

BOARD-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS (and Relationships)

A clear understanding of responsibilities and relationships between and among the board and school personnel is essential for a smoothly run 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 district, have a common and basic responsibility – the welfare of the children in the schools. This responsibility must guide all our considerations and decisions.

Board and Superintendent

The relationship of the board and the superintendent of schools can best be described as one of teamwork. They must pull together, and some of their functions are not readily separable. However, the primary functions are separable and should be clearly understood by each. The board is the legislative body of the school unit. It exercises its control over the schools through the formation of policies and the adoption of rules and regulations.

The superintendent of schools is the executive officer of the board and the chief administrative officer. The school board recognizes that the superintendent is the chief executive officer in the school system and wishes to make this clear to all staff members and to all citizens.

All communications, or reports, to the board, or to any committee of the board, from principals, supervisors, teachers, or other employees, shall be submitted through the superintendent. Nothing in this paragraph, however, shall be construed as denying the right of any employee to appeal to the board the decision of the superintendent on any important matter, provided the superintendent shall have been served with notice of appeal, and that it is handled through him/her to the board.

Board and Principal

The school principal has no direct administrative relations with the board. His/her relations to the board are through the superintendent. The principal is directly responsible to the superintendent; for the board recognizes that the superintendent is the person to whom it must look for professional leadership within the school system. He/she is the person who must take the leadership in putting into practice the policies of the board. The principal is likewise held responsible before bringing them to his/her attention. 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 the school staff, for the principal is in the best position to know the kind of person needed for a particular type of service in his/her school. However, the principal must make his/her recommendations to the superintendent and not to the board. At all times, the principal must remember that all matters that require board action must be presented to the board by the superintendent.

Board and Teachers

The relationship of the teacher to the board is indirect. The teacher is directly responsible to the principal and, through him/her to the superintendent, and then to the board. However, this does not mean that the teacher does not have access to the superintendent or to the board. Conditions may arise when direct access may be obtained through channels established for grievances.

In efficient school systems, policies are developed out of the needs of the schools; therefore, we as a board recognize the value of teachers in formulating effective policies. We do not feel that policies should be developed at the top and handed down, but should be developed through consideration of all people concerned with the problems. Students, citizens, teachers, principals, custodians, etc., should be asked to serve on committees dealing with problems that affect them.

Current practice codified 1975

Adopted: date of manual adoption

Department of Public Schools, Augusta, Maine