

CHAPTER III

The Role of the School Board Member Liaison

When the board works with a united and conscientious perspective, the superintendent is in a strong position to carry out the duties effectively. With a supportive and positive relationship between the superintendent and board mentor that allows for critical conversations, the superintendent can confidently initiate new innovations and experience professional growth.

– Ivory & Acker-Hocevar, 2007

The School Board Member Liaison

The Executive Leadership Series for Onboarding New Superintendents represents an extensive onboarding process for deeper knowledge levels, practical application, and a standards-based curriculum. The program is designed to fully prepare the superintendent to lead the school district while managing its daily operations.

This chapter is devoted to you and your role as the school board member liaison serving on your new superintendent's Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) team. It provides steps your board can take to assist with the onboarding process. It also outlines your role and responsibilities, provides information about accessing the superintendent's e-portfolio, and gives important dates and timelines for your calendar.

Successful onboarding is a true partnership between the new superintendent, the school district, and the Kentucky Association of School Administrators. In partnership, the three work to ensure the new superintendent has greater impact on student achievement.

Without an onboarding program, research data shows that 40 percent of leaders hired into new organizations don't succeed and are out of the position after 18 months. In addition, 20 percent of leaders who are internally promoted without an onboarding program are underperforming after two years (Sessa, Kaiser, Taylor, & Campbell, 1998).

The onboarding program aims to get first-year superintendents up to speed faster, accelerating their progress while helping them transition to their new role. Effective onboarding drives productivity, accelerates delivery of results, and significantly improves retention rates of highly talented leaders.

Three onboarding components include accommodation, assimilation, and acceleration (Sims, 2011). Accommodation is doing what it takes to make your new superintendent ready, eager and able to do the job from the start. Assimilation helps them join with others, including their ILP team, their colleagues, faculty and program staff who oversee the onboarding program, and the many stakeholders in your community. Finally, acceleration is helping the new superintendent and his or her team deliver better results faster.

To learn more about the value of the program, please click [here](#)



Robbie Asberry,
Hancock County Schools

1. Accommodation: Preparing for Your Superintendent's Arrival and Transition

First-year superintendents begin to develop and enhance their leadership when the announcement of their employment is made; but the initiative should occur from both directions as soon as the contract of employment is signed.

As the board team works to accommodate the new superintendent, the board member liaison should share information to ensure the new superintendent is well-versed on hot topics, trends, challenges and emerging issues in the community. This is not test data or demographics, but rather what some may call the lightning rod topics in the community. Initiating this conversation will give the new superintendent the opportunity to learn the issues, explore the history behind them, and use the information to better lead the district. This also leads to a supportive and positive relationship that paves the way for critical conversations in the future.

The district should immediately begin accommodation work by providing the new superintendent with the necessary tools for his or her office and work space. This includes work station setup, storage, space to meet with individuals, equipment, and access to the system network for email, file storage and pertinent district logins for access to data and reports.

In addition, the board should facilitate and foster relationships with the new superintendent and the staff through introductory meet-and-greets. These opportunities provide the pathway to success for impacting student achievement.

Onboarding begins the day your new superintendent accepts the job. This is the best time to roll out the welcome mat and assist him or her in managing the early transition. Your board's combined knowledge base is an excellent source of information that contributes to guiding and assisting your new superintendent.

The superintendent should expect a team-oriented, supportive relationship based on open and honest communication that is free from special interests.

