

TEAMWORK: THE BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT IN ACTION

Team Work Concepts

Six concepts are important in any team effort:

- Common goals, supported by all team members
- A game plan to achieve the goals
- Regular evaluation of progress, with full team participation
- Clearly defined roles, resulting in a coordinated effort
- Trust and confidence of team members in one another
- Communication, including active listening

Common Goals

Common goals, or goals supported by all team members, are one of the essential elements of effective board/superintendent relations. Common goals provide:

- A framework for unified action
- A guide for allocation of resources
- A basis for communication and understanding
- A foundation for effective public relations, policy development, and direction for the school system
- A frame of reference for reducing and managing conflict
- A basis for evaluation of progress

Common team goals are a blending of individual member goals. The individual can better achieve his or her goals through team support and action.

A "Game Plan"

Planning to achieve team goals is a second essential element in teamwork. A plan provides:

- A course of action team members will follow to achieve common goals
- A means of allocating resources and time to priority goals
- A way of controlling and coordinating activities
- A more specific set of objectives and strategies to reach goals
- A projection of time needed to achieve goals and objectives



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Effective teamwork requires that all team members participate in developing the game plan. This increases individual understanding and commitment to carrying it out. Members who do not understand the plan cannot be expected to perform well in achieving team goals.

Evaluation of Progress

Regular evaluation of progress in achieving goals is a third essential element in teamwork. This kind of evaluation provides:

- A check on how well plans are succeeding
- A means of monitoring resources (money, people)
- An assurance of accountability so that what is supposed to be happening is happening
- A control for quality of effort
- Identification of needed improvements

Evaluation begins with the identification of decisions that need to be made. Team members ask questions, gather information to answer them, and finally make judgements about how well goals are being achieved. Evaluation may result in changing plans, strategies, or resources allocated to particular activities. Evaluation ensures that these decisions will be made on the basis of facts, information, or evidence rather than on the basis of opinion alone.

Clearly Defined Roles

A fourth essential element in teamwork is a clear division of work and roles. Individual team members play different roles in achieving goals. Clear role definition provides:

- A clear expectation for performance of individual team members
- A constructive part for each member to carry out
- A coordinated effort in achieving desired goals
- Agreements that help avoid misunderstanding and confusion
- A feeling of interdependence and contribution on the part of each member of the team
- A building upon individual strengths of team members

The need for clarifying roles is an on-going one. Roles may shift and change depending upon tasks and strategies and the demands of the total enterprise.

Trust and Confidence

These qualities are the fifth essential element in teamwork. Team members need to have confidence in one another to get the job done. They need to have trust in individual judgement, behavior, and ability.

Trust and confidence result from good team relationships, and are maintained by open, candid communication among team members. Trust and confidence are increased when:



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- Communication is open and direct among team members
- Lines of authority are clear
- Roles are agreed upon by all team members
- Individuals feel they are contributing to the team effort
- Accountability for performance is clear
- Team members perform in ways they are expected to

Team members' trust in one another, confidence in the others' abilities, and willingness and commitment to get the job done are some of the payoffs in teamwork.



Definitions

ORIENTATION: a person's awareness of self with regard to position and time and place and personal relationships; a course introducing a new situation or environment.

- An adjustment or adaptation to a new environment, situation, custom, or set of ideas.
- Introductory instruction concerning a new situation: *orientation for incoming students.*

BENEFITS: Provides introduction to the operations of your district and “the rules” of boardmanship.

MENTORING: The establishment of a personal relationship for the purpose of professional instruction and guidance.

- Constitutes a one-to-one informal and supportive partnership between a more experienced person and a new colleague.
- An apprenticeship for new board members on a confidential and non-judgmental basis.
- A process where one person (the mentor) offers help, guidance, advice and support to facilitate learning or development of another person (the mentee).

BENEFITS THE MENTEE: Provides the skills necessary to comply and cope with the “rules of boardmanship.” Promotes faster assimilation to the board environment and sets the stage for developing greater board skills more rapidly.

BENEFITS THE MENTOR: Gain satisfaction from being able to transfer skills and knowledge accumulated through experience. Provides opportunity to reexamine their own practices, processes and beliefs.



Checklist for New Board Member Mentoring Programs

1. A Statement of purpose and a plan that includes:

- Who, what, where, when, why and how activities will be performed.
- Input from CSA, Board officers, potential participants
- Assessment of Board of Education need.
- Realistic, attainable, and easy-to-understand operational plan.
- Goals, objectives and timelines for the plan.

