

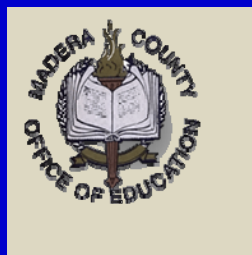
Regional System of District and School Support – Region VII
Partnering with the Counties of Fresno, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, and Tulare

Regional
System of
District and
School
Support

A Guide for Developing
**ALTERNATIVE GOVERNANCE
BOARDS**

2008-2009

*Developed by the Members of the
Regional Capacity Building Collaborative (RCBC)*



*Under the direction of Region VII – RSDSS
Regional System of District and School Support*

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Purpose

- ***The purpose of this guide is to provide a protocol and pathway for Alternative Governance Boards to be formed and to operate in supporting districts and Program Improvement schools in need of corrective action or restructuring to increase student achievement and close student achievement gaps.***

** Please note this document is only a "guide" for establishing AGBs. Each stage is meant to provide scenarios for discussion and need not be used in sequential order.

Background

The Regional System of District and School Support (RSDSS) is established to meet state and federal requirements for a statewide system of school support. A portion of the Region VII funding is set aside for the purpose of working with COE's to develop and deploy support teams designed to build a district's capacity to support low performing schools.

Region VII RSDSS provides base grant and sub-grant funding to each COE within the region. Liaison Coaches are COE staff, partially funded by RSDSS, who serve to extend the implementation of the regional RSDSS Workplan.

- **Program Improvement Services** – RSDSS can assist schools and districts assess their progress relative to the Nine Essential Program Components (EPC), the District Assistance Survey (DAS), and formation of District School Liaison Teams (DSLTL). RSDSS can assist in improving student achievement in Title 1 Program Improvement particularly in Corrective Action schools and schools planning for and implementing restructuring mandates from NCLB.
- **Alternative Governance** – Provide orientation and training for strategic selection of restructuring and corrective actions for underperforming schools. Conduct professional development for district and school personnel to assist in a strategic approach in making decisions regarding NCLB mandates specific to the Alternative Governance Board Model and Alternative Governance options. Provide training for potential Alternative Governance Board members. Provide technical assistance in implementation of Alternative Governance Boards.

Stage One

INITIAL CONTACT WITH THE DISTRICT

There are several possible scenarios or avenues in making contact with districts having Program Improvement Schools:

1. District in need calls county office...usually with school in P.I. year 3 or 4...or possibly year 5.
2. County Assistant Superintendent suggests a visit to a district with low-performing schools for assistance.
3. RSDSS has a request for P.I. Year 3-5 technical assistance through Principal, Assistant Superintendent, or Superintendent.

Reasons initial contact may occur:

1. Word of mouth based on data proven success.
2. Referral of SAIT Provider.
3. Professional marketing of C & I services, Region 7, and COE's.
4. CDE/RSDSS sponsored P.I. trainings.
5. Additional options.

Suggestions for further study:

How do we develop within COE's a pool of selected administrators, trained as AGB members and able to respond within a county or within the region as needed? What are practices in COE's regarding fees for service vs. no fee for RSDSS-related services beyond technical assistance?

Stage Two

MEET WITH DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

- **All of the suggestions made in Stage 1 may lead to an initial meeting with the Superintendent (or Designee) of the District -- Stage 2.**
 1. Meet with the Superintendent (Designee) who has inquired into P. I. services and surface issues of restructuring, the challenges, current status, and future considerations. Suggested people who might initially be present at this meeting – County Assistant Superintendent, Liaison Coach, RSDSS staff, Principals.
 2. Suggest that alternative methods besides AGB are considered for the restructuring process, such as moving to Charter School status; employing an outside agency to take over the school; or, restructure the school where a new principal is assigned and teachers are asked to reapply.
 3. A strong argument for implementing an AGB is that the local Governing Board does not give up control and does not necessarily have to replace any staff. This can give the district confidence that the AGB will support district and school reform efforts.
 4. The authority of the AGB comes from the Board, and is limited to making recommendations to the Superintendent and Board.
 5. If the Superintendent chooses to pursue the AGB, a discussion follows about its mission, what it will do, and possible models. In addition, an action plan would be outlined with the Superintendent as to how to proceed.
 6. Who should be on the AGB is very important. Although the Lead Agency (RSDSS or COE) may suggest the membership, it is the Superintendent and Governing Board who finalize the group membership. *(The Superintendent knows the political issues or responses that might influence who is placed on the AGB.)*

**Stage Two –
Continued**

7. With an outline of the possible model to be used by an AGB, and the possible membership, the Superintendent prepares to take a recommendation to the Governing Board.

