



New Jersey School Boards Association

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Role of the Board:

1. The Board truly functions as a policy making unit, focusing on goals, oversight and long-range outcomes.
2. It delegates all research studies, fact finding and the development of recommendations, solutions or alternatives to the appropriate administrative staff.
3. All information, back-up materials and administrative recommendations are given to the entire board well before they are asked to make a decision. The board is then able to follow the development of the idea and can ask pertinent questions on the information received.
4. The Board evaluates the information and makes decisions based on the findings after discussing the issue at board meetings.

The whole board gives full consideration to problems. Members feel free to deliberate, ask questions, reject or table recommendations, and ask for more information. Debate by all the members of the board is more productive, as the group is more likely to collaboratively point out benefits or recognize defects in the recommendations than is a smaller group, such as a committee. The district benefits from the best thinking of both the professional educators and each individual board member on all issues.

Role of the Administration and Staff:

1. The Superintendent is clearly the educational leader and the administrator: she/he may choose to delegate the responsibility to staff members to perform the necessary research and data collection, but she/he retains ultimate accountability for how the data/information is reported to the board.
2. The Superintendent either makes recommendations to the board based on the educational soundness of the data, or gives alternatives which detail the positive and negative implications of any action.
3. The staff does the research: they have the time, training and can be more thorough than board members, they are also the ones who, in the long run, will be responsible for the implementation and the success of the project.

The superintendent retains her/his full position as educational leader of the district: free to explore alternatives, make recommendations based on research, and use the talents of the staff appropriately. She/he is held accountable for the way in which he supplies the information and the way in which she/he formulates recommendations and implements the decisions made by the board.