2. A plan for both mentors and participants that includes:

- Strategies that portray accurate expectations and benefits.
- Targeted outreach based on participants' needs.

3. An orientation for mentors and participants that includes:

- Program overview.
- Level of commitment expected (time, energy, flexibility).
- Expectations and restrictions (accountability and confidentiality).
- Benefits and rewards they can reasonably expect.

4. Eligibility screening for mentors that includes:

- Suitability criteria that relate to the program's statement of purpose and needs of the target population. Could include some or all of the following: flexibility, skills identification; motivation for volunteering; interest level; and time availability.
- Successful completion of NJSBA initial board member orientation.

5. A monitoring process that includes:

- Consistent, scheduled meetings with mentors and participants.
- A tracking system for ongoing assessment.
- Written records, if required.
- A process for managing issues that may arise, praise, re-matching, interpersonal problem solving and premature relationship closure.

6. A support, recognition and retention component that includes:

- A formal kickoff event.
- Relevant issue discussion and information dissemination.
- Annual recognition and appreciation event.

7. Closure steps that include:

- Private and confidential exit interviews to debrief: participant and mentor
- Assistance for participants in defining next steps for achieving their goals as a new board member(s).

8. An assessment component based on:

- Outcome analysis of program and relationship.
- Program criteria and statement of purpose.
- Information needs of board.



Our Town Board of Education 2016 - 2017 Mentoring Plan

BOARD GOAL: To develop a mentoring plan to assimilate new board members into our board-superintendent leadership team.

Major Activities	Personnel Needed	Resources Required	Timelines	Indicators of Success
1				
2				
3.				
4.				
5.				



Into the Fold

How to introduce your new board members to your district

By JANET BAMFORD

Brand new board members may know a lot about their communities, but they probably don't know as much as they think they do about their school board. Even the most conscientious community member, who has been faithfully attending board meetings hasn't been privy to ongoing executive session discussions, negotiations that are in process, and a host of other issues. "When you first run for a school board, you have no idea how the board truly functions," says Jane Kershner, director of field services for New Jersey School Boards Association, and herself a former board member. "It is critical that a new board member understand the workings of a board." That's why it is important for a local board to conduct some sort of orientation to acquaint the new board members with the workings of a district.

This orientation is different and distinct from the new board member training that is conducted by the New Jersey School Boards Association that new board members are required to complete. That program covers topics such as the roles and responsibilities of board members, the Sunshine Law, the School Ethics Act, policymaking, school finance, labor relations, and evaluating the chief school administrator.

But local board members need some sort of initiation and orientation into their own district's board. That could be as informal as the current board president and the superintendent sitting down for coffee with the new board member. "When I was a board president, I would call new board members with the agenda for the reorganization meeting and go over it with them item by item," says Kershner. "The reorganization meeting is a big one with several items that have to be voted



on. They could decide to abstain if they felt they couldn't vote on an issue, or they could ask questions prior to the board meeting."

Other boards have a more structured program, with new board members coming to the board office to meet administrators, and perhaps tour school buildings.

Several weeks ago *School Board Notes* online ran a 30-Second Survey querying readers about their local board initiation. One respondent described the process his district goes through. "The new board member or members meets with the superintendent and the board president to go over current issues and basic boardsmanship," he said. "We have a specially prepared briefing book for new members with copies of all the labor agreements, the Board Member Code of Ethics and other important documents. Our briefing lasts about an hour and is done within the first few weeks after reorganization."

Another tactic is to provide the new member with an unofficial adviser.

"Some boards find it useful to assign a seasoned board member to be a mentor to a new board member," says Terri Lewis, NJSBA field service representative and former board member. "At first new board members don't mind asking questions at a meeting or even beforehand, but after awhile new board members just don't want to keep asking 'what does this mean, or why do we have to do this, or why can't we do this?' The new members feel more comfortable going to an assigned mentor with those questions."

Whatever the form, boards of education should have some process for welcoming new board members. Here is information that new board members need to become acquainted with soon after taking office:

The current issues What topics is your board currently grappling with? Is the district in the middle of negotiations with the teachers? Is it negotiating to buy a piece of land for a new school or reviewing the language arts curriculum in the elementary schools? What is the status of any litigation the district is currently involved in?

The district administrators It sounds elementary, but board members should meet the superintendent, the business administrator, the assistant superintendents and other supervisors or top administrators in the district.

