Strengthening the Board-Director Relationship

Module 6

Participate in this seminar to learn more about strategies for establishing and strengthening a successful and productive relationship for the board-director team. Module 6 workshop and resource materials include these important topics:

- The importance of clarifying expectations for board and director effectiveness;

- Guidelines for recruiting a Director of Education;

- Criteria for board governance health check;

- Criteria for director performance review; and,

- Strategies for strengthening the relationship.

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Contents

Introduction

The Board of Education and the Director of Education share a unique relationship – they both rely upon the work of the other in order to do their job well. Strong school board and director leadership, governance and teamwork are the foundations for raising the achievement of every child in Saskatchewan.

A strong, mutually-supportive relationship between a school board and its director is an essential ingredient in a well-run and effective school system. This module will help you explore what constitutes a "good" relationship between school board and director, and how such a relationship can be established and maintained. It will show how the Board-Director relationship and the performance of both can be enhanced.

Characteristics of Effective School Boards

School boards that govern well attend to three areas of responsibility:

- **Leadership** – Setting a progressive direction for the school system.

- **Stewardship** – Overseeing the successful operation of the school system.

- **Relationship** – Empowering staff and creating connections with all those who have a stake in effective public education for children and youth in Saskatchewan.

In examining the relationship between the board and the director, a number of questions should be pondered, as follows:

- What kind of relationship is desirable?

- What are some of the strengths of the current relationship?

- What were some of the most significant successes of this school system during the past year?

- What are some of the most pressing challenges facing the school system?

- How might the director improve relationships?   Performance?

- What should the director expect from the school board?

- What does the board expect from the director?

- What are the most significant and pressing professional development needs of the director at this time?

This resource is intended as the handout for school board member workshops on *Strengthening the Board-Director Relationship*.

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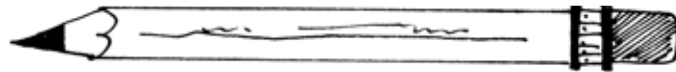
Board of Education Decision-Making

Boards of education have a mandate to make governance decisions and provide direction for the future of the school division. As a part of this process, they must hire a Director of Education and assign such duties that will enable them to carry out their mandate in an efficient and effective manner.

The duty of the board pertinent to this responsibility has its basis in *The Education Act, 1995* as follows:

Duties of the Board of Education:

85   (1)   …a Board of Education "shall:"

(q) "employ any staff considered necessary for the efficient management and execution of the policies, programs and business of the board of education;

…

(y) "contract, in writing, with teachers and other personnel required for the administration of the services of the board and terminate these contracts for cause in accordance with the provisions of his Act."
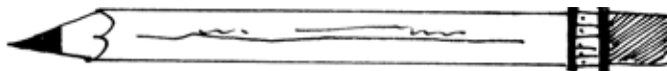
87   (1) …a Board of Education "may:"

(a) "employ, or retain the services of, any ancillary personnel that may be considered necessary to administer the policies and programs of the board of education."

Staff of School Division:

107   (1) "…every Board of Education and every conseil scolaire shall appoint a director who meets the qualification prescribed by the regulations."

Notes

Duties of the Director of Education:

108   (1) A Board of Education shall designate the director as the chief executive officer of that Board of Education.

109   (1) The powers and duties of a director shall be prescribed by the board of education, the conseil scolaire or the conseil general that appointed the director.

(2) In addition to any powers and duties prescribed pursuant to subsection (1), every director "shall:"

(a) prepare and submit reports and returns to department;

(b) ensure schools are conducted in accordance with the Act, regulations and board policies;

(c) provide general supervision of schools, work of principals, teachers and other staff;

(d) provide leadership in educational policies and practices;

(e) act as a liaison between the board and the professional staff and the public with respect to the efficiency and advancement of education in the school division.

Beyond these statutory requirements, the primary duties of a director appointed as chief executive officer usually include:

- Providing leadership and direction to the entire school system;

- Assisting the board in its short- and long-term planning, and working to achieve board-approved goals;

- Designing the division's organizational structure and management system;

- Supervising and evaluating schools, programs, and services;

- Implementing the decisions and policies of the board;

- Allocating resources based on board-approved budget levels;

- Entering into contractual agreements on behalf of the board; and/or,

- Building strong communication levels within the divisions and a strong public relations program with the community.

In keeping with this mandate, the Board of Education agenda should be organized to ensure that:

- The expectations and the authority of the director for management decisions within the limitations of written policy are defined;

- The expectations of the director for reporting to the board are defined;

- The expectations of the director for representation with the Ministry of Education and reporting to the board are defined;

- The board has established a process to assess Board effectiveness and directions for improved performance;

- The board has approved the contract of employment with the Director of Education; and,

- The board has carried out a performance appraisal of the director and established directions for improved practice.

