Working with the Board of Education

Putting in the work: From the Superintendent’s View

#NaleoBootCamp
19 years in Public Education
1997 graduate of Erskine College in Due West, South Carolina with a B.A. in History with a minor in Secondary Education, and the University of Massachusetts Lowell, Master’s in Educational Administration, and Ed.D in Leadership in Schooling, 2005 and 2012,
Graduate of the 2016 AASA Urban Superintendent’s Academy.
Served in the roles of Middle and High School teacher, department chair, assistant principal, principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent of schools.
March, 2016: appointed the first female Receiver in the State of Massachusetts to take over the Southbridge Public Schools by the State Commissioner of Education with the charge of turning around a chronically underperforming district.
Present and conduct trainings nationally on topics regarding educational leadership, policy, school improvement and turnaround.
Main interests lie ensuring equitable and high quality education for all students, and exploring how systematic and coherent approaches to the work of teaching and learning impact student outcomes.
Thomas E. Parker

@thomaseparker1

• Thomas Parker is in his 4th year as Superintendent of Ecorse Public Schools.
  • Youngest Superintendent in Michigan when hired
• Ten years experience as a turnaround leader in Detroit Public Schools
• BA in Education from Howard University, MA in Ed. Policy from the University of Michigan, and is completing his ED.D. at Eastern Michigan University.
• 2016 Graduate of AASA Urban Superintendents Academy
Goals for this Session

1. Engage the audience in an interactive conversation about Board/Superintendent Relationships

2. Build a shared understanding of Governance and Collaboration

3. Develop tools to support Board members in maintaining effective relationships with the Superintendent
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Growth Mindset

123.....
The RESEARCH:
Superintendent Tenure and the Effectson Student Achievement
Statistics

• Key Findings in a study by Waters and Marzano regarding the impact of district leadership and student achievement found a statistically significant relationship (a positive correlation of 0.24) between district leadership and student achievement.

• Effective superintendents focus their efforts on creating goal-oriented districts.
Finding #2

1. There are **five district-level leadership** responsibilities that have a statistically significant correlation with average student academic achievement. All Five focused on teaching and learning goals.

   a) **Collaborative goal-setting** which include all relevant stakeholders, including central office staff, building-level administrators, and board members, in establishing goals for their districts.

   b) **Non-negotiable goals** for achievement and instruction goals that all staff members must act upon) in at least two areas: **student achievement and classroom instruction**.

   c) **Board alignment** and **support of district goals**: In districts with higher levels of student achievement, the local board of education is aligned with and supportive of the non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction.
Finding #3

1. Finding 3: Superintendent tenure is positively correlated with student achievement

   a. Correlations have been found between superintendent tenure and student achievement. The weighted average correlation in these two studies was a statistically significant $0.19$. These positive effects appear to manifest themselves as early as two years into a superintendent’s tenure.
How?

1. Boards MUST ensure these goals remain the primary focus of the district’s efforts and that no other initiatives detract attention or resources from accomplishing these goals.

2. Superintendent to work collaboratively as a team, with a high degree of trust.

3. Board members and Superintendents must develop governance protocols that allow them to maintain effective relationships and move the work of district leadership forward
Board-Superintendent Relationships
Board Governance and Relationships

“A strong, effective relationship between superintendents and school board members hinges upon clear definitions of each body’s duties and responsibilities. Confusion over roles can cause inefficiency and conflict. Successful districts require board members to focus on long-term strategic planning and superintendents to focus on successfully implementing policy and procedures.” Dana Bedden – Superintendent, Richmond City Public Schools, VA
What does the Research Say:

“The role of the school board member today has to be one of leadership working in tandem with the Superintendent.”

“Model Collaboration from the top”

“Self-Examination, Reflection, and monitoring progress towards goals help keep boards on track.”
Board-Superintendent relations are critical

• The history of board-superintendent relations has seen roles and power dynamics change over time.

• A strong local educational leadership team of school board and superintendent is essential to form a community vision for children, enlist community support for the vision, and to develop long-range plans and goals for raising student achievement and improve professional development. *Flores
"Teamwork is the ability to work as a group towards a common vision, even if that vision becomes extremely blurry" Author Unknown
5 Dysfunctions of a Team
By Patrick Lencioni

- Inattention to results
- Status and Ego
  - Avoidance of ACCOUNTABILITY
    - Lack of commitment
    - Fear of CONFLICT
    - Absence of TRUST
  - Low Standards
    - Ambiguity
    - Artificial Harmony
    - Invulnerability
High Functioning Teams - by Lencioni

- Trust one another
- Engage in unfiltered conflict around ideas
- Commit to decisions and plans of action
- Hold each other accountable for delivering against those plans
- Focus on Achievement of those results
Be in it Together... Because YOU ARE!!

Sure glad the hole isn’t at our end.
Focus on the Solutions
Not the Problems........

Perspective
Turn and Talk

• Why do you think it’s important to develop a High Functioning team with the Board and Superintendent?

• How would you do this?