The district's policy manual New board members should be acquainted with how to use the manual and how to find information they may be looking for.

The contracts A new member should know something about the existing labor contracts such as the superintendent's contract, the teachers' association contract.



How Board Members Can Drive Student Achievement

Is your board doing what's needed
to improve academic performance?

JANET BAMFORD

What can school boards do to drive student achievement?

That's the fundamental question that was asked by the renowned Iowa Lighthouse Project. The research study, which was conducted by the Iowa Association of School Boards, had two parts. The first, which was conducted from 1998 to 2000, demonstrated that districts with higher levels of student achievement had school boards that were different from those in lower-performing districts, even when controlling for a range of variables. Part two of the study, which took place from 2002 to 2007, examined exactly how boards learn to lead their districts to become high-performing.

The study led to some interesting observations. In higher-achieving districts, the "working culture" was different. There was, among other qualities, a knowledge of what it takes to change achievement, an atmosphere where connections occur between people across the system, a commitment to professional development, good community connections, and a widespread use of data to help student achievement. In the higher-achieving districts there was also a fundamental difference in the expectations set for students. Adults in the better districts believed all students could learn, that the district could impact learning and understood what it takes to impact student learning.

The studies also found that boards drive gains in student achievement. In remarks

given at a training program for New Jersey board members, Mary Delagardelle, one of the leaders of the Iowa Lighthouse Study, was clear about the impact board members can have. "When I first came to the (Iowa) school boards association, we were teaching board members to stay at a distance on the issues of teaching and learning," said Delagardelle. "We told them that wasn't their job, and that they should leave that to the professionals in the district. But we were wrong asking board members not to play a role in those areas. Boards matter and what they do matters in relationship to the teaching and learning work going on in our system. A board's role is different than that of the administrators and teachers but a board does have a role that we can describe now."

NJSBA field service staff members developed a self-assessment tool that board members can use to gauge whether they are operating in the same way as high-achieving district school boards. Study the checklist in the box at right to see where your board stands—and where it can improve. NJSBA field service representatives are also happy to conduct on-site training for individual boards on this topic. For information, call your FSR or contact Cathy Ewart, the department's administrative assistant, at (609) 278-5218.

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School boards in high-achieving districts are significantly different in their knowledge and beliefs than school boards in low-achieving districts. In high-achieving districts, school board members are knowledgeable about improvement goals, curriculum, instruction, assessment and staff development. They are able to clearly describe the purposes and processes of school improvement initiatives and identify the board's role in supporting those initiatives.

Shared Leadership: A focus on student learning through a shared clear vision, high expectations and dynamic leadership among all levels.

- Board members are knowledgeable about the learning conditions in the schools, alternatives for improving education and the needs of students. Board members can mention specific initiatives that are underway and can explain the initiative and identify specific ways that the board contributed to the initiative.
- Board members can describe a clear direction and focus on specific goals related to improving student achievement. Board members can describe the work of staff around the goals in clear, specific terms.
- Board members can describe what is happening in classrooms and with instruction.
- Board members express their focus on finding ways to reach all children. "We can't just let them fall through the cracks."
- Board members have high expectations for all students.

Continuous Improvement: A continuous focus on improving education with high levels of involvement and shared decision making.

- Board members feel an internal desire



Mentoring **New Members**

A school board that actively searches for new colleagues and provides them with opportunities to grow into their roles will ease the transition from outsider to insider

Quintin Shepherd

Michael Gibbs

As a school board member, you know that teacher attrition and retention is a problem. Recent data suggests that 46 percent of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years. This attrition costs billions of dollars each year in turnover, training, and recruitment costs—not including the educational costs to the students.

You also know that a solid mentoring program can go a long way to decreasing attrition. Successful mentoring programs can drive down teacher attrition by 65 percent or more. Mentoring programs also can help new administrators, superintendents, and, of course, board members.

But as any educator can tell you, programs don't teach. It's almost never about the program but always about the

scientist Etienne Wenger, is learning that takes place in the same context in which it is applied. In other words, it's learning by socialization, visualization, and imitation. It's the process of watching others, thinking about how you would do it, and then trying to replicate.

Nearly all sports education uses a variation on situated learning when youngsters are first starting out. When a coach demonstrates how to slide into home plate or shows a video of an athlete doing the same, that's learning.

It's easy to draw parallels between situated learning and board work. Picture a tribal organization where the elders regularly gather to discuss the wants and needs of the group in order to plan for their future. The elders recognize they won't last forever and create a process where they "train" future elders.