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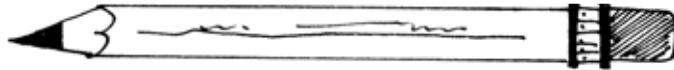
Recruiting a Director of Education

Most boards of education have limited experience with selecting a new Director of Education (the chief executive officer of the board) as this process occurs relatively infrequently. Hiring its Director of Education is often described as one of the most important responsibilities of a school board. The primary objective of the recruitment and selection process is to secure the services of the education leader possessing the skills and knowledge necessary to facilitate achievement of the school system's current and future needs and priorities.

You are encouraged to contact Saskatchewan School Boards Association for assistance and a copy of Research Report #02-02: *Recruiting a Director of Education: A Guidebook for Boards of Education.* This guidebook describes effective practices, processes and key questions within the legal requirements of Saskatchewan. Key sections of the guidebook include:

- What prior planning is necessary to set the stage for recruiting?

- What are the essential tasks in the recruiting process?

- What follow up actions are required to bridge the transition?

Regulation 6(1) of the *Regulations to The Education Act* sets out some requirements relating to recruitment. Boards of education must:

- Notify the Minister of Education in writing that you are recruiting a Director of Education (A letter to the Regional Director of Education meets this requirement.);

- Advertise in at least the two daily newspapers having the largest circulation in Saskatchewan (This means that, as a minimum, you must advertise in the Regina Leader-Post and the Saskatoon StarPhoenix.);

- Consider all applications; and,

- Notify the minister of the name, address and qualifications of the person appointed (A letter to the Regional Director of Education meets this requirement.).

Regulation 6(2) of the Regulations to The Education Act states that the Director of Education must be hired under a written contract specifying the terms of employment and the procedure for review and termination of the contract.

Regulation 7.1(1) of the *Regulations to The Education Act* requires that the person you hire files copies of all contracts of employment and subsequent amendments and revisions with the Teachers' Superannuation Commission or the Saskatchewan Teachers' Retirement Plan (whichever applies). This must be done within 30 days of the date on which the contract comes into effect. In some cases, the Board of Education files the contract of employment on behalf of its employee.

The recruitment and selection of a new director is too important a task to be hurried. It may take seven months from start to finish. Laying the groundwork before you begin searching for a Director of Education will help ensure that the process goes smoothly. Tasks at the planning stage include:

Assign Responsibilities

- The Board of Education is legally and ethically responsible for the outcome.

- Who will do this work – Boards of education can use resources within the education system, rely on fee-for-service options, or use a combination of both.
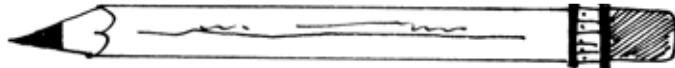
Establish a Budget

- Typically, the recruitment process costs the board the equivalent of six months to one year of the director's salary. If you work with a fee-for-service consultant, expect to pay professional fees;

- Travel costs;

- Newspaper advertising;

- Long distance phone charges; and,

- Hospitality costs.

Set the Stage

- Includes reviewing the vision, mission and goals of the school division, and developing a job description for the Director of Education – update it to be sure it is current and relevant.

- School division needs may be assessed through a combination of an exit interview of the departing director, a board self-appraisal, a review of accomplishments and reasons for success, an analysis of future needs, and a review of goals, objectives, and strategic plans.

- Any job description developed at this stage of the director selection process is only a preliminary one, and should be revisited once a new director is hired. The job description will be central to future evaluations of the director's performance. Ensuring that it is supported by board and director will result in an evaluation process that is fair and meaningful for everyone involved.

Be Aware of Potential Problems

- Two problems that sometimes arise during the search for a new Director of Education are conflicts of interest and pressure from candidates

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Seven Steps to Recruiting a Director of Education

Step 1: Decide on Criteria

- Legal requirements;

- Professional Criteria;

- First Nations Experience;

- Financial Management Skills;

- Personnel Management Skills;

- Educational Leadership Skills;

- Personal Characteristics;

- Criminal Records Check; and,

- Critical Factors – identify those skills and characteristics that are crucial to the appointment.

Step 2: Organize the Job Ad

- Describe the school division;

- Describe the type of candidate desired;

- Ask for the candidate's qualifications and references;

- Provide information about the application—where and how to send it and deadline date for applications;

- Provide source of more information—website URL; e-mail address; contact person; and,

- Place the ad.

Step 3: Widen the Job Search

- Contact Universities;

- Advertise among own staff;

- Contact LEADS; and,

- Advertise in special interest newspapers or newsletters.

Step 4: Handle Applications

- Determine who has access;

- Adhere to the strictness of guidelines;

- Attend to processing after review of applications; and,

- Ensure confidentiality.

Step 5: Screen Applicants

- Legal requirements;

- Short-list;

- Reference checks;

- Notify short-listed candidates; and,

- Share information with short-listed candidates.

Step 6: Interview Candidates

- The selection panel;

- The interview;

- Other input to the selection process; and,

- Making a decision.

Step 7: Follow-up

- Inform successful candidate and negotiate a contract;

- Inform unsuccessful applicants;

- Announce the appointment; and,

- Orient the new Director of Education.

