



**The toughest job  
you will ever have**

**It's up to you  
to make it work**

**South Carolina School Boards Association  
New Board Orientation  
February 20, 2020**

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**If you haven't ever felt this  
way...you will!**



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## **Let's talk about ...**

- 1. Major roles and responsibilities of boards**
- 2. Effective board/superintendent relationships**
- 3. Building and maintaining a unified board**
- 4. Excellent school board ethics**
- 5. Confidentiality and liability**

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## **Boards in conflict**

**If any of these actions are happening, you are (or you will) have problems:**

- 1. Members not “staying on their page”**
- 2. Members acting as individuals**
- 3. Members thinking they have authority**
- 4. Individuals forgetting their success as a member is tied to the success of the board**
- 5. Members breaking the promise of confidentiality leading to a lack of trust**

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**Board members not  
“staying on their page”**

**News Flash #1...**

**As a school board member,  
it is not your job to  
run the schools!!!!**

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**Board members acting  
as individuals**

**News Flash 2**

**Finding the balance between  
being an “individual” board  
member versus being a “team”  
board member**

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**Board members thinking  
they have authority**

**News Flash 3**

**You have none!**

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**Forgetting to emphasize the  
success of the entire board**

**News Flash 4**

**There is no “I”  
in the word “team”**

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**Lack of trust among  
members**

**News Flash 5**

**Nothing breaks down the  
board quicker than  
breaking confidentiality**

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**The reasons may vary,  
but many times...:**

**We have met the enemy  
and he is us!!**

Pogo Comic Strip  
Walter Kelly, 1971

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**Let's talk about these  
conflict “flash points”**

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**Your School District's  
Education Leadership Team**

**The board and the superintendent**

**To be effective, we start with agreeing on  
the work of the board**

**versus**

**the work of the superintendent.**

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## **Governing and managing:**

- **Policy adoption is the function of the board**
- **Policy implementation is the function of the superintendent**
- **Stay on your page and remember lessons learned!!**

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## **Board Powers and Duties**

**(Spartanburg 3 Policy BBA)**

- **Policymaking...adoption of policy**
- **Executive...hold the supt. accountable**
- **Quasi-judicial...a court of appeals**
- **Appraisal...evaluate policy effective**
- **Planning...continuous improvement**
- **Interpretation...being the link to citizens**
- **Operational...effective board meetings**
- **Budget...providing necessary resources**
- **Reviewing action...the final authority**
- **Visits to schools...use proper protocol**

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## BOARD–SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP

- There is nothing more important than both parties dealing with each other in an *ethical, honest, straight-forward, open-and-above-board manner*
- The superintendent is the CEO of the board and

In a sense, the superintendent is a “member” of the board ... with limits

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## BOARD–SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP Sample Policy Language

- The relationship that exists between a board and its superintendent is an intrinsic part of the educational process within a community.
- A knowledge of what each can reasonably expect of the other can help substantially in promoting sound working relationships.

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**School board's job versus Superintendent's job**  
Sample Policy BDD

**School Board**

**Superintendent**

Select Superintendent	Select Staff
Set policy	Recommends and implements
Adopts budget	Proposes and administers
Approves organization	Proposes organization
Approves personnel matters	Recommends personnel matters
Functions as a board only	Deals with the board as a whole
Staff matters through Supt.	Staff matters through Supt.
Acts as a court of appeals	Actions based on policy
Adopts curriculum	Recommends curriculum

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**In short ...**  
**Boards govern**  
**and**  
**Superintendents manage**

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**What about  
Individual board members....**

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**BOARD MEMBER AUTHORITY  
Sample Policy BBAA**

*Simply stated ...*

- **All powers of the board lie in its action as a body. Board members acting as individuals have no authority over personnel or school affairs**
- **Individual members of the board, including the chair, only have individual authority when given to them by the board**

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## **BOARD MEMBER AUTHORITY**

### **Sample Policy BBAA**

- **The power of individual board members exists exclusively in their action as a group.**
- **Individual board members, including the chair, have only such authority as delegated by Board vote or policy provision**
- **The board and its members deal with administrative services through the superintendent and should not give orders to any subordinates (of the superintendent) either publicly or privately.**

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## **BOARD MEMBER AUTHORITY**

### **Sample Policy BBAA**

- **The board will not be bound in any way by actions or statements of an individual**
- **Individual board members making information requests to the superintendent**
- **The board officers may, when appropriate, counsel individual members who are acting outside his/her authority and responsibilities or abusing his/her privileges**

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**It is not your job  
to “fix” things**

**You have to follow the proper  
chain of command**

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**The problem is....**

**Your “public” doesn’t  
know that**

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## **Memorize this statement**

**This problem could end up requiring board action, and if I am involved in it at this level, I will be unable to act on it as a member of the board because it could be a violation of due process.**

**You really need to go through the proper channels.**

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**Nothing breaks apart a board and the relationship between the board and their superintendent than the loss of trust**

**... and breaking confidentiality and being less than truthful are the two biggest reasons**

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## The FUN PART:

- Be an **ADVOCATE** for your schools and your students



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## Some discussion points –

- Do you vote for what is best for your specific “electors” or for the school district as a whole?
- How do you handle those situations where you are on the minority side of a vote?
- If the board is over-involved in personnel matters, you can’t hold the superintendent accountable for the outcomes

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## Some discussion points –

- Individual board member directives or requests to the superintendent...should there be any?
- Individual board members involvement in the day-to-day operations: how far is too far?
- How do you as a board member handle such situations when you see it happen?
- How do you want the superintendent to handle such situations when felt?

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## Some discussion points –

- Are surprises common at board meetings and how do you prevent them?
- Board unity: its importance, consequences of not having it, and the image/perception of not having it creates in the community and among the staff

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**Now the hard work begins**

**We are ready to go and  
nothing can go wrong**

**Right?**

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**Think Again!**



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