This training may take the form of having potential elders hear, see, and have limited practice pretending to be an elder so that when the time comes they will be ready to carry on. If the elders are dancing around the fire, these folks are watching them in order to learn.

This kind of training has many positive outcomes, including the maintenance and preservation of culture. Insiders' knowledge is imparted in a systemic way, and new perspectives and ideas are infused in a controlled manner.

This form of situated learning is called "legitimate peripheral participation." Imagine discovering this tribe and recognizing that they are endlessly preparing for their future and maintaining an historical perspective on their culture through legitimate peripheral participation. These tribes exist for hundreds of years, remaining fully rooted in their history and culture while at the same time preparing for their future.

Creating opportunities

How often do school boards create the opportunity for legitimate peripheral participation in order to preserve the board and district culture and history while preparing for their collective future? I suspect many of us would be uncomfortable with the responses we might give. This obviously requires the collective effort of the group. Board culture does not simply take care of itself and, in my experience, is not something to be left to chance.

Legitimate peripheral participation is at the heart of every great mentoring program in education. These mentoring programs actively recruit teachers far before the first interview. Pre-service teachers get opportunities in the classroom, where they are informally inducted into the role of insider through early participation in teacher-like roles.

Within administration, legitimate peripheral participation is evident whenever a sitting administrator gives the opportunity for a teacher to step into a quasi-administrative role. These opportunities are most often given as the teacher is pursuing an advanced degree in administration.

Internships are the epitome of legitimate peripheral participation, as the intern is regularly given the opportunity to participate in insider conversations with the administrator and gain insight into the thinking and logic that surrounds much of the administrator's daily life.

As superintendent, I participate in the school board tribe in a different role, and I have noticed that some boards find opportunities for legitimate peripheral participation and others miss the opportunity or leave it to chance.

Those boards that are successful in searching out future board members do so systematically and with purpose. They are open and transparent in their efforts. Sometimes this happens within a tangential organization like the PTA, PTO, or an education foundation board. These boards often are set up like a school board (with a formal chair, positions, and governance structure) and share mutual goals with the board.

School boards that make these organizations "part of the fold," so to speak, often have school board members as liaisons not only to keep the peripheral boards informed but also to inform potential board members of the district culture and what it means to have an insider's knowledge.

Another effective option is the board's committee structure. Board committees are a means to engage others in legitimate peripheral participation in a cultural and anthropological sense. These high-functioning boards and respective committees are regularly affording opportunities to those with an outsider's knowledge to participate in a meaningful way in board work.

This participation comes with the advice and insight of the board member who brings historical and cultural knowledge to the committee work. The net effect is a deeper understanding of the issues to which the committee is assigned and also the opportunities to grow new board members long before some have decided to run for the board. This is akin to the tribe that is actively looking for new elders.

Every organization needs new members to replace those who leave. A board that actively engages in searching out new members and providing them with opportunities to grow into this role will ease the transition from outsider to insider.

If you were lucky enough to gain an insider's perspective through some legitimate peripheral participation before taking on your official responsibilities, did it happen by chance or was it purposeful? What role does your board currently take?

The best type of leadership is purposeful. Being purposeful in this instance is having a plan and knowing the "why" behind it. ■

Quintin Shepherd (shepherdq@skokie69.net) is superintendent of Illinois' Skokie/Morton Grove School District 69.



NJSBA FIELD SERVICES

A Sampling of NJSBA Field Services Programs

Board Governance:

- Board Effectiveness & Team Charter
- Board Oversight & Appraisal
- Boards Role in Budget Development
- Boards Role in Curriculum
- Boards Role in Finance
- Boards Role in Policy
- Committee Effectiveness & Roles
- Conflict Resolution
- Continuous Improvement
- Consensus Building/"Getting to Yes"
- Dealing with Difficult People
- Education Reform Initiatives
- Effective Meetings
- Ethics
- Goal-Setting/Using Data Effectively
- Listening Skills
- Governance by Policy
- Norms
- Parliamentary Procedure
- Roles & Responsibilities
- Starting Right / Board-Building
- Strategies for Success
- Student Achievement
- 12 Common Mistakes
- Transitioning to a New Superintendent
- Work Styles

Communications:

- Effective Year Round Communications
- Key Communicators
- Public/Community Engagement

Evaluations:

- The Evaluation Process
- Board Self-Evaluation (Feedback)
- Superintendent/CSA Evaluation

Fee-Based Services:

1. Superintendent Search
2. Strategic Planning
3. Focus Group Facilitation

Call Your Field Service Representative

Field Service Representatives

Jane Kershner, Director

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Agenda

Creating an In-District Orientation Program for New Board Members

Facilitators: Al Annunziata
Kathy Winecoff
NJSBA Field Service Representatives

Objectives: This session will demonstrate how a well-designed, in-district orientation program can provide valuable information and resources to assist your newest board members as they jump in to their new role and strive to become effective members.

