

## **Board Minute – Board/Superintendent Roles**

The relationship between a school board and superintendent is a unique one. The superintendent is the district's chief executive officer and also serves as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the school board under Minnesota law. At the same time, the superintendent is hired, directed, and evaluated by the board. Understanding this relationship comes down to understanding the difference between governance and administration.

The school board governs the district. It establishes policy, sets priorities, approves budgets, determines long-range direction, and holds the superintendent accountable for carrying out that direction. The board also represents the community and brings different perspectives into decisions about the future of the school district.

The superintendent is both the board's professional advisor and the district's administrative leader. The superintendent keeps the board informed about district operations, student and staff needs, finances, laws, upcoming issues, and progress toward district priorities. The superintendent also makes recommendations so the board can make informed decisions.

Once the board establishes direction, the superintendent carries that direction into the daily work of the district. This includes supervising staff, managing programs and operations, implementing board policy, and making sure the district remains focused on the priorities established by the board.

Individual board members do not independently direct employees or make decisions for the district unless the board has specifically authorized them to do so. Direction to the superintendent comes from the board as a whole through boards taken as a board.

Not every concern becomes a board decision. The board establishes policies, procedures, and a chain of command so most issues can be handled at the appropriate level. The board remains the district's governing authority, while the superintendent and administrative team manage the organization within the framework the board has established.

I often compare this relationship to a sports team. Every position has a responsibility. A successful team does not require everyone to do the same job. It requires people to understand their roles, communicate well, and trust others to do their part. If the offensive linemen suddenly decide they should be running pass routes, the team will probably have a difficult afternoon.

The board governs. The superintendent administers. The board establishes direction, policy, priorities, and accountability. The superintendent provides professional advice and carries that direction into the daily work of the district. When those roles are understood and respected, the board and superintendent can work together as an effective team focused on what matters most: providing the best possible educational opportunities for every student we serve.

Everyone has an important role to play, and when we come together as Thunder Nation, we can continue creating big opportunities for our students.