

Best Practices for Boards of Education

Roles and Responsibilities of
School Board Members
What they are and what they are not.



What School Boards Do

1800's

- **Built the School**
- **Hired Teachers**
- **Shoveled coal/chopped wood**
- **Painted schoolhouse**
- **Raised the operating expenses**
- **Paid the bills**

21st Century

- Establish Vision
- Set/Monitor Policy
 - Evaluate Itself
 - Hire/Evaluate Superintendent
- Establish Budget
- Act as Hearing Panel
- Negotiate Contracts



What School Boards Do

1800's

- **Board Operates School**

21st Century

- Board sets vision/policy; monitors administration
- Superintendent operates district
- Principal operates school



The Role of The Board of Education

**To Foster, Support,
Promote, and Improve
Student Achievement**





Nine Principles of Board Leadership

1. Education/Students over politics
2. The Board and Superintendent are a Leadership Team
3. Take action as a Board: only actions taken at an official board meeting are legal and binding.
4. Follow and be consistent in the application of Board policies and procedures
5. Support the Superintendent in his/her role as CEO
6. Monitor effectiveness of policy
7. Know the difference between policy & administration
8. Know the "Chain Of Command"
9. Communicate, communicate, communicate



Effective School Boards

Commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement.

Continue to bring focus back to the work of the board to improve, foster and support student achievement

Have strong shared beliefs and values about students' ability to learn and of the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels.

Are accountability driven.

Have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community.

Are data-savvy.

Align and sustain resources to meet district goals.

Lead as a united team with the superintendent.

Take part in team development and training.

The Role of The Board of Education Three Central Responsibilities

Policy Development

Developing, implementing and monitoring of the district's policies including short and long term goals. These policies serve as the road map for the school district. They give direction to the administration and staff and become the foundation for accountability.

Adopting an Annual School Budget

The Board of Education's annual operating budget is the most important policy it adopts. It is designed to provide for the schools' day to day operations, supply the means to achieve short and long-range goals and fosters ongoing improvement by its support of the Board's strategic goals. The budget a tangible manifestation of the vision, philosophy, and aspirations of the school system.

Hiring The Superintendent

Selecting, retaining and evaluating the superintendent of schools, who serves as the district's chief executive officer and implements board policy. Perhaps no single decision a board makes has more impact than the selection of the superintendent.



The Four Principles of School Board Leadership

- Establish a **Vision** for Improving Student Achievement
- Develop and Maintain a **Structure** (Environment) that supports the **Vision**
- Establish measures of **Accountability** to ensure **Structure** supports **Vision**
- Develop **Advocacy** efforts to ensure the community, staff, parents, etc. understand and support the **Vision**



Setting Vision

- Vision/Mission Statement
- Board Policies
- Strategic Planning
- Board Goals
- District Goals

BOARD
(With Community/Staff
Input)



Setting Vision

- Vision/Mission Statement
- Board Policies
- Strategic Planning
- Board Goals
- District Goals
 - Superintendent's Goals
 - Principals' Goals
 - Teachers' Goals





Create the Environment

- Set Expectations
- Create Budget
- Support Curriculum Enhancement
- Promote Excellent Teaching
- Create a *Culture of Learning*



Establish Accountability

- Superintendent Evaluation
- Board Evaluation
- Assess Progress Regularly
- Policy Review
- Review Progress on Goals





The Role of the Board:

- Developing, implementing and monitoring of the district's policies;
- Hiring the Superintendent and participating, pursuant to policy, in search committees formed to hire other administrative personnel;
- Working with the Superintendent, as part of a management team, to ensure that policy is effective and being implemented, through regulations, as intended by the Board;
- Developing and adopting an annual budget in line with the mission, goals, and vision for the district.
- Serving on various hearing panels on such issues as termination, expulsion and grievance.



The Role of the Board

- Fulfilling the *trustee role*, board members act rationally to serve broad public interests.
- Ensuring the safety and adequacy of all school facilities
- Providing resources for the professional development of teachers, principals and other staff
- Building public support and understanding of public education.
- Communicating and interpreting the school district's mission to the public and vice versa.
- Periodically evaluating its own leadership, governance, and teamwork for children
- Overseeing negotiation with employee groups

What Is Not the Role of the Board

- Initiating action in response to staff, parent, community or student complaints
- Investigating, soliciting information or engaging in discussion of complaints or disciplinary matters of any kind related to staff, students or school board business
- Administering or managing the budget
- Solving or acting on a information received when the board is not in session
- Expecting to know everything that is happening in the school system at all times;

Board Members Do Not Have Administrative Or In-Classroom Roles

CABE encourages Board members to attend extracurricular events including, concerts, musicals, plays, sports events, awards nights, and other events held outside the school day.