- I. Introductions and Expectations
- II. Setting Goals and Priorities; Monitoring Success
- III. Adopting Policies
- IV. Hiring and Evaluating the Superintendent
- V. Communicating with the Community
- VI. Board Operations – Meetings
- VII. Board Operations – Board Members and Stakeholders
- VIII. Board Operations – Board Members and the District Staff
- IV. Summary and Evaluation

What Every New Board Member Needs to Know

Basic Information:

- District main phone number/address
- District Website
- Configuration of district
- Communities served
- Approx. # of students
- Approx. # of staff
- # of schools
- District Factor Group (DFG)

Contacts & Information (Phone #'s & E-mail):

- Chief School Administrator/Superintendent
- Business Administrator/Board Secretary
- District e-mail account (if provided)
- Fellow board members
- Committee chairs
- National School Boards Association (NSBA)
- New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA)
- NJSBA Field Service Representative (FSR)

Documents:

- Policy manual
- Current budget
- Recent Audit Report/Corrective Action Plan
- Mission, vision, beliefs and goals
- District Organizational Chart
- CSA/Superintendent contract
- Last School District Report Card
- Committee Briefings on Committee Work
- Last QSAC monitoring determination
- Code of Ethics for Board Members
- Collective bargaining agreements
- Strategic/Facilities/Curriculum/Technology plans
- Board Meeting dates for upcoming year
- Recent board meeting minutes
- District calendar/handbook

Board Governance:

- Who is the spokesperson for the board?
- How is board leadership selected (president/vice-president, etc.)?
- How is the agenda set?
- Who sets the agenda?
- What is the agenda order of items?
- How do items get placed on the agenda?
- What is the purpose and what are the rules of the board comment section?
- What happens at the Reorganization Meeting?
- Who can call the board attorney with questions?
- What information is confidential?
- When should you expect to receive board meeting materials and how will you receive them?
- How should you respond to staff or public complaints?
- Does the board have a chain-of-command? If so, what is it?
- What type of board governance does the board utilize (i.e. committees, board of the whole)?
 - How many board committees are there?
 - How are committee members selected?
- What is the board's practice for communication between board members, with the CSA/superintendent, with administration and staff; or requests for information?
- When and how does the board conduct the CSA/Superintendent evaluation?
- When and how does the board conduct the Board Self-Evaluation?
- Where can I find a listing of educational acronyms?



In-District Orientation for New Board Members

Your Town School District

Tour Facilities

- Provide tour/walk-through of all buildings, fields, etc. (available upon request)

Meeting with Board President

- Role of the Board Member
- Review agenda process
- Review board governance model (committee system/board of the whole)
- Review meeting protocol (getting an item onto the agenda, making motions, voting, open vs. executive session)
- Reorganization Meeting: what to expect
- Board Meetings: usual date, time, location
- Weekly Weekend Update
- Annual Board Retreat
- Board Annual Planning Calendar
- District & BoE Goals (last year)
- Provide Team Management Objectives
- Provide Mentor (to be provided by board president following reorganization)
- Provide info on NJSBA, County School Boards Assoc.
- Field Service Representative: name/phone #
- Legally Required Training for New Board Members
- Review the Chain-of-Command
- Professional Development opportunities for Board Members

Meeting with Administrators (Superintendent, School Business Administrator)

- Organizational Chart for Administration
- CSA (Chief School Administrator)/Superintendent: overview of district/CSA's role
- BA (Business Administrator): district's finances and budget process

Provide Documents

- District e-mail address/password
- Board Member Directory
- Policy Manual/Disk/On-line service
- Current Board Self-Evaluation
- Board Governance last evaluation (Committee System/Board of the Whole)
- Last six months of board minutes
- Strategic Plan and Mission Statement
- Recent student test scores
- State open-meeting laws
- NJ Code of Ethics for School Board Members
- Superintendent's Contract
- Teacher Contract (including salary guide)
- Administrator's Contract
- Financial Overview of District & Budget
- Strategic Plan
- School Calendar (current & for upcoming year)