In summary, the board should give high priority to the director selection process, allowing sufficient time and resources to do it thoroughly. There should be a "good match" of the division's culture, goals and needs with the director's philosophy, training, experience and leadership style. Boards must have a clear picture of what they are seeking if the person they hire is to fulfill their present and future needs. The board and director should agree on the director's job description and evaluation plan. When expectations are spelled out at the beginning, and a mechanism for regular feedback is formalized, the possibility of misunderstanding is dramatically lessened.

Director's Contract

The Board of Education should establish a contract with the Director of Education to spell out the terms and conditions of employment. As a minimum, the contract should define the role expectations, the authority of the director, provide for an annual written performance appraisal, incorporate salary and benefits, and should provide for a means of terminating the contract by either party in a manner that does not adversely reflect on either party. Drafting an appropriate contract can be complicated.

Legal Basis of the Board-Director Relationship

The interests of both board and director are best served if their relationship is defined in a written contract. The contract of employment is a legal document that contains straightforward clauses that:

- Identify the parties to the contract;

- Show both parties have agreed to the terms of the contract;

- Indicate the signing date and the number of originals of the contract;

- Outline the purpose and intent of the contract;

- Give the appointment and commencement date;

- Provide assurance that the director will have board protection from civil actions that may arise from the rightful and legal performance of duties (an indemnity clause);

- Identify the sick leave, health care, and insurance benefits provided; and,

- Outline reimbursement for expenses incurred through necessary school board business

In addition to these fairly straightforward clauses, additional clauses will be required to delineate more complex aspects of the employment relationship.

Other clauses will be required to:

- Identify salary, how that salary is to be paid, and how any changes in salary are to be determined;

- Outline the scope of the position, which may be done via a general statement, a reference to board policy, or an actual list of duties

- Outline the process and procedures for the conduct of a performance appraisal;

- Indicate vacation entitlement;

- Describe the professional activities of the director, and the financial contribution the board is willing to make towards those activities; and,

- Identify the term of the contract.

Employment contracts may also include clauses that deal with a number of other matters that impact on the employment relationship. Optional clauses may be included that cover such matters as:

- Car allowances;

- Pensions;

- Dispute resolution processes;

- Payment to estate in the event of the director's death;

- Relocation expenses;

- A covenant indicating in writing the quality of service the director will be providing to the board;

- Retirement allowance;

- Compassionate and personal leave;

- Sabbatical leave; and

- Termination (including termination for cause, termination with notice, and termination procedures).

Clearly Define Roles of Director and Board

Many of the problems that arise between school boards and their directors result from a lack of understanding of the appropriate role that each plays in the school system. School boards must distinguish between the role of director and board, and understand the mutually supportive nature of the two jobs in an effective school system. School boards are responsible for developing policy, while school directors are responsible for implementing or administering policy. However, the respective roles of board and director are best described as "mutual leadership."

A formal model for clarifying board-director relationships can be useful in determining the primary responsibilities of boards and directors:

- The director has complete authority to decide and act, within the limits of law, board policy, propriety, and common sense;

- The director has complete authority to act, but must inform the board about each decision or action;

- The director must obtain prior approval from the school board before taking action; and,

- The school board makes the final decision, but may permit or require a recommendation from the director.

An alternative to a formal model of role clarification can be a joint exercise which concludes in a simple list of responsibilities in regard to specific issues such as:

- The employment of teachers;

- Budgeting and appropriation; and,

- The use of facilities.

Maintaining Board Member and Director Relationships

Request for information from an individual trustee or individual trustees over involvement in day-to-day school division operation can be problematic. In the former, confusion about appropriate roles can develop. In the latter, there could be a perception that some board members are provided with privileged information. Procedures can and should be put in place to ensure that all board members receive the same information in a timely manner and there needs to be discussion with the entire board about how individual concerns should be brought before the entire board for consideration. A board and its director should have a formal code of relations conduct or, at least, they should be able to make basic assumptions about what they can expect from each other.

Director's Expectations of the Board

A director should be able to assume that a board will:

- Act in an ethical and responsible manner at all times;

- Furnish objective counsel and advice;

- Reserve the administration of the school division as his responsibility;

- Support him/her, providing he carries out board policy;

- Evaluate his/her work fairly and impartially on a regular basis;

- Encourage him/her to participate in professional development activities, as time and funds permit;

- Have an established set of policies and procedures to guide him/her in his role;

- Keep current with educational trends and participate in in-service activities designed for board members;

- Follow agendas and established procedure in board meetings, so that he/she may prepare himself to respond to questions and issues; and

- Respect his/her counsel and advice as a professional educator.

