

Guidelines
for
School Board Members

Mid-America Union Conference
Office of Education
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PREFACE

Within the Seventh-day Adventist system of education the local school board is one of the most important components in maintaining a quality school program.

School board members come with a deep interest in providing quality education to the children and youth of the Church and possess decision-making and problem-solving capabilities. However, they are frequently handicapped by a lack of familiarity with educational organization and terminology.

This manual was developed to help individuals to become effective board members. Some areas of Union policy are referred to and summarized. However, when specific questions on policy arise, the conference superintendent or the Mid-America Union Conference (MAUC) *Education Code* should be consulted. The purpose of this manual is to provide a basis whereby board members can ask good, in-depth questions of administrators rather than to become specialists in such matters.

Use of the Book

Conference superintendents of schools and local administrators are encouraged to use this volume for annual in-service programs. New board members are encouraged to read the book, ask questions, and discuss ideas. It is recommended that portions of school board meetings be used to review policy statements, proper procedures, and responsibilities of individual members.

Acknowledgment

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Chapter 1

Organization and Functions

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has historically supported a strong church school system. Each school has a relationship to the other schools in the local conference, the Mid-America Union Conference (MAUC), and the North American Division (NAD).

Each school, whether elementary, junior academy, or senior academy, is a unit of the K-12 school system. The local conference delegates the operation of a school to the local church or churches, and provides support for each school. The organization of a given school should be designed to meet the needs of its constituency.

To maintain an overall organizational structure, each school has a local board and a written constitution. The constitution harmonizes with denominational policy, identifying the organizational outline and the role of the constituency, the school board, and the school. Constitutional models are available from the office of education at the local conference office.

Constituency

The local school constituency consists of the church or churches that operate the school and meets annually or as specified in the school constitution. A boarding school constituency consists of the conference membership.

The primary functions of a school constituency include:

- Reviewing reports of the school operation.
- Considering plans and policies for school operation.
- Providing adequate financing for general operating costs.
- Approving financial plans for major capital improvements as recommended by the conference board of education or the school board.
- Encouraging the development and maintenance of a strong Home and School Association.
- Establishing and adopting a constitution, in harmony with denominational policies, that defines the principles and guidelines by which the school shall operate.

In Adventist education, each school is an integral part of a strong church school system.

Relationship Between the Local Board and Conference Entities

Confusion sometimes exists over the role of the local board and other entities, especially the conference board of education and the conference office of education.

- The local conference board of education derives its authority from the conference constituency and/or conference executive committee. To assure effective, orderly operation of schools within the conference, the conference board of education delegates selected functions to local school boards.
- The school board should thoroughly understand its relationship to the conference board and the office of education.

Although the conference board of education delegates certain functions to school boards, it cannot divest itself of its inherent legal obligations. Inasmuch as the conference association (in which school ownership rights are vested) may become legally exposed by school board actions, it is incumbent that close cooperation remain between school boards and the conference board of education in school operation and in all personnel actions.

The most effective board member is a team player, working unceasingly to support Adventist education.

- The conference board of education serves as employer of all certificated educational staff. As such, the conference board of education is responsible for the employment, assignment, transfer, retirement, non-renewal of contract and termination of all certificated personnel.
 - The conference superintendent, in consultation with the local school boards, makes recommendations to the conference board of education on the employment of certificated personnel.
 - The conference board of education delegates the employment of all local classified personnel to the local school board. Since all schools are part of the Seventh-day Adventist school system, they are to follow employment guidelines for classified personnel as outlined in the *MAUC Employment Policies for Education Personnel*.
- The conference office may provide payroll services for classified personnel, but this service is not to be construed as accepting any responsibility for employment, assignment, termination, or salary and allowances.

- If available, a designated administrator recommends all actions regarding classified personnel to the school board. If a designated administrator is not available, such actions for classified personnel will be recommended to the school board by the head teacher in counsel with the school board chair.

An employer who does not intend to rehire a salaried classified employee for the ensuing year must so inform the employee in writing prior to May 1 of the current school year.

A salaried classified employee who does not intend to accept employment for the ensuing year in the school where presently employed is to notify the school board in writing prior to May 1 of the current school year.

School Board

The primary functions of the school board are to:

- Ensure the implementation of policies and plans of the conference board of education as administered by the office of education.
- Develop a clear, practical set of objectives for their school, in harmony with the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education.
- Cooperate with the conference office of education in recommending the hiring of certificated staff to the conference board of education.
- Develop policies in areas of local concern such as:
 - Master planning
 - Use of school property
 - Bus schedules and routes
 - Purchasing procedures
 - Tuition and/or other methods of support
 - Admission requirements (in accordance with state and conference guidelines)
 - Facilities, equipment and maintenance
 - Textbook purchases (pupil or school owned)
 - Criteria for selection of media materials
 - Dress and social behavior
- Support the principal or head teacher in school administration including:
 - Implementation of board policies
 - Teacher load
 - Development and enforcement of a student code of conduct

“Effective schools occur when the administration and board do excellent jobs in their respective roles and do not get involved in each other’s responsibilities.”

