

BOARD RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATIONS WITH STAFF

A clear understanding of responsibilities and relationships between and among the Board and school personnel is essential for a smoothly running and efficient school system. It should be remembered that the Board, school administrators, teachers, and all others responsible for any phase of the work of the school system have a common and basic responsibility—the welfare of the children in the schools. This responsibility must guide all of the Board’s considerations and decisions.

RELATIONSHIPS

Board and Superintendent

The relationship of the Board and the Superintendent can best be described as one of teamwork. They must function cooperatively as some of their functions are not readily separable. However, the primary functions are separable and should be clearly understood by each.

The legislation of policies is the most important function of a school Board and that the execution of the policies should be the function of the Superintendent.

Delegation by the Board of its executive powers to the Superintendent provides freedom for the Superintendent to manage the schools within the Board's policies and frees the Board to devote its time to policymaking and appraisal functions.

The Board holds the Superintendent responsible for the administration of its policies, the execution of Board decisions, the operation of the internal machinery designed to serve the school program and for keeping the Board informed about school operations and problems.

The Board shall strive to procure, when a vacancy exists, the best professional leader available for the head administrative post. Then the Board as a whole, and individual members, shall:

- A. Give the Superintendent full administrative authority for properly discharging his/her professional duties, holding him/her responsible for acceptable results;
- B. Act only upon the recommendation of the Superintendent in matters of employment or dismissal of school personnel;
- C. Hold all meetings of the Board in the presence of the Superintendent or designee
- D. Refer all complaints, criticisms, and requests to the Superintendent, and discuss them only at a regular meeting after failure of administrative solution;
- E. Strive to provide adequate safeguards around the Superintendent and other staff members to the end that they can live happily and comfortably in the community and discharge their educational functions on a thoroughly professional basis; and
- F. Present personal criticisms of any employee directly to the Superintendent.

All communications or reports to the Board, or to any committee of the Board, from school principals, supervisors, teachers, or other employees shall be submitted through the Superintendent.

Board and Principal

The School Principal has no direct administrative relations with the Board. His/her relations to the Board are through the Superintendent, for the Board recognizes that the Superintendent is the person to whom it must look for professional leadership within the schools. A spirit of cooperation and mutual helpfulness must prevail between the Superintendent and the Principal if the best results are to be realized. For instance, the Principal and the Superintendent must cooperate in the selection of school staff because the Principal is in the best position to know the kind of person needed for a particular type of service in the school. However, the Principal must make recommendations to the Superintendent and not to the Board.

At all times the Principal must remember that all matters which require Board action must be presented to the Board by the Superintendent.

Board and Teachers and other School Employees

The relationship of the teacher to the Board is indirect. The teacher is directly responsible to the Principal/Assistant Principal and through the Principal/ Assistant Principal to the Superintendent, and then to the Board.

Other school employees, depending on their position, are directly responsible to the Principal/Assistant Principal or to the supervisor to whom the employee reports, and through the Principal or supervisor to the Superintendent, and then to the Board.

Direct access between employees and the Board may be obtained through channels established for grievances or through applicable Board policies

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS WITH STAFF

The Board will communicate regularly with school staff on matters of current interest and importance to the school community at such times and through such methods as the Board deems appropriate.

Individuals employees and employee organizations are expected to utilize communication channels established through Board policies, administrative procedures, and collective bargaining agreements and not to circumvent the chain of command and their direct supervisors.

Communications with staff are the responsibility of the Board as a whole. Individual Board members should refrain from initiating communications or conversations with staff members on their own.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA §§ 1(28); 1001(21); 1051; 13201-1320

Cross Reference: BEDH Public Participation in Board Meetings
KE- Public Concerns Complaints

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