Board's Expectations of the Director

A school board should also be able to make certain assumptions about the actions and behaviours of its director. A board should be able to assume that the director will:

- Operate in a fair, open, and ethical manner;

- Work with all board members on an equal basis;

- Enforce the policies set forth by the board and operate within the established procedures;

- Keep the board fully informed on all matters of its concern;

- Work toward the improvement of the instructional program and staff relations;

- Avoid unexpected areas of action at board meetings, so the board isn't forced into making a hurried decision;

- Operate the system in a fiscally sound manner;

- Support board decisions at all times;

- Fairly and objectively evaluate the staff on a regular basis; and,

- Advise the board of trends in education applicable to the system.

The SSBA has developed tools and a workshop to support boards of education in conducting a performance review of the board and director. You are encouraged to contact the Association for assistance. See Research Report #97-03 – *The Board –CEO Review* for background information.

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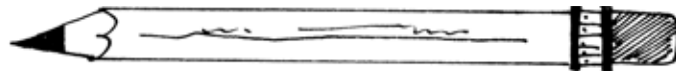
Assessing Performance

Appraisal of the director, board and system are undertaken to acquire and maintain information to improve decision-making, planning and policy development. The program outlined below is designed to be adapted in planning for your school division.

The purposes of appraisal are to establish methods for setting priorities for the board and to ensure quality education through effective governance and management of schools.

Implied in the concept of evaluation is an assumption that individuals and committees are capable of improvement. Performance will be improved if evaluation is carried out systematically in accordance with good planning, conscientious follow-through, and careful assessment of results.

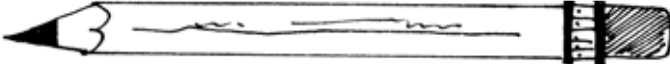
Building Board Knowledge

1. *How effective is your Board of Education in governing? What indicators do you have to analyze board effectiveness?*
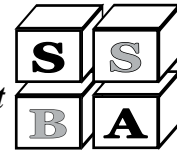
Board Improvement

Boards of Education of successful school divisions review the direction and progress of their school division on a regular basis. They constantly strive to improve their performance with the knowledge that an assessment of board performance can impact on the outcomes of their students. They use self assessment, internal discussion or assessment by other constituent groups to identify strengths, needed improvements, and responsibility for related actions. They focus on one or more of their major areas of operation as indicated below:

- Personnel;

- Program;

- Board Chairperson Self Assessment;

- Board Operation and Meetings;

- Policy Development;

- Community Relations;

- Communications;

- Financial Management Facilities and Transportation; or,

- Goals of Education: Discussion of Board Initiatives

Notes

Indicators of an Effective School Board

In 1991, the Canadian School Boards Association identified the indicators of an effective Board of Education (Introspection: Canadian School Boards Look at Themselves).

Indicators of an Effective Board of Education	Poor ------- Strong			
1. An effective board develops, in consultation with its community, a vision for education in a changing society, and articulates that vision through a clear mission and goals.	①	②	③	④
2. An effective board devotes its energy to the improvement of education and educational outcomes.	①	②	③	④
3. An effective board fulfills its corporate potential by recognizing and drawing strength from the diverse backgrounds of its members.	①	②	③	④
4. An effective board is an advocate for education and the needs of all its students.	①	②	③	④
5. An effective board governs the educational system by establishing and periodically evaluating its policies.	①	②	③	④
6. An effective board works to ensure an adequate flow of resources and achieves equity in their distribution.	①	②	③	④
7. An effective board deals openly with all issues.	①	②	③	④
8. An effective board communicates with its constituents through public and media relations, and through the visibility of the chairperson and board members in the community.	①	②	③	④
9. An effective board uses clearly defined procedures to govern its decision-making.	①	②	③	④
10. An effective board develops and maintains supportive relations with its staff.	①	②	③	④
11. An effective board, in consultation with its chief executive officer, works out and periodically reaffirms the separate areas of administrative and policy responsibilities, and how these separations will be maintained.	①	②	③	④
12. An effective board invests in its own corporate development by encouraging its members to participate in professional development at the local, provincial and national levels.	①	②	③	④
13. An effective board annually evaluates its own corporate performance and that of the chief executive officer.	①	②	③	④
14. An effective board encourages partnerships with groups that share a commitment to the advancement of education.	①	②	③	④
15. An effective board participates actively in its provincial and national associations, and helps them to represent the public voice of education.	①	②	③	④

Indicators of Ineffective School Boards

School boards need to reflect on the way they function as a board. A meaningful board self-reflection can help them identify any shortcomings in their operation. Some of the indicators of flawed governance are identified below:

- **Time On The Trivial** – Items of trivial scope or import get disproportionate attention compared to matters of greater importance.

- **Short-Term Bias** – The board deals far more with the past and the near-term, than with the long-term issues.

- **Reactive Stance** – The board finds itself reacting to staff initiatives rather than acting proactively.

- **Reviewing, Rehashing, Redoing** – The board spends most of its time going over what its staff has already done.

- **Leaky Accountability** – The board goes 'around' the DIRECTOR, relating officially to other staff.

- **Diffuse Authority** – In the board-executive partnership, each party's authority has not been clarified.

