

VOL. XI, NO. 1

JANUARY, 1933

Research Bulletin
OF THE
National Education Association

The School Board Member

PUBLISHED BY THE RESEARCH DIVISION OF THE

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

1201 SIXTEENTH STREET NORTHWEST, WASHINGTON, D. C.

Research Bulletin of the National Education Association

Published five times each year in January, March, May, September, and November by the Research Division of the National Education Association of the United States.
President, JOSEPH ROSIER *Secretary, J. W. CRABTREE*

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Entered as second-class matter February 10, 1923, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under Act of August 24, 1912. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized February 10, 1923.

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FOREWORD

COMPETENT teachers and good schools in any community indicate foresight and good judgment on the part of its school trustees or school directors. Within rather broad limits the school board determines the amount of money that is spent for education, the kind of teachers that are employed, the length of the school term, and in short every fundamental school policy. Thus, the school board member in a very real sense determines the quality of the school. It is therefore extremely important for school board members to be thoroughly acquainted with their official responsibilities.

This issue of the *Research Bulletin* is concerned with the school board member and his work. The facts presented should enable school directors to perform their important duties more efficiently. The bulletin describes, first of all, the place of the school board member in the great national program of education. It then reveals the nature of a school board by considering its origin, development, and legal status. It points the way to successful cooperation and urges the board member to be critical of his own work as school director. Its recommendations are both practical and timely with reference to school board meetings, educational policies, personnel problems, and business affairs.

This publication is, first of all, a handbook for the men and women in active service on boards of education. They should find it especially serviceable because of the brief, convenient form in which the facts and principles are presented. Likewise, busy school directors will appreciate the short list of carefully selected references which is termed the five-inch shelf of books for school board members.

Although written primarily for school board members themselves, school superintendents and all those who share responsibility for the direction of public schools should find this bulletin helpful. It will be of interest also to college classes in educational administration, to officers and active workers in parent-teacher associations and other civic organizations, and to all citizens who are vitally interested in the welfare of public education.

J. W. CRABTREE, *Secretary,*
National Education Association.

The School Board Member and American Education

Education as a National Enterprise

Education is one of the largest national projects. Only five industries—agriculture, railroads, oil, electricity, and lumber—represent a capital investment more valuable than public-school property.¹ A million teachers and tens of thousands of other employees, such as engineers, custodians, janitors, and bus drivers, are engaged in carrying out this great national program. Agriculture, construction, railroads, and textiles are the only industries in which more people are employed.² But most important of all, the schools now enrol more than 25,000,000 boys and girls. Similarly, in many communities, the school is the largest business enterprise, with valuable property, a considerable number of employees, and a program which reaches into nearly every home. Nationally and locally, education is of first importance.

Education and National Welfare

Although the scope of the educational program suggests its importance, an estimate of the true worth of education must be based on other considerations. One may properly ask, What are the schools doing to promote individual and national well-being? Why do we maintain this extensive program of public education?

The aims of education help to answer these questions. School work is directed toward the attainment of seven major objectives:³ (1) sound health, (2) mastery of the tools of thought—reading, writing, language, and number, (3) worthy home membership, (4) vocational efficiency, (5) good citizenship, (6) wise use of leisure, and (7) ethical character. In the clean wholesome environment of the school, children develop useful habits and skills, acquire valuable information, learn to think for them-

selves, and gain an appreciation for the finer things in life.

Definite information is available to show that many of the foregoing objectives are being realized. For example, note the following changes in American life: (1) between 1900 and 1928, life expectancy increased 18 percent and the death rate per 1,000 inhabitants decreased 32 percent;⁴ (2) illiteracy decreased from 10.7 to 4.3 percent between 1900 and 1930;⁵ (3) national wealth increased fourfold during the same period;⁶ (4) the index of the amount of output per worker stands now at about 190 units as compared with 100 units in 1899;⁷ (5) the value added to raw materials by manufacture has increased more than sixfold within the last thirty years;⁸ and (6) the per capita circulation of library books is more than twelve times as large as it was in 1876.⁹ Although other social agencies helped to produce these achievements, the American public-school system deserves much credit for the progress that has been made. Along these and other lines, efficient schools are producing a nation of healthier, more intelligent, and more efficient citizens.

The Board Member's Responsibility

America's vast educational program is directed by a half million school board members¹⁰ serving on 150,000 school boards. The efficiency of every board member is of first importance. It is truly said:

The school board has the future of the nation and the progress of all of our people as its responsibility. The maintenance of the democratic aspect of public education is as much dependent upon the type, the intelligence, the ability of school board members or school trustees as it is upon the quality of instruction offered to the children in the classroom.¹¹

¹ National Education Association, Research Division. *The Schools and Business*. Washington, D. C.: the Association, 1930. p. 4-5.

² *Ibid.*

³ U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education. *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education*. Bulletin, 1918, No. 35, Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1918. p. 9-16.

⁴ National Education Association, Research Division. "Investing in Public Education." *Research Bulletin* 8: 215; September, 1930. Washington, D. C.: the Association.

⁵ U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930*. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1932. Volume III, p. 10. Also *Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910*, Volume I, p. 1187.

⁶ National Education Association. "Ten Facts on Financing Public Education." *Journal of the National Education Association* 21: 26; January, 1932.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ National Education Association, Research Division. "Investing in Public Education." *Research Bulletin* 8: 201; September, 1930. Washington, D. C.: the Association.

¹⁰ The term *school board member* will be used in this bulletin to apply to "school directors," "school trustees," and all other officials serving on committees that are charged with the direction of schools.

¹¹ California State Department of Education. *California Schools*. Vol. II, No. 10; October, 1931. Sacramento, Calif.: State Department of Education, 1931. p. 377.

The efficient school director renders the highest type of public service. His influence reaches out beyond the limits of the immediate district and touches the very heart of the nation. Likewise an inefficient board member, by hindering educational progress in his own district, thereby impairs the whole program of national education. The responsibilities of the office are large; the opportunities for service to childhood and to the nation are unlimited.

Purpose of the Bulletin

It is the purpose of this bulletin to present the fundamental principles of school board work. The section which follows this one tells how the office originated and traces some of the important trends in its development. The dis-

cussion then turns to the official relationships of school board members to one another, to their employees, and to the public. Following a brief presentation of important facts about school law, the major portion of the publication is devoted to the actual duties and activities of a school board. The bulletin analyzes some of the difficult problems which school boards encounter and presents, as an aid to their solution, a body of facts and principles derived from a careful analysis of the literature in the field and the combined judgments of many competent advisers.¹ The problems considered relate to school board meetings, educational policies, personnel problems, and business affairs. The final section of the bulletin enumerates some of the personal traits and qualities frequently found in capable school board members.

¹ This bulletin incorporates many ideas and recommendations from the writings of prominent authorities in the field of educational administration. Specific acknowledgment to those whose materials are cited directly is given in the footnotes. In addition, recognition is due to many authors whose materials were used indirectly. It is not possible to list the names of all whose helpful cooperation has been obtained. Special appreciation is expressed to the following professors of educational administration and more than one hundred of their students: W. W. Kemp, University of California; E. E. Lewis, Ohio State University; Shelton Phelps, George Peabody College for Teachers; Osman R. Hull, University of Southern California; Fred Engelhardt, University of Minnesota; and E. P. Cubberley, Stanford University. The valuable criticisms of the following persons who read the manuscript, wholly or in part, are also gratefully acknowledged: Professor John C. Almack, Stanford University; Mrs. Ruby Crampton, President, Association of Women School Board Members; Walter S. Deffenbaugh, Chief, Division of American School Systems, U. S. Office of Education; Mrs. Henry Grattan Doyle, Member, Board of Education, Washington, D. C.; Professor I. N. Edwards, University of Chicago; Supt. T. W. Gosling, Akron, Ohio; Charles H. Judd, Director, School of Education, University of Chicago; Supt. M. R. Keyworth, Hamtramck, Michigan; Professor John K. Norton, Columbia University; M. M. Chambers, Editor, *Educational Law and Administration*; and W. W. Keesecker, Specialist in School Legislation, U. S. Office of Education.

The Research Division assumes responsibility for the general interpretations in this bulletin other than those quoted fully from other publications.

THE SCHOOL DIRECTOR is an important force in shaping the course of education. As such, he is also a powerful instrument in guiding the destiny of the state, the nation, and society. A school may add immeasurably to the advancement of human welfare. To do this its administrators must be wise, energetic, and courageous. They must be directed by sound principles. The compensation which they receive is not in money, nor even in honor, but is in the consciousness of having helped as fully as possible in training young men and women for the part which they are to play in American state and national life, and for that larger part which America is to play in the affairs of the world.—John C. Almack.

Progress in School Board Organization

Origin of the School Board

During the colonial period, every citizen took direct part in managing school affairs. Every item of school business was brought before the town meeting. As towns became larger, more and more of the business of the town meeting was entrusted to officials known as selectmen. Providing proper schools was one of the duties frequently delegated to these officials. Thus the selectmen became, in reality, the first lay representatives of the community charged with the management of schools. As towns continued to grow, the selectmen were unable to attend to school business, town business, and church business. Special school committees were then created and with that practice the school board proper came into existence. Colonial practice formed the background for early state laws¹ and by a process of gradual and irregular development, the office of school board member spread to all parts of the nation.

Although school boards vary in size, in form of organization, and in authority, they reflect the adherence of the American people to one important principle, namely, that the control of the public school must be separated from that of other governmental activities. Through this separation the people have sought protection for their schools against the changing fortunes of partisan politics.

Size of School Boards

Many of the earliest school committees had three members. This practice has had an important influence, especially in rural districts. Approximately 80 percent of the rural district boards are composed of three members.²

The history of city boards reveals a more varied development. As cities increased in size, school boards tended to become larger. In 1902, New York City had a school board of 46 mem-

bers; Philadelphia had 42 board members; Pittsburgh, 39; Providence, Rhode Island, 36; and more than 50 percent of the large cities of the country had boards larger than 9 members. The average school board in 58 large cities in 1902 had 14 members.³ The tendency to reduce the size of city school boards in recent years has been pronounced. The first part of Chart I indicates this trend. Seventeen of the 58 cities just mentioned reduced their boards to fewer than 9 members by 1927 and the average had been reduced to 8 members. If smaller cities are included, the average board had only 6 members in 1927. Cities show a distinct preference for boards of 3, 5, 6, or 7 members.⁴

Method of Selection

Although school board members are chosen in many ways, popular election and appointment by an administrative officer of the civil government are the two leading methods.⁵ However, there are many differences in methods of election and appointment. Sometimes board members are chosen in a separate school election; at other times the school election is merely a part of the general election. Some board members are chosen to represent wards or other areas; others are elected at large. Similarly, appointment may rest with any one of a number of officials or official groups. Most authorities favor the election of non-partisan board members in a special school election to represent the city or district at large.⁶ Deffenbaugh⁷ writes that "a comparison of the data for 1902 with data collected in 1927 shows that there have been few changes in the method of selecting school board members."

Length of Term

Authorities on school administration agree that board members should be elected for a

¹ See Clapp, F. L., Chase, W. J., and Merriman, Curtis. *Introduction to Education*. Boston: Ginn and Co., 1929. p. 75. Reisner, E. H. *The Evolution of the Common School*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1930, p. 309. Reisner, E. H. *Nationalism and Education Since 1789*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1922. p. 352-55.

² Counts, George S. *The Social Composition of Boards of Education*. Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 33. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1927. p. 12.

³ Deffenbaugh, W. S. *Certain Practices in City School Administration*. U. S. Department of the Interior, Office of Education, City School Leaflet No. 29. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1927. p. 2-3.

⁴ Counts, George S. *Op. cit.* p. 11-14. McGaughy, J. R. *The Fiscal Administration of City School Systems*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1924. Appendix A.

⁵ The self-perpetuating board may be cited as an illustration of one unique method. The board members hold office for an indefinite term and all vacancies are filled by vote of the board itself.

⁶ Deffenbaugh, W. S. *The School Board in City School Survey Reports*. U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education City School Leaflet, No. 2, 1922. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1922.

⁷ Deffenbaugh, W. S. *Certain Practices in School Administration*. p. 4.

relatively long term, so that the entire personnel of the board will not change every two or three years. The trend in school practice reflects the influence of that belief. As shown by the middle bars in Chart I, the average term of office increased from 3.6 years in 1902 to 4.6 years in 1927 in the cities studied by Deffenbaugh.¹

Number of Standing Committees

Large boards of education began the practice of creating many standing committees. There was frequently a committee on finance, a committee on buildings and grounds, a committee on teachers, one on textbooks, supplies, courses of study, medical inspection, discipline, truancy, library, athletics, rules and regulations, grievances, auditing, kindergartens, evening schools, Americanization classes. In 1917, 10 percent of the school boards in cities over 100,000 in population reported 10 or more standing committees.² The average number was 6.5. The last pair of bars in Chart I show that by 1927 this average was reduced to 3.5. Likewise, in cities 30,000 to 100,000 in population, the average number of standing committees was 6.2 in 1917, and only 4.2 in 1927.

¹ *Ibid* p. 5.

² *Ibid* p. 9-10. Deffenbaugh, W. S. *Standing Committees of City Boards of Education*. U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, City School Circular, 1927-28, No. 2. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 4 p.