- Research on Effective Schools

- Develop a list of principal/head teacher responsibilities in conjunction with the conference superintendent of schools.
- Ratify or modify the recommendations of the school administration in cases of serious discipline. Serve as the ultimate authority in the dismissal of students. Consideration of student dismissal must occur in executive session.
- Support the Home and School Association.
- Keep official minutes of each meeting of the board or subcommittees and file one copy with the conference office of education. Academy boards are to file copies of minutes with the Mid-America Union Office of Education and conference office of education.

The primary function of the board is policy making.

- Consider appeals and answer questions regarding the operation of the school.
 - Participate in the process of school evaluation as scheduled by the Union or conference office of education.
 - In counsel with the superintendent of schools, consider a proposed plan of school organization including a constitution and bylaws, an administrative organization, and a basic curriculum plan for the school.
- Adopt the recommended conference-wide school calendar. Any modification must receive prior approval from the conference office of education.
 - Authorize the preparation of a school bulletin, which shall include such items as:
 - Course offerings
 - Financial information
 - Harassment policy
 - School regulations
 - Statement of nondiscrimination
 - Weapons policy
 - Assume responsibility for the planning and funding of an annual operating budget including:
 - Administrative expenses
 - Curriculum materials
 - Playground and physical education supplies
 - Media center materials
 - School supplies
 - Insurance
 - Indebtedness
 - Miscellaneous operating expenses

- Assume responsibility for planning and funding a capital improvements budget.
- Consult the conference guidelines and state/local regulations for building projects.
- Cooperate with the Union and conference offices of education in matters of curriculum development.
- Appoint subcommittees as needed including personnel, finance, curriculum and instruction, and public relations.

School Board Chair

The primary functions of the school board chair are to:

- Call and preside over board meetings.
- Serve as consultant to the executive secretary (principal) in preparing board meeting agendas.
- Follow parliamentary procedure.
- Encourage discussion relevant to agenda items.
- Become acquainted with the school program and confer with the administrator on items pertaining to the operation of the school.
- Communicate with individual churches and present school items pertinent to each church constituency.

A good board chair
is a key element in
the successful
operation of a
school.

The board chair is *not* responsible for:

- Administrative and leadership functions in the school.
- Staff supervision.
- Acting or speaking unilaterally for the board or for the school.

Executive Secretary

The principal serves as the executive secretary of the school board (MAUC *Education Code 1377*). The executive secretary of the school board is to:

- Prepare agendas for board meetings in consultation with the board chair.
- Keep an accurate written record of each meeting in a permanent file. A recording secretary may be appointed, but the executive secretary (principal) is still responsible for the record.

- Distribute copies of the board minutes following each meeting. Minutes for elementary schools and junior academies go to the conference office of education. Those for senior academies go to the conference and the Mid-America Union offices of education.
- Produce the board's necessary correspondence.
- Notify the conference office of education of the dates for the regular board meetings for the school year.

Church Pastor

The church pastor is responsible for:

- Leadership and support of Adventist education by precept and example.

The total support of the pastor(s) is a must for a school to be a quality school.

- Church involvement in the financial support of the school.
- Encouragement of effective parent/teacher/pupil relationships.
- Assisting in the spiritual emphasis of the school.
- Involvement as a spiritual counselor and resource person.

- Promoting recognition of administrator(s) and faculty as educational leaders.
- Fulfilling an advisory role to the school board and staff.

