

## **Assessing Board Relationships**

It will be important for you as a superintendent to be keenly aware of the relationships among members of the board of trustees. These include political, social, and power relations among individual and small groups of board members. One way to identify these relationships is through the use of a sociogram. A sociogram is nothing more than a diagram of the verbal interactions among individual and small groups within a larger group. With it you can depict who the "stars" of the group are, who the "isolates" are, and who the members of cliques might be. A sociogram can take several forms but for our purposes, the simpler the depiction, the better.

Here is your assignment:

1. Attend a public board meeting, a board training session, or a board workshop. Observe the verbal interactions between board members and between board members and the superintendent (The superintendent is part of the group too).
2. On a simple diagram, chart the frequency and direction of the verbal interactions you observe.
3. After diagraming the interactions, analyze the verbal patterns depicted on your diagram. Identify "stars," "isolates," and cliques. Submit the analysis using the discussion board or email it directly to me at mb01@swt.edu

Be sure to secure your superintendent's permission before completing this assignment. I don't want to be hunting jobs for any of you.

## **Board Effectiveness Audit**

*Instructions: Review this checklist with your superintendent. Check those items that you both agree are true of your board of trustees at the present time. Submit the completed document via the discussion board before the seminar meeting.*

### **Planning and Governance**

- 1.0 A vision statement is in place for the district.
  - 1.1 \_\_\_ The vision statement clearly sets forth the school district's mission.

1.2 \_\_\_ The board reviews and readopts the vision statement at least every three years through formal board action.

1.3 \_\_\_ The procedures for periodically reviewing the vision statement is written. The board understands the procedure and supports it.

1.4 \_\_\_ Mechanisms for disseminating the vision are clearly identified and written down.

2.0 A comprehensive goal statement for the district is in place.

2.1 \_\_\_ The board adopts or reaffirms a comprehensive list of district goals each year through formal board action.

2.2 \_\_\_ Mechanisms for disseminating the goals for the district are clearly identified and written down.

2.3 \_\_\_ The procedure for developing and reviewing district goals is written. The board understands the process and supports it.

2.4 \_\_\_ The board is familiar with the administration's written plans for accomplishing the goals. The plans include time lines for implementation, specific mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness of the plans, and specific times for reporting to the board on progress.

3.0 Board actions reinforce the central importance of the goals to the work of the district.

3.1 \_\_\_ Deliberation on all items before the board routinely includes a discussion of the recommended action's impact on meeting the district goals.

3.2 \_\_\_ The board's superintendent evaluation instrument and process focus primarily on the superintendent's success in addressing district goals.

3.3 \_\_\_ The board's budget review process specifically identifies how goals are funded in the proposed budget, whether adequate, and whether funding priorities are consistent with district goals.

4.0 The board monitors plan implementation and district success in a formal, scheduled manner.

4.1 \_\_\_ Time lines in the plans for reporting to the board are incorporated into the board's annual activity calendar and included in appropriate monthly agendas.

4.2 \_\_\_ The board reviews the appropriateness, adequacy, and usefulness of the reports annually with the superintendent.

### **Management Oversight**

5.0 Goals, standards, and/or benchmarks have been established for all major aspects of district operations.

5.1 \_\_\_ The board receives information annually from the superintendent on the goals, standards, and benchmarks the administration uses to assess effectiveness for the major areas of district operations.

5.2 \_\_\_ The board receives regular, scheduled updates on operations effectiveness as measured against standards or benchmarks.

6.0 The board is familiar with broad outlines of the systems the superintendent has put in place to manage district operations.

6.1 \_\_\_ The board and superintendent have a schedule for periodic updates on major management systems in the district, including presentations on how benchmark data are used to plan improvements.

6.2 \_\_\_ The board's evaluation of the superintendent's performance focuses on the superintendent's success in establishing appropriate measures and standards of performance; putting effective plans, programs, procedures, or systems in place; monitoring success; and using data for improvement.

### **Board-Superintendent Team Operations**

7.0 The board and superintendent team regularly checks expectations and assesses board-superintendent operations.

7.1 \_\_\_ The board and superintendent participate in an annual team building activity focused on self-assessment.

7.2 \_\_\_ The team building activity concludes with written plans or priorities for continuing education by the board and by individual board members for the year.

7.3 \_\_\_ The effectiveness of the team building activity and the success of board members in meeting their continuing education plans are reviewed as a formal agenda item six to ten months after the activity.

7.4 \_\_\_ The board has adopted and annually reaffirms an ethics statement or code of conduct for board members.

8.0 Written operating procedures for the board and superintendent are in place.

8.1 \_\_\_ A written annual calendar of board events, outlining major board activities month by month, is in place.

8.2 \_\_\_ Operating procedures are codified in a written board-superintendent operating procedures document; new board members are oriented to operating procedures within the first 60 days of service.

8.3 \_\_\_ An annual review of operating procedures is included on the board activity calendar.

Adapted from the Texas Asssocation of School Boards.