

Quincy School Board Best Practices

Shared values

The Quincy Governance team, school directors and superintendent value:

Respect

Civility

Open Communication

High Performing Governance Teams

There are important distinctions to be made between the board's role and that of the superintendent and staff. Just as board members should govern and not manage a school district, superintendents should not administer a district in isolation from the representatives whom the public has entrusted with the schools. School board directors are the representatives of the people, elected to ensure a community's schools educate the community's children in accordance with the wishes of the local community.

Board members have collective, not individual authority. Authority to make decisions is only granted to the board as a whole. The full board gives direction to the superintendent, most commonly at board meetings. Individual board members do not have the authority to direct the superintendent. The following question is a useful construct for distinguishing role and responsibilities: *Is this a board matter or administrative work?*

Boards and superintendents must team together to ensure a district has effective leadership. The Quincy School District Governance team of superintendent and board directors hold respect, civility and open communication as fundamental values guiding their work.

Success Supports: Quincy Governance Team of Six

What does the board need from the superintendent to be successful?

- No surprises
- Share timely information
- Understand the role of the board
- Know policy and procedure
- Keep the policies up to date
- Be open to ideas and concerns
- Be impartial when dealing with the board and staff
- Use good crisis management skills
- Be good listener
- Keep current on legislation, policies and collective bargaining agreements
- Share your expertise

- Understand the vision
- Develop and execute a plan for the district to reach that vision
- Utilize a communication plan that communicates to all stakeholders
- Be an effective steward of resources
- Bring humor and joy
- Model civility and respect

What does the superintendent need from the board to be successful?

- Support and understanding
- Utilize the chain of command and board protocols regarding citizen complaints and issues
- Come prepared to the board meetings
- Honesty
- Commitment
- No surprises
- Be good listeners
- Use measurable goals in the superintendent's evaluation
- Humor and joy
- Respect confidentiality
- Trust and support
- Heavy questions regarding agenda items need to come to the superintendent prior to the board meeting to give adequate preparation time
- Model civility and respect

What does the board need from one another to succeed?

- No surprises
- Share ideas and knowledge
- Be open to ideas
- Be good listeners
- Respect each other's opinions
- Agree to "disagree" during discussion
- After the vote, the board speaks with one voice
- If more information is needed postpone the vote
- Come prepared
- Contact the superintendent with your questions prior to the board meeting
- Support our colleagues outside of our district
- We must support not undermine one another
- Be patient with one another
- Ask clarifying questions
- Make decisions in the best interest of each student
- Understand our role as board directors
- Engage in professional development
- Be open to compromise

Successful organizations are the results of strong and effective leadership. In order for members of our team to be active players, they must know their roles.

Roles of the Board and Superintendent

SCHOOL BOARD - GOVERNS (Guides, Directs)	SUPERINTENDENT - MANAGES (Administers, Operates)
<i>Decides What</i>	<i>Decides How</i>
<i>Requests Information</i>	<i>Seeks and Provides Information</i>
<i>Considers Issues</i>	<i>Provides Recommendations</i>
<i>Creates, Reviews, Adopts Policy</i>	<i>Recommends, Implements Policy</i>
<i>Approves & Reviews Plans</i>	<i>Implements Plans</i>
<i>Monitors Progress</i>	<i>Reports Progress</i>
<i>Contracts with Personnel</i>	<i>Supervises & Evaluates Personnel</i>
<i>Approves & Reviews Budget</i>	<i>Formulates Budget</i>
<i>Represents Public Interests</i>	<i>Acts in Public Interest</i>

What our roles do not encompass

The role of the School Board is <i>not</i> to:	The role of the Superintendent is <i>not</i> to:
Carry out policies or micro-manage or develop budgets	Make policies
Direct any staff other than the superintendent	Direct the board
Create surprises	Create surprises
Abdicate board responsibility	Assume board responsibilities
Press narrow personal agenda	Press narrow personal agenda
As individuals, make promises that would appear binding upon the board and/or district	Discourage open discussion and feedback

BOARD BEST PRACTICES

We, the members of the Board of Directors of the Quincy School District, are committed to serving the children and citizens of this community. We will strive to provide a high quality public education which meets the needs of all the children in our district. We believe that the success of the Quincy School District depends on a shared vision among the school board, staff, parents and community, and we will try to the best of our ability to uphold these aspirations.

To achieve that goal, we have established an operating protocol which will serve as a code of conduct and ethics to help govern our actions at meetings and in our role as directors.

<p>Communications (Board and Staff)</p>	<p>The following communications procedures are established:</p> <p>A. Staff Communications to the Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All communications or reports to the board or individual board members from principals, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members shall be submitted through the superintendent. • This will not deny any staff member's right to appeal to the board regarding administrative decisions, provided that the superintendent will have been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed according to the applicable procedures on complaints and grievances. <p>B. Board Communications to Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All official communications, policies, and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the superintendent. • The superintendent will employ all such media as are appropriate to keep staff fully informed of the board's priorities, concerns and actions. <p>C. Visits to the School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual board members interested in visiting the school or classrooms will make arrangements for visitations through the principal. • Such visits will be regarded as expressions of interest in school affairs and not as "inspections" or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes. • Official visits by board members will be carried on only under board authorization and with the full knowledge of staff, including the superintendent and principal. <p>D. Social Interaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and board members share a keen interest in the schools and in education. When they meet at social affairs and other functions, informal discussion on such matters as educational trends, issues, and innovations can be anticipated. • Discussions of personalities or staff grievances are not appropriate.
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<p>Working with District Staff About our Own Children</p>	<p><i>In order to work effectively with district staff about our own children, we agree to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember we are parents (grandparents) first • Follow the same process that we expect all parents to follow <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet with the teacher first, then follow the chain of command • Be clear that we are speaking to the teacher as a parent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>i.e., "My child is having this problem_____ – How can I help them?"</i> • Understand that sometimes our spouse or significant other may be the right person to handle situation • Inform the superintendent of the situation regardless of the resolution
<p>Board Conduct</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base our decisions on the available facts and not independent judgment • Not yield to individuals or special interest groups • Keep in mind the interests of all the district's students • Not abuse our official position • Not use district facilities, resources, or position for the purpose of advancing the interest of themselves or any other individual or individuals • Make every attempt to attend all board functions, including committee meetings • Serve on committees as a silent observer or an active participant as defined by the board • Accept responsibility for all board decisions, regardless of how we voted and not offer a different opinion outside the board room • Take no private actions that will compromise the board or administration • Endeavor to hear all members' opinions and listen objectively • Encourage debate and differing points of view • Conduct discussions with care and respect

<p>Board and Superintendent Roles in Negotiations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage members to take advantage of opportunities to inform themselves about current educational issues by individual study and participation in programs providing needed information• Encourage members to disseminate information to other members <p>The board and superintendent will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define the philosophical and financial parameters for negotiations• Trust our negotiating team to do the best job that they can• Remind staff that there is a process in place, that the staff and district each have an identified negotiating team and any questions or issues need to go through the defined negotiation process• Once the contract is adopted, all stand behind the final contracts• Change to adopt and stand behind the final contracts
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