How Boards Spend Their Time

|	Focus on the needs of the system	Focus on the needs of client
Concern for the long term	System Long term 48%	Client Long term 18%
Concern for the short term	System Short term 25%	Client Short term 9%

Assessing the Director's Performance

School boards are responsible for the management of the human and financial resources of the school division. To fulfill this responsibility, the board must ensure that the performance of all employees is regularly evaluated. While the evaluation of most employees is conducted by a school principal or administrator, the board itself is fundamentally responsible the performance evaluation of the school division's director. The Board of Education has one employee – the Director of Education.

The SSBA has a board-director appraisal model that can serve as the foundation upon which school boards can build their own evaluation framework. You are encouraged to contact Saskatchewan School Boards Association for assistance and a copy of Research Report #97-03: *Board-Director Review.*

The evaluation process engages the board in establishing priorities and reviewing board operations. In most cases the appraisal is a positive experience that results in clarified roles and expectations. A quality director evaluation process is a win-win situation for the board and director.

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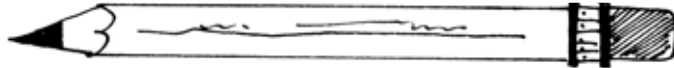
Purpose of Evaluating the Director

The purpose of evaluating the director is:

- To provide oversight and public accountability and assurance that the policies are being effectively implemented;

- To provide input and feedback to the director in order for continuous performance improvement to occur;

- To make critical decisions about contract extensions and non-extensions, as well as terminations if necessary;

- To keep the school board informed about school division activities and progress being made toward goals;

- To celebrate strengths;

- To support the development of the board;

- To facilitate the professional growth of the director; and,

- To enhance the board-director relationship.

The ultimate purpose of the director evaluation process is the improvement of learning opportunities for children by ensuring the effective leadership and management of the school system.

Building Board Knowledge

1. How does the board assess the director's performance?
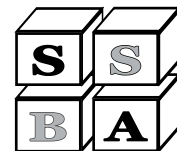
Benefits of Director Appraisals

The director evaluation process focuses directly on the working relationship between the director and the board. When done well, this process will:

- Facilitate effective communication between the board and director.

- Ensure that the essential management functions set out in the job description are performed effectively.

- Create a plan for professional growth of the director.

- Enable the board and director to plan for their future relationship, including a basis for salary adjustments and decisions on continued employment.

- Enhance the job satisfaction of board members and the director.

Regular evaluation of the director can also benefit the school system in that it provides:

- Insights into the board's own performance as a corporate body in relation to its Director;

- An opportunity for the board and director to review divisional priorities;

- A mechanism for analyzing the efficiency of programs, policies, and personnel; and,

- A formal record of the director's performance.

Regularly scheduled evaluations provide a forum for dealing with concerns as they arise to strengthen the board-director relationship and performance.

- What kind of relationship is desired with the director?

- What does the director need from the board?

- What does the board need from the director?

- What are the areas for improvement?

Focus of Director's Performance Review

A director's performance review can focus on one or more of the following areas of responsibility.

Personal and Professional Skills and Characteristics:

- Key qualities which enable the director to relate effectively with the board, system employees and the public.

Purpose and Direction:

- Clear understanding of the future directions of the board and the system, together with a clear sense of one's own vision and values.

Technical and Managerial Skills:

- Ability to organize and expedite the general operation of the system in accordance with provincial and board regulation. Facility with business and human resources.
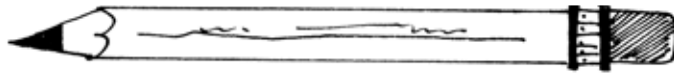
Educational Leadership:

- Ability to work effectively with system staff to develop, implement and evaluate the educational program. Ability to facilitate instrumental growth through supervision and staff development.

Political Skills:

- Assumption of a strong advocacy role for the system. Ability to work with an elected board.

Notes

The Review Process

The actual review process should include:

- The director's presentation of a self-evaluation of the objective outcomes with an opportunity to discuss results, and suggestions for change;

- A board discussion and evaluation of the director's performance in meeting the objectives;

- A board and director discussion of any differences in perception; and,

- A written evaluation by the board provided to the director.

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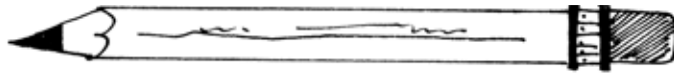
Types of Performance Reviews

Formal Board/Director Conferences:

- Periodic exchanges about Director performance, based upon data formally collected

Informal Board Judgment:

- Feedback presented to the Director usually once per year.

Unsolicited Information from Various Groups and Individuals:

- Board/Director discussions based upon comments from parents, teachers, etc.

Checklists/Rating Scales:

- Ratings of performance by one or more groups on a structured form.

Management by Objectives:

- Assessment by the board, and sometimes an external individual, against pre-established performance objectives.

Self-Evaluation:

- Utilizing rating scales, objectives, or general measures, the Director provides an assessment of his/her own performance.

Student Outcomes-Based Review:

- The use of pupil performance/standardized tests over time as an assessment gauge.