(Tuttle, 1963)

2. Steps for Getting Started

The Board Member Liaison should complete the following tasks in preparation:

1. Read chapter one of this guide to gain a thorough understanding of the onboarding program for new superintendents—how it works, what it requires of the new superintendent, and the roles and responsibilities of each ILP team member.
2. Lead a discussion with the board of education on ways it can incorporate best practices into the onboarding processes.
3. Prepare a briefing information packet about the school district and deliver to your new superintendent long before his or her first day on the job. This information should include applicable items listed in the Essential District Data for Review section found at the end of chapter two.
4. Mentor your superintendent through the community's political arena.
5. Assist with the relocation process by connecting your new superintendent to community resources. Ensure his or her family is provided for and settled.
6. Connect your new superintendent with his or her administrative team quickly and recognize that leadership is key to providing the support principals and teachers need to be effective instructional leaders (Glass, Franceschini, 2007). When possible, provide some flexibility to allow for the superintendent's individual taste and working style.
7. Prepare and host a meet-and-greet schedule of key stakeholders.
8. Ensure your new superintendent's office space is welcoming, set up, equipped and move-in ready.
9. Connect your new superintendent with support staff who can assist with identification cards, access to the building, email account, setting up voice mail, etc.
10. Make coping, understanding and reducing superintendent stress a high priority for the board (Glass & Franceschini, 2007).

Onboarding begins the day your new superintendent accepts the job. It is the best time to roll out the welcome mat.

– Chief Executive
Officer
Rhonda Caldwell, Ed.D.
*KY Assn. of School
Administrators*

Steps for Getting Started Continued

11. Review expectations for communication with your new superintendent, including delivery method, frequency and information to be shared.
12. Ensure your new superintendent has your support and the tools needed to participate in the onboarding program. Mobile devices and a laptop are essential for the program.

Completion of these steps indicate you are prepared for your new superintendent's transition and that you genuinely care about getting him or her up to speed.

When a formal onboarding program is in place, new superintendents experience the following results (Sims, 2011):

1. Position matched their expectations
2. Clear understanding of their role and how it fits into the school district
3. Positive and welcoming environment
4. Transition objectives clearly focused the first weeks on the job
5. Meet-and-greets were planned, productive, and led to stronger relationships
6. Early wins built the new superintendent's confidence and organization
7. Having structure the first few weeks/months was effective
8. Environment supports and encourages development on the whole

Most superintendents accept the top job because of their desire to have a greater impact on student achievement. School boards are instrumental in establishing many of the working conditions for their new leader, which in turn helps accelerate the transition and enables them to focus on student achievement and getting results much faster (Glass & Franceschini, 2007).

I am indebted for the mentoring that I received during the onboarding process. The quality coaching built my capacity to layer ideas and lead with pace. You have to go slow to go fast.

- Superintendent
Mark Martin, Ed.D.,

Meade County Schools

Cohort #9

3. Assimilation: Key to Engagement and Acceleration

The school board member liaison is key to helping the new superintendent connect and engage in the onboarding program. The assimilation and acceleration phases include specific responsibilities to be carried out by the liaison.

The new superintendent's ILP team is comprised of an executive coach, an experienced superintendent mentor, and a school board member liaison. The team's purpose is to provide support, serve as a sounding board, and act as a critical friend throughout the first year. These individuals guide the new superintendent on a daily basis and assist with the development of the ILP and Capstone of Learning presentation at the end of the program year, as well as ensure successful completion of the onboarding program. The team meets a minimum of two times per year, but may meet as often as the superintendent and executive coach deem necessary.

The school board member liaison is selected by the new superintendent to serve on the ILP team. This team member serves as a liaison between the local board of education and the new superintendent, providing guidance and direction from the perspective of district needs and working to assimilate the new leader into the school district and the statewide onboarding program.

Specific responsibilities of the school board member liaison include:

1. Inform the superintendent about pertinent topics and issues.
2. Ensure the accommodation phase is completed.
3. Assist in the development of the ILP, ensuring board goals and objectives are aligned.
4. Communicate updates to the full board regarding the onboarding process.
5. Effectively guide and evaluate the new superintendent's growth over time.
6. Complete the action items outlined on the next page.

We know that leadership is very much related to change. As the pace of change accelerates, there is naturally a greater need for effective leadership.