CODE OF ETHICS FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

N.J.S.A.: 18A:12-24.1

A School Board Member shall abide by the following Code of Ethics for School Board Members:

- a. I will uphold and enforce all laws, rules and regulations of the State Board of Education, and court orders pertaining to schools. Desired changes shall be brought about only through legal and ethical procedures.*
- b. I will make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of children and will seek to develop and maintain public schools that meet the individual needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex, or social standing.*
- c. I will confine my board action to policy making, planning and appraisal, and I will help to frame policies and plans only after the board has consulted those who will be affected by them.*
- d. I will carry out my responsibility, not to administer the schools, but together with my fellow board members, to see that they are well run.*
- e. I will recognize that authority rests with the board of education and will make no personal promises nor take any private action that may compromise the board.*
- f. I will refuse to surrender my independent judgment to special interest or partisan political groups or to use the schools for personal gain or for the gain of friends.*
- g. I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to the schools, which, if disclosed, would needlessly injure individuals or the schools. In all other matters, I will provide accurate information and, in concert with my fellow board members, interpret to the staff the aspirations of the community for its schools.*
- h. I will vote to appoint the best qualified personnel available after consideration of the recommendation of the chief administrative officer.*
- i. I will support and protect school personnel in proper performance of their duties.*
- j. I will refer all complaints to the chief administrative officer and will act on the complaints at public meetings only after failure of an administrative solution.*

The Role of the Board of Education Member

School board members are state officials. They are empowered by state law to perform a state function – governing the public schools at the local level. Their powers are derived from the legislature and not from the people of their community. They are representatives of their community to the state.

The role of a board of education is not to run the schools but to see that they are well run. In order to accomplish this, a board makes policies. Policies are the written expression of the board's desires for the district's students. A board of education is a policy-making body.

Board members have no legal status other than that of any citizen except when sitting with other board members in a legally constituted meeting. As individuals, board members cannot make decisions for the board, take actions for the board or speak for the board, unless the board has authorized them to do so.

Board members represent their entire community, not just the area in which they live or their particular supporters. Board members have a responsibility to listen to all citizens and to explain to those with a special point of view the needs of the school system as a whole. Above all, board members are responsible for and to the students in the schools. Every policy they approve, every action they take needs to be based on what is best for the education of those students.

Excerpts taken from *Board Members and Superintendents. Who Does What in Public School Governance*. New Jersey School Boards Association.



The Agenda Process

The Agenda Process:

- ◆ Organizes the business of the board
- ◆ Serves as the basis for information needs
- ◆ Serves as a planning tool
- ◆ Informs the public
- ◆ Provides continuous and useful flow of information
- ◆ Keeps surprises out of meetings

The Agenda is developed by:

- ◆ The Superintendent and Board President together

Items are placed on the Agenda by:

- ◆ Committee recommendation
- ◆ Board President
- ◆ Superintendent

To get an item on the Agenda:

- ◆ Contact the Committee Chair
- ◆ Contact the Board President
- ◆ Contact the Superintendent

Agenda Structure:

- ◆ Informational Items
- ◆ Action Items

Reorganization Meeting

What to expect

- Held after the School Board and/or School Budget election results have been certified
- Board Secretary begins the meeting and gives the election results
- Board Secretary administers Oath of Office to elected board members
- Nominations for President & election of same
- Elected President receives the gavel and officiates the remainder of the meeting
- Nominations for vice-President & election of same
- Naming of legal depositories
- Approving signatories for accounts
- Naming of official newspaper for placement of legal advertisements
- Appoint Board Secretary
- Appoint Board Attorney
- Appoint insurance consultants, district auditor
- Adopt board meeting schedule
- Appointments such as NCLB Contact Person, Affirmative Action Officer, Purchasing Agent, School Funds Investor, etc.
- Adopt all Board Policies & Regulations
- Adopt all Curriculum





New Jersey School Boards Association

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BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES 12-MONTH AGENDA PLANNING

JANUARY

- Board reorganization (November elections)
- District In-house orientation for new board members (November elections)
- Review the requirements of Superintendent contract renewal (For contracts expiring July 1st see 18A:17-15)
- Review preliminary budget numbers _____
- Review Board Member mandatory training requirements
- Board Code of Ethics Discussion with NJSBA Representative (November elections)
- _____

