



ONTARIO EDUCATION SERVICES CORPORATION

Professional Development Program for School Board Trustees

Modules

15

What makes a great Board Chair?

CASE STUDIES

Case Study #1 - Succession Planning

A colleague invites you to have coffee sometime to discuss how she can prepare herself to someday be vice-chair or chair of the board. She would like to develop her skills and broaden her experience. She also has questions about the process of putting her name forward.

What would you tell her that might be helpful? What kinds of suggestions would you make about ways to develop skills and broaden experiences?

Case Study #2 - Student Trustee Mentoring

The outgoing student trustees approach you in private at the end of their term to tell you as board chair that they found their role less meaningful and interesting than they had hoped for when they were appointed as student trustees. They propose that a mentoring approach should be considered for the next student trustees.

What do you do with this information?

Case Study #3 - Parent Delegation at the Board Meeting

A seemingly incensed parent informs you through email that he will be attending the board meeting to represent parents from ABC School along with a large group of other concerned parents. He wants to present their concerns to the board about proposed changes in boundaries. There have been parent meetings to discuss the boundary changes, which also impact DEF School. In the message, he says that the trustees were foolishly elected and can't imagine what reason they could have for considering such a disruptive and culturally insensitive change to attendance boundaries.

How would you respond to this message? How would you prepare for the meeting? Who else would you involve in your preparations?

Case Study #5 - Managing Criticism

The director of education presents a long and detailed report to the board for decision. The report was not made available in advance of the meeting. It is not the first time this kind of situation has happened at the board meeting. One vocal trustee starts the discussions by attacking the professionalism of the director of education and the lack of leadership of the board chair for letting these sorts of situations arise. Two other trustees want to speak on this position.

As board chair, how do you manage this agenda item and discussion? How can you ensure that the issue does not continue to arise?

Case Study #6 - Director Recruitment

Your director of education has left the Board for a new position. The interim director of education may be a candidate for the position. You need to plan for and manage the upcoming in-camera meeting of the board where the selection of the new director will be discussed.

What do you need to consider in order to conduct an effective meeting without compromising the recruitment process?

Case Study #7 - Director Performance Appraisal

Your board is beginning the process of the annual director performance appraisal. The Board has not completed an appraisal on a regular basis so there have been extensive discussions about the purpose and process. Board members agree that the main intent of the process is: to provide helpful, objective feedback to the director in order to optimize future performance; to provide a structured opportunity for the director to receive feedback; and, ideally, to identify concerns in a timely and supportive way to facilitate resolution.

What steps need to be taken to ensure that the appraisal is fair and supportive of the director while ensuring that concerns are addressed?

Case Study # 8 - Surprise Phone Call

You get a call from your director of education to inform you that she's accepted the position of director of education at another, larger school board and will be leaving in six weeks. You had no idea she had even applied for that position. She is excited about the move as her daughter lives in the city to which she will be relocating. Just before the call ends, she mentions that she thinks the current superintendent of curriculum would make a great director, which might simplify the process of replacing her.

How do you inform the board of this news? How do you organize to find another suitable director for the school district?