

Administration

Concept and Roles in Administration

The Superintendent shall direct and coordinate the administrative staff in implementing the educational philosophy, and achieving the goals and general objectives of the Board of Education, within the guidelines established by Board of Education policy law and employee agreements. The Board of Education expects the administration to demonstrate leadership and to develop good working relationships with the community for the achievement of common goals.

The Superintendent of Schools is encouraged to conduct the operations of the school system in a collaborative manner.

Administration

Board-Superintendent Relations

Preface:

Connecticut's educational leaders recognize the power and potential to improve teaching and learning in our public schools through cooperative, purposeful and professional working relationships between superintendents and boards of education. At a time when public education is under tremendous pressure from the newly enacted "Leave No Child Behind Law"; the Supreme Court ruling finding private school vouchers constitutional; budget cuts at the state and local levels; and other issues, it is critical that this relationship be as strong as possible.

The position paper presented below is CABA's attempt to specifically communicate our view on the nature of and expectations for superintendent and board working relationships. It is presented as both a description for statewide reference and a call to action for superintendents and boards to work toward strengthening these relationships, which, we believe will result in greater student success. It is our attempt to develop a "best practice" in this area, understanding that many of the issues addressed must be determined at the local level.

Our hope is that this position paper becomes the focus of statewide discussions and local conversations among and between boards of education and superintendents to provide the best leadership possible for the students in our schools.

For success, the board of education and the superintendent of schools in any school district must share the same goals and visions for providing students with quality education. While board and superintendent roles are different, they should complement each other. For the greatest success, board members and the superintendent must work collaboratively as a governance team, with each clear on their roles and areas of responsibility, each respecting the others' roles and responsibilities and collaborating effectively on those responsibilities that are shared.

In general, "the board is a legislative body that develops, evaluates and oversees education policies. The superintendent is the professional educator chosen by the board to implement policies and to provide professional leadership (and vision) for a district's schools." (AASA-NSBA, 1994, p. 7).

According to the 1994 study of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and the National School Boards Association (NSBA), school districts with high-quality governance teams and high student achievement are characterized by excellent working relationships between the superintendent and boards of education.

The focus of both must always be "collaboration on behalf of children."

Administration

Board-Superintendent Relations

School Governance Position Statement

The following delineation of roles and responsibilities should be followed with integrity and commitment to ensure that board members and superintendents fulfill the obligations to provide the best possible education for their school district's children.

Board of Education's Responsibilities	Superintendent of Schools' Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To establish and regularly review all policies, ensuring they are lawful and designed to improve the quality of the school district. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To implement policies approved by the board and recommend changes, if appropriate. To develop, implement and inform the Board of administrative procedures necessary to implement board policy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To hire, support, and conduct an annual formal evaluation of the superintendent of schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To serve as the school boards' chief executive officer and educational leader.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To refer administrative communications, including questions, complaints and personnel inquiries to the superintendent, as appropriate, and to follow the board-established chain of command. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To respond to communications, as appropriate and ensure the adherence and appropriate response through the chain of command. to keep board members informed about district issues in a timely manner.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To seek the superintendent's recommendation before taking action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide the board with good information for informed decision-making, as appropriate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To adopt, advocate for and oversee a school budget, which is responsive to district goals and meets the needs of all students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prepare, advocate for and implement an annual budget that addresses district goals and meets the needs of all students; and reports regularly to the board on status of the budget and any concerns or other issues about which the board should be informed.

Administration

Board-Superintendent Relations

School Governance Position Statement (continued)

Board of Education's Responsibilities	Superintendent of Schools' Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To delegate to the superintendent responsibility for all administrative functions, except those specifically reserved to the board through board policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To oversee the organization and management of the district's day-to-day operations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To conduct an annual self-evaluation of its own leadership, governance and teamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To participate, as appropriate, in the annual self-evaluation of the board.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure appropriate resources for the superintendent to carry out his/her responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To recommend appropriate resources to ensure he/she can carry out his/her responsibilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have the board chair work with the superintendent to develop meeting agendas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work closely with the board chair to develop meeting agendas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To determine and include in district policy, hiring procedures that clearly define board and superintendent responsibilities. (see best practices addendum) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To, as pursuant to best practice and board policy, hire personnel for the school district and ensure that each employee is properly supervised and evaluated; and to make recommendations for termination of employment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To communicate and interpret the school district's mission to the public and listen, and incorporate appropriate community perspectives into board action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To communicate community perspectives, research information, performance results and educational needs to the board and to the school staff.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure there is a supportive, smoothly, operating leadership team, which advocates for both children and the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To serve as a key, effective member of the leadership team.

Administration

Board-Superintendent Relations

School Governance Position Statement (continued)

The following are joint responsibilities of the Board and Superintendent. These are areas in which each Board and Superintendent should determine their respective responsibilities.

