

# Foundations of Board Governance

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Presented to the  
**North Haledon Board of Education**

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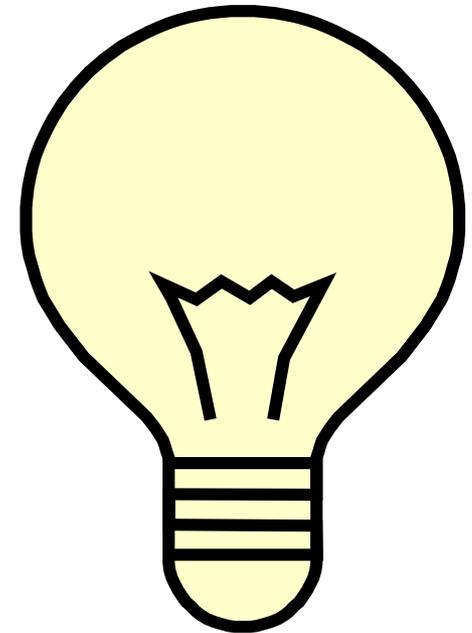
New Jersey School Boards Association

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# Let There Be Light!

Here is a good explanation of the differences in roles between the superintendent and the board:

**How many board members does it take to change a light bulb?**



# None!

It's up to the Board to say “**let there be light.**”

It's up to the Superintendent **to decide** if it will be incandescent, florescent, candle, solar or neon.

Then it's up to the Board to **approve the purchase** of the light bulbs and **evaluate the quality of lighting.**



# The Four Functions of a Board of Education

1. To provide guidance through **policy development** in the areas of instruction, personnel, general administration, fiscal and business management, physical plant and community relations.
2. To provide for a **program of quality instruction** by adopting curriculum standards as academic goals for students, **assessing district and personnel needs** to ensure **student achievement** of the standards, supporting professional development training for staff and requiring reports on the results of student assessment. **(Planning)**



# The Four Functions (con't)

3. To provide for the **effective management** of the district by **employing and evaluating** the Chief School Administrator, establishing policies for monitoring of district finance, curriculum, facilities (B&G), and personnel, and **requiring reports on the results of policy implementation.**
4. To provide for **two-way communication between community and Board** by informing the public about the schools, promoting parents' presence in schools and at school functions, evaluating the superintendent on how effectively parental input is solicited and considered, and working to secure public support for the schools and public understanding of district goals.



# Is This Your Role?

Read each of these scenarios and decide whether or not the actions describe appropriate behavior for the Board of Education or for individual Board members. **Why or why not?**

**1) The Ourtown Board of Education has successfully passed its elementary school building referendum and construction on the school has begun. Dan Rollins, a Board member who runs a large construction company, has begun visiting the construction site every day to speak with the Construction Manager and check on the progress of the project.**



# Is This Your Role?

**2) In executive session, the majority of the Ourtown Board of Education decides to support the Superintendent's recommendation to fire its extremely popular football coach because of his recent unprofessional and unsportsmanlike behavior, on the field and afterwards, following a disappointing loss to a big rival (which was covered by the media and is all over social media).**

**Board member Ed Reed's sons were coached by the football coach. Ed believes in second chances. He disagrees with the Superintendent's recommendation, and argued strongly against it. Bitterly disappointed in the action of the Board. The next day, Ed calls his best friend, John (whose son is a current member of the football team), tells him about the Board's decision, and encourages John to bring the football players & their parents to the next Board meeting to try to get the Board to change its decision.**



# Is This Your Role?

**3) Claire Murray, a member of the Ourtown Board of Education, is in the produce section of the local supermarket. Two of her neighbors come up to her and tell her that their daughters have told them that their 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher, Mrs. Smith, spends part of every school day talking and texting on her cellphone while she is in her classroom with her students. These parents are highly upset!**

**To calm them down, Claire promises to investigate the situation, and make sure that it doesn't continue. Claire assures them that the Superintendent would be distressed to learn about this and that a swift resolution is guaranteed.**



# Is This Your Role?

**4) At the beginning of the annual budgeting process, the Ourtown Board of Education meets with the Superintendent and Business Administrator and sets parameters for the budget. Board members take out the District's five-year Strategic Plan, review with the Superintendent what objectives have not yet been completed, and ask how Administration is going to create a budget that moves the Strategic Plan along.**



# Is this Your Role?

**5) The Ourtown Board of Education holds its meetings on the first and third Tuesday of the month. Board members receive their Board packets on the Friday preceding the meetings.**

**Bob Martin, a member of the Ourtown Board, in reading his packet over the weekend, believes that he has found an error in one of the proposals that the Board will vote on Tuesday evening. To make sure that everyone on the Board is involved and has the same information at the same time, he decides to wait until the meeting to point out the error and ask for clarification.**



# Is this Your Role?

**6) Lisa Watson, a Board member on the Ourtown Board of Education, has received multiple calls complaining about the behavior of a teacher at the middle school. Although she refers each of the callers up the chain of command, she also calls the Superintendent to alert him to the issue each time she gets a call.**



# Is This Your Role?

**7. Elizabeth Gonzalez, an Ourtown BOE member, is very concerned about the district math scores. While at NJSBA Workshop in Atlantic City, she talked to many BOE members from other districts throughout the State. She learned about a math program that is being widely used in South Jersey. From what she's heard, this math program could really suit Ourtown's needs. She asks her Superintendent to research it, and to prepare a report comparing that program with the Ourtown's current math program & the math programs used in neighboring districts, to be presented to the Curriculum Committee.**



# Is This Your Role?

**8) The Ourtown Elementary School needs a new Assistant Principal. Because the Superintendent is new, the Ourtown Board (non-conflicted only) decides to help by reading all of the applications and interviewing all of the candidates for the position. They plan to narrow the field down to two or three candidates. They will accept the Superintendent's recommendation on the best of those candidates, after he has had a chance to interview them as he likes.**



# Is This Your Role?

**9) As a former teacher at Ourtown School, OBOE member, Kate Armstrong is often approached by teachers. Because she knows they are more comfortable with her than with the Superintendent, she encourages them to come to her with their problems and concerns. What she can't fix herself, she refers to Administration.**



# Is This Your Role?

**10. Jim Berenger, an Ourtown Board member, knows that NJ State law requires that all curriculum meets the standards set out in the NJ Student Learning Standards. In order to ensure that the Ourtown curriculum is meeting them, he decides to go to the elementary school and question teachers and administrators about the implementation of the curriculum and whether they believe that it meets the NJSLS.**

**He calls the school on Monday, explains his thoughts to the principal, and asks her which day would be the best for him to spend some time with staff during lunch hour.**



# Personnel

Question: As a Board member, do you know what you should know about your role in personnel?

Let's take a quiz!



# Summary

- 4 Functions: Policy, Planning, Oversight & Appraisal, and Two-way Communication
- Respect the “What” and the “How”
- Personnel: Know what you should know
- Observe the Chain of Command
- Board of Education – A **Team Sport**
- **Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!**

