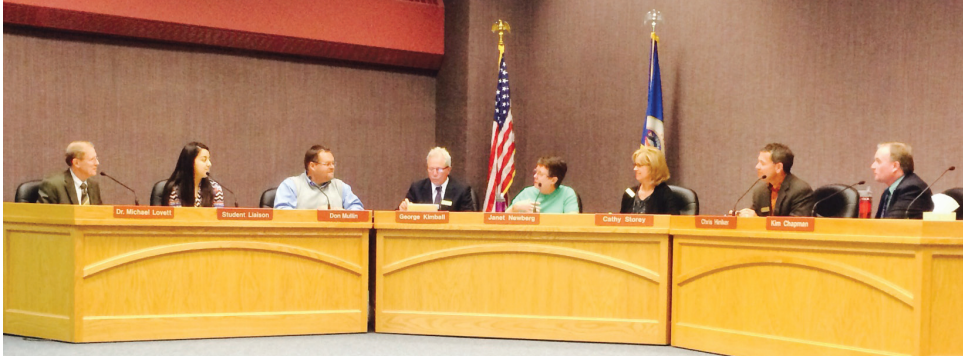


Building a Strong School Board/Superintendent Relationship



Minnesota School Board Association
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1. COHESIVENESS Our communities see us as a team. School board members and the superintendent together represent our students, staff, and community as one cohesive unit. Work to be at your unified best, every day and in every correspondence.

2. COMMUNICATION Communication must be regular, continuous, and fit the needs of your team. Your superintendent will work with you to find a strategy that regularly updates you on operational urgencies, important communication, and progress on strategic priorities. As a board member, regularly listen to, talk to, and meet with your superintendent. Talk to your school superintendent privately about your expectations for the frequency and detail of communication. When board members have varying expectations, it may be helpful to discuss the topic as a full board at a study session.

3. COMMUNITY As a school board member you are a steward of your entire district, including families, businesses, schools and students. Consider ways to support your community by being visible and approachable.

4. CONDUCT At your public meetings conduct every conversation and ask every question with respect and civility. In private conversation and in written conversations conduct yourself in the same manner. Develop school board protocols about who should respond to questions, inquiries or advocacy from employees or the public. For example, the board chair and the superintendent can decide given the nature of the communication.

5. COMPLIANCE Understand, honor, and practice compliance with the letter and spirit of federal and state law and your own board policies. As a school board member, you operate within the context of five levels of authority, including:

- Federal laws and regulations
- State laws and rules
- School board policy
- Administrative procedures
- Collective bargaining agreements

As a new board member, learn to appreciate the complexity of levels of authority. Especially important from the beginning is a keen understanding and respect for data privacy, and an awareness of the open meeting law.

6. COMPASSION Recognize your responsibility for oversight of the school district and evaluation of the superintendent. Also help your superintendent to be at his or her best by giving feedback on what is going well and what you think needs improvement. Generally follow the norm of *praise in public and correct in private*, unless the matter is a legal or ethical issue which needs public transparency. School board members are in a position to provide support for the professional and personal challenges that we all face.



White Bear Lake Area Schools

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