

**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 15, 2024**

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



# 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

# 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

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

**News Flash #1...**

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

# **Board members acting as individuals**

## **News Flash 2**

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

**Board members thinking  
they have authority**

**News Flash 3**

**You have none!**

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

## **News Flash 4**

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



**Lack of trust among  
members**

## **News Flash 5**

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

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

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

**Pogo Comic Strip  
Walter Kelly, 1971**

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

# **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.**

# 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!!

# **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**

# 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

# **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.**



# School board's job versus Superintendent's job

## Sample Policy BDD

### School Board

Select Superintendent

Set policy

Adopts budget

Approves organization

Approves personnel matters

Functions as a board only

Staff matters through Supt.

Acts as a court of appeals

Adopts curriculum

### Superintendent

Select Staff

Recommends and implements

Proposes and administers

Proposes organization

Recommends personnel matters

Deals with the board as a whole

Staff matters through Supt.

Actions based on policy

Recommends curriculum

**In short ...**

**Boards govern**

**and**

**Superintendents manage**

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

# **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**

# **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.**

# **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**

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

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

**The problem is....**

**Your “public” doesn’t  
know that**



# **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.**

**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**

# The FUN PART:

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



## 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

## **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?**

## **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**

**Now the hard work begins**

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

**Right?**

# Think Again!

