

A BOARD MEMBER'S TEN COMMANDMENTS

THOU SHALT:

- 1. *Establish firm expectations for Interactions, behavior and responsibilities.***
Don't assume anything — talk things over, clarify your expectations, periodically evaluate your performance, get training to enhance your boardsmanship.
- 2. *Understand that the superintendent is the professional.***
Respect his/her right to be the educational leader — reinforce the board's policy prerogatives. Don't make the mistake of thinking that you should be friends.
- 3. *Make certain that you and the board knows what the superintendent does.***
Orient yourself to her/his day to day responsibilities, but resist any urge to “check-up” on his activities.
- 4. *Insist on being involved in planning.***
Set aside time for agenda planning; schedule planning time for the board to discuss ideas and plans, and make certain that you consult on major issues / timeliness / problems.
- 5. *Keep your hands off the “day to day” operations.***
Force the board to leave the day to day operations to the superintendent — you can't evaluate his / her effectiveness if you are messing things up!
- 6. *Do your homework!***
Read the material sent in your packet — understand the background, the rationale, the numbers, the implications for the district! Never surprise the superintendent in public – call before the public meeting with pertinent questions, and be prepared to share information appropriately.
- 7. *Show courage when making the hard decisions.***
Know that you can't please all the people all the time - so don't keep score, and don't become defensive. Above all, don't hide behind “the administration made us do it.”
- 8. *Be prepared to support board decisions.***
You don't have to cheer-lead for votes you lost — but don't undermine the superintendent's efforts to implement the direction of the board.
- 9. *Keep the lines open: communicate with the superintendent on a regular, meaningful basis.***
Make certain s/he is kept informed by establishing patterns that fit both your needs and includes regular formal and informal feedback sessions on goals. Clarify your definition of “emergency” and the amount of information needed to make decisions.
- 10. *Use the spotlight.***
Encourage appearances at school district events and community activities. Make certain that you give public credit for administrative accomplishments. Never make the board, board members, or the superintendent look bad.