FEBRUARY

- Meet with NJSBA Representative to review superintendent and board evaluation process and set timelines for completion
- CSA provides update on progress toward achievement of district goals & objectives
- Board provides update on progress toward achievement of Board goals and Professional Development Improvement Plan
- Report on teachers meeting definition of Highly Qualified or evidence of progress toward same
- Update on capital projects
- _____

MARCH

- Hold budget hearing / adopt budget (April elections)
- _____

APRIL

- Financial Disclosure forms to the Ethics Commission
- Hold budget hearing / adopt budget (November elections)
- Approve the School Health Nursing Services Plan
- Approve the Comprehensive Equity Plan
- _____

MAY

- Board reorganization (April elections)
- District In-house orientation for new board members (April elections)
- Board Code of Ethics Discussion with NJSBA Representative (April elections)
- Complete online CSA evaluation forms (all non-conflicted board members) once CSA has completed his/her goals portion
- Complete online board self-evaluation form
- Approve written curriculum that clearly and specifically aligns with the most recent State Board adopted version
- End of-Year Staff Review (All staff: Non-tenured, Tenured, & Administration)
- Report on compliance of submitting Financial Disclosure Statements to the Ethics Commission
- Act on personnel recommendations
- _____

JUNE

- Schedule Closed Session meeting (all non-conflicted board members) to organize superintendent evaluation narrative (Rice superintendent)
- CSA provides end-of-the-year report on district goals
- Board provides end-of-the-year report on board of education goals
- Review and revise as necessary the Superintendent evaluation instrument for upcoming year based on goals and objectives
- Finalize the Superintendent's Evaluation and conduct closed session summary conference (Rice superintendent; all non-conflicted board members) before June 30
- Board requests Contract Analysis, from NJSBA Labor Relations Dept., for employee contracts ending in June of the upcoming year
- CSA submits annual progress towards the PDP to the board for board review
- Review results of compiled Board Self-Evaluation
- Board Annual Goal Setting Retreat
- _____

School District Accountability Act – Mandatory Training

The School District Accountability Act requires training for first-term school board members and charter school trustees in their first, second and third years of office, as well as for reappointed/re-elected members.

The following mandated training programs are required:

Governance I: New Board Members - New Board Member Orientation Conference

Governance II: 1st Term, 2nd full year of service

Governance III: 1st Term, 3rd full year of service

Governance IV: Reelected/Reappointed Board Members in the first year of any succeeding term – Legal Update + Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights

Note Regarding Online Mandated Training: Online mandated training for the 2014 cycle will be available in the summer of 2014. Please check back for registration and more information.

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NJSBA offers two ways for board members to fulfill their state mandated training requirement: in-person and web-based. Choose the training program that best fits your learning style. Completion of either course satisfies the requirements of the School District Accountability Act.

For questions regarding Mandated Training, please email the Member Services Unit. For further assistance, call (609) 695-7600.

In-person Training

Dates and Locations (Additional dates and locations for 2014 will be announced later this year.)

Governance I

Saturday, June 7 2014

125 North Hope Chapel Rd

Jackson, NJ 08527

Your New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) & Field Service Representatives (FSR's)

It is important to know that any member of the Board, the Superintendent, or the Business Administrator may contact your district's Field Service Representative (FSR). All contacts made are held in confidence. Your district's FSR can provide information and/or in-district training for the board on board governance, committee structure, effective meetings, boards' role in curriculum, budget, and finance, the evaluation process, and many other topics.

In addition, NJSBA has the following services available to all board members, the Superintendent and/or the Business Administrator:

- **Legal and Policy Services:** offers information on legal matters (does not provide legal advice) and can provide sample copies of board policies and research policy development. Monday thru Friday, one staff attorney is the "Attorney of the Day" and welcomes phone calls to provide legal information.
- **Labor Relations Services:** staff are available to answer questions and provide advice and assistance to board members, administrators, and attorneys on such diverse topics as negotiations, grievances, mediation, fact-finding, job actions, salary guides, contract language, employee benefits, as well as statutes and case-law affecting labor relations. Staff will also provide in-district consultations and will analyze your districts collective bargaining agreement to identify provisions that are illegal or ill-advised and provisions that are advantageous and protective of the boards' interests.
- **Governmental Relations:** staff will research issues, gather information, represent local boards interests with state and federal officials and advocate on behalf of public schools. Current legislative issues are featured topics of discussion at each county's school board association meeting.
- **Communications:** several publications are issued by NJSBA including: *School Leader Magazine* (issued bimonthly), *School Board Notes* issued weekly, and *Daily Clips* is a daily listing and link of education related articles in NJ newspapers. These publications are available on our website: www.njsba.org.

