

New Superintendent New School Board Practices



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Board Retreat

Success in New Superintendent/School Board Relationship

During entry, successful superintendents established trust and a positive relationship with their school boards by (2012 study):

- ❖ Use of a formal or informal superintendent entry plan during the first 90-100 days
- ❖ Frequent communication with board members

2007 book *Effective Superintendent School Board Practices* recommends new superintendents:

- ❖ Reach out to and understand each board member's interests and goals

Transition to New Superintendent Offers Opportunity for School Board

Qualities desired in new superintendent:

- ❖ Collaboration
- ❖ Transparency
- ❖ Inclusive decision-making
- ❖ Bringing people together to solve problems

Reflect and enhance those same qualities in school board

Board Practices to Enhance Collaboration and Inclusive Decision Making

Increasing regular board member awareness will facilitate greater communication with incoming superintendent:

- ❖ Very brief weekly report listing topics from superintendent/board chair meeting
 - Increases understanding of what's happening
 - Board members with questions can follow up with the superintendent, thus creating additional opportunities for them to engage directly with the superintendent on areas of interest or concern.
- ❖ Weekly board chair/superintendent meetings did not include the vice chair until last few years. Could rotate to also include chair and another board member.
- ❖ A suggestion rather than a requirement for more meetings. Past monthly meetings of superintendent and two board members. Synergy of these meetings of three people led to important conversations, innovative ideas, and greater understanding of the perspectives of board members and of the superintendent.

Board Practices to Enhance Collaboration and Inclusive Decision Making

Board chair “acts as a resource to superintendent on decisions that may require further information between board meetings.” (OSBA, Role of the Board Chair).

Quite a responsibility as the the board chair is regularly representing all voices of the board.

- ❖ Inclusive practice of board chair was conducting very frequent touch point conversations with each board member. This enabled the board chair to understand all the perspectives of board members.

Board Practices to Enhance Collaboration and Inclusive Decision Making

Distributed leadership reduces the stress on the board chair and creates a school board that is stronger as our *wide* variety of talents, skills, and knowledge are drawn upon.

- ❖ Seek input on board activities such as the retreats. Shared planning documents facilitate inclusion so all board members can suggest topics.
- ❖ All members can take turns representing the board in meetings with people or organizations.

Going Forward

EIGHT CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD

1. Effective school boards commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision.
2. Effective school boards have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn, and of the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels.
3. Effective school boards are accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.
4. Effective school boards have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.
5. Effective boards are data savvy; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.
6. Effective school boards align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.
7. Effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.
8. Effective school boards take part in team development and training, sometimes with their superintendents, to build shared knowledge, values and commitments for their improvement efforts.