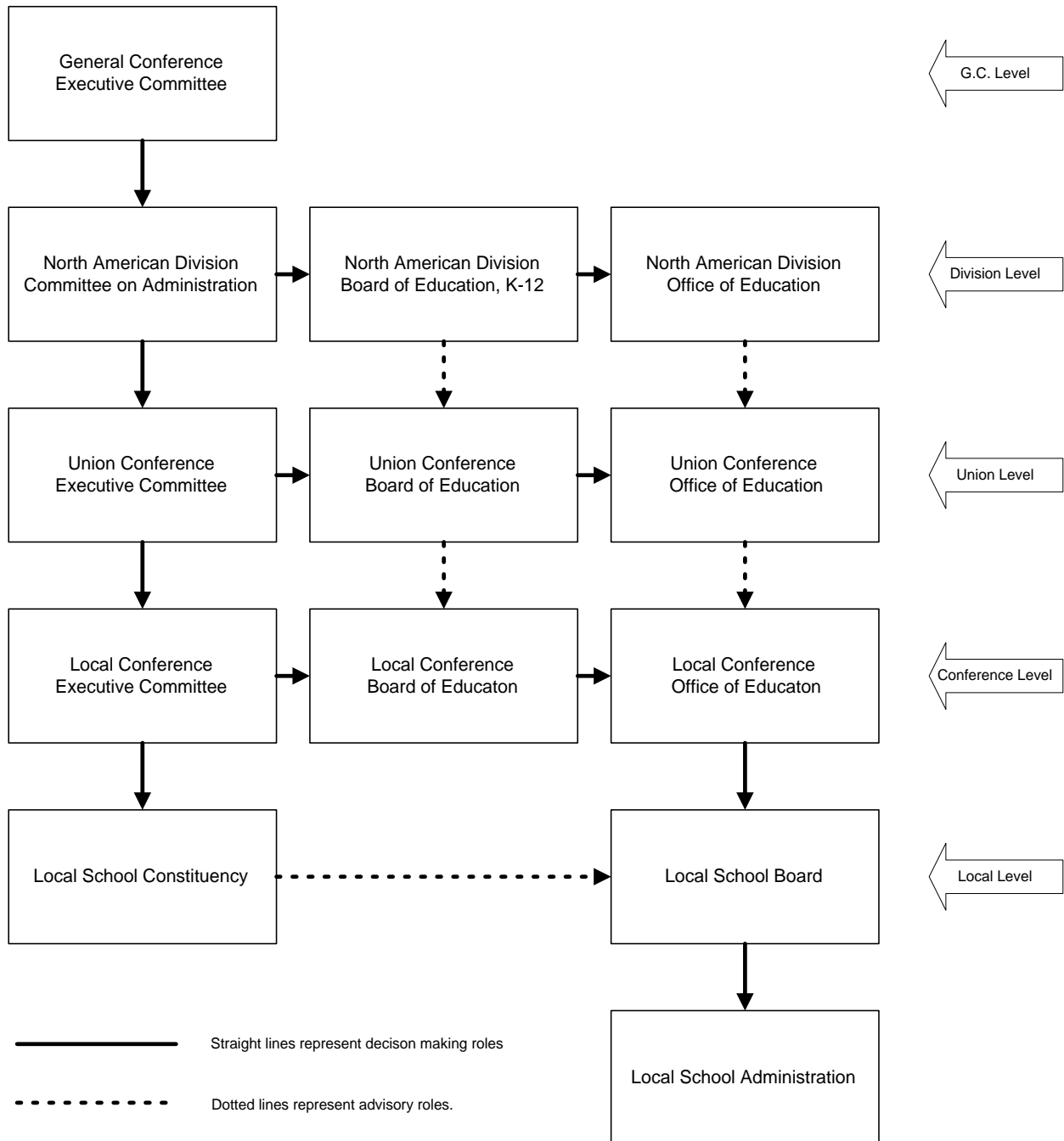
Organizational Structure K-12

The following chart illustrates the organizational structure of the K-12 education system of the North American Division.

Many recommendations, such as hiring of personnel, must go from the local school board to the conference board of education. The conference superintendent works closely with school administrators and boards; therefore, the conference board usually agrees with the local board recommendation. However, the official action is taken by the conference board of education.

The General Conference and the North American Division set policies that are general and pertinent to all schools under their authority. Union conferences set policies that are within North American Division guidelines but that are more specific, according to regional needs. Union conferences work closely with local conferences on matters such as employment policies, curriculum, teacher and student expectations, and school operational procedures.

SDA K-12 Educational System in the North American Division





Chapter 2

Effective Board Membership

The process of becoming an effective board member takes time and willingness to learn. What board members need to know can seem overwhelming. However, the following guidelines will help develop competence.

- As a member, you will become familiar with board policies, budgets, curriculum, discipline guidelines, evaluations, grievances, school law, testing and much more. Don't expect, however, to become an expert in all areas.
- Since you cannot know or remember everything, knowing where to find information is crucial. Numerous reference materials include the MAUC *Education Code*, *Employment Policies for Education Personnel*, school handbooks, board policies, and minutes from past board meetings.
- Review policies and other material periodically, but give particular study to information relating to current issues of discussion or committees on which you serve. It is especially important for personnel committees to review employment policies in the spring when hiring and rehiring are done.

Recognize that your responsibility is not to run the school but, with your fellow board members, to see that it is well run.

- School boards should provide updated reference notebooks for all members. Notebooks might include conference curriculum standards, the school's mission or philosophy statement, the annual budget, a simplified version of parliamentary procedure, an outline of how school board meetings are conducted, and the roles and responsibilities of the board, conference education personnel, and administrators. Additionally, a school map may prove useful in discussions of the physical plant.
- Do not concentrate on or overemphasize one particular area of interest. Board members must be concerned about all parts of the program.
- Do not allow your personal biases to evolve into prejudice or discrimination. Prejudice can have a negative impact on decisions. Discrimination is both illegal and immoral.
- Absent yourself if board discussion regarding family members or a child's teacher occurs which could be viewed as a conflict of interest.
- Respect and support educators as knowledgeable professionals.

- Be cautious of using your own expertise. You may be a theologian or minister, but that does not make you a Bible teacher. You may be in business, but school finance is somewhat different. You may be an attorney, but school law is a specialized field.

Orientation of New Board Members

Becoming a board member can be an intimidating experience; however, the following suggestions can ease new members into their role. An orientation program for new board members should include:

- Interaction with administrators, teachers, other board members and leaders of school support groups as soon as possible. An informal board reception at the beginning of the school year provides an excellent opportunity for such interaction.
- A tour of the school grounds and facilities with the school administrator.
- Discussion of the management structure, school events calendar, and student demographic information with the administrator.
- A presentation by the accountant or business manager explaining the school budget.
- An explanation by the board chair regarding how meetings are conducted, the roles and responsibilities of the board and administration, and the chain of command within the conference.
- A review of written board policies, recent board meeting minutes, recent committee reports, and last year's budget.
- Attending workshops or training sessions conducted by the conference or state school board associations.

Effective board meetings have well informed members who understand the functioning process of the board.

Motivated, energetic new board members often expect too much of themselves. Remember that experienced board members didn't always know what they know now, nor did they learn it all at once.