• What would your evidence be?
Recommendation

• Create a *Shared Solutions Team* that meets quarterly.
• Team consists of various stakeholders, including board members.
• Shared agreements that problems aren’t brought to the table without solutions.
Board and Superintendent

Roles and Responsibilities
### The Division of Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Board</th>
<th>Superintendent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td><strong>Means</strong></td>
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<td><strong>End Results</strong></td>
<td><strong>Questions to be addressed</strong></td>
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<td>What?</td>
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<td>Why?</td>
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<td>How much?</td>
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<td>How well?</td>
<td>By whom?</td>
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<td><strong>Mission</strong></td>
<td><strong>Strategies</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Methods</strong></td>
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Role clarification is needed and this takes time and training.

• *State laws and local policies make clear that school board member roles should focus on leadership and governance for high student achievement and not on administrative and financial details.*

• There is a need for clarity in the role definitions of the board and superintendent.

• It’s easy because of the grayness of the work to fail to differentiate between the **policy-making role of the school board and the administrative role of the superintendent**.

  • *When the boards and superintendents understand and respect each one’s role in district governance and administration, then they are able to set clearly defined roles for increasing student achievement.*
The Ongoing Work.......Recommendations

• 1. Regular board work sessions on board and superintendent roles

• 2. Clear job descriptions for Superintendents to prevent the blurring of legislative/administrative lines and overstepping of boards into potential administrative micromanagement.

• 3. Establishment of clear performance expectations for the Superintendent.
Reflection

• When board-superintendent conflict escalates to the point that a superintendent is non-renewed, *it is incumbent on boards to evaluate their responsibility for the superintendent turnover.*

• The dynamics of superintendent turnover are such that boards that are not concerned about role clarification between the superintendent and themselves may be creating an environment that is less than favorable for future board-superintendent relations.
How do we keep the Board and Superintendent on time

• Telling time is easy; getting people to be on time is the hard part

• Two mechanisms that can help keep the Board and Superintendent on time and the district moving forward
  • Norms
  • Communication
Norms
Norms

• **Team norms** are basically relationship guidelines. **Team** members develop particular ways of interacting with each other over time until those habits become behavioral expectations. From “Effective Teams”

• **Norms can include both processes, (e.g. start and end on time) and content (e.g. taking risks with our questions and ideas, pushing each other)**
Purpose

• To reach consensus on the ground rules that will guide the team’s work.

• To codify team expectations around task completion, team processes, and personal interactions.
Turn and Talk

• What role do the norms play in each school committee meetings? (ex. Are they read before meetings? Are they present at the table? Posted on the wall?)

• Who polices the norms?

• What does it really look like for norms to be operationalized? Like Roberts Rules...
Policing

“If you don’t call attention to the fact that a norm has been violated, in effect you’re creating a second set of norms. For example, a common norm is expecting everyone to be on time. If you don’t point out when someone violates that norm, then, in effect, you’re saying that it’s really not important to be on time” National Staff Development Council
Communication is critical

How does the board communicate with the superintendent as a body?

How does the Superintendent communicate with individual Board members?

What role does the Board President play in the communication matrix?
Emotional Intelligences

How we Communicate is a Derivative of our Leadership Style
Emotional Intelligence

• First defined by Peter Salavoy and John Mayer - and popularized by Dan Goleman: the capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically.

• https://www.16personalities.com
Communication Quiz

An effective Superintendent has to know how all of his/her Board members communicate; verbally non-verbally

Take the following quiz and learn your communication style.

http://www.newlineideas.com/communication-style-quiz.html
Turn and Talk

• What is your style?

• What about your Board Colleagues?

• How has/can this affect your relationship with the Superintendent
Tips for effective Communication

- Weekly Update/Board Report
- Norms/systems defining when important issues need to be communicated and who communicates them
- Define how the Board President communicates to the Superintendent and the Board.....and stick to it!
- 2 minute drill
- Quarterly report
Monitoring results matters.

• Establishing frequent, regular times for school boards to monitor student achievement results is important. Public hearings, regular monthly board information sessions and linking the budgeting process to performance goals are all ways boards can structure sessions to focus on school improvement.
Monitoring

• Using site visits to assist board members in their monitoring role can be helpful if questions, process and procedures for classroom visits by individual board members are adopted by the board.

• These visits provide school personnel an opportunity to “paint a picture for them (boards) of how things are progressing and how successful their policies are
Need for Self Assessment

The School Board of the City of Norfolk

2012-2013

Governance Self-Assessment

SAMPLE COPY
When Governance Goes Wrong

The Loss of Local Control
Be Wary of......

Paralysis
When Governance Goes Right....
Recommendations

1. School Board Training (Adaptive vs. Technical)
2. Developing and Policing Norms
3. Self-Assessment and Monitoring of Governance and Administration
4. Clarity of roles and responsibilities
5. Attending conferences such as NSBA with Superintendent to learn together.
6. Personality Profiling (i.e. True Colors Training/Myers Briggs)
7. Bi-Annual Progress Monitoring meetings with Superintendent
8. Create Quality Profiles for the District Annually so you can control the narrative of your school system.
EDUCATORS
“CHANGE LIVES”
ON A DAILY BASIS
Questions???
References


4. Michigan Association of School Boards
