Trustees should honor the “team” nature of the board.
- Individual trustees have no authority.
- Trustees should not speak for the board unless delegated by the board to do so.
- Trustees should not participate in any meeting outside of a legal assembly of the board in which matters of board substance are discussed.
- Trustees should fully support all decisions made by the board.

Effective trustees are those who make sincere efforts to work with others on the board in a cooperative, collegial manner and who are willing to abide by principles that contribute to board effectiveness. Being a member of the all-important leadership team requires respect and consideration for others and for the responsibilities of trusteeship.