School System Audits and Effectiveness Reviews:

- Judgment about Director performance based upon self-study by the system.

Director Portfolio:

- Periodic examination, by the board, of accountability records with input from a variety of resources, compiled by the Director.

The director's performance review is best conducted over a 3-year planned process with a focus on 2 or three of the above approaches in each of the three years so that the process and focus ensure as wide a coverage as possible. Formal feedback is provided after each review. There should also be a debriefing, with a focus on the next review session.

Documents central to the review process are: Goals of Education for Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan School Boards Association Code of Ethics, and the LEADS Code of Ethics.

Boards are encouraged to engage in Saskatchewan School Boards Association board-director review process after the first year of the board or director's term of office.

Your School Boards Association has developed tools and a workshop to support boards of education in conducting a performance review of the board and director. You are encouraged to contact the Association for assistance. See Research Report #97-03 'The Board –CEO Review' for background information.'

Timing of Director's Evaluation

Pre-Evaluation:

- Prior to the beginning of the new school year, goals and expectations for the director should be mutually established with the board. Agreement on the form, process and timeline should also be in place.

Contract Extension Review:

- By March 15 directors must be notified about extension or non-extension of their current contract. Other timelines may also exist within the director's contract itself. In order to make these decisions, a performance review must take place prior to these deadlines so that the board can make an informed judgment.

School-Year Review:

- Prior to the beginning of the next school year another performance review needs to be concluded with a written evaluation summary and a conference between the board and director. This triggers the next cycle of goal setting and evaluation.
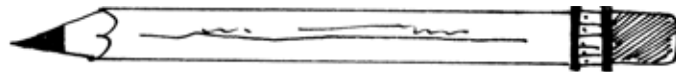
360º Evaluation

The Board of Education and only the board undertakes performance reviews of the Director. However, as stated earlier, one characteristic of an effective board/Director review process is that the board utilizes a variety of sources of feedback. The opinions of other interested parties may be helpful inputs or development feedback to the board's decision-making process.

This principle is at the heart of the "360º feedback process," which has gained favour in employee assessment in a variety of organizational contexts, both public and private sector, in recent years. The surge of interest is partly due to the increased use of teams within the business world -- where fellow team members often know more about each other's day-to-day performance than the boss. The intent of the 360 feedback process is to provide a multi-source assessment system in order to support people and encourage their continued improvement. A 360 assessment focuses more on how workers do their job. It is a process that can be used in the director's review.

A 360º assessment is a full-circle overview of a person's performance on the job. Instead of a single evaluation from the boss, a person receives feedback from many workplace sources. Sometimes 360°'s are called multi-source or multi-rater assessments. The boss still gives input, but peers and direct reports (people who report to the participant) also get involved in the evaluation process. The person participating in a 360° gets to rate his or her performance, too. Applying their individual observations and experiences, everyone involved brings different perspectives to the assessment.

To be effective, people need feedback, and the old system of performance evaluations involving only the individual and the boss have often been disliked and ineffective. The feedback from a 360° evaluation forms the foundation for a productive development path.

Notes

The form of 360º programs vary widely from company to company, but typically it might work as follows:

An employee chooses several (6-12) people in the company, who know his work well, for his evaluation.

Those people anonymously fill out questionnaires and rate the employee on core competencies such as communication, leadership, adaptability, relationships, task management, production, development of others and personal development.

The results are tabulated by computer, and the employee is given a report that summarizes his performance.

He goes over the results (including his self evaluation and the manager's evaluation of him) with his manager, and puts together a long-term plan to improve his work.

The results from the participants are sometimes weighted.

Benefits of a 360° Feedback System

Full-circle feedback from work associates is both credible and motivating to participants.

It can be used as a springboard for professional growth by pinpointing training needs to improve performance.

It is typically an annual process to monitor the progress of professional growth.

Participants get a more fair, well-rounded impression of how their work is viewed by others and take steps to continuously improve their effectiveness.

Peers and Direct Reports get an opportunity to share concerns, which helps them contribute to constructive changes in their work environment. At the same time, they can confirm positive behaviours that do not need attention.

Team members can use the information to identify and prioritize team development needs.

Feedback tends to be consistent. The results tend to be constructive coaching.
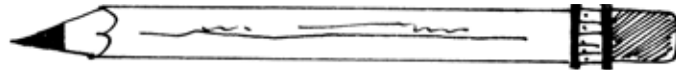
Issues With the 360º Assessment

The 360º program needs to be carefully developed so that it is perceived to be legitimate:

- Anonymity is essential to avoid finger-pointing and office melodrama;

- Some employees may band together to give each other inflated evaluations; and,

- Using 360º review for salary increase determination may lead to "cheating."