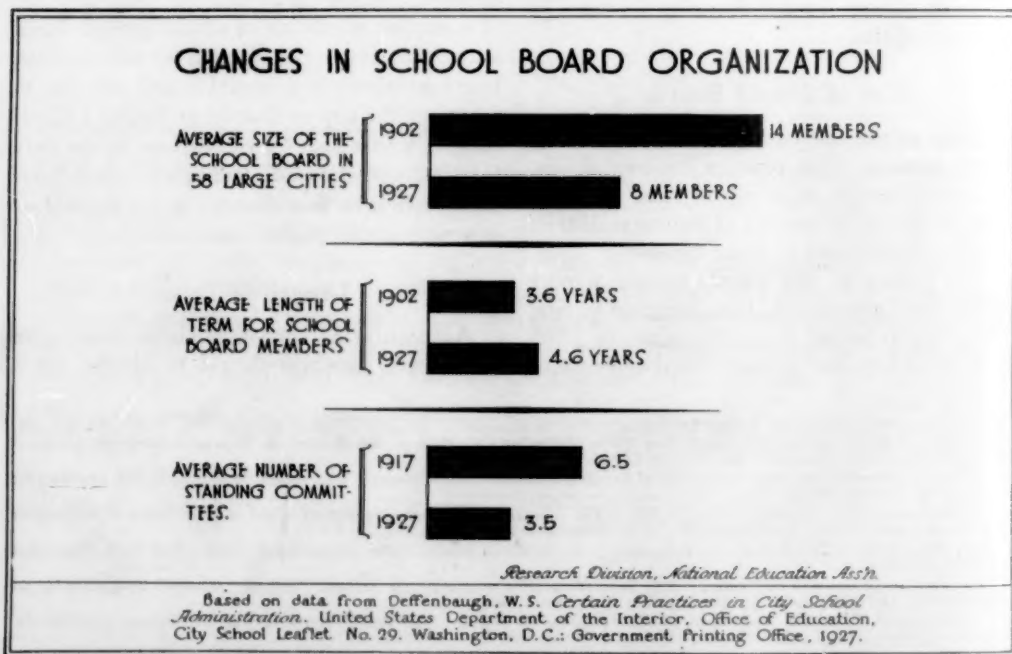
³ Cubberley, Ellwood P. *Public School Administration*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1929. See Chapter 12. Deffenbaugh, W. S. "Forty Years of City School Administration." *American School Board Journal* 82: 33-4, 116; March, 1931.

Trends Reveal Progress

The school board grew naturally out of the conditions of pioneer life in New England. The office is deeply rooted in the foundations of American democracy. For more than two centuries school board members have directed the schools of the nation, keeping them responsive to the will of each community and relatively free from the control of any political party, religious sect, or social class. The school director is responsible today, as he has been in the past, for keeping the schools open to every individual and for providing the best educational service obtainable for every child in the district.

The school board is undergoing an evolution which foretells greater efficiency.³ It is becoming small enough to allow free interchange of ideas and to give all members an opportunity to enter into the discussions. Longer terms of office insure to it a greater degree of stability. And finally, the abolition of standing committees frees the board from routine administrative matters, thereby giving it an opportunity to deal with fundamental policies and to evaluate properly the results attained.

CHART I



Working with Others

Relation of a Board Member to the Board Itself

A school board is not merely a collection of individuals. It is a unit. Each member contributes his ideas and, as the deliberation proceeds, modifies his own opinions in the light of those expressed by others. Thus at the close of the deliberation, every member is likely to hold an opinion that differs materially from that held by any member when the discussion began. By its vote a school board gives expression to a group decision.

The identity of a board or committee—The relation of the school board member to the entire board is somewhat like the relation of tributaries to a river. A river is made possible by its tributaries, but it is not identical with them. The Ohio, the Missouri, the Arkansas, and various other tributaries pour their waters into the Mississippi. Yet the Mississippi is not merely the Ohio plus the Missouri plus all the other tributaries. It has its own channel, its own characteristics, its own identity.

Let us assume by way of illustration that Mr. Johnson, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Brown are the members of a school board. The board is not Mr. Johnson and Mr. Smith and Mr. Brown. It is a unit made up of Messrs. Johnson, Smith, and Brown. Each exerts an influence in proportion to the strength of his leadership and adapts his own ideas as he is influenced by others. Consequently, board action is neither the judgment of Mr. Johnson nor the aggregate of the independent judgments of Mr. Johnson and Mr. Smith and Mr. Brown. It is a collective act, representing the group as a whole.

Board members have no personal authority—The simple fact explained above can scarcely be overemphasized. It lies at the very heart of school board relationships. Unless the school board member understands the relationship which should exist between himself and the board as a whole, he is likely to become involved in difficulties. He is liable to make official decisions, forgetting that it is the board alone which acts in an official capacity. The true relation between member and board is stated thus by one school board member:

I am a member of the school committee of Lewiston, but what authority or power have I over any teacher, or any pupil, or any janitor, or any building belonging to Lewiston's public schools? None whatever, as an individual. I may combine in the committee with other members and have my share of influence; but when I am alone, out of the meeting, away from the others, I have no more power or authority than any other citizen. Mark this, and do not forget the distinction. If you will read the statutes of the State, you will find many things said about the committee, many powers defined, many duties and prerogatives described; but you will not find that the law clothes the single member with any power, any duty, or any prerogative whatever.¹

In only one instance may an individual board member exercise official authority. The board may delegate to one of its members the authority to carry out a specific task. In such cases the authority comes solely from the vote of the board, it applies only to the specific task assigned, and it extends only for a limited period of time. The following paragraphs cite practical situations in which the need for united action is sometimes overlooked.

*Pledging support*²—No school board member wants to pledge himself not to think. Yet when a board member pledges himself to support a given proposition in board meeting, he takes that step. By his pledge he promises not to listen to reason, not to consider any argument no matter how convincing it is, not to recognize any new facts or evidence that may be introduced. In other words, he promises to act as an individual and not as a member of a board. The board member is entitled to hold personal opinions, and he may properly express his present ideas outside the board meeting. An opinion is one thing; a decision is another. The public has a right to know the board member's opinion about any issue. It has no right to know what his decision is going to be. A competent board member makes all his decisions in the board meeting. No promise influences his final judgment. He is free to adopt whatever course of action seems best when, after deliberation, the matter is put to vote. The board meeting is held to determine wisely all matters in issue: to reach decisions—not to register the independent conclusions of the several board members.

Information concerning board action—Board members do well to refuse to grant interviews

¹ Anthony, A. W. "The Relation between the Superintendent and the School Committee." Reprinted from the *Maine School Report, 1908*. Augusta: State Department of Education, 1917.

² See Chancellor, W. E. *Our Schools*. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1915. p. 80.

7 concerning what the board is going to do or is likely to do; likewise, concerning what it has done. Such personal commitments are often embarrassing to the member himself and to the board as a whole. They frequently cause unnecessary dissension. The minutes of the board meeting are open to the public and to newspaper reporters. Official acts are recorded in them. If a question is at all controversial, boards find it good policy to delegate to one individual—probably to the superintendent of schools or the secretary of the board—the responsibility for announcing the board's action. Correspondence, conversations, and discussions pertaining to board meetings should be held in strictest confidence. Such safeguards are quite essential in preserving harmony.

Relation of One Board Member to Another

Board members will not find themselves in unanimous agreement on all matters. Board action implies discussion and deliberation; it implies agreement growing out of differences. But when differences arise, only policies or courses of action should ever be involved. A fellow board member is not to be condemned because of his opinion. It is the opinion, the policy, the course of action that is, perchance, wrong. A policy may be rightly criticized and vigorously opposed; a fellow board member may not be. Every controversial issue should be thoroughly discussed before the board acts, but all differences should be purely impersonal.

The majority action of the board on a given issue should become the policy of the entire board until such time as the question is again raised for consideration. Only in the most exceptional cases, where dishonest or corrupt practice on the part of a majority of the board actually threatens the welfare of the district, is a board member justified in resisting board action. The board member's first duty is to the public and, to be sure, he is obligated to carry to the public a complaint against corrupt action. Otherwise, he is obligated to support the action of the majority of the board. Teamwork is the first principle of board action. A member with the proper conception of his relation to the board will criticize neither the action of the board as a whole nor that of a fellow member.

He will present his views in board meeting and vote according to his best judgment; but if the majority vote is against him, he will lay aside personal opinions and cooperate with the majority in sustaining the policy of the board.

The Board Member and Employees of the Board

Indirect control—In systems large enough to employ a superintendent of schools, the relationship between the school board member and employees of the board should be indirect. The board has no relation with any individual employee other than the superintendent¹ except in matters of contract and payment of salary. All direct contacts are between the superintendent and the employees who work under his direction. The board member should not recommend applicants for nomination; he should not supervise the work of any employee unless required by vote of the board to do so in a specific instance; he should not hear complaints from employees; nor should he openly criticize an employee. As long as an employee deserves to be continued in service, he deserves the support of the board in the performance of his duties.

Self-interests of board members—A board member is not elected in order that he may sell real estate, insurance, automobiles, or any other commodity to employees of the board, or in order to increase the demand for his professional services. Neither is he elected in order that his children or his friends' children may enjoy special privileges. It is extremely unethical and in most states illegal for a board member to abuse his office by seeking special privileges for his children or by soliciting business among school employees.

Testimonials—When a board member recommends an employee to other employers, the testimonial should be direct and honest. He should not write an open testimonial of the to-whom-it-may-concern variety. The direct statement to the prospective employer is more effective, is entirely confidential, is more likely to be accurate. No self-respecting director will write a strong recommendation to get rid of an incompetent employee; nor will he write a weak or indifferent recommendation for a capable employee in order to retain his services.

¹ Large city systems are sometimes so organized that there are two or more coordinate administrative officers; for example, the superintendent and the business manager. To simplify the discussion, this bulletin will refer only to the relations between the board and the superintendent, since a single executive officer is found in the great majority of school systems.

The Board Member and the Public

The relationship between the school board member and the public is implied by his relation to the board as a whole. The *board* should be ready to hear a representative, to receive a petition or resolution, to hear an individual citizen, but a board member should not. If Willie's teacher kept him in at recess when really it was Johnny who pulled Mary's hair, the board member should refuse to give personal consideration to the angry complaint of Willie's father. Only the board may properly hear any complaint.

Other public relationships can be inferred from the foregoing illustration. The board member should be informed about school matters and should be willing to serve in a lay capacity as a representative and defender of the schools. He needs only to remember that he is an ordinary citizen except when sitting in a board meeting. The board should be responsive to any legitimate movement on the part of the public, provided the matter is presented

through the proper channels. It should give publicity to its policies, its actions, and to school affairs; but this also can be done best by the board rather than its members.

Ethics for School Board Members

Every group of persons working in a common enterprise should have a set of principles to govern their relationships to one another and to those whom they serve. All important service groups have codes of ethics. Doctors, lawyers, nurses, dentists, teachers, and other groups have adopted rules for their guidance.

Many school boards have found it helpful to work out their own codes of ethics. A few of these have been published¹ and can be used to good advantage for study purposes, or a school board might adopt one of them. Table 1 lists a few important principles covered by existing codes. Using these and other principles set forth in this bulletin, any school board can readily develop its own standards.

¹ See (1) Almack, John C. *The School Board Member*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1927. p. 235-38; (2) Mendenhall, Edgar. *The City School Board Member and His Task*. Pittsburg, Kansas: College Inn Book Store, 1929. p. 71-73; (3) "Code of Ethics of the Board of Education." *Colorado School Journal* 43: 16; May, 1928; (4) Edmonson, J. B., and Schorling, R. *Problems of the High School Teacher*. Bloomington, Ill.: Public School Publishing Company, 1924. Problem 67; (5) "Tentative Code of Ethics for Superintendents and Boards of Education." *Texas Outlook* 7: 16; August, 1923; (6) National Education Association, Research Division. "Ethics in the Teaching Profession." *Research Bulletin* 9: 1-92; January, 1931.

TABLE 1.—CERTAIN ETHICAL PRINCIPLES MENTIONED IN FOUR CODES OF ETHICS FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS¹

It is unethical for	Code Number ²			
	1	2	3	5
A board of education to:				
1. Perform administrative duties properly belonging to the superintendent.....		x	x	x
2. Elect to any school position a candidate not recommended by the superintendent.....		x	x	
3. Employ any candidate except on merit, or dismiss an employee except for good cause.....	x	x	x	
4. Consider a complaint against a teacher that is not first submitted to the superintendent.....		x	x	
5. Withhold notice of failure to reappoint until so late that the teacher is handicapped in finding another position.....		x		x
6. Keep the public in ignorance on school matters.....	x	x		
7. Offer a wage insufficient to cover living expenses for twelve months in the community where the teaching is to be done, or to offer any other unjust or humiliating contract.....				x
8. Offer a position to a teacher who is already under contract without first securing the consent of his present employer.....				x
A school board member to:				
1. Seek special privileges or private gain.....	x	x	x	x
2. Assume authority not specifically delegated to him by vote of the board.....	x		x	x
3. Urge the superintendent to nominate a particular candidate (particularly one of the board member's relatives).....	x		x	x
4. Criticize school employees publicly.....	x			x
5. Disclose confidential information.....	x	x		
6. Fail to cooperate properly.....	x	x		
7. Make misrepresentations in testimonials.....		x		x
8. Place the interests of one group (e. g., one city ward) above the interests of the entire school district.....	x	x		
9. Withhold facts about the incompetency of any employee from the superintendent.....			x	x
10. Give personal consideration to complaints.....			x	
11. Make no effort to inform himself on school matters.....		x		
12. Announce the probable future action of the board.....	x			

¹ The principles enumerated in this table were derived from four of the codes cited in footnote 1, p. 9. An "x" following a given principle indicates that it was mentioned in a particular code of ethics.

² These code numbers correspond to the reference numbers in footnote 1, p. 9.

The School Board and the Law

Special school laws regulate the work of school boards. In addition, many of the laws governing other public corporations apply to school districts. Each board member needs, therefore, to become familiar with the school laws of his own state and with other important corporation laws that apply to school districts. Moreover, the interpretations of the law which are given by the courts are scarcely less important than the laws themselves. Through their decisions in numerous school cases, the higher courts of the various states have established many common-law principles which are exceedingly important to public-school officials.¹ This part of the bulletin presents a body of legal principles derived from court decisions. It explains the legal nature of a school district and shows the legal relation of a school board to other governmental agencies, state and local.

A number of specific cases are cited by way of illustration. These should be interpreted with due caution.² Just as laws themselves vary from state to state, court decisions also differ. Consequently, although each case cited here represents a point of view held by many judicial bodies, the court in any given state might render a different decision on any one of them. Collectively, they give a useful description of the legal status of the school district.

The School Board as a Corporation

School districts as quasi-corporations³—The legal term *quasi-corporation* applies to an agency that is almost the same as a corporation. Strictly speaking, school districts are not corporations, but they resemble corporations in so many respects that they are called quasi-corporations. Laws regulating public quasi-cor-

porations apply to them. In addition, laws sometimes read as follows: "Any city, county, township, or other municipality shall . . . etc." Although neither school districts nor quasi-corporations are mentioned, laws of this type ordinarily apply to them.⁴ The term *municipality* is used at the end of the series to include all public corporations and quasi-corporations not otherwise named.⁵

By definition, a school board is an artificial person created by a general or special law to maintain a system of education in a certain territory. Its duties resemble those of the board of directors of a corporation. The school board represents the district in forming policies, in entering into contracts, in managing property, and in general in the conduct of all business affairs. It may bring suit against persons or corporations and in turn suit may be brought against it.