– John Kotter

Important Dates and Action Items for ILP and Capstone of Learning

Month	Date(s)	Action Item
July	1-31	Attend orientation session in July or view on demand video for in-depth understanding and knowledge of the program, its requirements and the impact on the new superintendent.
August	1-31	Meet with the new superintendent for ILP development and alignment to district strategic plan goals and/or priorities. Lead board of education in discussing the five effectiveness standards utilized in the program and consider aligning with the superintendent's annual evaluation.
September	1-30	Meet with full ILP team in September or October.
October	1-31	Meet with full ILP team in September or October.
December	1-31	Meet with superintendent to discuss and review progress on ILP and PGP.
February	21-22??	Attend ILP team meeting held in conjunction with KSBA annual conference.
March	1-31	Meet to discuss ILP checkpoints.
May or June	1-30	Schedule Capstone of Learning to be presented by your new superintendent during a May or June board meeting. Mentor and director of executive coaching and mentoring to attend.
July	29	Celebrate your new superintendent's successful completion of the program (if entered the yearlong program in July of the previous year)

Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)

As the School Board Member Liaison, your role in the Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) is crucial in supporting your newly appointed superintendent throughout the onboarding journey. The ILP is designed to provide personalized growth opportunities, culminating in a Capstone of Learning at the end of the program year that showcases each superintendent's development and impact on their district.

The ILP is a year-long initiative that allows superintendents to create a tailored learning plan based on their specific goals, challenges, and the unique needs of their school district. This individualized approach ensures that the learning experience is relevant and applicable, empowering superintendents to focus on areas that will yield the greatest benefits for their leadership and the communities they serve.

Throughout the ILP, superintendents will engage in ongoing reflection and assessment of their progress. This reflective practice encourages them to document their experiences, insights, and the application of best practices, fostering a culture of continuous growth and self-awareness.

At the end of the program year, new superintendents will present their Capstone of Learning to the Board of Education, which reflects the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the program. The Capstone will highlight your new superintendent's key learnings, the outcomes of their individualized projects, and the strategies implemented to address specific challenges within their districts. This presentation is an opportunity for superintendents to showcase their leadership development and the positive impacts they have made in their educational community.

To enhance the ILP process, the Capstone of Learning will be managed through SuperEval, a powerful platform designed for evaluation and feedback in educational contexts. SuperEval provides a structured environment for the presentation of Capstone projects, allowing superintendents to effectively communicate their leadership, achievements, and the impact of their work.



As the School Board Member Liaison, you play a vital role in guiding and supporting your new superintendent through the Individualized Learning Plan process.

Your engagement in this process will undoubtedly contribute to the success of your new leader and the school community.

Completion of the steps outlined in this chapter accelerates your new superintendent's onboarding, bringing about immediate and positive results for the school district.

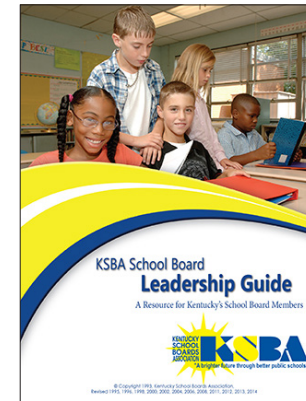
Fred Carter, Ed.D.
KY Assn. of School
Administrators

Recommended Reading

The following books are recommended by school board members, superintendents and participants who have completed the onboarding program or served on an ILP team. These publications serve as resources and are found beneficial by experienced school board members and superintendents.

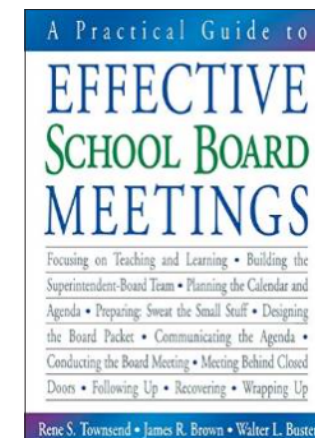
KSBA School Board Leadership Guide

An excellent resource for working with your school board is KSBA's Leadership Guide.