Notes

Example of a 360º Assessment

A copy of a form based on one developed by American leadership and management author, Steven Covey, that might be used in a 360º review follows:

Indicators of an Effective Board of Education	Poor ------- Strong			
1. Willingly assists and serves people.	①	②	③	④
2. Is honest in interactions with people.	①	②	③	④
3. Does not backbite or gossip.	①	②	③	④
4. Keeps promises and honours commitments.	①	②	③	④
5. Shows courtesy and respect for people.	①	②	③	④
6. Helps create a positive and optimistic work environment.	①	②	③	④
7. Consistently produces high-quality work.	①	②	③	④
8. Balances a concern for getting work completed with a concern for the goals and feelings of others.	①	②	③	④
9. Does not allow work to dominate his/her entire life.	①	②	③	④
10. Does not allow personal life to inappropriately interfere with effectiveness at work.	①	②	③	④
11. Balances all aspects of life to maintain overall effectiveness. Remains in control of his/her actions, even in highly emotional or difficult circumstances.	①	②	③	④
12. Works to solve problems, rather than ignoring and avoiding them.	①	②	③	④
13. Focuses efforts on things he/she can do something about, rather than on things beyond his/her control.	①	②	③	④
14. Takes initiatives to get things done.	①	②	③	④
15. Accepts responsibility for his/her actions and attitudes rather than blaming others or making excuses.	①	②	③	④
16. Makes the best of difficult situations.	①	②	③	④
17. Appears to have clear sense of direction in life.	①	②	③	④
18. Begins projects with a clear understanding of desired outcomes.	①	②	③	④
19. Works toward long-term solutions, not just temporary fixes.	①	②	③	④
20. Works to ensure that his/her work group has a clear sense of direction and purpose.	①	②	③	④
21. Sees potential in people and encourages them to reach it.	①	②	③	④
22. Foresees and prepares for problems before they arise.	①	②	③	④
23. Prioritizes work so that time is spent on the most important issues.	①	②	③	④
24. Organizes and prepares in a way that reduces having to work in a crisis mode.	①	②	③	④
25. Achieves smooth workflow through effective coordination and scheduling.	①	②	③	④
26. Is disciplined in carrying out plans (i.e., avoids procrastination, unnecessary interruptions, time wasting, etc.)	①	②	③	④

	1	2	3	4
27. Meets requests in a timely manner.	①	②	③	④
28. Does not undermine or manipulate others for personal gain.	①	②	③	④
29. Is happy when others succeed.	①	②	③	④
30. Is fair with all people regardless of their position.	①	②	③	④
31. When resolving conflicts, works to find solutions that benefit all.	①	②	③	④
32. Does not allow self-interest to inappropriately influence business decisions.	①	②	③	④
33. Has the courage to say 'no' when appropriate.	①	②	③	④
34. When working with people on projects, works to ensure that the desired outcomes are clear and agreeable to all involved.	①	②	③	④
35. When working with people on projects, ensures that clear guidelines for completing the task are established (i.e., standards, constraints, policies).	①	②	③	④
36. When working with people on projects, ensures that necessary resources are identified and available (i.e., supplies, people).	①	②	③	④
37. When working with people on projects, works to ensure that the way performance will be measured is understood by all.	①	②	③	④
38. When working with people on projects, works to ensure that the consequences of both good and bad performance are understood by all.	①	②	③	④
39. Listens to people without interrupting.	①	②	③	④
40. Is sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others.	①	②	③	④
41. Seeks to understand others' viewpoints.	①	②	③	④
42. Seeks feedback on ways he/she can improve.	①	②	③	④
43. Seeks to understand a problem before applying a solution.	①	②	③	④
44. Understands issues and concerns that exist outside his/her work group (i.e., customers, other departments).	①	②	③	④
45. Is clear and concise when communicating.	①	②	③	④
46. Does not dominate or overpower people during discussions.	①	②	③	④
47. Expresses ideas and feelings with confidence.	①	②	③	④
48. Is thoughtful and considerate of others when communicating.	①	②	③	④
49. Is straightforward and open when communicating.	①	②	③	④
50. Consistently looks for new and better ways to do work.	①	②	③	④
51. Seeks out and applies the knowledge and skills of others to better accomplish tasks.	①	②	③	④
52. Even when holding strong opinions on issues, encourages others to express differing viewpoints.	①	②	③	④
53. Develops teamwork and cooperation with people.	①	②	③	④
54. Seeks ways to improve work group performance.	①	②	③	④
55. Strives to build and improve relationships with others.	①	②	③	④
56. Cares for his/her physical health and well-being.	①	②	③	④
57. Is current and knowledgeable about his/her field of work.	①	②	③	④
58. Strives to develop new skills and abilities.	①	②	③	④
59. Take time to find meaning and enjoyment in life.	①	②	③	④

PLEASE PRINT TO WRITE LEGIBLY. In order to protect your anonymity, please avoid using words or jargon that might reveal your identity. (See "NOTE" on survey cover regarding anonymity.)

A.   List the three most positive qualities of this person with regard to overall effectiveness.

B.   Describe the three most important things this person could improve on to increase overall effectiveness.

C.   If desired, use the space below to clarify your responses to items in this survey or to make comments related to this person's effectiveness that have not been addressed.

