

Scenarios

The following scenarios may be used to stimulate discussion of responsibilities and roles within a functional area.

General Operations

- The local paper contacts a new member of the board. They hear there was a long debate regarding adding an enrichment program at the last school meeting, and asks for the inside story since the reporter was not at the meeting.
- The local newspaper sends a photographer to take first day of school photos at the elementary school. They did not notify the principal ahead of time, but show up at the office with the camera in hand. How does the principal respond?
- During its re-organizational meeting, with two newly elected members present, the board re-elects its current chair and clerk. Following the elections, a new member asks what the board's goals were last year and what they are for the upcoming year. The board chair replies the board has never articulated formal goals before, that is really the job of the superintendent.
- A bomb scare at the high school near the end of the day will delay the dismissal of school. This will impact the elementary schools as well, since the same buses are used to transport both sets of students. What should the principal do?

General Support Services

- At a monthly board meeting, the principal presents a service contract to repair the school's heating plant to the board chair for approval. The superintendent is unaware of the request. The board members question the principal about the repairs and discuss the necessity of the \$3,000 expenditure. They eventually approve the request and the chair signs the contract.
- As the result of a fight on a school bus, the superintendent, school bus contractor and building principal meet to discuss how to improve the environment on the bus. Younger students are afraid to ride and older students have been using foul language, threatening physical harm to other students and using gender biased comments toward others. They agree to craft a letter to parents of students on that bus seeking information about the bus climate and to clarify that the school would be treating bullying on the bus as a major infraction of school rules from this point forward. A school board member's child rides the bus and after receiving the letter complains to the superintendent that the board should have been involved in making this decision.

Curriculum and Instruction

- Under NCLB the board feels they need to be able to answer the question “how are our students doing?” when asked by parents and community members. What information does the board need and how does it obtain it?
- During a board meeting a board member mentions they have heard through the grapevine that despite a long standing practice of all first graders remaining with the same teacher in second grade via looping, the school will be reorganizing the composition of second grade classes next year. The board member thinks this is a bad idea and wants the board to weigh in on the decision.
- A board member notices bus loads of elementary students getting out at the local music hall for a production. It appears the entire school is attending. At the next board meeting the board member asks how the performance was tied into the curriculum and what was ‘missed’ as a result of the half day spent at the music hall. They also ask how the performance was paid for.

Student Support Services

- A new building principal wants to become familiar with the special education and educational support system in the school.
- A board member is cornered at the high school basketball game and asked to defend the rising costs of special education as reflected in the proposed budget published in the recent town report.

Human Resources

- The superintendent realizes that supervision and evaluation is not consistent across his/her schools. Principals and the Special Education Director are handling procedures differently and are not necessarily following board policy.
- On the June board agenda there are four open teaching positions with hiring recommendations. A board member is concerned with the large turnover in staff over the past several years and asks what the board can do to ensure they retain the staff they have instead of having to hire new teachers each year.
- Contract negotiations start up this fall. What steps need to happen prior to the first meeting between the union and the negotiating team?
- A board member receives a complaint at the grocery store about the upcoming in-service day. The parent has to take time off from work so her child will be supervised. The parent questions the need for in-service days, thinking they are really days teachers do not have to work but still get paid. The board member asks at the next meeting who determines the number of in-service days, how are they used, how do we know if they are effective?

Fiscal Operations

- A board member looking at the draft 2005-2006 budget notices an increase projected in special education again. The board member tells the principal to reduce that figure- they will not support the increase.
- The new superintendent sees a teacher in the local store purchasing school supplies. Later in the week the teacher submits a receipt and requests reimbursement of \$260 for supplies. The superintendent wants to find out what purchasing system is in place in the district.