Any of these NJSBA services are available by calling 609-695-7600 or 1-888-88NJSBA or by visiting our website at www.njsba.org.

Field Service Representatives

Jane Kershner, Director

Alfred Annunziata

Charlene Peterson

Jesse Adams

Gwen Thornton

Mary Gassman

Kathy Winecoff

Theresa Lewis

Charlene Zoerb

Robynn Meehan



The most difficult thing to learn . . .

Experienced board members from across the nation were asked to identify the most difficult lesson they had to learn about board service. Here's what they said most often.

- Determining your function on the board and how to accomplish it effectively.
- That no matter what you think you know about board service when you first come on the board, you still have a lot to learn.
- Learning to acknowledge publicly that you have no power or authority as an individual board member; that only the full board can make policies and decisions for the district.
- Recognizing the difference between setting policy (the board's job) and administering the schools (the CSA's job).
- That you must think deeply and sometimes accept board decisions that are contrary to your own beliefs.
- That you must represent all the students. Your decisions must be made in the interest of the total school system and not made solely for special groups of interests.
- Learning how to respond appropriately to the complaints and concerns of citizens, school administrators and other staff.
- That change comes slowly.
- That you can't solve everyone's problems by yourself.
- That boardsmanship means being able to hold the minority viewpoint when voting on an issue, then openly supporting the majority vote in your community.
- Discovering how the schools are funded.



Tips for being a Successful New Board Member....

Think *STUDY* as your guide:

S Survey your surroundings - every district and board is unique with its own culture and climate. You are the “new kid on the block” and it will take some time to learn your role on the team.

T Take the time to analyze - learn the most important things; your district’s strategic plan, annual goals, operating structure, policies and process, current initiatives and your key roles and responsibilities.

U Understand the people situation. Who are the key resources that can help you? Who’s doing what? Why are they doing them? Be sure to introduce yourself widely to begin developing relationships to ensure your success.

D Do not make hasty decisions or judgments. Being new means you will not yet understand the current situation or have all of the facts... never a good time to make snap decisions.

Y Yes, you can! No matter how overwhelmed you may feel in this new role, take a deep breath, remain calm, stay focused, listen, learn and **call your Field Service Representative (FSR) for help!**



A New Board Member's Common Queries

1. How do I get things on the agenda?
2. When do we have time to talk about issues that are important to each board member?
3. What does the committee system mean to our deliberation and decision-making?
4. How do I find out exactly what goes on in a committee meeting?
5. How do I give direction to the superintendent or other administrators so that they will do what I want them to do?
6. How often can I visit the schools to check up on programs and staff?
7. What do I do with all the reports and paper I receive – do I really have to read it all? Should I save it all?
8. What is the difference between regular session discussion and closed or executive session discussion? Who can I talk to about things that bother me in closed session?
9. What are our rights for appointing and evaluating other staff members?
10. Why are some things “role” call votes and others just voice votes?





NJSBA FIELD SERVICES

A Sampling of NJSBA Field Services Programs

Board Governance:

- Board Effectiveness & Team Charter
- Board Oversight & Appraisal
- Boards Role in Budget Development
- Boards Role in Curriculum
- Boards Role in Finance
- Boards Role in Policy
- Committee Effectiveness & Roles
- Conflict Resolution
- Continuous Improvement
- Consensus Building/"Getting to Yes"
- Dealing with Difficult People
- Education Reform Initiatives
- Effective Meetings
- Ethics
- Goal-Setting/Using Data Effectively
- Listening Skills
- Governance by Policy
- Norms
- Parliamentary Procedure
- Roles & Responsibilities
- Starting Right / Board-Building
- Strategies for Success
- Student Achievement
- 12 Common Mistakes
- Transitioning to a New Superintendent
- Work Styles

Communications:

- Effective Year Round Communications
- Key Communicators
- Public/Community Engagement

Evaluations:

- The Evaluation Process
- Board Self-Evaluation (Feedback)
- Superintendent/CSA Evaluation

Fee-Based Services:

1. Superintendent Search
2. Strategic Planning
3. Focus Group Facilitation

Call Your Field Service Representative

Field Service Representatives

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