The one essential difference between a corporation and a quasi-corporation is that the former is organized voluntarily—for profit or in order to secure some benefit or advantage—whereas the latter is brought into existence by a law without even the consent of those affected. Because school districts belong in the latter class, school boards are allowed less freedom in the performance of their duties than boards of regular corporations. At the same time, they are relieved of certain liabilities which regular corporations must assume.

Importance of absolute conformity to law—Legal requirements tell a school board what it must do, what it may do, and how its acts are to be performed.⁶ A school board cannot safely ignore provisions of either type. It cannot successfully contest definite legal provisions, even though all the people in the district favor its

¹ See Hodgdon, Daniel R. "What Price Litigation." *School and Society* 36: 571-73; October 29, 1932.

The author points out a significant increase in the amount of litigation involving school boards and school districts during the decade 1921 to 1931 and shows that much of it was needless. If the public-school officers had been familiar with the statutes and the principles of common law relating to school districts, most of the controversies would not have arisen.

² If the school law does not specifically cover a particular issue or if there is some doubt as to the way a law will be interpreted school boards should seek competent legal advice from the state department of education or some other reliable source.

³ The following decisions discuss the legal status of the school district: *Hassett v. Carroll*, 85 Conn. 23; *Sunset Lumber Co. v. Smith*, 272 Pac. 1068; *Waddell v. Board of Directors*, 190 Iowa 400; *Seeger v. Mueller*, 133 Ill. 86; *First National Bank of Waldron v. Whisenhunt*, 94 Ark. 583; *Harris v. School District No. 10*, 28 N. H. 58; *David v. Grand Rapids Board of Education*, 191 Mich. 339.

⁴ See *Commissioners of Trenton v. Fall*, 29 Atl. 816; *Winsper v. District Township*, 37 Iowa 542; *Spalding Lumber Co. v. Brown*, 171 Ill. 487; *Brown v. Newport Board of Education*, 108 Ky. 781; *State v. Wilson*, 65 Kan. 237; *Board of Directors v. Peterson*, 4 Wash. 147; *Lincoln v. Brock*, 37 Wash. 14; *State v. Grimes*, 7 Wash. 270; *Rathbone v. Hopper*, 57 Kan. 240; *Smith v. Board of Trustees*, 141 N. C. 143; *Macon v. School District No. 34*, 5 Wash. 142; *Eagle v. Board of Education*, 97 W. Va. 434; *Joint School District No. 132 v. Dabney*, 127 Okla. 234; *Curry v. District Township of Sioux City*, 62 Iowa 102.

⁵ The word *municipality*, interpreted in a narrow sense, refers only to a city; in its broader sense, it includes all governmental subdivisions of the state: counties, townships, parishes, school districts, drainage districts, road districts, and all cities, towns, and villages. See *American and English Encyclopedia of Law* 15: 953.

⁶ Edwards, I. N. "Legal Authority of Boards of Education." *Elementary School Journal* 30: 291-9; December, 1929; 372-86; January, 1930; 431-9; February, 1930. Alexander, Carter. "Can a School Executive Afford to Ignore the Law?" *Nation's Schools* 9: 29-30; March, 1932.

course of action.¹ Numerous court decisions have emphasized the importance of following legal prescriptions² with respect to such matters as establishing high schools, opening schools at the proper time, making contracts of a certain type, contracting debts, letting school property, employing an attorney, and transporting pupils to and from school. The strictness of the court is illustrated by the following case.³ A rural district board borrowed \$1,000 and built a schoolhouse. Prompt action on the part of the board enabled them to get the building erected at a very conservative figure. The law, however, required that notice should be given and an election held before any money could be borrowed for the purpose of constructing school buildings. The board in this instance acted while it could and called an election afterwards to ratify its action. In this election only three dissenting votes were cast, yet the board was enjoined from paying the debt because it had been contracted illegally.

Not all of a board's duties are specifically defined. Laws enumerate some of the things which a board must do and some of those which it may do. In addition, a board may do whatever is "reasonably necessary" to carry out an act which is definitely authorized. Although the court must decide what is reasonably necessary in any given case, boards may use considerable discretion as to the number of teachers to be employed, the purchase of supplies, the length of a contract, and general school policies.⁴

Liability for damages—Although a school board must conform to law carefully, it is safeguarded from liability better than almost any other corporation.⁵ An established principle of common law is that the state cannot be made the defendant in a suit in its own courts without its consent. Since school districts are invol-

untary sub-divisions of the state discharging a governmental function, the courts hold that, in the absence of permissive legislation, a damage suit against a school district is similar to one against the state itself. Moreover, they have pointed out that a school district has no money except that levied for other specific purposes; that if damages were allowed, a series of accidents might wipe out the entire amount of available school funds and prevent the district from carrying out those functions for which it was created.

Damages are often allowed to school employees for injuries coming under workmen's compensation acts. California, Washington, and a few other states have laws which make a school board liable under other stated conditions. Moreover, the courts in certain states—particularly California, New York, and Washington—have held school boards liable for damages more frequently than those in other states. Although the board should seek legal advice in case any such claim is made, it is well for board members to know the law and the attitude of the court in their own state toward this question.

Damages have been allowed somewhat more frequently in recent cases than in the earlier ones.⁶ Consequently, in the future, boards may be required to assume greater liability than they have in the past. Boards have seldom been required to pay damages for injury to teachers or other employees, to pupils, or to patrons, even though the injury was due to the negligence of an employee of the board or to the negligence of the board itself. A board has frequently been held liable, however, when the injury resulted from some act in which the board exceeded its authority, or when the in-

¹ See p. 12 of this bulletin for a fuller discussion of the relation of the school board to the state.

² See *Wilkinson v. Lord*, 83 Neb. 136; *State of Kansas ex rel. v. Freeman*, 61 Kan. 90; *State ex rel. v. Meador et al.*, 284 S.W. 890; *Hutchinson et al. v. Skinner et al.*, 49 N.Y. Sup. 360; *Whitney v. Stow*, 11 Mass. 368; *Holch'iss v. Plunkett*, 22 Atl. 535; *Folsom v. School Directors*, 91 Ill. 404; *State v. School District*, 42 Neb. 499; *State v. Cole*, 51 N.J. 277; *Smith v. Proctor*, 130 N.Y. 319; *State v. Board of Education*, 35 Ohio 368; *Schant v. Joint School District No. 6*, 191 Wis. 101; *First National Bank of Waldron v. Whisenhunt*, 94 Ark. 583; *Board of Education v. Scott*, 189 Ky. 225; *School District No. 16 v. School District No. 9*, 12 Neb. 241; *School District No. 98 v. Pomponi*, 79 Colo. 658; *Holch'iss v. Plunkett*, 60 Conn. 230; *Denman v. Webster*, 139 Calif. 452; *State v. Milquet*, 180 Wis. 109.

³ *Arkansas National Bank v. School District No. 99*, 152 Ark. 507. See also *Rural Special School District No. 50 v. First National Bank of Dardanelle*, 173 Ark. 604.

⁴ *Starweather v. Fox*, 236 Mich. 57; *A. H. Andrews Company v. Delight Special School District*, 95 Ark. 26; *Jacobberger v. School District No. 1*, 122 Ore. 124; *Security National Bank, etc. v. Bagley et al.*, 210 N.W. 947; *State ex rel. v. Levitan*, 193 N.W. 499; *Nohl v. Board of Education*, 197 Pac. 373; *State ex rel. v. Burton*, 45 Wis. 150.

⁵ Important court decisions dealing with the liability of school boards are: *Weddle v. School Commissioners*, 94 Md. 342; *Kinnare v. City of Chicago*, 171 Ill. 332; *Lindstrom v. City of Chicago*, 331 Ill. 144; *Bang v. Independent School District No. 27*, 177 Minn. 454; *Spencer v. School District No. 1*, 121 Ore. 511; *Krutili v. Board of Education*, 99 W. Va. 466; *Herman v. Board of Education*, 234 N.Y. 196; *Motovich v. Independent School District*, 177 Minn. 466; *Antin v. Union High School District No. 2*, 280 Pac. 664; *Whitehead v. Detroit Board of Education*, 139 Mich. 490; *Daniels v. Grand Rapids Board of Education*, 191 Mich. 339; *Donovan v. McAlpin*, 85 N.Y. 183; *Lane v. District Township*, 58 Iowa 462; *Farris v. Board of Education*, 122 Mich. 315; *Byrnes v. City of Cohoes*, 67 N.Y. 204; *Noonan v. City of Albany*, 79 N.Y. 470; *Inman v. Tripp*, 11 R.I. 520; *Ross v. City of Clinton*, 46 Iowa 606; *Ashley v. City of Port Huron*, 35 Mich. 296; *Rennoyer v. City of Saginaw*, 6 Mich. 534. See also Edwards, I. N. "Tort Liability of School Districts," *Elementary School Journal* 30: 34-50; September, 1929. Woellner, Robert C. "Liability of School Boards in Cases of Accidents," *American School Board Journal* 74: 49-50, 140, 142; April, 1927.

⁶ See Weltzin, Frederick. "The New Tendency in the Tort Liability of School Districts." (A series beginning March, 1932. *American School Board Journal* 84: 52 ff.)

jury or loss resulted from an act of trespass or the maintenance of a nuisance.

Exemption from other corporation laws—Public-school property is exempt from taxation, but it may or may not be exempt from assessments for local improvements. Practice with respect to the latter varies from state to state.¹ Boards are granted exemptions and privileges of many kinds. For example, in one case² a third party was not allowed to collect debts from school employees by instituting garnishment proceedings against the school district. In another,³ the school district was not held subject to the statute of limitations as a private corporation would have been. The decision stated that a school district might bring its suits before the court at any time. Thus, the exemptions of a school board compensate in some measure for its restricted powers. As long as the board is careful to conform to the law, the courts will protect it against interference and imposition.

The School Board and the State

The state's responsibility for education—Education is a state function. The supreme courts of all the states have stated that principle again and again. The school district is a state agency. It is created by the state; its officers receive their authority from the state; it is subject to change or dissolution at any time by the state legislature. No other principle of law is more thoroughly established, yet few are more frequently misunderstood.⁴ Ordinarily, board members are chosen locally. They are concerned only with schools in the district. It is therefore natural for them to think of themselves as local officials looking after local affairs. In reality they are not local officials. If board members are chosen locally, it is because the state thinks that better public

schools can be maintained by having them chosen in that way. It might require them to be chosen by the governor, by a justice of the supreme court, or by the sheriff in an adjoining county. Occasionally, people within a district and school board members have the idea that "these are our schools; we will run them as we please. It is no one's business what we do with our schools." If schools did belong to the district—if the management of schools were a function of local self-government—such an attitude would be correct. Neither is true. The schools do not belong to the district but to the state; school management is not local self-government, but the discharge of a duty assigned by the state. The board member is helping to manage a certain portion of the educational program of the state.⁵ Therefore, state laws, state regulations, and the exercise of state control are not to be regarded as officious interference. The board member's first obligation is to the state; if he is also responsible to the people in the district, it is because the state has delegated to the people a share in its responsibility for education.

State control—Since education is a state function, the authority of the state legislature is supreme within the rather broad limits imposed by the state constitution. This fact explains why a school board should look to legal requirements rather than to the wishes of the people in the district for guidance on any issue.⁶ The legislature—not the people in the district—gives the board its authority. The legal relationships of a school board are indicated in Chart II. Note that the control exercised by the people in the district comes from the legislature. It may create school districts, fix their boundaries, divide them, combine them, and prescribe in detail how their affairs shall be conducted.⁷

¹ Fuller, E. Edgar. "The Law Governing Special Assessment of School Property for Local Improvements." *Elementary School Journal* 32: 531-41; March, 1932. See also, *City of Chicago To Use of Schools v. City of Chicago*, 207 Ill. 37.

² *Shelly v. Westminster School District*, 103 Calif. 652.

³ *Richardson v. Liberty Independent School District*, 22 S. W. (2nd) 475.

⁴ Morehart, G. C. *The Legal Status of City School Boards*. Contributions to Education, No. 270. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1927. 96 p. Schroeder, H. H. *Legal Opinion on the Public School as a State Institution*. Bloomington, Ill.: Public School Publishing Co., 1928. 81 p.

⁵ The number of court decisions dealing with this question is so great that a complete citation cannot be given. Among the well-known decisions are the following: *Board of Education v. Davidson*, 190 Calif. 162; *Hasselt v. Carroll*, 81 Atl. 1013; *Attorney General v. Board of Education*, 99 Mich. 404; *Associated Schools, etc., v. School District, etc.*, 142 N. W. 325; *Attorney General v. Detroit Board of Education*, 154 Mich. 584; *State of Kansas ex rel. v. Freeman et al.*, 61 Kan. 90; *State ex rel. v. Huntington*, 82 Conn. 563; *Scoron v. Czarnecki*, 264 Ill. 305; *Herold v. Parish Board of Directors*, 68 So. 116; *State ex rel. v. Haworth, etc.*, 122 Ind. 462; *McCormack v. Commissioners of Robeson County*, 90 N. W. 441; *Hutchinson et al. v. Skinner et al.*, 49 N. Y. Sup. 360; *Bush v. Shipman*, 5 Ill. 27; *Williams et al., v. Board of Trustees, etc.*, 173 Ky. 708; *State ex rel. v. Meador*, 284 S. W. 890; *City of Louisville et al., v. Board of Education, etc.*, 154 Ky. 316; *City of Lafayette, etc., v. Jaxners*, 10 Ind. 70; *School District No. 17, etc., v. Zedisher et al.*, 47 Pac. 482; *Spaulding v. Andover*, 84 N. H. 38; and *Miswinger v. Rau*, 236 Pa. 327.

⁶ See p. 10, the section headed *Importance of Absolute Conformity to Law*.

⁷ See *Henderson v. School District No. 44*, 242 Pac. 979; *School District No. 28 v. Larson*, 80 Mont. 363; *State ex rel. Walsh v. Hine*, 59 Conn. 50; *City of Chicago v. People*, 80 Ill. 384; *Morse v. Ashley et al.*, 193 Mass. 293; *Newberg v. Donnelly*, 209 N. W. 572.