Director Appraisal

1. The director acknowledges and apologizes for mistakes.				
2. The director shares information, both positive and negative with people.				
3. The director involves people in decisions that affect them.				

Our director would be better if:

What I like best about our director:

The leadership style of the director is:

Key successes of the director this year have been:

LEADS Leadership Model

The Saskatchewan League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents adopted a statement on professional educational leadership to serve as a basis from which its members could better understand their roles and challenges and foster quality educational services in Saskatchewan. This statement was based upon four fundamental commitments:

1. The "Leader of Leaders" role;

2. The "Professional Advocate" role;

3. The "Steward of Educational Resources" role; and,

4. The "Servant of Leaders" role.

School boards might consider using these elements as categories on which to base the evaluation of their Director of Education.

Notes
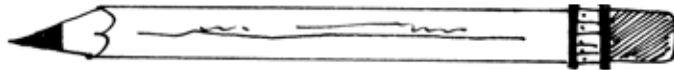
Board-Director Relationship and School^{PLUS}

The effectiveness of school division governance and leadership is directly proportional to the nature of the relationship between the Board of Education and its Director of Education. It is a symbiotic relationship with the success of one resulting in the success of the other. It is unique in that each relies on the work of the other in order to do their job well. This is particularly so with the changes brought about by the adoption and implementation of School^{PLUS} when one adopts the more public and transparent operation of a School^{PLUS} school division.

School^{PLUS} is about organizational and operational change. It involves:

- A new way of thinking about education and results;

- A preferred future;

- A different governance model;

- An emphasis on student achievement and life success;

- Expectations for board, staff and community;

- New role for the Board of Education and Director of Education;

- A way of leading with adaptive leadership and doing business; and,

- Authentic partnerships and strategic alliances.

The relationship between the Board of Education and its Director of Education depends on the compatibility of positions of various aspects of school division leadership. The Board of Education needs to determine where it stands on the various mandated duties and associated issues of the school division and the community. It needs to determine where it stands on School^{PLUS} and the implications of adoption and implementation of this initiative. It needs to redefine its relationship with the Director of education, staff, parents, partners and community. In some cases, the school board may need to reinvent itself in respect to the changes that are anticipated. In all cases, it will involve the Board's chief executive officer.

The duties of the board are prescribed in *The Education Act, 1995*, and these are unchanged. However, the manner in which they are carried out and the transparency of that are fundamental to the adoption of School^{PLUS}. Boards will need to determine the governance model they will adopt in implementing School^{PLUS}. They will need to decide whether they will embrace participatory, collaborative decision-making with participation of the learning community and the larger community. They will need to establish if they subscribe to adaptive leadership as the operational management style.

The selection of a Director of Education may be the most important decision that a Board of Education makes. As the person responsible for seeing that the board's policies are implemented as intended, the Director of Education's abilities and compatibility of views of education and leadership are critical to the relationship. It is particularly so as the school division adopts, implements, advances, nurtures and evaluates School^{PLUS}.

The Director of Education selection criteria and process will change with the adoption of School^{PLUS} as will the development and evaluation of the director. The mandate of School^{PLUS} will require new skills and duties of the director. The participatory and inclusionary processes will require emphasis on ensuring that the spirit of School^{PLUS} permeates the school division and pursues an adaptive leadership style. It means implementing the Effective Practices Framework to achieve student and community success. As the board plans for the recruitment of a Director of Education, it must integrate the essential elements of School^{PLUS} that it has or is planning to pursue into each phase of the tasks to assure that this major change in the school division is included.

As the board looks at the knowledge, skills, personal characteristics, vision and leadership of the prospective Director of Education, it needs to look at each of these in light of where the school division is in implementing School^{PLUS} and determine if the candidate has the ability to take the school division to the preferred future state of the board.

The board will need to determine:

- The aspects of School^{PLUS} implementation, advancing and nurturing that will be part of the director's contract;

- The extent to which the leadership style of the board and the director support this decentralized vision of operational matters with School^{PLUS};

- How the level of student and school division success impacts the evaluation of the board and the director; and,

- The role of parents, partners, learning community, larger community in the evaluation of the board and the Director of Education.

Building Board Knowledge
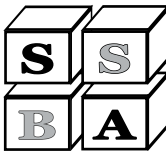
1. *Is School^{PLUS} seen as a benefit or milestone in your school division?*

2. *How effective is your school board in implementing School^{PLUS} and in providing adaptive leadership?*

3. *What changes need to be made to the school division's board and director evaluation policies and procedures?*

Reflection

Three key ideas from this module are:

-

-

-

My questions are:

-

-

-

	Ideas I want to learn more about:	Ideas for my board to consider:
To be an effective trustee:		
To be an effective board:		

My Personal Plan of Action

In order to strengthen the Board of Education-Director relationship, I make a commitment to:

State the Area You Want to Improve	I Commit Myself to the Following	When Will I Do This?	How Will I Know I Have Been Successful