



How to enhance positive board and superintendent relations

Principle 1: Clarify roles and expectations.

Strategies:

- Hold forums or one-on-one meetings to provide school board candidates with a clear picture of what is expected of them if they are elected.
 - Establish the expectation that the entire team be committed to continuous learning such as KASB Regional Meeting-Seminars-Annual Convention.
- Stress the importance of **planning and policy** making as the board's primary functions. Let board members know how plans and policies relate to the district's vision.
- Revisit annually to reaffirm role expectations of the superintendent and administrators.

Principle 2: Develop a clear process for communication.

Strategies:

- Develop a communication plan. Clearly state who needs to know what and when. Don't forget to explain how you will communicate during emergencies.
- Provide activities that encourage board members and administrators to build their listening and decision-making skills.
- Hold periodic board meetings in the district's schools and enjoy a student presentation or ask the building principal to conduct a tour before the meeting.
- Hear accountability reports from principals on building effectiveness in reaching district goals.
- Pick up the telephone instead of worrying about an issue—keep the lines of communication open.
- Provide board members with regularly scheduled updates, including both good and bad news, in accordance with the open records law requirements. Include a calendar of any upcoming events which board members might attend.
- Allow regular opportunities for principals to report directly to the board during board meetings.

- The board president and superintendent should build the meeting agenda together.
- Do not surprise others at the board table.
- Clearly state the process governing board member communications about building-level issues. Clarify the superintendent's role and that of the building administration and staff.

Principle 3: Actively work to build trust and mutual respect.

Strategies:

- Develop a vision/mission statement for the district. Express and clarify core beliefs and develop an ethical behavior statement for the board, superintendent and administrators.
- Respect the opinions of others, even if they differ from your own. Express disagreement openly and rationally, and agree to disagree when consensus cannot be reached.
- Identify activities that build trust in a relationship and apply them to board/administrator work.
- Recognize each other's successes. Help each other succeed.
- Remain focused on issues—not personalities—when discussions become heated.

Principle 4: Evaluate the whole team.

Strategies:

- Conduct superintendent, board and district evaluations using district goals as the core ingredient of each evaluation.
- Make sure a meaningful process is clear to everyone involved in the evaluation.
- Identify indicators to be used to assess goals or evaluation criteria.

Principle 5: Actively work on improved decision making.

Strategies:

- Recognize board members' expertise in different areas and ask for advice when making decisions.
- Provide information in a timely manner. Board members should communicate to the superintendent prior to meeting when more information is needed.
- Seek the advice of legal counsel when necessary. Determine who can seek advice of the district's legal counsel for the board.
- Propose more than one solution to a complex problem. Allow for discussion.
- Support the final decision of the board.