The School Board and the Local Government

Independent existence of the school board

Conflicts occasionally arise between officials of the city government (or those of some other governmental agency) and the board of education. Certain responsibilities for education are frequently assigned by law to the former as well as to the latter. Because of that fact, education is often wrongly conceived as one of the fields of local government similar in character to public parks, police and fire protection, public health, and so on. If that were true, the school board would be one of the units or divisions of the local government. Indeed the state (granting to it the supreme responsibility for education) might have made the school district an integral part, a mere unit or subdivision of the local government. However, this is seldom the case. The school district is separate and distinct from any and all other agencies of government. Scores of court decisions include statements similar to the following:

A school district is a separate and distinct corporation from the municipality or township in which it may be located, even though the territorial extent of the two is the same.¹

The illustrations which follow provide convincing evidence that a school corporation is a governmental agency separate and distinct from all others.

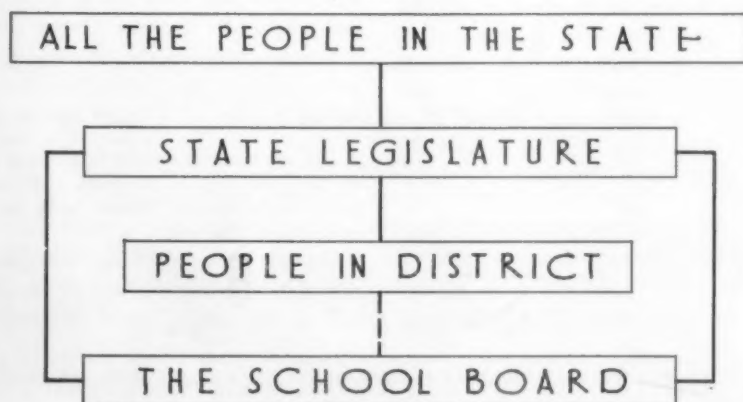
Independent boundaries—A school district's boundaries often coincide with those of some other public corporation, a city, township, or county. Nevertheless, each boundary is independent of the other. For example, when county or township lines are changed or when a city incorporates new territory, the school district does not automatically expand to take in that territory unless there is a law to that effect.² Conversely, school districts are frequently extended beyond city, township, or county lines. Boundaries of the school district merge with those of the local government only as a matter of convenience—not because the former is in any sense a part of the latter.

¹ *School District v. St. Joseph School District*, 184 Mo. 140. See also *Teeple v. State*, 171 Ind. 268; *Heller v. Stremel*, 52 Mo. 309; *People v. Board of Education*, 39 Mich. 635; *State v. Gordon*, 109 Wash. 37; *MacQueen v. Port Huron*, 194 Mich. 328; *Titusville Iron Co. v. New York*, 207 N. Y. 203; *Wichita v. Board of Education*, 92 Kan. 967; *People ex rel. v. Board of Education, etc.*, 39 Mich. 635; *Agar v. Pagin et al.*, 79 N. E. 379; *Los Angeles School District v. Longdon*, 148 Calif. 380; *North Troy Graded School District v. Town of Troy*, 80 Vt. 16; *People v. Munising Township*, 213 Mich. 629; *Cline v. Martin et al.*, 94 Ohio 420; *State v. McGraw*, 74 Mont. 152; *Jarvis v. Hammons*, 32 Ariz. 124; *Hathaway v. Sackett*, 32 Mich. 97.

² *State v. Henderson*, 145 Mo. 329; *School District No. 7 v. School District of St. Joseph*, 184 Mo. 140.

CHART II

SOURCE OF THE SCHOOL BOARD'S AUTHORITY



Research Division, National Education Ass'n.

*Separation with respect to financial matter*¹—Two of the powers commonly granted to school boards are (1) the power to levy taxes and (2) the authority to contract debts. The laws of certain states fix definite limits to these powers for school boards and other limits for the agencies of local government (city, township, county, etc.), thereby drawing a clear distinction between them. Other states have a single legal limit, the law enumerating all the agencies to which it applies. In other states, where the maximum tax levy and debt limit is fixed only by a general law covering "any public corporation," the courts have frequently held that neither the tax levy nor indebtedness of the school district was part of the levy or indebtedness of the local government—that each agency could levy the entire amount of taxes authorized or contract any debt not in excess of the prescribed maximum.²

The fiscally dependent school board might, at first thought, seem to be an exception to the general principle set forth above, namely, that a school district is a separate corporation. But even in cities where the school budget is approved by the city council, and where school revenues are administered by officials of the local government, in legal theory the school district is still separate and distinct, preserving its own identity. A number of court decisions have held that the city council (or other governing body) cannot alter the school board's budget in any way unless it is specifically authorized by law to do so, and that the council *must* approve the budget.³ In school districts where the local government is authorized to exercise any important control over school affairs, it is particularly important for school board members to acquaint themselves thoroughly with the laws governing such cooperative relationships. More than other board members, they need especially to recognize the separate character of a school district.

Independent duties—The local government cannot take over the school board's duties. It can neither interfere with the work of the school board nor aid it, except as the law specifi-

cally gives it the right to do so. The courts have been very strict in limiting the activities of local governments solely to those specified by law.⁴ One of the outstanding cases involving this issue arose in Louisiana in 1896.⁵ The people wanted a high school, but the school board could not at the time establish one. The town government was in a position to finance the enterprise and set out to establish the high school. A citizen brought suit and an injunction was granted. The court held:

A high school is not essential to municipal government. A system of education is not a part of municipal regulation, and the power of the corporation to establish a public school cannot be inferred from any power necessary for municipal existence.

In at least two cases⁶ the courts have forbidden the city government even to supply free water to the schools, since the school board had authority to levy a tax for their support.⁷

In 1921, a law was passed in Vermont authorizing town managers. Soon, one of the officials elected under this law notified the board of education that henceforth all requisitions for purchases for the school district would have to be submitted to him for his approval, that he would take charge of the care, maintenance, and repair of school buildings, and that he would do the accounting of the district. His authority was contested in court action, and from principles already set forth, the results can be predicted easily. The court stated that as a matter of *policy* a high degree of cooperation between the city and the school district was desirable and praiseworthy. It then proceeded to point out in no uncertain terms the line of demarcation between the two and to inform the town manager that he had no control over the school district. The court said in part:

The town school district is no more a department of the town than is the town a department of the town school district. Neither is, in any sense, a department of the other.⁷

At first thought, it may seem strange that a city council is not allowed to pay even a water bill for the school board. However, complete

¹ Fowlkes, John Guy. "What Is the Fiscal Status of a Board of Education." *Nation's Schools* 5: 82-4; January, 1930. Frasier G. W. *The Control of City School Finances*. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1922. 132 p. McGaughy, J. R. *The Fiscal Administration of City School Systems*. The Educational Finance Inquiry Commission, Vol. 5. New York: Macmillan Co., 1924. 95 p.

² *Board of Education v. Bitling*, 9 N. Mex. 588; *Lyon v. Stock*, 274 Pa. 541.

³ *State v. Mayor, etc.*, 189 Wis. 84; *City of Louisville v. Commonwealth*, 134 Ky. 488; *Esberg v. Badaracco*, 210 Calif. 110; *Board of Education of Bowling Green v. Townsend*, 140 Ky. 248.

⁴ Edwards, I. N. "Legal Relation between School Districts and Municipalities." *Elementary School Journal* 30: 734-45; June, 1930.

⁵ *Nelson v. Mayor, etc. of the Town of Homer*, 19 So. 271.

⁶ *Board of Education v. Alton Water Co.*, 314 Ill. 466; *Water Supply Co. of Albuquerque v. City of Albuquerque*, 9 N. Mex. 441.

⁷ *Farmer v. Haley et al.*, 100 Vt. 75.

separation between them is probably fortunate. If the various agencies of local governments were allowed to spend money for educational purposes, they would be in a position to dictate school policies. The city council could say to the school board, "We will pay \$25,000 toward this enterprise, if you will agree to a proposition which we have to offer." Consequently, although in some instances voluntary assistance on the part of the local government might be very helpful to the school board, in others, it would be detrimental.

Joint Action by Two or More Boards

School boards often find it advantageous to maintain and control some educational enterprise jointly. In such instances legal requirements should be carefully followed. Generally speaking, one school board may not participate with another in a joint business session or enter into any contract or agreement which will tend to impair its separate identity. To illustrate, the court would not allow one school district to spend its money to complete, for their joint use, a partly finished building belonging to another.¹ In another instance, one district was restrained from building on a site belonging to another, even though the latter had abandoned it.² A third decision points out that a high-school board and a grade-school board in the same

town may employ the same superintendent of schools, but that one board cannot delegate to the other the authority to select the candidate. Neither can the two boards sit as one and a majority vote be taken to elect the candidate. He must be elected by each board acting as an independent body.³ In other words, school boards may cooperate, but each must preserve its identity and retain control over those matters entrusted to it until it is abolished or merged with the other through the consolidation of the two districts.

Summary

The foregoing review of selected court decisions has explained briefly the legal nature of the school board and of the district which it serves. The school board member helps to direct a public quasi-corporation, an agency with limited authority but one that is separate and distinct from all others and well protected from outside interference. The obligation of the school board to the state is immediate. Its relationships to other agencies of local government should be confined to those clearly specified by law. Board members need especially to inform themselves about school law and to recognize the importance of competent legal advice⁴ when there is some uncertainty as to the proper course of action.

¹ *Olmstead v. Carter*, 34 Idaho 276.

² *Melin v. Community Consolidated School District No. 76*, 312 Ill. 376.

³ *Cloverdale Union H. S. District v. Peters*, 264 Pac. 273.

⁴ Information and legal advice may be obtained from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

AN EXAMINATION of the School Law of an American State will reveal still further the state character of the school system which has been provided. Although the management and control of the schools of any district or town or city may be placed by law in the hands of locally elected officials; although much liberty of action may be granted locally by the state school code; and although the large burden for the support of the schools may fall on local sources of taxation; the schools nevertheless exist to carry out a state purpose, as expressed in the state constitution and the state school law, and the local governing authorities act as agents for the State and can do only those things which the school law permits of being done.—Ellwood P. Cubberley.

The School Board in Action

The School Board Meeting

A school board must transact all its business in a board meeting. No matter how urgent or how trivial a matter may be, the board cannot dispose of the case without meeting as a body and taking regular action; that is, a board cannot legally act by each member merely giving his assent, one at his store, another at his office, one at his farm, another at his home.¹ When the board is not in session there is no board. The proper conduct of the board meeting is therefore a matter of first importance.

What is a board meeting?—A board meeting is essentially a deliberative assembly. It is the place where individual viewpoints are changed to group decisions. Each major issue coming before it involves three steps in procedure. The board must (1) hear and consider facts and recommendations; (2) adopt a plan, policy, or course of action; and (3) authorize the proper person or persons to carry out its decision. The school board acts in a capacity somewhat similar to that of a jury. The case is brought before a jury and argued pro and con by those who have carefully collected the facts. Not only do the jurors hear the facts thus presented, but they are told what the law provides by the judge, a man who is professionally trained in law. The jury then reaches its decision and reports it back to the court. It does not pass sentence, or collect the fine, or put the culprit in jail. Similarly, the school board considers facts; receives the counsel of a man professionally trained in education, the superintendent; reaches a decision; and, finally, authorizes the superintendent to carry out its wishes or to see that they are carried out. Unlike the jury, the school board, because it is a continuing body, goes one step further and at some later time decides whether or not its policies have been wise and its decrees properly executed.

Board leadership—It is the duty of the chairman of the board to preside over its meetings,

to keep the discussion focused on the matter in hand, to get an expression from each member of the board, to see that every question receives proper attention, to keep the meetings from dragging. He should know something about parliamentary procedure but more about working with other people. A successful chairman leads but does not dominate the group. He is tactful but not irresolute. He knows that his position as chairman of the board is not identical with that of the superintendent of schools—that it is his duty to preside over board meetings and not to administer or supervise the schools.² Most writers agree that it is a mistake to rotate the office among the different members of the board merely for the sake of passing around the honor. Good chairmen are rare; and since one board member often makes a better chairman than any of the others, it is well to keep that person in service.³

The secretary of the board may, or may not, be a board member. If the board does not select one of its own members for this office, the duties are performed by the superintendent's clerk, the superintendent himself, or by whatever person the board selects. It is the duty of the secretary to keep in permanent form "complete, truthful, and legal" minutes of board meetings.⁴ In addition, he is frequently required to assemble other facts and to distribute them to board members, to notify each member of special board meetings, to take care of the correspondence of the board, to carefully preserve the records of the board, and to make the minutes of board meetings available to the press or to the public upon request.

The superintendent is the technical adviser of the board. Aside from presenting facts and recommendations, he does not take part in its procedures. He is not a member of the board; he has no vote. Nevertheless, as educational counselor, he should attend every board meeting unless it is one in which his own employ-

¹ An excellent court decision bearing on this point is that given in the case, *Attorney General v. Remick*, 73 N. H. 25.

² Sirayer, George D., director. *Report of the Survey of the Schools of Chicago, Illinois*. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1932. p. 34-36.

³ Coatney, E. C. "The School Board and Its Meetings." *American School Board Journal* 79: 39-41; September, 1929.

⁴ Secretaries of school boards should know how to keep records that are legally correct. See Keyworth, M. R. *Legal Aspects for the Records of Proceedings of Boards of Education*. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1931. Also, Grill, George W. *Minutes of a Board of Education*. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1932.

ment or salary is being discussed. His professional training and his experience in the field of education make it possible for him to provide the board with constructive educational leadership which no one else can supply. His recommendations, though merely advisory, should have an important influence over the board's deliberations.

When the board should meet—The number of meetings which a board should hold depends on the amount of business to be transacted. However, it is generally agreed that every board, no matter how small the district, should meet once each month; and that any board, no matter how large the district, should be able to transact its ordinary business in not more than two regular meetings each month.¹ Special meetings may be necessary when special problems arise.

The adoption of a regular schedule for board meetings is an important legal safeguard. If there is a regular schedule, no further notice of regular meetings is required, for it is assumed that board members know the schedule. If there is no schedule and any board member fails to receive notice of a proposed meeting, any business transacted at that meeting is illegal.² Requiring the clerk to notify each board member of every proposed meeting not only gives him an unnecessary task but also involves an unnecessary legal risk.