Joint Board/Superintendent Responsibilities

- To work together with the community to develop a vision and goals for the school district and to monitor the achievement of those goals.
- To advocate for students and the school district and promote the benefits of public education.
- Provide community leadership on educational issues by creating strong linkages with appropriate organizations, agencies and other groups to provide support for healthy development and high achievement for all children.
- To collectively execute their legal responsibilities.
- To work collaboratively with appropriate agencies and bodies on an ongoing basis.
- To collaborate with other school boards and superintendents to inform legislators of local concerns and issues relative to education.
- To participate in continuing education specifically regarding their roles and responsibilities and on relevant content areas.
- To support board actions and decisions.
- To semiannually set aside time, to discuss school board/superintendent relations.
- To belong to, actively support and participate in their professional organizations, and that each will encourage the other to do so.
- To institute a process for long-range and strategic planning that will position the school district for success.
- To ensure that professional development opportunities, consistent with district goals, are available to all school district employees.
- To serve as liaisons to the community.
- To ensure adherence to federal and state laws and board policies.

The Relationship between the Board Chair and the Superintendent

By the nature of the position, the board chair plays a key role in ensuring the effective functioning of the governance team. The chair serves as the liaison between the board and the superintendent. The board chair will often have a very different relationship with the superintendent of schools than others on the board. Because of this relationship, it is crucial that board chairs be chosen carefully and that ability to serve as representative of the board and, as appropriate, partner with the superintendent, should be critical considerations in selecting the board chair.

Administration

Board-Superintendent Relations

School Governance Position Statement (continued)

Usually the chair and superintendent collaborate on developing the meeting agenda and other operational issues facing the board. The superintendent will depend on the chair for guidance, and the chair should look to the superintendent for the same, not only in setting the agenda, but also in carrying out other joint board/superintendent responsibilities.

The superintendent is a non-voting member of the district leadership team, and should be accorded the proper respect. Likewise, the superintendent is an employee of the board, and the board has a responsibility to insulate the superintendent from outside pressures, in particular, political pressure. The chair has a responsibility to ensure that the superintendent can do his/her job without undue outside interference. The chair must also ensure that individual board members understand their roles and responsibilities, not only in terms of the board/superintendent relationship, but also as the board relates to the students, community, staff, government agencies and others affected by the board. Understanding that board members are individuals, with different opinions and agendas, the board chair still has the responsibility, to the extent possible, for keeping everyone "on the same page". In particular, the chair must make every effort to ensure that once district policy has been properly established, the board speaks "in one voice" as the superintendent implements that policy. This will, in the long run, pay dividends in terms of credibility of the board and will lead to more efficient and effective board action.

Conclusion

While this position paper attempts to outline the various roles and responsibilities of boards of education and school superintendents, its primary purpose is to emphasize the importance and necessity of a close working relationship between the two, based on trust, an understanding of each other's unique roles and abilities, and a shared vision for the school district's success. Not only is such a relationship a necessary prerequisite for this success, but also the lack of a trusting, collaborative relationship between a board of education and its superintendent is a blueprint for failure.

The focus for boards and superintendents must always be: how we can work together to ensure educational excellence for our children?

School Governance Position Statement

CABE-CAPSS Best Practice*

*Both CABE and CAPSS appreciate the importance of a clear understanding between Boards of Education and the Superintendents concerning the hiring process. This suggested “best practice” and recommended policy represents the considered judgment of the two organizations.

Hiring of Personnel

The hiring of qualified individuals to serve as teachers and administrators within our school system is arguably the single most important function of the school district’s leadership team. As such, it is essential that the Board of Education and Superintendent understand their roles within the hiring process and work together to ensure that only the best and most qualified individuals are hired to work with our children.

The Superintendent is responsible for the hiring of all teaching and classified staff. The Superintendent will give regular and timely reports of all teaching vacancies, transfers, and new hires to the Board of Education.

The Board of Education will appoint qualified individuals to all administrative positions, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent. The Board of Education will give the Superintendent’s recommendation serious consideration, understanding the need for the Superintendent to be able to build an administrative team that can work closely together to meet the needs of the school district.

While the Board of Education may accept or reject the Superintendent’s recommendation, appointment of an administrator by the Board of Education will be valid *only if* made on the recommendation of the Superintendent. The decision to accept or reject the Superintendent’s recommendation will be done at a regular or special meeting of the Board of Education.

The Superintendent will be responsible for the posting of administrative positions, recruitment and screening of candidates, and when called for, bringing candidate(s) to the Board of Education for consideration. The Superintendent will solicit the advice of the Board of Education when conducting an administrative search and, when appropriate and as agreed upon by the Board of Education and the Superintendent, will involve Board members in the search process.