Code of Ethics

A code of ethics is a standard of personal conduct. In fulfilling their responsibilities, school board members should observe the following code:

- Maintain Christian ethics of honesty, trust, fairness and integrity.
- Base decisions on the philosophy and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist education system.
- Demonstrate attitudes and personal conduct that reflect the standards of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Refrain from actions or involvements that might prove embarrassing to the church or the school.
- Work unceasingly to improve the understanding and support of Adventist education.
- Learn and practice the art of compromise without sacrificing principle.
- Support and protect the civil rights of all members of the school community.
- Recognize that the authority of the board is only expressed by its actions as a board. Individual members may act or speak on behalf of the board only when authorized to do so.

A school board member has no authority except when functioning as a part of the board at a properly convened school board meeting.

- Take no private action that will compromise the school system, the board, or the administration.
- Avoid any conflict of interest.
- Base your decisions on facts and your independent judgment. Don't defer to the opinions of individuals or special interest groups.
- Work with other board members in a spirit of decency, harmony, and cooperation.
- Uphold all board decisions, regardless of any personal disagreement.

- Maintain confidentiality of all matters that, if disclosed, would needlessly injure individuals or the school.
- Recognize that your responsibility is not to run the school but, together with your fellow board members, to see that it is well run.
- Refer all complaints to the school administrator for appropriate processing.

Any board member who finds that they cannot accept any of these code items should voluntarily resign from the board, or face dismissal by the school constituency.



Chapter 3

Effective Board Meetings

A board comprised of intelligent, sincere, and effective members does not guarantee that board meetings will run smoothly and efficiently. Effective board meetings have informed members and are well structured.

To keep meetings focused and functional, board members should assess their current practices, agree on needed improvements, and effect changes. Further, by documenting the policies and procedures that the board follows, all members and constituents will understand the functioning process of the board and will know what is expected.

Meeting Policies and Practices

Many boards, particularly those of small schools, will find no need to formalize all of the following suggestions. After considering these suggestions, however, each board should adopt those it finds pertinent.

- The board needs agenda development procedures by which board members, school staff, and constituents may add items to the agenda.
- It is the responsibility of the school board to support and uphold the teaching staff in the organization and administration of the school. The board shall make clear to all patrons of the school that no one has the right to come to the school for the purpose of verbally attacking or haranguing the teacher, either before the students or otherwise. The board, in counsel with the superintendent, shall stand ready to hear legitimate complaints of patrons against the school if calm, personal discussion of the problems between the teacher and the patron has failed to clear up the matters in question.
- New issues should be channeled through the agenda development procedures. This will allow the administration to review, study, and present the issues in writing to the board. Issues initially raised during the meetings can swamp the group with discussions before they have sufficient information to make sound decisions.
- New issues raised during a meeting should be referred back to the administration for investigation, recommendation, and follow-up at the next scheduled meeting.

The board must spend its time addressing major policy issues, not getting bogged down on trivia.

- It is crucial that the board chair and school administrator discuss agenda items and other ensuing business prior to the meeting. They can anticipate potential problems and propose viable options, thus maximizing board efficiency. When possible these options should be circulated to board members for consideration prior to the board meeting.
- Board members should receive copies of the minutes, committee reports, and agenda several days prior to scheduled meetings.
- School board meetings generally are considered to be open meetings; however, the chair may cite an appropriate reason, such as discipline or personnel items, and call the board into executive session.

Meeting Conduct

- Board meetings should begin and end on time.
- Board members have a responsibility to be prepared for meetings.

Effective board meetings are well structured and begin and end on time.

- It is the chair's responsibility to prioritize the agenda and allocate adequate time to important matters.
- An orderly method must be established by which staff, constituents, and students may be heard during meetings.
- Board members should remain focused, confining their discussion to the topic at hand. Non-pertinent discussion should be ruled out of order.
- The chair can help maintain order by recognizing members and giving them the floor when they wish to contribute to the discussion.
- When presiding as the chair, recognize those who have not spoken previously and those presenting alternate points of view.
- Avoid speaking a second time on the same motion if someone else wishes to speak for the first time.
- When speaking, address issues, not personalities. Don't interrupt. Be brief.
- The chair should keep the meeting moving deliberately, neither rushing business nor letting it drag.
- If you find yourself facing a conflict of interest, tell the chair immediately. Do not participate in the discussion, and ask the recording secretary to note that you abstained from the vote. You may even leave the meeting temporarily so other members may freely discuss the issue.

- Create a cooperative, rather than a competitive, environment. Whenever the majority thinks they "beat" the minority on a vote, whenever good committee reports are unnecessarily questioned, whenever a group believes it is against the chair, the entire board and school system suffer.
- It is important for the chair to summarize issues before calling for a vote.
- Although easy to overlook, items deferred to the next meeting deserve timely follow-up by the administrator and the board.

Parliamentary Procedure

In order for any official meeting to operate smoothly, standard procedures must be followed. One or two board members should be well versed in parliamentary procedure and serve as resource persons or parliamentarians when necessary. However, basic procedures are not complex and can be learned easily by each member. The following rules allow boards to function smoothly and efficiently.

- When making a motion, address the chair.
- Only one motion is considered at a time.
- The chair will ask for a second to the motion and, if granted, will proceed with discussion.
- School boards can entertain short introductory discussions before motions are made. These do not replace the detailed discussions that occur after motions have been seconded.
- A motion may require amendment during the discussion phase. The amendment must be seconded and voted before the motion may be voted.