The day of the week and the hour should be arranged to suit the convenience of the group. Almack³ recommends that the meeting be held toward the first rather than toward the end of the week. Noon meetings are favored by certain boards; afternoon or evening meetings are preferred by others.

Where the board should meet—There should be a regular place for the meeting as well as a regular time. In most large school systems, the board has a special room in which to meet. In smaller systems, that is not always true. In such cases, the board must select a place best adapted to its purposes. The office of the superintendent is sometimes used; in other instances a classroom is selected. A spe-

cial room equipped with a table around which the directors may gather and with facilities for taking care of records, maps, charts, and other materials should be provided if possible. In any event, the board should find a more appropriate meeting place than the post office, barber shop, or general store.

Regular board meetings should be held in a room large enough to accommodate not only the board but also its guests. There should be space for delegations, committees, press representatives, and any interested citizens who wish to attend. Ordinarily, meetings should be open to anyone who wants to attend.⁴ It is good policy for the board to avoid even the appearance of secrecy or intrigue. If the board carries on its work as it should, however, there will be few visitors. We can readily agree with Almack that

the relations among board members should never get to such a point as to attract a mob of curiosity seekers looking for a free-for-all fight. If they do reach this point, then it is time for a considerable number of the board to hand in their resignations.⁵

Consequently, although a few guests will often be present, the meeting place need not be large.

Procedure in the board meeting—The meeting should be called to order promptly at the specified time and not allowed to drag. Again Almack offers wholesome advice:

The board that drags out its meetings three or four hours is not distinguished for accomplishing more work, nor for maintaining better schools. An hour and a half should be the maximum except on unusual occasions. . . . If a few congenial directors want to stay and rehearse the day's news, swap a few jokes, and smoke a few cigars, very well, but business should always take precedence over social affairs. Let those who wish to visit do so after the board has adjourned.⁶

A good board meeting is one that proceeds quietly, smoothly, and with dispatch. A definite order of business helps to produce a meeting of that type. The arrangement of items differs from place to place, but the order of business given in Figure I is typical. The figure also indicates the amount of time which, under ordinary circumstances, will be required for each part of the business calendar.

¹Hart, F. W. and Peterson, L. H. "The Business of Boards of Education." *American School Board Journal* 74: 38; April, 1927.

²See the following court decisions: (1) *Beaver Creek v. Hastings*, 52 Mich. 528; (2) *Campbell School District No. 4 v. Baier*, 98 Wis. 22; (3) *Harding v. Vandewater*, 40 Calif. 77; (4) *State v. Smith*, 22 Minn. 218.

³Almack, J. C. *The School Board Member*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1927. p. 81.

⁴"When Are Star Chamber School Board Sessions Permissible?" *American School Board Journal* 78: 64-5; April, 1929.

⁵*Op. cit.* p. 77.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 81. Also Kirk, H. H. "Short Versus Lengthy Board Meetings." *American School Board Journal* 85: 23-24; September, 1932.

FIGURE I.—TYPICAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

Item	Time in minutes ¹
Call to order and roll call....	2 to 3
Reading and approval of minutes	5 to 10
Superintendent's report.....	15 to 30
Report of special committees....	10 to 15
Communications and petitions...	10 to 20
Unfinished business.....	15 to 20
New business.....	32 to 50
Adjournment	1 to 2
Total time.....	90 to 150

¹ With but two exceptions, the time allotments given here are taken from: Almack, J. C. *The School Board Member*. New York: Macmillan, 1927, p. 92. Almack does not include "report of special committees" in his suggested order of business and his allotment for the superintendent's report is slightly less than that given above.

Many boards find it a good plan to have the secretary, before a board meeting, supply each member with a copy of the minutes of the preceding meeting and with a statement of the business that is to come before the board at the proposed meeting. If that is done, the order of business can be used to better advantage in the board meeting, each member being fully aware of what has been done and what remains to be done throughout the session.

Although the order of business is important, it is by no means solely responsible for the efficiency of the board meeting. To work most effectively, a board must learn to organize its business, to delegate authority, to fix responsibility, to handle routine as routine, to devote its major attention to major problems. Ayres has demonstrated clearly the way in which a school board may lose itself in a maze of detail.¹ He made a study of the work of a certain city school board for a period of time and found that only about one-twentieth of it had to do with educational policy—the major function of the board. Instead, this board was taking up hundreds of items of business which ought never to have come before it. Its work was not organized or properly balanced. In transacting 2,000 items of business only 8 measures were defeated. On more than 2,000 roll calls there were only 51 disagreements about a total of 37

topics. Ayres described it as a "yes-minded" board. A certain amount of routine was ground through the mill at each board meeting. The board was working smoothly but without direction. The members were conscientious but they were doing work which their superintendent should have been authorized to do. In summarizing this situation Ayres made an observation which every board member should keep in mind. He said, "A board that is a *busy body* ceases to be a *deliberative body*."

Discussion should be encouraged on all matters of importance.² Exchange of ideas and mutual agreement growing out of different points of view is the very essence of board action. Yet there should be a time limit on debate in order to protect the board against the tirades of the member

who takes advantage of every occasion to deliver an oration on the rights of man, the greatness of himself, and the sacredness of liberty. This type ought to be restrained—one is tempted to say, by violence if necessary.³

The board should observe simple rules of parliamentary procedure, but the rules should be the servant of the board, not its master.

Standing committees find little favor either in present theory or practice.⁴ When there were no professionally trained school administrators, standing committees probably served a useful purpose. When professionally trained administrators are employed, there is no work which standing committees can properly do. Consequently, as experience has shown, standing committees tend to usurp authority belonging to the superintendent and to dictate to the board as a whole. The greater part of a board's affairs should be handled by the entire board acting as a "committee of the whole." All matters may well be handled in this way by school boards in small school systems, and, even in large cities, standing committees are unnecessary. A recent authoritative statement on this question appears in the report of the survey of Chicago schools. After a careful study of the work of the Chicago school board the survey staff recommended that the board of education abolish standing commit-

¹ Ayres, L. P. *School Organization and Administration*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1916. Chapter 2.
² Doyle, Mrs. H. G. "What Constitutes a Good School-Board Meeting?" *American School Board Journal*, 85: 23-24; August, 1932.
³ Almack, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
⁴ "Abolition of Standing Committees." *American School Board Journal* 78: 66; February, 1929. Carney, E. B. "Proper Organization of School Boards: Should Standing Committees Be Used?" *American School Board Journal* 78: 38; March, 1929. See also p. 6.

tees and that it devote itself to the consideration of matters of major importance as a committee of the whole.¹

From time to time special problems are likely to arise: problems which the board will prefer to delegate to a committee rather than deal with as a body. A special temporary committee can always be appointed. Such special committees should be fact-finding and not policy-forming. A special committee can sometimes render a distinct service by gathering facts about a problem. When the facts have been reported to the board, however, the committee's work is done. The board—not the committee—should decide what the facts mean and what the board should do.

Rules and regulations—Many school boards find that written rules and regulations tend to prevent misunderstandings and conflicts.² They give definite expression to board policy so that everyone may know what is expected. Since, obviously, it is better policy to prevent an evil than to correct it, a school board can advantageously exercise general oversight over a considerable number of matters through its by-laws. Rules and regulations may be adopted covering those matters on which the board has a definite policy.

Board regulations frequently deal with the following topics:

1. Organization of the board itself.
2. Order of business.
3. Schedule for regular board meetings.
4. Duties of officers and members of the board.

5. Powers and duties of the superintendent of schools (and perhaps, of other administrative officers).

6. Powers and duties of other employees.

7. Qualifications for employees.

8. Salary schedule for employees.

9. Special use of buildings.

10. Admission of non-resident pupils.

11. Issuance of transfers to resident pupils.

12. Transportation of pupils.

13. Leaves of absence of employees.

14. Reports that will be required from employees.

15. Investment policies.

16. Public relations.

Although the board adopts its rules and regulations, it usually does not, and probably should not, formulate many of them. Rules affecting employees "should grow out of the experience of the men and women performing the service,"³ subject to the approval of the board. Many other rules can be formulated wisely, only by an educational expert. It is not the function of the board to make rules, but to get rules made which it is willing to approve. It is the superintendent's function to formulate rules and regulations pertaining to the school system and to recommend them to the board; it is the function of the board to adopt those that meet with its approval.

Effective rules and regulations embody the following characteristics:⁴ (1) they are guiding principles rather than mere collections of detailed instructions; (2) they are stated so clearly that they are not likely to be misinterpreted; (3) they are consistent with school law; (4) they are carefully organized and indexed, and printed in usable form; and (5) they are subject to revision.

¹ Strayer, George D., director. *Report of the Survey of the Schools of Chicago, Illinois*. Volume I. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1932.

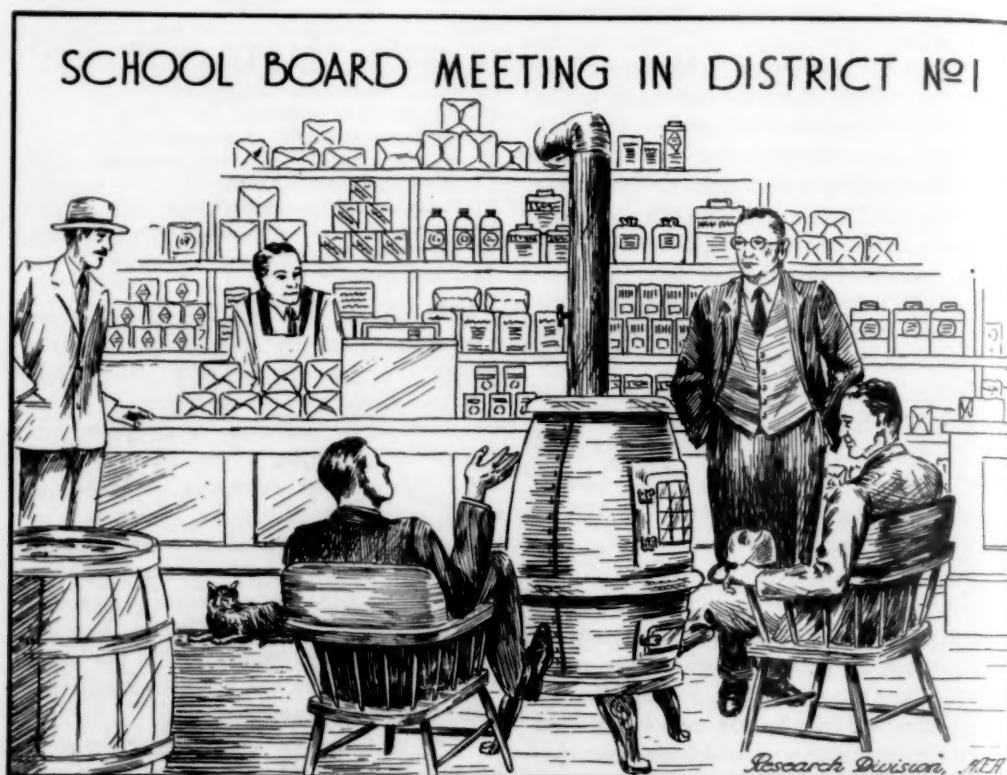
² Froese, H. I. and Troxel, O. L. "Rules and Regulations of School Boards of Small Cities." *American School Board Journal*, 85: 25-26; December, 1932. Melby, Ernest O. "Rules, Regulations, and Written Instructions as Administrative Controls." *American School Board Journal* 74: 43-5; May, 1927. National Education Association, Department of Superintendence and Research Division. *Rules and Regulations Governing Schools in Cities over 30,000 in Population*. Educational Research Service Circular, Number 4, March, 1930. Washington, D. C.: the Association.

³ Morrison, J. C. "The Value of Carefully Defined Rules and Regulations Covering the Work of the School Board and the Superintendent." *American School Board Journal* 72: 48-50; February, 1926.

⁴ Melby, Ernest O. "A Check List for the Preparation of Rules, Regulations, and Written Instructions." *American School Board Journal* 74: 41-2, 152; April, 1927. National Education Association, Department of Superintendence and Research Division. *Rules and Regulations Governing Schools in Cities over 30,000 in Population*. Educational Research Service Circular, Number 4, 1930. Washington, D. C.: the Association, 1930.

THE MOST COMMON means by which mismanagement and interference with the technical and professional functions of the experts of the school department comes, is through the attempt of school boards to manage the schools by means of standing committees. The work attempted by such committees involves professional knowledge and judgment which no city board of education, either as a body or through a committee, ought ever to try to assume.—E. P. CUBBERLEY.

FIGURE II



Time—11:00 P. M.

Place—Hammond's general store

MR. A.—But the children from the old Bryce School can go to the new Central School. It would be better for them and cheaper too. I wish I had the superintendent's cost figures to show you.

MR. B.—Figures! Bah! Who cares about figures? I promised the folks down there that the Bryce School would be kept open and I'll never vote to close it.

MR. C.—Where is the superintendent tonight?

MR. B.—Oh, I guess he doesn't know we're meeting. I know I didn't tell him.

MR. A.—What do you think about closing the school, Charlie?

