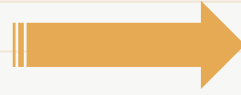
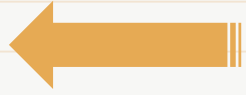


How Board Presidents and Superintendents Can Leverage Mutual Aid



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What is Mutual Aid?



- **In organization theory, mutual aid is a voluntary reciprocal exchange of resources and services for mutual benefit**
- **The Organizational Theory refers to the set of interrelated concepts, definitions that explain the behavior of individuals or groups or subgroups, who interact with each other to perform the activities intended towards the accomplishment of a common goal**
- **In other words, the organizational theory studies the effect of social relationships between the individuals within the organization along with their actions on the organization as a whole. Also, it studies the effects of internal and external business environment such as political, legal, cultural, etc. on the organization**

Relationships: Board President and Superintendent

(A.K.A. The relationship you never wanted to have)

Board of Education drama will always exist, but exists less when the relationship between the Board President and Superintendent is Strong

Goal:

- Build productive working relationships with all stakeholders and influencers
- Although any Board member may communicate directly with the Superintendent, the Board President serves as the liaison between both

Action:

- Ask questions and be an *active* listener
- Strong, candid, and personalized conversations
- Maintain confidence in district leadership



Relationships and the Committee Structure

- Does the committee structure influence the President and Superintendent working relationship?



Working collaboratively, the Board President and Superintendent can establish parameters to guide committee chairs

- Chairpersons can work directly with Department Heads or Superintendent to ask questions and actively listen
- Develop trusting and candid relationships
- Assist with efficient and effective agenda planning and communication strategy

Communication



- Full Board weekly updates can capture major highlights of the week
- Board President and Superintendent should meet regularly via informal “sit downs”
 - Discussion on how best to communicate citizen concerns, complaints, crisis situations
 - Best practices on how to avoid surprises and setting expectations
 - Can be a free flowing discussion or one facilitated with prepared topics
- The Board President is designated to respond to all communications directed to the Board with assistance from the Superintendent and administrative staff, if needed

Establishment of a Communication Document



Board - Superintendent Communications



Shared

Role:

- Understanding the leadership roles in a district is essential to the Board's clarification of administrative functions. The role of the Board President is to convey community and Board input to the Superintendent. This input, with collaboration of the full Board, helps set policy and mission. The Superintendent's role is to inform the Board, staff and community on district priorities and successfully implement the policies established by the Board.

Responsibilities

Action:

- Trust the administration as the experts
- Remind the Board of process
- Clear definitions of what constitutes an administrative decision and a Board decision
- Establishing the communication loop between Board President, Vice President and Superintendent



Policy making or Micromanagement? That is the Question

- Reasons Board inquiry drifts from policy making into micro management:
 - Failure of the Board and Superintendent to communicate
 - Lack of clarity in the roles of the Superintendent and Board
 - Personality conflicts between the Board and the Superintendent
 - A low trust level between the Board and Superintendent; a divided Board
 - A Board member with too much time, which allows the person to become a pseudo (false) staff member (ha, ha, ha!!)

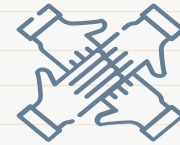


Synergy

Goal: The whole is greater than the sum of its parts

Action:

- Align vision, mission and goals
- Find outlets for action oriented board members
- Set behavioral expectations prior to problems arising
- Relationships are hard, put in the work (Board members and Superintendent)
- Establish the firm line of process, esp. for members who involve themselves in administration
- Use the expertise of Board members appropriately
- Goal monitoring and accountability
- Establishment and utilization of a governance committee to resolve issues
- **Above all else, remain ethical**



Respect the Role

- The Board's direct responsibilities is to make policy, develop plans, and evaluate outcomes, not manage day-to-day operations
- Board members do not have “all access” to district schools and, in many respects, have no more authority than any other parent or community member
- Effective school Boards lead as a united team with the Superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust
- Your success as a Board member is inextricably tied to the success of your Board

Respect the Role

- You were elected as an individual, but you'll work as part of a team
- Collaboration and respect doesn't mean consensus
- The board sets the tone for the entire district; staff, students, parents, and the community watch carefully to see how the board functions
- Criticism is a constant, a Board member must accept and learn from it
- Work out interpersonal conflicts appropriately and privately

Common Ground

- Be a model of collegiality and collaboration; this builds confidence in the community that all are working to do what is best for students
- Be willing to listen to each other and understand that the district's best interests come before your own:
 - Individual opinions are simply tools on the "how" to accomplish the "what"
- Differences in opinions is a strength as long as you remain open minded and respectful
- Group think rarely leads to success:
 - Flexibility and adoption is preferable
- Create meaningful and achievable goals
- A working team is how a Board makes a difference
- Maintaining a sense of humor helps in the most challenging of situations



Juggling Dual Roles

Parent and Board Member/President

- Statutory provisions provide guidance and regulation on the duties and responsibilities of School board members, ethical standards that a board member should follow, and penalties when a board member deviates from what is legally acceptable.
 - What is acceptable for issues that do not come with statutory guidelines or regulations?
- A Board member/parent can prove to be very useful to the rest of the Board by providing unique perspectives and insight
- What can I say, or not say, to parents and friends about school issues?

Juggling Dual Roles

Parent and Board Member/President

- I have children in school. How can I talk with their teachers and principal now that I'm on the School Board?
 - No matter what you say about “speaking as a parent, not a Board member,” it's difficult for some to separate your role on the School Board from your role as a parent
- Should a Board member/parent voluntarily recuse themselves from the deliberation process when her/his participation might create an undue bias in the situation, or create a public perception of impropriety?
- A Board member must separate personal issues from their Board responsibilities
- Best practice is to follow policy and maintain the chain of command
- When unsure, discuss the matter with the Superintendent

THANKS!

Do you have any questions?

Elisa Billis



Greg Maceri

