

ONTARIO EDUCATION SERVICES CORPORATION

**Professional Development Program
for School Board Trustees**

Modules

**4 Common Ground,
Common Purpose:
Relationships in
School Boards**



In this module, Trustees will explore:

- Key relationships in the world of school boards
 - Among members of the Board
 - With the Director
 - With the Board Chair
 - With the Board's constituents
- Winning dynamics in relationships
- Building a successful board team
- Board and Director - an effective leadership team



The ultimate potential of a board is only realized
when everyone works together as one.
One board. One voice. One team.

Patrick Lencioni



No “I” in team, No “I” in board

- How do we move from “I” to “We”?
- How do I, as an individual, add value so that the successful work of the board as a whole far exceeds what can be accomplished by any single member of the Board acting alone?
- How do **we**, collectively, create value for our students, for the education system and, for society as a whole?



The Board as a whole has to take responsibility to resolve potentially dysfunctional situations and strive to build dynamics that demonstrate a commitment to:

- collaborative decision-making
- doing the homework and sharing responsibility
- contributing to public meetings in a way that earns public confidence in the work of the board
- put the good of the school system before individual political agendas
- focus at least as much on assessing the value of initiatives as in controlling costs
- be open-minded to the views of fellow board members



Your true voice...

It is your self-knowledge, as an authentic leader, that will give you:

- the self-discipline
- to align to and to pursue the board's common higher purpose with integrity,
- to practice solid values,
- to lead as well with your heart and
- to establish ethical and effective relationships.

Adapted from The Leadership Challenge.



A Word on Diversity

- If everyone thinks alike, we only need one person in the boardroom!
- The synergy of bringing differing perspectives, insights and opinions together can create solutions that are deeper and richer and, most importantly, owned by everyone.



Code of Conduct

- A Code of Conduct serves to:
 - define acceptable behaviours,
 - clarify the rules of civil engagement,
 - promote high standards of practice, and
 - provide a framework for professional conduct and responsibilities.
- The Education Act includes a provision requiring school boards to establish a Code of Conduct and specified actions to be taken if the Code of Conduct is breached.



The Essential Partnership: Board and Director

The Director is the sole employee of the Board and part of the team.

Together the Director and the Board must :

- Develop a clear vision and strategic direction
- Share leadership built on trust
- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Focus on results
- Establish clear reporting and communication processes



Relationship: Chair and Director

The Chair and the Director must communicate frequently on matters such as:

- Preparing meeting agendas and recommendations for board action
- Timely and effective reporting processes for effective board decision-making
- Developing protocols for handling emergency situations that might arise
- Dealing with news media and role of the Chair as spokesperson for the Board



Chair and Members of the Board

The Chair:

- provides leadership and focus on board's multi-year strategic plan
- sets the tone and ensures that meetings are run effectively and that all voices are heard
- demonstrates impartiality in handling the business of the board and in professional relationships with all trustees
- provides leadership in professional development of board members
- ensures regular review of the effectiveness of the collective board



The Board and its Constituents

It is the right of constituents to know:

- what children are learning and how well they are learning.
- how their tax dollars are being spent
- how education resources are allocated in their community.

It is the Board's responsibility to:

- present a broad perspective on issues that affect the entire public within the collective Board's jurisdiction.



Individual commitment to a group effort -- that is what makes a team work, a company (board) work, a society work, a civilization work.

Vince Lombardi