

Board & Administrator

FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

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Develop trust before becoming board president

As the spokesperson for the school board, the board president must be in constant -- if not daily -- contact with the superintendent. Accordingly, if you have recently been elected to the position or you're thinking of running for board president down the line, get to know your superintendent and take steps to develop trust. Communicate

with the superintendent on a regular basis, be honest about your concerns and motivations, offer constructive feedback, and actively participate in board meetings and executive sessions. Starting off on the right foot will ensure that you and the superintendent will make a great team in the future. ■

Bring in expert to train board before superintendent's evaluation

One of the most important responsibilities of the school board is to evaluate the superintendent's performance each year. Not only does the evaluation enable the board to assess whether the district is successful under the superintendent's leadership, it also presents the board an opportunity to provide detailed feedback and identify areas in which the superintendent needs further development.

Because the evaluation is such an important event, consider bringing in an expert beforehand to train all board members on the process. This may be especially helpful if the board has recently welcomed new and inexperienced members into the fold.

For example, on Sept. 30, 2021, the school board for Chapel Hill-Carrboro (N.C.) City Schools held a special meeting to discuss the superintendent evaluation process. During this meeting, a school law expert trained board members on how to fill out the state's evaluation packet, which uses seven standards to

gauge the superintendent's success and objectives.

You can do something similar for your board. Consider asking your district's legal counsel or another expert to lead a training session a few weeks before the superintendent's annual evaluation is due.

At this training, board members can ask the trainer to review how to:

- Evaluate the superintendent using state-imposed evaluation standards or worksheets, if applicable.
- Analyze the superintendent's self-evaluation.
- Determine whether the superintendent has met yearly goals.
- Develop and communicate goals and expectations for the upcoming year.
- Accurately assess the superintendent's performance in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Prevent bias or prejudice from impacting the evaluation process.
- Set appropriate salary increases. ■

Pause before posting

Board members should be careful about discussing school-related business on social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs. If posted comments about school issues prompt responses from other board members, the back-and-forth dialogue on a social networking page could amount to a quorum of the board deliberating in violation of the Open Meetings Act. Social media platforms can implicate both the records and meeting provisions of the "right to know" law.

Here are some guidelines to follow:

- Convey that you are communicating as an

individual member of the board and not as an official district spokesperson.

- Do not comment on other board members' pages or respond to their comments.
- Avoid posting content that indicates you have already formed an opinion on the matter.
- Post only content that has been released to the public.
- Respect the privacy of others.
- Take a minute and review before you hit "post."
- Consider designating a social media spokesperson to provide board perspective. ■

Use board committee report to enhance organization, efficiency

Committees can significantly streamline the school board's decision-making process. However, when a committee has dedicated a lot of time and effort into researching a specific project or issue, it may sometimes be difficult for the committee to

organize its findings and condense them into one neat recommendation. To help your committee chairs with this process, ask them to fill out this form when they are ready to present a final recommendation to the board as a whole.

Board Committee Report

Instructions: Once your committee has researched the assigned issue and has developed a final recommendation, fill out this form and present it to the whole school board. Attach any important documents that you would like the board to consider.

Committee name: _____ Date: _____

Names of members in attendance:

1.) _____ 2.) _____
3.) _____ 4.) _____

Statement of committee issue or area of responsibility:

Final committee recommendation:

Reasons for recommendation:

Policies or bylaws affected by committee recommendation:

Recommended board action stated in the form of a motion:

Signatures of all committee members in attendance:

1.) _____ 2.) _____
3.) _____ 4.) _____ ■