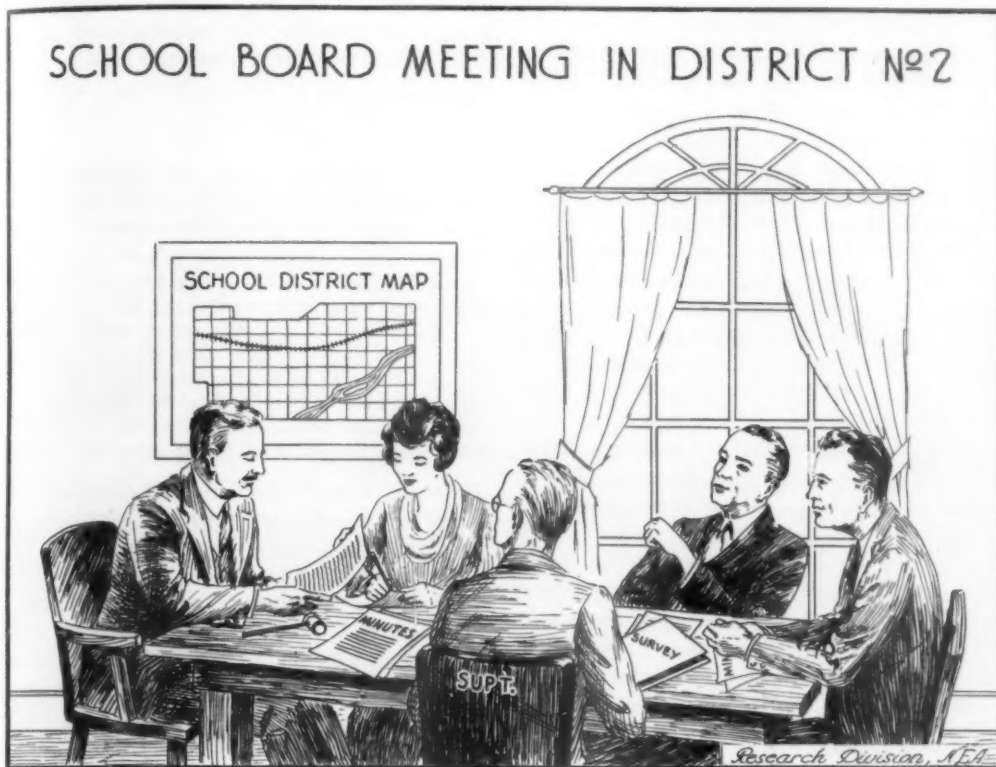
MR. C.—I think it's a good idea. But Ben voted for the teachers I wanted and I don't like to go against him on this.

MR. B.—That's right, Charlie. One good turn deserves another.

MR. C.—Let's not decide tonight. I've got to go right now.

MR. A.—All right. We'll get together again before long and talk it over . . .

FIGURE III



Time—10:00 P. M.

Place—Office of the Board of Education

MR. C.—But we must think of the best interests of the whole city.

MR. B.—I agree. Of course some patrons of Franklin School will object to its being closed, but the superintendent's report convinces me that we ought to do it.

MR. A.—There's just one more question I'd like to ask him. If we consolidate these schools won't our new building soon be overcrowded?

SUPT.—Apparently not. Our recent building survey shows that, barring an unusual shift of population, the new building will be adequate for at least ten years.

MR. A.—(After a pause) Well we've discussed this for over an hour. Any other comments?

MR. C.—I move that Franklin School be abandoned.

Motion seconded, voted upon, and carried.

MR. B.—Mr. Chairman, I move that the superintendent give the newspapers an announcement of our decision, making clear our reasons for the consolidation. The people should know where we stand.

Motion seconded, voted upon, and carried.

MR. A.—Any other business? (Pause) Then, as stated in our schedule, we will meet again in this room on February 10th, at 7:30 P. M. A motion to adjourn is now in order . . .

Educational Policies

In previous sections of this bulletin, frequent mention has been made of the fact that school boards should deal with fundamental problems rather than routine. What are the major problems for which the board should lay aside routine? What type of questions may properly come before a school board meeting? One of the important phases of school board work is the consideration of questions of policy and the adoption of a plan or course of action in connection with each. This section is devoted to an analysis of the school board's policy-forming function. It is introduced by contrasting the duties of the earliest school boards with those of modern boards.

Early school boards and the educational program—The first school committees were temporary ones. Each committee was appointed in a colonial town meeting to attend to one important matter, for example, to select and buy a school site. Among the many special committees were those appointed to visit the schools and see that all was well within them. Later, when permanent school committees or boards of education were established, they assumed all the duties which the various special committees were accustomed to perform. Schools were small; teachers had no special professional training; there were no trained supervisors, principals, and superintendents. These early school boards were compelled to transact every item of business and to supervise the work of the schools. There was no one else to do it. Their relations to school activities were quite direct. If board members really knew more about school management than the teacher—as was often the case when there was so little professional training—this direct control was beneficial. If they did not, it was often detrimental. Good or bad, it was the only type of supervision available.

Under such circumstances, early school boards regulated school activities down to the most minute detail. They adopted such rules and regulations as the following:¹

Resolved that the School Master see that the glass be put in that is broke out by the Scholars that breakes it.

The schollars shall be instructed in their spelling and reading in their several classes at least twice in the forenoon and twice in the afternoon.

Every schollar must be taught to pay a particular attention to the pauses in reading, and so to modulate their voice that they may read with propriety and understanding, and that every schollar when reading in a class shall pay strict attention to their book that they may be able to correct those who may make a mistake in their reading so that instead of reading only one sentence they may, as it were, read the whole lesson and thereby gain more instruction.

Nor did school boards in those days confine themselves to adopting rules and regulations. They supervised the work of the teacher. The visit of the school board was a formal and solemn occasion. Board members heard the pupils read and spell, looked at their writing and ciphering books, and questioned them about their work. If the committeemen were not pleased with the work of the school, they told the teacher what to teach and how to teach it—perchance, showing him how to conduct his classes, discipline his pupils, mend quill pens, or mix the ink.

Direct management no longer desirable—Conditions have changed so remarkably that direct management of school affairs is seldom possible today. Even where it would be possible, it is no longer necessary or beneficial.² Schools have become larger and more complex. Year by year the scope of their activities has been broadened. Educational problems have been studied intensively, and a science of education has been developed. Specialists have been devising a new and better curriculum. Improved methods of classroom procedure have been discovered. The

¹ Foster, Henry W. *The Evolution of the School District of South Orange and Maplewood, New Jersey, 1814-1927*. Geneva, N. Y.: W. F. Humphrey Press, 1930. p. 51-52, 56, 59.

² Chadsey, C. E., chairman. "Relation between Boards of Education and Superintendents." (Committee Report, Department of Superintendence.) *Proceedings, 1917*. Vol. 35. Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1917. (Readopted by the Department of Superintendence, 1932.) Cubberley, E. P. *Public School Administration*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1929. Chapter 13, "Functions of Boards for School Control," p. 195-219. Engelhardt, Fred. "The Board and the Superintendent." *Minnesota Journal of Education* 10: 185-86; January, 1930. Hartwell, E. C. "The Relation of the Superintendent of Schools to Lay Control." *Official Report, 1928*. Department of Superintendence, Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1928. p. 95. Heidelberg, H. B. "The School Board and the Superintendent." *American School Board Journal* 78: 47; February, 1929. Kraus, L. H. "Superintendent and School Board Member." *American School Board Journal* 64: 34-38; May, 1922. Ludeman, W. W. "A Study of School Boards." *American School Board Journal* 78: 38; February, 1929. Osterheld, C. M. "Relation of a School Board to Its Superintendent." *American School Board Journal* 79: 34; December, 1929. Roudeshush, Roy R., and Russell, John Dale. *The School Board and the Superintendent*. Indianapolis, Ind.: State Department of Public Instruction, 1927. Shaw, E. O. "Functions and Relations of the Superintendent and the School Board." *American School Board Journal* 76: 51-52; June, 1928. Strayer, George D. "The Relation of Administrative Officers to Boards of Education." *First Yearbook*. Washington, D. C.: Department of Superintendence, National Education Association, 1923. p. 159-64.

professional education of the modern teacher gives him a technical knowledge, not only of subjectmatter, but also of children and of the best teaching methods. Likewise, in order to administer a modern school system properly, an individual must now have specialized knowledge that can be gained only by a long period of intensive training.

The transition from direct to indirect control—Largely because of tradition, it is only within recent years that school boards have paid more attention to fundamental policies than to the details of administration. As late as 1925, a study of the work of 836 school boards showed that some of them had not yet learned to delegate administrative duties to those who were employed specifically to perform them. Table 2 presents selected items from the data of that study.

TABLE 2.—ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS STILL CARRIED OUT DIRECTLY BY CERTAIN BOARDS IN 1925¹

Administrative function	Percent of boards performing ²
Checking supplies when received.....	45
Preparing payroll.....	43
Supervising the construction of new buildings.....	23
Selecting supplies.....	22
Rating janitors.....	15
Selecting textbooks.....	14
Nominating teachers to the board.....	13
Supervising repair work on school buildings.....	12
Approving payment of individual bills.....	12
Rating teachers.....	8
Keeping inventory of supplies.....	3
Taking school census.....	1
Issuing supplies.....	0.4

¹ Adapted from Ganders, H. S. *Personnel and Organisation of Schools in Small Cities*. U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education Bulletin, 1926, No. 6. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1926. p. 28-29.

² Based on a study of practice in 836 cities.

The facts just cited indicate that the transition from direct to indirect management has been slow. However, a recent study of school board practices in 1,000 cities ranging from 2,500 to more than 100,000 in population shows that, in a large majority of cases, the modern school board delegates administrative functions to the superintendent.¹ Table 3 presents data

with respect to the management of certain administrative details. Columns 2, 4, 6, and 8 show the importance of administrative control through the exercise of the power to approve or disapprove. In contrast, columns 3, 5, 7, and 9 show that few school boards now exercise direct control over the administrative functions listed here. The table also shows that many boards delegate these functions to administrative officers so completely that even approval by separate board action is unnecessary. For example, although replies were tabulated from 49 cities over 100,000 in population, in only 20 of them does the school board approve regulations pertaining to routine matters and in no case does it actually make such regulations. The absence of direct management is especially noticeable in the practices of school boards in cities over 100,000 in population (column 3).

Since the school board member is no longer the manager of the school system but rather a member of a directing board, an analysis of the function of a board of directors seems appropriate at this point.

The function of a board of directors—The average citizen is no better qualified to assume direct control of a modern school system than he would be to manage a hospital or a bank. This does not mean that the ordinary citizen cannot be an efficient member of the board of directors for either a school, a hospital, or a bank. In either case the directors need to be well informed, but technical training is unnecessary. Bank directors need not be bankers; directors of a hospital need not be doctors or surgeons; school board members do not have to be educators. The directors of a bank entrust its administration to a man whose character, professional training, and experience qualify him for that work. The directors of a hospital do not select the members of the hospital staff or employ the elevator boys. They do not tell the surgeons how to remove tonsils, or the nurses when to take the temperature of their patients. How absurd it would be if they thought it their duty to select and purchase the surgical instruments, the hot water bottles, and bandaging gauze! It is equally inappropriate for school directors

¹ The investigation from which these data were obtained was conducted by the Research Division of the National Education Association for the Commission on Educational Leadership of the Department of Superintendence. The questionnaire was circulated in 1931. Superintendents were asked to indicate with respect to each of a series of functions: (1) whether they alone were responsible for initiating, approving, or executing it; (2) whether the school board was solely responsible for its initiation, approval, or execution; or (3) whether it was initiated, approved, or executed by the joint action of the school board and the superintendent. For a discussion of the functions of the superintendent of schools, which may be contrasted with those performed by boards of education, see National Education Association, Department of Superintendence, "Educational Leadership," *Eleventh Yearbook*, Washington, D. C.: the Association, 1933, Chapter 6.

to occupy themselves with technical or routine affairs. The board of directors of any respectable corporation is a policy-forming body. It is not created to manage the enterprise, but to study the needs and possibilities and outline a course of action; to employ trained workers to carry out its policies; to pass judgment on the results obtained. The function of a board of directors is not to do, but to get things done.

The importance of the policy-forming function—Adopting sound educational policies is the most important duty of a school board. Educational policies chart the course which the schools will take. If the board adopts sound educational policies, the schools may be comparatively good in spite of administrative errors. If the policies are not correct, any amount of administrative efficiency cannot overcome the defect. Educational policies are the foundations. A house that is built upon the sand will not stand no matter how well it is constructed in other particulars.

For that reason, a school board should devote a large proportion of its time and energy to the formulation of educational policies and delegate routine administrative matters to responsible employees. A few contrasts will show why educational policies are the more fundamental. Which is more important: (1) Shall a kindergarten be established? or In what room shall the kindergarten be placed? (2) Shall supple-

mentary readers be provided for the second grade? or What three out of the dozen or more good sets suggested shall be purchased? Educational policy says whether or not there shall be evening schools, health clinics, and special schools for handicapped children; whether the school term will be nine or ten months; whether the minimum amount of professional training for grade teachers shall be two, three, or more years beyond the high school. Although the organization and operation of these special educational services, the arrangement of the school calendar, and the selection of one of three qualified applicants as a grade teacher in the South Side School are important administrative matters, they are less important than board policies.

Educational policies demand the attention of the board, not only because of their basic importance, but also because they are numerous. The board of education that delegates administrative matters to its superintendent does not free itself with respect to the amount of work which it does. On the contrary, it merely lays aside the less important duties of administration in order to assume those of greater importance. The quantity of work which school boards do and the importance of the service which they render have increased through the years as school boards have become legislative bodies. A board that is tied down with administrative routine cannot possibly supply the type of constructive

TABLE 3.—METHODS USED BY SCHOOL BOARDS IN 1,000 CITIES IN 1931 IN MANAGING CERTAIN ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS ¹

Administrative job	In 49 cities over 100,000 in population, the school board		In 170 cities 30,000 to 100,000 in population, the school board		In 430 cities 5,000 to 30,000 in population, the school board		In 351 cities 2,500 to 5,000 in population, the school board	
	Approves	Executes	Approves	Executes	Approves	Executes	Approves	Executes
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Making regulations governing routine matters....	20	0	89	7	158	15	115	2
Taking school census.....	10	2	77	11	185	38	141	59
Enforcing attendance laws.	10	0	67	5	137	12	115	8
Determining subjects to be taught.....	27	0	97	4	228	7	161	3
Determining content of school courses.....	15	0	69	3	148	3	113	1
Supervising medical inspection.....	14	0	76	4	152	12	108	9
Supervising classroom instruction.....	14	0	49	1	96	2	72	1
Directing civic center activities.....	9	0	58	3	98	8	58	2
Supervising continuation schools.....	13	0	58	3	78	5	18	0
Supervising evening schools	19	0	67	5	113	3	33	1

¹ Based on data collected by the Research Division of the National Education Association for the Commission on Educational Leadership of the Department of Superintendence.

leadership that is needed in the schools today. Each phase of the entire educational program fairly bristles with problems with which the school board must deal. In order to illustrate that fact, and in order to bring out somewhat more clearly the distinction between educational policies and administrative duties, Figure IV is presented. This figure shows how many questions of policy arise in connection with a single phase of school management, namely, granting leaves of absence to employees of the board. The list is not exhaustive, merely suggestive. When one stops to consider how many phases there are to an educational program and that numerous questions of policy in regard to each of them demand attention, the importance of the board's policy-forming function becomes apparent.¹

How policies should be formed—The most important principle of board action with respect to policy making is that every policy should be determined only after the board has secured, studied, and given joint consideration to all

pertinent facts. As James J. Hill once remarked, "Accurate and ample information is the first step toward success in any undertaking." No school board can formulate sound policies without making use of adequate information.²

The superintendent of schools is in the best position to supply the board with facts, to interpret them with reference to local problems, and to make recommendations to the board. He has access to helpful information in many publications, such as: (1) general books and magazine articles dealing with school administration; (2) annual reports of superintendents of schools; (3) regular publications of state departments of public instruction and state education associations; (4) bulletins and other publications of the U. S. Office of Education; and (5) the research bulletins, yearbooks, committee reports, and other publications of the National Education Association. Moreover, he can readily secure the cooperation of the local library, the county superintendent, and all the state and

¹ For an analysis of other functions, see Olsen, Hans C. *The Work of Boards of Education*. Contributions to Education, No. 213. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1926. 170 p. He lists the questions of policy and the administrative duties that pertain to various phases of school work—the curriculum, health service, cafeterias, athletics, alumni, student publications, religious education, thrift education, school gardens, social centers, transportation of pupils, maintenance of buildings, and more than one hundred other topics.