**Effective board
members support
one another and act
as a group.**

The General Conference rules of order are the accepted standard for parliamentary procedures. A copy may be secured from the local conference office.



Chapter 4

Effective Leadership

Much of the work done by boards is actually prepared by committees. The board votes the school budget, recommends hiring personnel, and approves curriculum matters; but committees do most of the work. Therefore, it is important to develop strong working committees. The following ideas can enhance small group interaction.

Ideas for Effective Leadership

- When possible, form committees of five to seven members with a balanced representation of the various groups of the constituency. Whenever possible work in a circle or around a table.
- Establish a set meeting day and time. This makes it easier for members to remember, and plan.
- Avoid rewarding latecomers. Don't stop the committee or give full recaps on what has been covered.
- Publish an agenda. This keeps the group focused and working more efficiently.

To be a good chair,
the chair must be a
good facilitator.

- Place an important *but uncomplicated* item first on the agenda. Starting with a heavy item may cause the group to bog down. Starting with an array of menial items, however, will sap power and energies from the more crucial items.
- Use plural pronouns over singular. "We" and "us" convey feelings of shared responsibility.
- Good leaders commend *ideas*, not people. The chair may then challenge *ideas* without challenging the person behind the ideas.
- It is easy to commend attractive people, those you like, and ideas you personally favor. This, however, leads to a dangerous form of favoritism.
- The chair is primarily a facilitator, facilitating the wishes of the group, not promoting personal desires.
- The chair must maintain a neutral position. If the chair needs to advocate for a position, they should temporarily turn the chair to the vice-chairman or a union or conference representative, if present.

- Control those who attempt to dominate discussion by avoiding eye contact, asking for broad input, or by not allowing a second contribution from one individual until each of the others has had an opportunity.
- Quiet members have a right to remain that way. They should know, however, that they may be seen as siding with the prevailing notion(s).
- The chair should keep the discussion as directed as possible to keep it from wandering.
- Do not push for a decision until all views have been heard.
- Consensus is often more powerful than majority, especially on critical issues. A majority vote may leave nearly half the members unsatisfied.
- Discussion may well lead to conflict. The chair's goal is to manage conflict, not avoid it.
- Compromise and negotiation are often satisfactory. Preferences and policies are negotiable.
- When an impasse seems to halt progress, remind the group of common goals.
- Beware of the temptation to select the most familiar solution or that which receives sudden support without evaluation. Your committee could become victims of "group think."
- Encourage the group to examine its progress and process. "How are we doing?"
- Invite an evaluator to attend occasionally and critique the group process and interaction.
- Pleasantness and proper humor lighten tasks and help participants to be more productive and leave with good feelings.
- Traits associated with effective group leadership include self-awareness, genuineness, sensitivity, understanding, self-confidence, sense of humor, flexibility and honest self-evaluation.

The characteristics most valued in committee participants include clarity, brevity, and flexibility.

Ideas for Effective Group Participation

- A committee generally moves at the pace of its least informed or most vocal member.

- Economize your contributions. The more you contribute, the less credibility your contributions carry. Sometimes it is enough to say, “I support that idea” or “When it's time to vote, I'm voting (for) (against)”.
- As a member, you have the responsibility to help keep the discussion focused, but do so tactfully.
- The most crucial goal of all interaction is understanding. Ask for clarification when you don't understand. Stating “I'm unclear” displays considerably more tact than “You didn't make yourself clear.”
- Committee members will not respect a member who tells stories, offers extended explanations, or recounts the ways in which things have previously been done.
- The characteristics most valued in committee participants include clarity, brevity, and flexibility.

Leadership Styles

The following summarizes three basic leadership styles:

- **Authoritarian style** consists of a leader who dominates the discussion, gives orders, and makes personal remarks. Members of an authoritarian-led group tend to depend more upon the leader and to react more aggressively.
- **Democratic style** features group discussion of all issues. This style includes giving members the overall goals with alternative means for accomplishing these goals, then helping the group decide which alternatives to select. Democratic leaders make objective remarks, give few orders, and are more likely to participate as a group member. Group members work more efficiently, are more congenial, and exhibit more "group-mindedness."
- **Laissez faire style** offers minimal leader participation. The leader supplies material, gives information when asked, and gives few orders. Group members are usually less satisfied and less organized than members of democratic groups.

An effective leader reminds the group of their common goals.

No leadership style is effective in every group; but in most committees, the democratic style appears to be the most effective. Committees require some structure, especially in their early stages, and some monitoring to keep the group on track. However, experienced committee members do not need a dictator constantly giving orders.



Chapter 5

Developing Positive Relationships

Probably the most important relationship in a school setting is between the board and the administrator. Positive relationships between these entities require development and nurturing. Educators and board members offer the following ideas on establishing such relationships.

- Perform your tasks as a board member and allow the administration to manage the day-to-day operations of the school.
- Recognize that the educational and occupational background of the administrator should equip him with the knowledge and skill to deal with most background matters.
- If you have legitimate concerns about an administrator's suggestion, don't hesitate to tactfully voice them.
- The administrator deserves prior knowledge of all problems to be discussed at board meetings.
- Discuss improprieties in private. Making allegations or criticisms in public causes defensiveness and strife.
- When evaluating a situation, create a balance between strengths and weaknesses. Analyze the problem, not the person.
- Realize that limited budgets and inadequate facilities may restrict what the administrator can do.
- Communicate openly with the constituency and listen to their concerns. Solve small problems early to avoid the development of major crises.
- Listen to teachers, students, or constituents without patronizing or offering an official decision.
- Individuals with serious complaints should discuss the complaint with the administrator for appropriate processing before taking it to the board.
- Board members have no authority individually. Therefore, make no personal promises.