It is also **Best Practice** for Board members to **volunteer** in and **visit** schools, in consultation with the Superintendent and in compliance with board policy, and administrative regulations and protocol.

Remember* board members are members of the public when visiting and volunteering in schools. There is no Board members must follow board policies and administrative regulations when visiting or volunteering.



Best Practices: Visiting Schools



Administration **Concept and Roles in Administration**

The Superintendent of Schools is responsible, within the guidelines established by the Board of Education policy, state, federal laws and regulations, and employee agreements, for directing and coordinating the staff to achieve the goals and general objectives adopted by the Board of Education consistent with the district's educational philosophy.

The Board of Education expects the Superintendent, and other administrators, to understand and practice effectively and efficiently:

1. decision making and communication;
2. planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation of programs and personnel; and
3. coordination between the school system and community to work cooperatively on behalf of local education.

(cf. Series 0000 Goals and Objectives)
Policy adopted: December 12, 2002
BOLTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Bolton, Connecticut



What Is Not the Role of the Board

- Curriculum development
- Evaluating curriculum delivery
- Getting reports directly from staff members without working through the superintendent;
- Supervising, observing, or directing employees - they are responsible to their supervisors, principals, and ultimately, the Superintendent.



What Is Not the Role of the Board

- Observing classrooms or staff
- Evaluating staff other than the superintendent
The Superintendent observes and evaluates administrators and principals observe and evaluate teachers pursuant to collective bargaining agreements, state law, and district evaluation procedures
- Being involved in the day-to-day operation of the school system
- Handling administrative details

Individual Board Members

- Individual Board members have no authority except when they are meeting as a Board of Education;
- The Board of Education is a collective body and, by statute, can only act when a quorum is assembled in a legally constituted meeting;
- The statements or actions of individual Board members do not bind the Board of Education, except when that statement or action has been authorized by an official act of the Board;
- Board members should be careful not to act or speak in a manner that suggests they are speaking or acting on behalf of the board of education or the school district when they have not been so authorized by the Board.

The Chain of Command

Know the Chain of Command

Board Members are not “fixers.”

You do not need to nor can you solve all of the problems brought to you.

You DO need to know where to refer people who come to you with conflicts, complaints, and problem situations.

Know who can facilitate solutions and make sure the public knows who to speak to and why

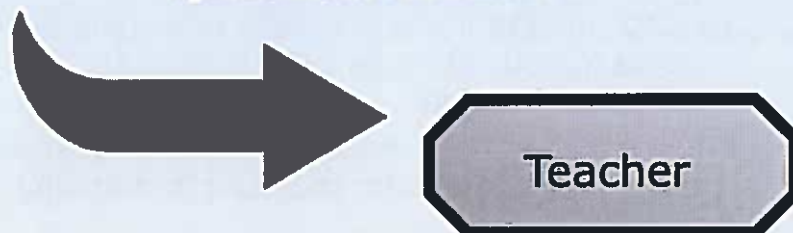


Chain of Command

When you get a complaint about a teacher or program...

Chain of Command

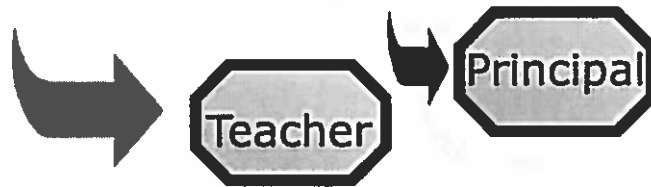
The complainant needs to talk to the teacher in question first...



Chain of Command

If the issue is not resolved there...

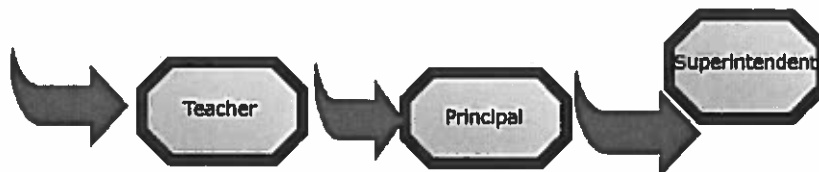
They should be referred to that person's supervisor, usually the principal.



