



Superintendent Open Discussion

WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE FOR? This one-pager provides key takeaways from the open-discussion portion of the Leading Now Briefing Session with School Board Partners. Hear what other Superintendents had to say about what's happening when communication is going well with the school board and what other Superintendents would change about their board relationships.

When communication is working well with your board, what is happening?

- When the board lets me do the role they hired me to do.
- BOE asks questions between meetings through the Chair to me rather than them all reaching out. BOE comes to me rather than going to other staff members.
- Our conversations and meetings are focused on teaching and learning versus other stuff.
- Our meetings run smoother and are less confrontational.
- They provide a "heads up" to me on issues that may be difficult to answer during a meeting.
- There is clarity and clear communication on decisions made.
- They look at the school district as working with the town rather than against it.
- They are willing to ask "brave/vulnerable" questions in work sessions - willing to talk about hard issues.
- The Board stays in their governance lane; they leverage the communication structures; they leave management to me; meetings/dialogue focused on priorities/strategies.
- When we all make learners the center of decisions.
- Things are going well when BOE members respond to community concerns by email or in an open forum and represent the district's position clearly without needing add'l support; alignment

If you were to change one thing about your board relationships, what would it be?

- That Trustees would better understand and manage their own biases
- I would change: a way to have more time with them to help them learn to express their concerns - board members have busy lives and can't take the time they need to learn
- When there is a breakdown if someone brings their bias into the conversation. When/when not to insert certain things that may not have anything to do with the school system.
- By design, board members are elected and are beholden to their constituents. I'm not. I'm beholden to the board as a whole and the students in our system. If we leveraged each other's roles instead of looking for lines to cross - the result would be more benefit for kids.
- Reducing the need to be reactionary to the everyday polarizing actions of patrons... responding as appropriate but staying the course on mission work.
- When inserting a political stance.
- When Trustees hold one another accountable to "agreements for engagement", it is normally a powerful learning experience and allows them to "teach" each other.
- Board turnover is a challenge.
- Struggling with how to get the board to focus when there is going to be yet another turnover soon.