

Strategies For Working With New Board Of Education Members

by Dr. Walter J. Doherty, Superintendent, Central Square Central School District

Superintendent's Informal and Formal Welcoming and Congratulations:

Send a Letter from the Superintendent

Send News Release to Press

Put something in the Superintendent's Column, District Newsletter

Board of Educations Informal and Formal Welcoming and Congratulations:

Letter from the Board President

Reception at the Annual Reorganizational Meeting

Use New School Board Member Orientation Programs:

Local Orientation Program:

- Superintendent and Board President
- Suggested Tonics:
 - Role of a School Board Member
 - Role of the Superintendent
 - Structure of the Public School System
 - School Board Associations
 - Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES)
 - Collective Bargaining and Personnel Management
 - School Budget Development
 - Curriculum and Instruction
 - District Shared decision Making Plan
 - District Strategic Plan
 - District Support Services (Transportation

Regional Orientation Program (such as CNYSBA):

- New board members only

State Orientation Program (NYSSBA):

- Superintendent and new board members

Nurture and Maintain Positive Relationship with Board Members:

Participate (as Superintendent) in school board development activities

Provide the Board with Weekly Updates

Start and keep all board meetings operating on a positive tone:

- Hold Board meetings in schools
- Have students performing music as the board members and audience enter the meeting room
- Have student and faculty presentations
- Announcement on “What’s Right With _____ Schools ?“
- Have a mid-meeting break for refreshments, and so the Board can mingle with the audience members
- Keep meetings to 2 to 2 1/2 hours - board members have other lives and have to go to work in the morning

Celebrate “important” events at meetings. (i.e.: birthdays, landmark

Board of Education / Superintendent Relations

“A marriage made in Heaven..... or Not.”

- The Superintendent’s Contract is a combination of Marriage Vows and Prenuptial Agreement
- The first 6 month is the “Honeymoon Period,” where positions are established.
- Communication and mutual understanding are keys to success.
- Respect for each other strengths, and understand of each other’s weaknesses.
- The continual willingness to look out for each other is important.
- Share responsibilities, with a clear understanding of differences in responsibilities.
- Encourage a mutual belief that the “best of all worlds” is that the relationship stays in place.
- Disagreements do not have to end in divorce. The deterrent to divorce is that it is can be expensive to both sides.
- Hopefully you will be able to celebrate many anniversaries.