



the board before you apply

The board should be a crucial factor in a decision to apply. You should make a concerted effort to learn everything you can about a board that can make or break your success in its district. Search the internet for articles about its meetings. Contact people you know in the area. Get as much information as you can from the search consultant or district contact; dig deeper if you realize responses are evasive or too glib.

Consider the points below to assess how well a school board functions and whether it is the right board for you.

FUNCTIONAL

- Focused on clear set of beliefs, a plan to carry them out, and constant monitoring on goals and process
- Established process to orient new board members, provide continuous training, and build collaboration
- All about improving achievement of all students
- Differences are never personal in public and are about important issues related to student achievement and well-being
- Members work together to represent the whole district; do not play interest group game
- Board keeps regulations to a minimum
- Board does work through the superintendent
- Board operates in the open, involves community in decision-making
- Board communicates as one body and works with the media in an ethical manner
- Board shares expectations with community before hiring a superintendent, sets goals, monitors and provides feedback frequently

DYSFUNCTIONAL

- Disagreement among members on goals and process
- No coherent orientation for new board members, no investment in training for board members
- Unfocused agenda that wastes time on unimportant, peripheral issues
- Disagreements get personal in public
- Members represent special interest groups or only certain areas of the district
- Board over manages with regulations, petty matters
- Board members play to other district staff, go around superintendent
- Board avoids transparency, prefers to make big decisions in closed committees
- Board plays favorites with press
- Board hires superintendents under unclear expectations, then changes its mind frequently