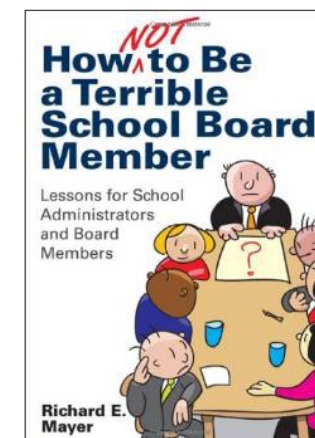
A Practical Guide to Effective School Board Meetings

Written by Rene Townsend, James Brown, and Walter Buster, this book provides realistic, detailed information for turning board meetings into productive, result-getting events that help you focus on teaching, learning and achieving your districts' goals. The authors have chaired over 1,000 board meetings and discuss creating role clarity, building the superintendent-board team to increase effectiveness and support positive working relationships, developing general operating procedures that work, carrying out effective board meetings, and following up post meeting.



How Not to Be a Terrible School Board Member: Lessons for School Administrators and Board Members

Veteran school board member, Richard E. Mayer, takes a humorous but substantive approach to the relationship between school administrators and board members. Key features of the book include 28 brief case studies and lessons learned for board members and administrators. In addition to highlighting typical traps, the case studies light the path to positive collaboration and shared decision-making between superintendents and school boards.

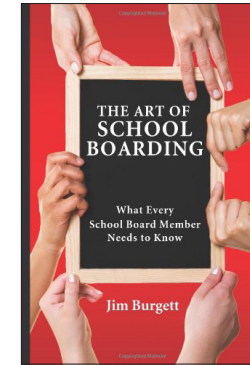


A capacity and taste for reading gives access to whatever has already been discovered by others. It is the key, or one of the keys, to the already solved problems. And, not only so, it gives a relish and facility for successfully pursuing the yet unsolved ones.

– Abraham Lincoln
Speech to the
Wisconsin State
Agricultural Society,
September 1859

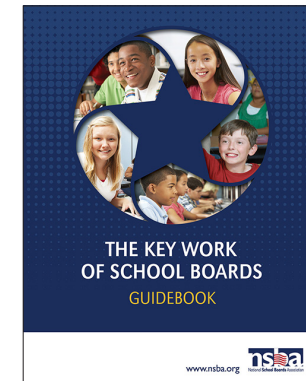
The Art of School Boarding

This easy read by Jim Burgett, written for school board rookies and veterans alike, describes how board members should treat the position and gives guidance on dealing with families, law, curriculum, finance, mandates, athletics and more.



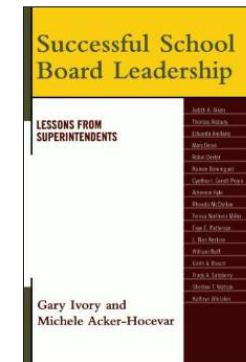
The Key Work of School Boards Guidebook

This guide provides a systems-thinking framework for improving student achievement by focusing on eight essential and interrelated action-areas for effective school governance. Authors Katheryn Gemberling, Carl Smith, and Joseph Villani refer to this as the Key Work of School Boards. The eight Key Work action-areas are vision, standards, assessment, accountability, alignment, collaboration, climate and continuous improvement.



Successful School Board Leadership

Authors Gary Ivory and Michele Acker-Hocevar provide success strategies for school board members in this book. They tackle leadership in an era of change, data driven decisions, leading with integrity, developing good staff, learning about education and your role, shortages of resources, mandates and micro politics, and understanding your superintendent's perspective and good relationships.



The School Board Member's Guidebook

Every student deserves a high-impact, well-qualified, and governance-driven school board. In this helpful book, best-selling authors Ryan Donlan and Todd Whitaker show you as a school board member how to make smart, worthwhile decisions that will lead to positive change in your district. The School Board Member's Guidebook addresses the challenges of making realistic choices that will truly benefit the school and have a lasting impact.