Note: Models of AGBs would be examples from different school districts that have demonstrated success in improving student achievement. AGBs may have different names depending upon district politics; however, it must be kept in mind that NCLB requires that year 5 PI schools implement “an alternative governance plan.”

Suggestions for further study:

Compile a list of CDE, COE, and other resources for restructuring options.

**Stage Three:
FORMING AGB – TEAM MEMBERSHIP**

1. The Lead Member supervises, coordinates, and directs all actions and recommendations of the AGB. Additionally, the Lead Member provides follow-through, including agendas, minutes, and periodic reports to the Governing Board. Examples of Lead Member are Assistant Superintendent, Liaison Coach, or private provider, though any member may be selected as lead. Possible membership includes:
 2. Liaison Coach
 3. District Level Leadership
 4. Distinguished Educators
 5. Other County Office Representative
 6. Teachers or Principals from Title I Achieving Schools and/or schools that make significant progress.

Stage Three-Continued:

7. Other district personnel from successful districts.
8. Retired educators
9. Parents/Community members
10. Union Representative
11. Board Member
12. It is suggested that an AGB membership be made up of 3, 5, or 7 members. (Use an odd number to prevent ties in voting)

- Notes:
1. Members from outside the district should have successful experience and background in areas of school reform and instruction. As you think about the formation of the AGB, what might be some other considerations you might take into account in the formation of this team?
 2. The Lead Member is usually appointed by the District.

Stage Four:

PRESENTING AGB TO DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1. Suggest that the Superintendent or Designee take proposed AGB restructuring model, including membership, to the Governing Board for formal approval.
2. The model should indicate the role, responsibilities, and goals of the AGB; individual member roles; meeting schedule; how meetings will be conducted.

Stage Four–Continued:

3. Recommended language for Governing Board approval: *“To form an Alternative Governance Board which becomes a sub-committee by formal Board action and approval for one or two year appointment for the purpose outlined below”*
4. It is important to understand that the AGB sub-committee is only advisory to the Superintendent and Board. However, the Board should recognize the seriousness of the AGB role in dealing with the Program Improvement schools in years 3, 4, and 5.

Stage Five:

FIRST MEETING (Training) OF THE ALTERNATIVE GOVERNANCE BOARD AFTER DISTRICT BOARD APPROVAL

1. AGB meetings must have an agenda, and the agenda must be posted within 72 hours of meetings. (Brown Act) AGB minutes should be approved before being made public.
2. It is suggested that the AGB come together 2-3 months prior to beginning its actual work in order to have the group meet, develop norms, clarify roles, understand their mission, goals, hypothesis, and any other training needed that would be beneficial for the success of the AGB.
3. Review what type of training AGB needs to become successful.

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL TASKS FOR FIRST MEETING

1. Initial review of the school data.
2. Initial review of Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) and Academic Program Survey (APS).
3. Consider the needs of the individual AGB members. Training depends on the membership and the readiness of its members.

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL TASKS FOR FIRST MEETING *CONTINUED*

4. Calendar of events (observations, teacher focus groups, etc. if held separately from AGB meeting dates.)

❖ **QUESTIONS THAT NEED TO BE ANSWERED DURING OR BEFORE THE MEETING.**

1. As all meetings are open to the public, how will the AGB conduct “closed sessions” for confidential conversation?
2. What additional training do we need? (State tools, Brown Act, Roberts Rules of Order)
3. How do we approach the monitoring of a P. I. School?
 - How will we measure school progress?
 - What tools will we use to conduct classroom visitations?
 - How will we provide feedback to principal and school staff?

Stage Six

THE AGB LEAD MEETS WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT TO DISCUSS FIRST MEETING OUTCOMES.

1. Meeting with the Superintendent to get agreement, communicate, and discuss initial, specific role of AGB.

Suggestions for meeting with and debriefing the Superintendent conducted by the AGB Lead.

1. Discussion of Norms...Agreements acting as an appointed subcommittee of the Governing Board.
2. Review purpose of the AGB.
3. Review initial data of the P.I. School
4. Review what type of training AGB needs to become successful.
5. Calendar events.

Suggestions for meeting with and debriefing the Superintendent conducted by the AGB Lead. *Continued*

6. Agenda for next meeting.
7. Ask, "Do you believe the AGB has sufficient authority to make a difference?"

Stage Seven

POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL TRAINING AND KNOWLEDGE

Members of the AGB may need to be trained in some of the following areas:

1. The Academic Program Survey (APS) and its Nine Essential Program components; District Assessment Survey (DAS).
2. Alignment of the APS, DAS, and SPSA.
3. Cognitive Coaching.
4. Elements of Professional Learning Communities.
5. Training in walk-through visitations.
6. Other...(list of suggested readings).

