The Superintendent – Communicating and Building a Relationship

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Teaming For Success

“UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL.”

AESOP

© Lifehack Quotes
What is all the fuss about a good Board/Superintendent Relationship?

- Why is a good relationship so important?
True or False?

- The board/superintendent relationship can do more to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of education in schools than any other single factor.
True or False?

- The relationship between and among board members and the superintendent is healthier when all parties discuss and resolve misunderstandings and disagreements before serious conflict.
Reality—Partnership Is Complex

*Relationships Vary from District to District

*Disagreements Are Part of the Relationship

Strength lies in differences, not in similarities.

— Stephen Covey
Strengthening the Relationship

1. Build mutual trust and understanding.

2. Develop a shared understanding of roles and expectations of the board as well as the superintendent.

3. Build a shared vision that focuses on student needs for the future.
4. Ensure long term communication within and between the board and the superintendent.

5. Make effective decisions emphasizing consensus building, conflict resolution, and learning together.

6. Develop positive links with the community.

Strengthening Board of Education / Superintendent Relationships In America's Schools

The University of Iowa
Roles and Responsibilities

Board... (as a convened body),

- Supports Superintendent with Advice and Counsel
- Considers and Approves Policies
- Adopts the Budget
- Delegates to Superintendent All Executive Functions
- Allows Superintendent to Manage All Employees
- Keeps Superintendent Informed – No Surprises
- Refers Complaints to Superintendent
- Holds the Superintendent Accountable
Roles and Responsibilities

Superintendent...

- Loyal to Board
- Assists Board with Counsel and Advice
- Keeps the Board Fully Informed
- Recommends Instructional Improvements
- Recommends Purchases and Services
- Manages the Finances of the District
- Directs Gains in Student Achievement

Review the Superintendent’s Contract For Defined Roles
Effective Board and Superintendent Decision-Making

Board Responsibilities
- Adopts Goals/Priorities: What The Board Expects Of Itself And The Districts
- Evaluation: Difference Between Outcomes And Priorities
- Product Assessment: Measure Of Success

Governance
- Adopts Policies: The Board’s Guidelines

Education Plan
- What
- When
- How

Fiscal Plan
- Cost
- Source

Decisions

Administrative/Professional Responsibilities
- Evaluate the Progress: How Well The Operations Were Performed

Management
- Develop Plan and Directives: What The Superintendent Wants Accomplished To Implement The District’s Policies
Who Is Responsible?

- Who is responsible for the supervision of employees at the school site?
- Who appoints, compensates and otherwise controls all school employees?
- Who approves the employment of the administrators, teachers and non-certificated personnel?
Getting Started

- What is a good strategy when casting a vote while you are still learning about the issues coming before the Board?

- [ ] Irrelevant
- [ ] Irrelevant
- [x] Relevant
- [ ] Irrelevant
- [ ] Irrelevant
Communicating with Superintendent

- The Board and Superintendent must determine:
  - What methods will be used to communicate?
  - How much and about what issues you want to know about?
  - When do you want to know?
  - How will you ask for information you need?
The Board Chair and Superintendent Relationship

- Weekly check in’s recommended
- Discussion of Agenda items
- Any issues around bargaining units
- Have your board calendar handy
Problem-Solve for a Minute

You are confronted by a parent in your local store regarding the parent’s displeasure with the 3rd grade teacher. How would you conduct yourself as a board member, and what would you do following the conversation?
Communication – Behaviors

- Listen to understand.
- Speak to be understood.
- Start dialogue from a common point of reference or point of agreement; and move slowly into areas of disagreement.

The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn’t said. — Peter Drucker
Relationship Building --
Attitudes

- I assume **good faith**; I do not question your sincerity or your sanity.

- I **care about our relationship** and want to resolve this difference in perception. Please help me to see it from your perspective.

- I am **open to influence** and am prepared to change
Defining the Roles: Maintaining a Healthy
Thank you for Attending

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Thanks to Bill Hill, Superintendent of Bristol Bay for his time and hard work on behalf of students in Alaska!

• PS We would like to thank the Michigan Association of School Boards for sharing some of their slides with us! We appreciate all our school board members and organizations.
Questions and Answers