² Reeder, Ward G. *The Business Administration of a School System*. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1929. p. 25-29.

FIGURE IV.—QUESTIONS OF POLICY AND ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES PERTAINING TO LEAVES OF ABSENCE FOR TEACHERS¹

Questions of educational policy	Administrative duties
- Under what conditions shall a leave of absence be granted? - For how long may a leave of absence be granted? - Under what conditions may a leave of absence be extended? - At what intervals may leaves be granted to the same person? - Under what conditions shall part (or all) of an individual's salary be paid him while he is on leave of absence? - Under what conditions shall any of the expenses incurred by a person on leave of absence be paid by the district? - What shall be the penalty for failure to report for duty immediately upon the expiration of a leave or for using a leave for a purpose other than that for which it is granted? - Under what conditions shall leaves of absence be cancelled? - In view of the reports submitted by the superintendent, how can the policies of the board with respect to leaves of absence be improved?	- Grant or refuse leaves of absence in accordance with board policy. - Grant leaves of absence of the length approved by the board. - Grant extensions in accordance with board policy. - Keep complete records of leaves of absence and grant them only after a proper interval. - Pay that part of an individual's salary due him while on leave of absence. - Pay such expenses incurred by person on leave as the policies of the board require. - Enforce the penalties for failure to comply with all the rules of the board of education pertaining to leaves of absence. - Cancel leaves of absence when board policies so require. - Submit to the board appropriate reports and recommendations relating to leaves of absence.

¹ Adapted from: Olsen, Hans C. *The Work of Boards of Education*. Contributions to Education, No. 213. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1926. p. 78.

national agencies listed above in securing unpublished data. The board may properly turn to him for leadership and expect him to supply information relating to its various problems.¹

Many times, however, school boards need information about their own school systems which can be supplied by none of the officials and agencies mentioned above. School surveys have been used widely to meet this need. Survey methods vary greatly, but the following procedure is typical. A group of competent educators selected by the board of education collects a considerable body of definite information on the system as a whole or on some particular phase of it; for example, its organization, financial problems, building problems, or instructional efficiency. The survey staff then analyzes the data and, in its report, recommends to the board any changes in policy which the findings seem to warrant. The extent to which the survey method has been used indicates its value to boards of education.² Chart III shows the cities in which facts collected in school surveys have served as a basis for school board policies.

After obtaining ample information, the board should formulate its policies in accordance with

certain guiding principles. Its policies should place the best educational opportunities the community can afford within the reach of every person. Board policies should contribute to the solution of current problems but they should also harmonize with the board's distant objectives—the goals to be achieved in five, ten, or more years. The board should use due caution in making its policies conform to law. Important and more or less permanent policies with respect to situations of frequent recurrence and general public interest may well be written into the board's bylaws. The board should make its policies known to those most likely to be affected by them. Although the board should abide by its policies, tradition should not force the continuation of a policy which is no longer desirable.

The adoption of a policy, or course of action, is a matter for group decision. Unfortunately, board policies are not always the result of group action. For example, there is the board in which a single member dominates to such an extent that his own ideas become board policies. Then there is the divided board, in which the majority group make it their business to put across the

¹ Moehlman, A. B. "Keeping the School Board Informed." *Nation's Schools* 4: 64-67; July, 1929. Simley, I. T. "Keeping the School Board Informed." *American School Board Journal* 74: 102-4; March, 1927. White, M. C. "Keeping the School Board Informed." *American School Board Journal* 76: 72; May, 1928.

² Advice on how to plan and carry out a survey in any particular school system can be obtained from the superintendent of schools, the state department of public instruction, schools of education in the state, and the research bureaus of many of the large universities.

CHART III

CITIES IN WHICH SCHOOL SURVEYS HAVE BEEN MADE



Research Division, National Education Assn.

Based on the city surveys listed in: Smith, H. L., and O'Dell, E. A., *Bibliography of School Surveys*. Bloomington, Indiana: Bureau of Cooperative Research, Indiana University. 1931. 212p.

opposite of any policy proposed by the minority group. In certain instances the superintendent not only administers the schools but makes the board's decisions for it. In others, a party boss or some influential person or group dictates to the board. Other boards have no policy; they are so busy trying to administer the schools that they never get around to planning; things just happen; and they spend their time untangling chance accidents. Efficient boards use none of these methods. They are neither blind to constructive suggestions nor subject to the dominance of others. They get all the facts obtainable; they weigh the suggestions and recommendations submitted; they make use of the leadership of their superintendent. In addition to all this, they discuss every question of policy freely in a board meeting where every member's rights and opinions are respected, and out of that discussion, arrive at a decision which represents the board as a whole.

Making policies function—The adoption of a policy is but the first step. The authority to carry it out must be delegated to the proper person; he must perform the service so required; and the board must judge how well the task was done and whether or not the policy was a good one.

Follow-up reports are therefore important. School boards do well to require many regular and special reports from their administrative officers with respect to the scope and character of the educational service, the efficiency of the instruction given in each of the several schools, divisions, or departments, and the efficiency of employees. A board has the right to expect definite information and objective facts in these reports and not mere vague descriptive statements. The board should require the number and kind of reports that will enable it to pass intelligent judgment as to the merits of its policies in order that these may be reaffirmed, modified, or abolished in the light of experience.

Interpreting school policies to the public—The school system belongs to the people. Therefore, the school board is obligated to keep the public informed about its policies and about school matters generally. The relation of board

members to the public has already been discussed,¹ but little has been said about the duties of the board as a whole in the matter of public relations. At this point certain general principles may be properly suggested. First, the board should establish a definite plan for interpreting its educational policies to the public, just as it plans for any other major activity; for publicity is too important to be left to chance methods. Second, the matter of presenting facts to the public is largely an administrative function which should be delegated to the proper person or persons. Third, the board should require simple and readable educational and financial reports to be presented to the public regularly. Finally, the program should be continuous.

Public support for a school board's policies is determined in large measure by the confidence of the people in specific plans and not by their confidence in the value of education generally. People believe in education; they question only the kind of education that is being given. If the board expects public support, it must keep the public informed.²

Personnel Problems

School boards are often large scale employers. As such they are concerned with the selection, compensation, tenure, and welfare of their employees. This section will discuss problems relating to the performance of a number of their more important personnel duties.³

Employing a superintendent—The school board's most important personnel duty is the selection of a superintendent of schools.⁴ The superintendent occupies a key position. On the one hand, he brings to the board the benefit of his training and experience as an educator. He advises them on administrative problems, supplies them with facts, makes a constant study of the school system, and recommends to the board the program best adapted to the educational needs of the community. On the other hand, he is the administrative officer of the board. He carries out the board's instructions, transacts business for them, puts into effect the program which they adopt, directs the work of

¹ See page 9.

² National Education Association, Department of Superintendence. "Resolutions of the Department." *Official Report, 1928*. Washington, D. C.: the Association, 1928. p. 259. Hart, T. C. "Cooperation between School Boards and the Public." *American School Board Journal* 64: 51-52; March, 1922. Moehlman, A. B. "How Can a Board of Education Function Efficiently." *Nation's Schools* 2: 25-28; July, 1928.

³ Almack, *op. cit.*, Chapter 6. "Taking Care of Employment Problems," p. 178-214. Cubberley, E. P. *Public School Administration*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1929. p. 208-10 and 220-30. Reeder, Ward G. *Fundamentals of Public School Administration*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1930. p. 46-50.

⁴ Beu, F. A. "The Biggest Job of the Village and Small City School Board." *Education* 51: 50-54; September, 1930.

all other employees, and assumes responsibility for the effectiveness of the entire school system. Hence, it is quite essential for the board to select the best superintendent that it can secure for the salary which the district can pay.¹

The board may well formulate a clear statement of the qualities which they expect the superintendent to have, before considering applications for the position.² Board members cannot afford to depend merely on their general impressions about a candidate. Although the standards of one board will differ from those of another, every board will be concerned with standards of at least three types: (1) the superintendent's qualifications as an educator, (2) his business ability, and (3) his personal qualities. Each of these factors is important and each may be defined in rather specific terms.

The superintendent is first and foremost an educational leader. The community's most valuable possession, its boys and girls, is going to be trained in the schools which he directs. Hence, the discriminating board will examine first of all the educational qualifications of applicants. It will establish standards as to the minimum type and amount of professional training that the candidate must have; it will outline the type and amount of experience that seem desirable; it will find out what the candidate has accomplished in other schools. Since the successful superintendent must be a good organizer, a good administrator, and a good supervisor,³ a board ought to inquire: (1) Have his previous schools been well planned and well organized? (2) Have they been administered efficiently? (3) Have they been known for a high quality of school work?

In the second place, the superintendent is—either directly or indirectly—a business manager. The administration of a community's schools is often the largest business enterprise in the district. The superintendent, therefore, needs to be a man of unquestioned business ability, especially when business management is one of his personal responsibilities.⁴ He should be able to buy economically and to recognize value. He should be able to manage well the

sums now available for education and to plan wisely for the future. Recommendations relating to a candidate's business ability are helpful, but even more reliable are the evidences of business ability disclosed by the financial reports of the district in which he has been working. Changing towns seldom makes a good business manager out of one who has managed poorly in another district. Conversely, good management in the one instance predicts good management in another.

Personal qualities are also very important, especially character.⁵ The superintendent must be able to command the respect of pupils, co-workers, and patrons. Personality traits such as mannerisms, language habits, personal appearance, social graces, general outlook on life, and interest in other people often determine the superintendent's ability to work harmoniously in the community. Good health is another factor of considerable importance. Character and personality traits must be judged largely by the testimonials of those who know the candidate, although the board may get additional evidence through direct contacts with the applicant. The manner in which he presents his case is an indication of his ability and worth. A capable man will supply the board with definite information and with the names of those who know his work. He will make an honest effort to show his ability but will neither boast nor make extravagant promises. He will not bring pressure to bear on the board in behalf of his candidacy. An applicant worthy of consideration will present his case to the board and not to individual board members one after another, for the candidate who tries to influence board members when the board is not in session obviously does not know the first principle of school board action.

Boards ordinarily find better superintendents when they seek the man than when they depend on the man to seek the job. They need to collect as complete and accurate information concerning each candidate as may be obtained. They must be alert for biased testimonials in which the merits of the candidate are obviously exaggerated and reject all open testimonials of the to-whom-it-may-concern variety. A board may

¹ Deffenbaugh, W. S. "The Selection of the School Superintendent." *American School Board Journal* 68: 36; June, 1924.

² Anderson, Earl W. "Choosing a Superintendent." *American School Board Journal* 84: 33-34; March, 1932. National Education Association, Department of Superintendence, "Educational Leadership." *Eleventh Yearbook*. Washington, D. C.; the Association, 1933. Especially Chapters 6 and 12. See also references listed in footnote 3 on p. 27.

³ Cubberley, E. P. *Public School Administration*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929. Chapter 15, "The Superintendent's Work," p. 234-57.

⁴ Gosling, T. W. "What Qualifications Best Fit the Superintendent for His Job?" *Nation's Schools* 6: 37-39; August, 1930. Bauernfeind, H. K. "The School Superintendent as Business Manager." *American School Board Journal* 81: 46; September, 1930.

⁵ Thompson, L. W. "Desirable Personal and Professional Qualities of the Superintendent." *School Executives Magazine* 50: 562-63; August, 1931.

also need to fortify itself against pressure coming from a candidate's friends, or from fraternal, religious, or political groups that may interest themselves in his behalf.

From the applications and credentials received, the board can doubtless select a very few candidates from whom the selection will be made. Interviews may then be restricted to those who are being considered seriously. As a precaution in conducting interviews, Almack¹ gives the following illustration of an undesirable method:

The clerk wrote to many places for applicants. All that responded were asked to call on the board, and, without notice to the candidates, the same date was set for reception of all. To the surprise of the candidates, a total of about forty assembled in the waiting room. Each candidate was invited into the inner sanctum, where the board was in session, for a fifteen minute interview. When the better men saw the situation they withdrew, and the appointment finally went to a relatively inexperienced and incompetent applicant.

In another instance of similar nature, five applicants came to a board meeting at their own expense from distances ranging from twenty-five to three hundred miles. Although somewhat surprised at such an unexpected introduction, all five remained for the interview. Within a few days each received a letter saying that the board and the former superintendent had settled their differences and that the latter had been re-employed! Candidates deserve the courtesy of an exclusive interview and obviously they should not be invited to come for an interview unless the position is definitely vacant—especially if they come at their own expense.

When the board has selected the man for the position, the question of length of contract arises.² It is a matter of common knowledge that frequent changes in administration are expensive and tend to produce inefficiency. There can be no continuity of educational policy when frequent changes are made in the administration. A single school year is not enough to demonstrate the ability of a superintendent. Therefore, as long as the board has any doubt whatever, it should continue to look for an acceptable candidate. When it is satisfied that the right man has been found, there is every reason

why he should be employed for a period longer than one year. A superintendent can do his best work only after he has had an opportunity to study the community and become a part of it. Certainly there will be little educational leadership in the nature of laying plans for the future if the superintendent's primary concern for the future involves his own re-employment. Many school systems use regularly either the three, four, or five-year contract. Others use the indefinite contract; that is, reappointment is unnecessary. The superintendent continues as long as his appointment is mutually satisfactory, but not merely by one, three, or even five-year periods. Such a contract is terminated only for some good cause. Recent changes in the laws of various states give the superintendent a longer term of office. This trend, which reflects growing sentiment in favor of longer terms of office is indicated by the data of Table 4.