**It is important that
the board chair and
the principal
develop a positive
relationship.**

Relationship Among Board Members

The board must also develop positive working relationships within itself. Without this, differences among board members cause turmoil and hinder effectiveness. Some concepts to help build positive relationship among board members follow.

- Devote time and energy to your position. Study materials and reports, make suggestions, and contribute to committee work.
- Recognize that effective members are continually learning.
- Support one another and act as a group.
- Maintain a well-balanced perspective. Acknowledge improvements that have been made and recognize problems to be solved.
- Realize that not all problems are totally solvable.

Board members
should take time to
socialize as a group.

- When in the minority during board discussions, maintain your position without feeling guilty, but publicly support the majority vote, after the vote has been taken.
- While maintaining a sense of humor can help to ease tensions, making light of issues can hamper serious discussion and promote inefficiency.
- Recognize the difference between asking good questions and questioning every action. The former promotes problem solving; the latter produces tension.
- Appreciate the time and effort expended by committees.
- Take time to socialize as a group. All work and no play make a very dull board.



Chapter 6

Financial Management

The budget is the educational plan of the school expressed in monetary terms. There are two types of budgets:

- **An operating budget** forecasts revenues and expenditures for the fiscal year.
- **A capital budget** covers plant and equipment expenditures for both short- and long-range plans. The short-range capital budget provides for expenditures for the fiscal year. The long-range budget plans for new and replacement equipment and major structural improvements and additions extending beyond the next fiscal year.

Budgeting should begin afresh each year with most line items beginning at zero. Figures are then justified by the best information and projections possible.

Funding sources are extremely important. In fact, predicted revenue is really where the budget process begins. Most of the revenue comes from tuition. Therefore, the budget is tuition-driven. Subsidies from supporting churches and the local conference must be based on realistic estimates of what the supporting entities are able and willing to contribute.

Schools and local churches are seldom on the same fiscal year. Therefore, friction can result when churches are asked to provide more funds than they have budgeted in their fiscal year. When possible the school board should anticipate subsidy requests and communicate this projected need to the churches before their budgets are finalized.

A well developed budget provides for the coming school year, and recognizes the need for future projects, programs, and improvements.

The board must decide where money will be spent. Seldom is enough money available for every need or desire, so the board must set priorities.

- Board members must realize that most budget items are relatively fixed and that budgets have little flexibility. Salary and benefits compose the major part of a school budget.
- Preliminary budgets should be developed for various levels of enrollment, such as 105%, 100%, 95% and 90%, since enrollment figures can never be guaranteed.

- The overall philosophy of the board helps establish financial priorities and decisions.
- After establishing budgetary priorities, the board can develop a plan. Some plans, such as building renovation, have stages of completion that allow for budgeting over a two- or three-year period.

Budgeting Process

In budgeting, as in other areas, the board is responsible for establishing policies; and administration is responsible for implementing and controlling those policies.

- The board is not to become involved in the minor details of budget management. However, it is to hold the administrator responsible for doing so.
- The budget covers a 12-month period, from July 1 through June 30. A budget calendar is needed to indicate when planning and preparation must occur, when reports and recommendations are due, and who is responsible for precise functions.
- Sufficient participation is required in budget preparation, especially during the early stages. Participants may include staff, school organizations (e.g. Home and School Association), the constituency, and the board. A short questionnaire might suffice for some groups, whereas formal meetings might be more appropriate for other groups.

Sound budgets for both operating and capital expenditures should be approved by the board.

- The board deserves rational explanations on every major area of the budget. Be especially aware of funding changes exceeding 10%, unrealistically low allocations, and the need for a reasonable emergency fund.
- Proper order is important in the budgeting process. Major consideration should be given first to the educational needs and then to the ability to finance those needs. To reverse the order is to stunt educational growth.
- The board must not be concerned only about the immediate goal of preparing a budget for the next school year. A well developed budget recognizes the need for future projects, programs, and improvements. Reserve funds and long-term goals should be budgeted over a two- or three-year period.
- The board needs to understand the difference between budgeting dollars and actually spending dollars for specific materials or services. Money must be in hand before spending takes place.

- Establish and maintain budget areas. Depending on the school size and organization, budget areas commonly include salaries and benefits, curriculum and instruction, materials, equipment, facility maintenance, transportation, food service, dormitory, etc., as appropriate.
- Once established, there should be little need to transfer funds from one account to another. If money is allocated for library books, it should be spent on library books and not playground equipment.
- Budget for the unexpected, because you cannot prevent it from happening.
- Consider placing utility services on a constant budget figure with a settlement date in the summer.
- School boards should budget for the following year by early spring of the current year.