Stage Eight

AGB BEGINS THEIR WORK AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

1. What is the district's capacity to support its schools to meet the needs of low performing schools and provide quality curriculum and instruction directed to the standards?
- One of the roles of the AGB is to find out the following information by review of the DAS or by direct interview. However, it is not necessary for the AGB to answer all or most of these questions before beginning its work.
 1. Determine the district's top three or four priorities.
 2. Is there frequent monitoring to ensure implementation of strategies that increase achievement. (School plan that addresses 9 EPC's)?

Stage Eight continued:

3. Can principal, teachers, district staff define their roles?
4. Reporting to AGB by district consultants. *What does that look like?*
5. Prioritizing, allocating resources, focused culture on students.
6. Examining budgets, mission statements.
7. Is there congruence between what is said and what is done? Is there a match between the LEA Plan and what sites see and experience?
8. If you can't measure capacity, how can you build it?
9. Is there an actual person, time, authority, and resource to make a difference in support of improvement efforts?
10. Is there Fiscal support, personnel support to ensure capacity?
11. What are the non-negotiable reform measures that need to be in place?

Notes:

1. Use DAS: AGB gets summary of data from District Assistance Survey, LEA Plan, and/or Single School Plan for Student Achievement from DSLT.
2. Visitation Protocol for verification of DAS.
3. Information gathering through interview... *who are you interviewing?*
4. Make sure that everyone understands terms/acronyms.
5. How was DAS completed? What training was provided?
6. Does the AGB need initial training in DAS to support school-level achievement in the following areas?

Stage Eight Continued:

- Standards-based Curriculum.
 - Professional Development.
 - Human Resources.
 - Data Systems and Data Analysis.
 - Community Involvement.
 - Fiscal Operations.
 - Governance and Leadership.
7. In this analysis, AGB needs to revisit its role and responsibility with the district to ensure that there is a match between the expectations of the two.
8. How do we avoid the District using AGB leverage “inappropriately”?

Stage 9

FIRST SITE VISITATION – DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE AGB MEMBERS AND THE PRINCIPAL

❖ Major questions that are asked of the school principal.

1. In the SPSA plan...what changes are suggested, that when fully implemented, would affect student achievement most significantly?
2. What are three or four items to focus upon that the school has determined will change achievement?
3. What are the criteria for observation protocols?
4. Can you arrange substitutes and teacher/staff release for focus groups?
5. Can you provide the following beyond the APS information:
 - Class schedules
 - Teacher assignments
 - School maps
 - Additional data that principal believes it is important for the AGB to have

ADDITIONAL ROLES OF AGB

1. Could share its knowledge and expertise for ensuring the success of the SPSA plan (changes that they want to implement after determining that the site does have a viable plan.
2. Important to discuss the monitoring – directing role of the AGB to support the plan for achievement.
3. AGB should be supportive, sometimes directive, but not punitive.

Stage 10

INFORMING THE STAFF OF THE PROCESS BEING USED WITH AGB

1. Schedule a gathering of the staff to meet the AGB members and outline the purpose of the AGB and future visitations.
2. Outline expectations and items that the AGB will be examining during meetings/visits. (The three or four prioritized items from previous meetings.) This will vary by school and/or district.
3. Announce scheduled visitation dates.
4. Explain to staff that the AGB will be comparing “what is” and “what could be” from the three or four prioritized goals.
5. The AGB will be looking for artifacts and data that support the implementation of the goals.
6. Provide examples of agendas and teacher focus group questions.
7. Assure staff that the AGB seeks to work collaboratively with the district and site staff to meet the prioritized goals.

Stage 11

SITE VISITATION PROTOCOL

1. Classroom observation protocols should be available at the district. Ask to use form and, if needed, provide training for AGB.
2. If a form does not exist, AGB will have to work with the district to develop one.
3. Whatever form is used, it should be used consistently, and the results reported in a consistent manner. Ideally, it includes quantifiable data and is measured against a rubric.
4. Results should be reported to the site staff, district staff, and Governing Board.

Stage 12

AGB FIRST REPORT OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The AGB first reports its recommendations to the Superintendent, then to the Principal and DSLT; the manner depends on how the Superintendent wants to receive the information.
2. Recommendations could include meeting minutes, a report on the priorities, where the gaps are, if any, or suggestions for improvement to the Superintendent that will eventually be presented to the Governing Board.

Stage 13

AGB LEAD MAKES FORMAL REPORT TO BOARD

1. The Governing Board, using the AGB recommendations, directs or redirects the Superintendent to make the necessary changes to improve student achievement results.
2. The Superintendent, or the AGB, acting under authority of the Superintendent and Governing Board, directs the Principal to make necessary changes and interventions to meet the focus goals.
3. Formal reports may be made at any time at the request of the Governing Board, Superintendent, or AGB. A formal report should always be presented at the end of the school year.