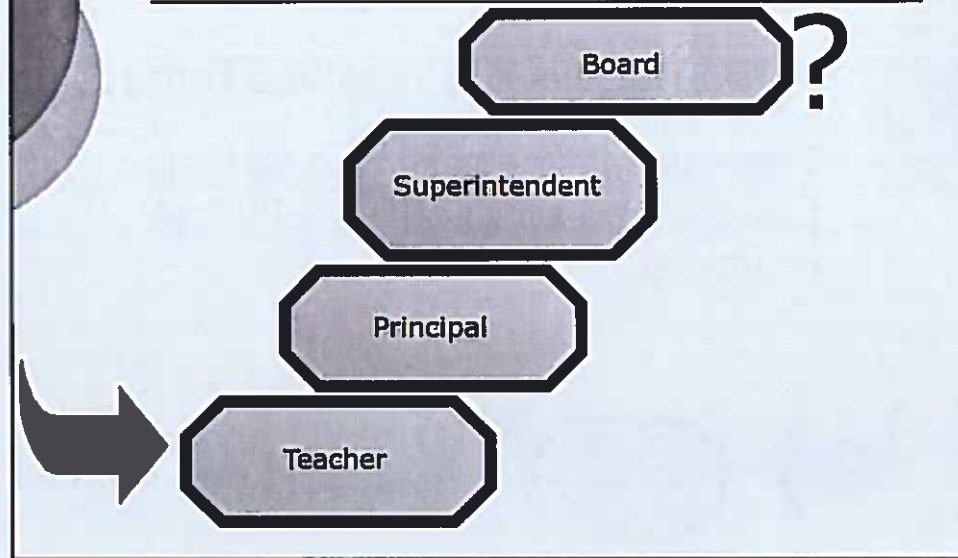
Chain of Command

If not resolved there...

The issue will be referred to the Superintendent



Chain of Command



Chain of Command

The board should very rarely, if ever, be involved in the handling of a complaint.

Board Policy

The Board would take action only:

1. Subject to a specific board policy
2. Upon a formal request, as described in the Board policy
3. After going through the chain of command without resolution

When Asked about Investigations, Legal Matters, Student or Staff Discipline

“This problem could end up requiring board action, and if I am involved in it at this level, I will be unable to act on it as a member of the board at that time because I will have violated due process rights, and/or collective bargaining law, and/or privacy rights.

Please speak with _____



LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT



Connecticut Constitution



Constitution of the State of Connecticut *Article Eighth*

Sec. 1. There shall always be free public elementary and secondary schools in the state. The general assembly shall implement this principle by appropriate legislation.



Connecticut General Statutes



C.G.S. §10-220

Duties of boards of education.

(a) Each local or regional board of education shall maintain good public elementary and secondary schools, implement the educational interests of the state as defined in section 10-4a and provide such other educational activities as in its judgment will best serve the interests of the school district;...



Connecticut General Statutes



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Connecticut General Statutes

(b) The board of education of each local or regional school district shall...prepare a statement of educational goals.. and every five years thereafter,...shall review and update such statement of goals.

Connecticut General Statutes

Shall make a continuing study of the need for school facilities...the care, maintenance and operation of buildings;...shall make such provisions as will enable each child of school age, residing in the district to attend some public day school for the period required by law and provide for the transportation ...

Connecticut General Statutes

Shall provide an appropriate learning environment for its students which includes:

- adequate instructional books, supplies,
- materials, equipment, staffing, facilities, and technology,
- equitable allocation of resources among its school,
- a safe school setting.

Connecticut General Statutes



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Connecticut General Statutes



10-222 Appropriations & Budget
Each local board of education shall prepare an itemized estimate of the cost of maintenance of public schools for the ensuing year and shall submit such estimate to the board of finance...The money appropriated by any municipality for the maintenance of public schools shall be expended by and in the discretion of the board of education.



Connecticut General Statutes



C.G.S. §10-157 Superintendents
(a) Any local or regional Board of Education

shall provide for the supervision of the schools under its control by a superintendent who shall serve as the chief executive officer of the board.

The superintendent shall have executive authority over the school system and the responsibility for its supervision.