Monitoring the Budget

Even with good planning, a monitoring process remains mandatory. Steps in monitoring budgets include:

- Review financial reports regularly. Financial reports may vary but should cover expenditures, appropriations, revenue, and cash flow. The board should know what has been spent, how the current year compares with the previous year, and how much funding remains.
- Concentrate on major issues when reviewing budget reports. Some boards nitpick at small \$100 items and don't recognize imprudent spending on \$1,000 items.
- School activities need separate accounts that are handled through the school business office and reviewed by the board. Student association funds, club dues, and class or school fund-raising projects should be properly monitored, and audited.
- Do not reward excessive spending behavior and punish sound fiscal management. The theory of "If I don't spend it now, then they will cut it next time" stimulates unnecessary expenditures. Some administrators overspend every budget in order to get increases the next year. A person who stays within budget should be rewarded. One who goes unnecessarily over budget should be confronted.
- Explain the use of money to the constituency. Many boards have found that comparing a school budget to a family budget makes explanations easier.

Even with a
sound budget,
a monitoring
process is
necessary.

- Invest school funds at the highest, most secure rate of return. Consider certificates of deposit, savings accounts, and similar investments guaranteed by federal laws. Be sure to follow conference policies regarding the investment of funds.
- Schools may often have several small temporary trust funds for items such as class trips, new computer equipment, or playground improvements. These funds are to be kept as separate accounts on the school's books.
- Larger, permanent trust funds should be set up as separate accounts and reported as line items in the balance sheet.

Insurance and Loss Control

The following introduction to insurance and loss control is summarized from the MAUC *Education Code*. See the *Code* for detailed information.

- Each school shall have a loss control committee to review regularly school activities and the condition of the premises.
- The loss control committee shall evaluate the safety of all school- or faculty-sponsored activities. The plans for each event must eliminate hazards as much as possible and provide for contingencies prior to each event.

An effective
finance committee
is invaluable.

- Each school shall annually survey its fire insurance to protect against over- or under-insurance. One hundred percent replacement cost is recommended on all school buildings.
- Each school shall prepare a plot plan of its property, designating each building so that proper identification can be made.

- Schools shall provide adequate student accident insurance for all students enrolled.
- Worker's Compensation Insurance shall be carried for all employees.
- The loss control committee shall determine the cause of all accidents in order to prevent similar accidents in the future.
- Employer's liability insurance shall be carried on all employees, including teachers, and on students not covered by Worker's Compensation Insurance.

- General liability insurance shall be carried in amounts recommended by Adventist Risk Management, Inc. Catastrophic loss should be considered. Bodily injury and property damage should be no less than \$1,000,000. All school-owned vehicles shall be covered under the conference auto policy.
- Each school shall provide the conference with all payroll figures for Worker's Compensation audit purposes.
- All schools that have hot water heating or boilers should contact the conference insurance officer to determine that the school is covered on the master boiler policy for Adventist institutions. In no case should boiler insurance be less than \$1,000,000.
- Other important master program coverage plans include: Depositors Forgery Bond, Fidelity Bond, Directors' and Officers' Liability, Theft and Glass, Inland Marine Floater coverage and Aircraft. School administrators should be familiar with these programs and should contact the conference insurance officer or an Adventist Risk Management, Inc. officer concerning any questions.
- Remove all known hazards from school activities and premises.
- In an endeavor to minimize all insurance premiums, safety education programs shall be instituted. Records shall be kept of these programs or meetings.
- Students should receive safety instruction for all physical education activities before participating in the activity. Student safety must be a priority for each physical activity or sport.



Chapter 7

Curriculum & Instruction

Curriculum and instruction comprise the most important functions of any school.

Curriculum functions include funding a commitment to learning, reviewing administrative reports, adopting curriculum and instruction policies, establishing educational goals, and providing for curriculum leadership.

Instruction functions include providing means for professional staff development, being aware of instructional innovations, and overseeing adequate staff evaluations. The board can support curriculum and instruction functions by the following means:

The board needs to demonstrate its commitment to the learning process.

- The school administrator should establish a curriculum committee to review the current procedures and the coordination of instruction among grade levels.
- Teacher input should be sought in curriculum or instructional improvement programs.
- Request reports on what is happening in curriculum and instruction. Such reports could include progress in curriculum development, content being taught, successful accomplishments of students, and new teaching methodology.
- Do not allow curriculum specialists or special interest advocates to intimidate you. Ask specific questions, demand research evidence, and don't make changes without reason.
- The state or denomination may require the implementation of a new course or program such as AIDS education. Generally, however, the most successful curriculum changes are modifications of existing programs.
- If a school contemplates a curriculum innovation, procedures in the MAUC *Education Code 2024* should be followed.
- All curriculum changes should be evaluated within the first year. The educational philosophy of the board determines the direction of curriculum and instruction.

- The board should be aware of new curriculum, whether from the denomination or state, and support its on-going development.
- Addressing needs of students beyond the regular program should be a concern of the board to assure quality education of all students.
- Adoption procedures for materials other than those listed in the MAUC textbook lists should follow MAUC guidelines (MAUC *Education Code 2156* and 2468).



Chapter 8

School Law

A journal article, "I Knew I Was On the School Board When I Got Sued By My Son," emphasizes board members' greatest fear. While it is possible for a school board to be sued, the concern is usually overemphasized, especially if the board follows well written policies and acts reasonably, not capriciously.

School boards must assure that facilities are safe, that proper supervision and instruction are provided, and that due process is followed. Since most lawsuits result when established policies are not followed, board members should constantly ask, "Does it meet policy?" The MAUC *Education Code* is a collection of basic policies required to run a school program. Most conferences have additional policies that need to be followed.

School boards must assure that facilities are safe, that proper supervision and instruction are provided, and that due process is followed.

Board members should know some basic principles of school law. The following school law principles provide a basic introduction to the areas of personnel, discipline, negligence, finance, constitutional rights, freedom, and personal regard.

Personnel

- Boards, personnel committees, superintendents, and principals must recognize that employed persons have constitutional rights which will be upheld by the Supreme Court. Every employee has the right to due process and free speech.
- When recommending the termination or suspension of an employee, ascertain that the reasons for the action do not violate any constitutional rights.

Due Process

- Even when rules obviously have been violated and the resultant discipline is predetermined by policy, it is essential that people be treated fairly and given due process. Legally and ethically, the board should protect staff and students from excessive, unreasonable discipline.
- The board sets policy, administration administers policy, and the board act as appellate group only.

Negligence

- A significant number of lawsuits filed against schools cite negligence. The two main areas are negligence in maintaining facilities or equipment and negligence in providing adequate supervision of students.

Finance

- Special contracts which are not according to policy should not be arranged.
- All teachers should be given a regular salary according to the conference teacher salary schedule.

**Most lawsuits
result when
negligence is
alleged or when
policy is not
followed.**

Curriculum and Instruction

- If a school teaches a controversial subject, it must anticipate objections. School officials should not try to force obedience on issues of conscience if no class disruption has occurred.
- Although suits have been brought against school boards for alleged educational malpractice, no substantial educational malpractice suits have ever been won.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE BOARD AGENDA

Academy/Large School

AGENDA

School Name

Date

1. Devotional and Prayer
2. Approval of Minutes – Last Meeting
3. Financial Statements
4. Principal’s Report
5. Selection of Board Officers
6. Report from the Marketing Committee
7. Senior Class Trip Plans
8. Home and School Open House
9. Progress Report on School Evaluation Plans/Committees
10. Presentation of New Mathematics Textbooks
- 11.
- 12.

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE BOARD AGENDA

Small School

AGENDA

School Name

Date

1. Devotional and Prayer
2. Approval of Minutes – Last Meeting
3. Financial Report
4. Principal/Head Teacher’s Report
5. Field Trip Plans for the School Year
6. Purchase of Library Materials
7. Standardized Test Program
8. Home and School Association Report
- 9.
- 10.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE BOARD MINUTES

Board Minutes

School Name

Date

Present	_____ chair; _____ secretary; (list each person present)
Devotional	The devotional and prayer were given by Elder Jackson.
Minutes	Voted, to approve the minutes of the meeting held _____.
Financial Statement 01-02:1	Voted, to accept the _____ financial statement, subject to audit.
Principal's Report	The principal's report included information on enrollment, visiting committee recommendations, new staff, and school picnic plans.
New Board Officers 01-02:2	Voted, to elect the following officers for the coming school year: (list each officer).
Marketing Committee Report 01-02:3	Voted, to accept the report from the Marketing Committee. (Copy attached)
Senior Class Trip 01-02:4	Voted, to approve the plans for the class trip to Florida, March 13-20.
Home and School 01-02:5	Voted, to express appreciation to the Home and School Association for their plans to present a special Open House program on October 15.
School Evaluation 01-02:6	Voted, to accept the recommendation of the Steering Committee to appoint the following committees for the Self-study part of the evaluation: (list each committee).
Math Textbooks	Mr. Simmons displayed the new Math textbooks, and stated their advantages over the old series
Adjournment	The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

APPENDIX D

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The following are some items that the board should discuss or take action on during the school year. Items will vary depending upon the size of the school. Times are approximate. Crisis issues require immediate attention.

August Board Meeting

- A. Review important policies, such as field or class trips, medication or immunizations, discipline, etc.
- B. Elect a new chair of the board.
- C. Review the school board procedures manual.

September Board Meeting

- A. Report on last year's financial audit. **
- B. Arrange for board committee assignments.
- C. Review enrollment reports.
- D. Revise school budget as enrollment necessitates.

October Board Meeting

- A. Review the board's legal responsibilities.
- B. Act on class trip or major field trip requests.

November Board Meeting

- A. Conference/Administration report on progress for evaluation of faculty.

December Board Meeting

- A. Report on standardized test results.
- B. Report from safety and facilities committee.

January Board Meeting

- A. Report from curriculum committee.*
- B. Review enrollment report.

February Board Meeting

- A. Progress report on school goals.*
- B. Report from public relations and marketing committee.*
- C. Review preliminary budget.
- D. Cooperate with conference office of education in hiring old and new staff. ***

March Board Meeting

- A. Refine next year's budget.
- B. Report from personnel committee: rehiring and new personnel needs.
- C. Facilities update plan.
- D. Major maintenance projects for the summer.

April Board Meeting

- A. Hire old and new staff.
- B. Review school calendar for the next year.
- C. Expected changes in curriculum, textbooks, or instruction.
- D. Set student fee schedules.

May Board Meeting

- A. Promotional activities for next school year.
- B. Report on committee activities for the year.
- C. report on school goals, accomplishments.
- D. Establish school goals for the year.
- E. Report on Visiting Committee recommendations.

* These could occur through the year.

** This item report will be in the month following receipt of the audit report.

*** This item will continue until staff is hired.