TABLE 4.—LEGAL CONTRACTS PROVIDED FOR BY THE LAWS OF VARIOUS STATES IN 1922 AND IN 1928¹

Number of years of contract	Number of states having such provisions	
	1922	1928
One year.....	15	6
Two years.....	2	1
Three years.....	1	7
Four years.....	4	6
Five years.....		3
Indefinite contract.....		3
Median length of contract....	one year	three years

¹ Based on data given by Norwood, Patrick H. *Legal Status of the City School Superintendent Since 1920*. Master's thesis, Nashville, Tenn.: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1928. Ch. 5, Table 17.

Working with the superintendent—The most important phase of personnel administration is the maintenance of proper relations between the board and the superintendent.³ The duties of the superintendent are many; his responsibilities are large. Since the board very properly holds the superintendent responsible for the entire school system, it owes him the most vigorous and persistent support in carrying out its policies.

The board's responsibility does not end when it has instructed the superintendent to carry

¹ See Almack, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

² Alltucker, Margaret M. "Tenure in Present Positions and Training of City School Superintendents." *School and Society* 29: 649-52; May 18, 1929. National Education Association, Department of Superintendence. "Educational Leadership." *Eleventh Yearbook*, Washington, D. C.: the Association 1933. Chapters 6 and 9. Shannon, J. R. "Turnover of City and Town Superintendents." *School Executives Magazine* 50: 334-35; March, 1931.

³ Potter, M. C. "The Board and the Superintendent." *American School Board Journal* 85: 46-47; August, 1932. Gardner, J. P. "Cooperation for Administrative Efficiency." *American School Board Journal* 84: 33-34; February, 1932. See also references listed in footnote 2, p. 22.

out a certain task. It must stand four-square behind him if opposition arises. A loyal board is ready to accept responsibility for any act which it has authorized or for any administrative act growing out of its policies. Moreover, it is exceedingly reluctant to consider complaints relating to matters in which the superintendent has been instructed to act at his own discretion, unless gross abuse of that power is clearly evident. It insists that every complaint against the system or against the work of any employee be addressed first to the superintendent; that a complaint against the administration be presented either in the form of a written, signed statement, or orally in a formal hearing with the superintendent present.

The board should help to protect the schools from special interests. Schools are beset by a veritable army of persons, companies, or organizations seeking to further their own schemes.¹ Agents, solicitors, and representatives of all sorts of organizations try to show the "educational value" of their various projects. The school board's policies with respect to such matters will, of course, be general rather than specific. They will give the superintendent considerable leeway in such matters but will set forth quite definitely the *type* of cooperation which shall, and shall not, be extended. More than anything else, they will support the superintendent in his stand against such encroachments. Demands will be less frequent if it is known generally that the school board stands squarely against the exploitation of the schools by agents, solicitors, advertisers, and propagandists.

Finally, the board should handle every business transaction with its employees through the superintendent. It should not deal directly with teachers, janitors, or other employees.² All board regulations relating to the work or conduct of employees should be reported to them by the superintendent. Moreover, since he is in a better position than the board to pass judgment on the efficiency of employees, any transfer, promotion, change in assignment, or dismissal should be recommended by the superintendent, and, when approved by the board, carried out by him.

According to the data in Table 5 the practices of modern school boards are in substantial

agreement with the foregoing recommendations. The great majority of them participate directly in neither the appointment, transfer, nor dismissal of employees. The control which they exercise is that of approval or disapproval. However, columns 3, 5, 7, and 9 show that a few boards still perform certain of these administrative duties. The direct appointment of janitors in cities below 30,000 in population is one outstanding example. The dismissal of employees is another phase of personnel management which a number of boards have not delegated. These, as well as the other administrative duties listed, rightly belong to an executive officer; and school boards are, for the most part, transferring them to the superintendent.

The personnel duties of a school board are not unlike those of the directors of any other corporation. The directors of a life insurance company do not select the bookkeepers, the stenographers, and the insurance agents. Nor do they tell the agents how to sell insurance policies. They leave the selection and supervision of employees to capable officials and hold the latter responsible for getting results.

Results count. Just as the board should delegate to the superintendent the management of personnel affairs, it should also hold him responsible for the efficiency of employees. If the board could administer the system effectively, it would have no need for a superintendent. Since it cannot, its participation in personnel management can only hinder the superintendent in his work. On the other hand, delegating authority without fixing responsibility is likely to result in laxity and inefficiency. Therefore, the board should require the superintendent to submit, from time to time, satisfactory evidence as to the efficiency of school employees.

Employing subordinates—The superintendent should select and recommend to the board the applicant who, in his judgment, is best qualified to fill each vacancy. Although the board reserves the right to approve or reject his recommendations and may at any time ask him to give reasons for his choice, the superintendent should be solely responsible for finding and recommending those who are to be employed. He is best qualified by training and experience to select school employees. Board mem-

¹ Miller, C. R. "Propagandist in the Public School." *School Executives Magazine* 50: 217-19; January, 1931. National Education Association, Committee on Propaganda in the Schools. *Report*. Washington, D. C.: the Association, 1929. National Education Association, Department of Superintendence. "Resolutions of the Department." *Official Report*, 1929. Washington, D. C.: the Association, 1929. p. 273. Pew, M. E. "Propaganda." *Teachers College Record* 31: 37-43; October, 1929.

² Dixon, John. "The Teacher and the Board of Education." *American School Board Journal* 81: 35-36; October, 1930.

bers are not only less familiar with the qualities that make for success in school work than is the superintendent, but they do not have the time to study carefully the qualifications of all the principals, teachers, custodians, clerks, and other employees necessary to operate a school system. Furthermore, if the administrator has no voice in the selection of those whom he directs, employees are likely to be indifferent about cooperating with him. The board will expect to hold the superintendent responsible for the efficiency of employees, yet it is obviously unfair to do so unless he participates in their appointment. Although a board member or any other citizen may properly suggest to the superintendent a name that he might consider when making his recommendation, *every* nomination should come from the superintendent. The board then approves them or, if it does not approve his first recommendation in any case, asks him to nominate another. A board member ought never to present a nomination to the board unless the superintendent (feeling in a particular instance that his recommendation would be prejudiced) declines to nominate anyone for the position.

Although the board should delegate to the superintendent the duty of finding and recommending employees, it cannot lawfully delegate to him, or to anyone else, the authority to enter into a contract with them prior to board action. The superintendent recommends; but the board alone can legally decide to award a particular contract. For example, the school board may properly authorize the superintendent to contract with Mr. A. B. Jones according to certain designated terms. It cannot authorize the superintendent to contract with an unnamed person of his own choosing. That the board cannot delegate to its superintendent, to one of its officers, or to a committee the initiative in entering into *any* contract is an important and well-established principle of school law.¹

In addition to the principles set forth above, the following suggestions relative to the appointment of school employees may be drawn from the best in educational practice. First, since the school exists for the sake of children rather than to provide employment for anyone, there is no such thing as a *right to a job* in any school system except that which is based on the efficiency of the applicant. Where the applicant

¹ "Entering into a contract" is used in this paragraph to refer to the board's decision that it wishes to make a contract, not to such administrative details as filling the necessary blanks, securing the signature of the second party, etc.

TABLE 5.—PRACTICES OF SCHOOL BOARDS IN 1,000 CITIES IN 1931 WITH RESPECT TO THEIR EMPLOYEES

Administrative job	In 49 cities over 100,000 in population, the board		In 170 cities 30,000 to 100,000 in population, the board		In 430 cities 5,000 to 30,000 in population, the board		In 351 cities 2,500 to 5,000 in population, the board	
	Approves	Executes	Approves	Executes	Approves	Executes	Approves	Executes
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Appointment of:								
Assistant superintendents	35	3	86	9	65	8	32	7
Business manager.....	23	11	84	31	66	28	23	8
Principals.....	41	3	132	16	293	35	210	51
Teachers.....	37	2	133	19	307	34	223	46
Janitors.....	26	4	112	19	257	57	191	79
Clerks.....	30	3	115	15	250	35	151	31
Health, recreational, so- cial workers.....	27	1	113	16	220	34	99	27
Attendance officers.....	33	2	121	19	231	49	138	54
Transfer of:								
Teachers, principals, as- sistant superintendents	20	1	85	4	202	11	150	13
Health, recreational, so- cial workers.....	16	0	86	3	148	14	76	8
All other employees.....	17	2	79	9	184	21	123	21
Dismissal of:								
Teachers, principals, as- sistant superintendents	34	5	131	23	280	62	207	70
Health, recreational, so- cial work.....	24	4	107	19	196	45	90	28
All other employees.....	20	5	102	23	211	56	154	48

Based on data collected by the Research Division of the National Education Association for the Commission on Educational Leadership of the Department of Superintendence.

lives and how badly he needs the job are secondary considerations. Second, the board should adopt (upon recommendation of the superintendent) regulations setting forth the minimum qualifications for each type of position in the school system and should hold the superintendent responsible for selecting and nominating candidates who measure up to or exceed those standards. The amount of training and experience actually required of new teachers in city school systems in 1930-31 is given in Table 6. This table may be used to discover whether a given set of standards are relatively high or low. Third, it is ordinarily unwise for a board to employ a near relative of any of its members or of the superintendent.¹ Finally, boards should avoid competitive bidding² for the services of an employee. Every board should determine what it can pay, adopt a salary schedule, and base all offers on that schedule.

The salary schedule—Although the salary schedule is a business problem as well as a device in personnel administration, it is best discussed at this point.

First of all, there should be a definite salary schedule of some kind. A definite schedule, al-

though admittedly imperfect, is more likely to attract and hold good teachers than the prac-

TABLE 6.—AMOUNT OF TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED OF NEW TEACHERS IN CITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN 1930-31¹

Number of years	Percent of cities ² requiring for teachers in the		
	Elementary school	Junior high school	Senior high school
Training:			
Less than one year . . .	.2	.2	.1
One year	2.8	.7	
Two years	74.7	23.8	.9
Three years	16.1	24.5	.9
Four years	6.1	50.2	94.6
Five years (or more) . . .	.1	.6	3.5
Experience:			
No experience	58.5	47.3	47.3
One year	18.0	19.3	17.7
Two years	22.4	30.0	30.6
More than two years . . .	1.1	3.4	4.4

¹ National Education Association, Research Division. "Administrative Practices Affecting Classroom Teachers." Research Bulletin 10: 8, 13; January, 1932. It is somewhat more valid, of course, to compare practice in any given city with that in cities of approximately the same size. Tables 1 and 3 in the bulletin cited give the percentages for cities of various sizes. Prevailing practice is indicated by the figures in bold type.

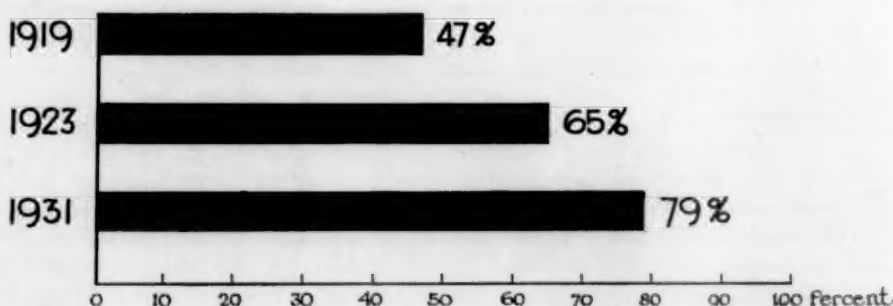
² These percentages are based on returns from more than 1200 cities.

¹ See Thomas, M. J. "School Boards and Teacher Hire." *Washington Education Journal* 9: 201-02; March, 1930.

² An attractive salary schedule is not to be construed as competitive bidding. The term is used here to describe the situation in which an applicant attempts to bargain first with one board, then the other, in order to obtain the highest possible salary. Such procedure is neither businesslike nor ethical.

CHART IV

PERCENT OF CITIES HAVING SALARY SCHEDULES



Research Division, National Education Ass'n.

Data from the following sources: Evenden, E. S. *Teachers' Salaries and Salary Schedules in the United States, 1918-1919*. Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1919. 169 p. (Commission Series, No. 6). Also, National Education Association, Research Division. "Teachers' Salaries and Salary Trends," and "Administrative Practices Affecting Classroom Teachers." *Research Bulletin* 1: 1-116, July, 1923; 10: 1-78, January and March, 1932. Washington, D. C.: the Association.

tice of individual bargaining. Teachers of the highest caliber do not want to ask for each increase in salary. They do not care to enter school systems where that is necessary. Moreover, if increases are arranged by individual bargaining, it is not the best teacher but the best bargainer who advances most rapidly. Jealousies due to discrimination are almost certain to arise. A definite schedule helps to build up an efficient corps of workers and to maintain high morale among them.

The principle of salary scheduling is receiving wider and wider recognition. A decade ago salary schedules were in effect in scarcely more than half our cities. Now about four-fifths of them have definite schedules. Chart IV shows how the idea has developed.

The one factor most commonly used in fixing a teacher's place on the salary schedule is length of service. Many schedules also take into account such factors as the type of position held, amount of professional training, and quality of the teacher's work.

Since a good salary schedule must take into account local conditions and local needs, each board, with the advice and leadership of the

superintendent, can best determine what the provisions of its own salary schedule should be. The following general principles are widely advocated: (1) the salary schedule should attract the best type of employee; (2) it should promote efficiency and encourage professional growth; (3) it should recognize continuous and satisfactory service as well as superior achievement; (4) it should provide equal pay for equal training, experience, and efficiency; (5) the maximum salary should be high enough to retain the best teachers and the maximum should not be reached until the end of a considerable period of service;¹ (6) the schedule should have a reasonable degree of flexibility.

Other policies affecting personnel—Control over purely personal matters is unwise, but policies calling for fair and just treatment often improve morale among employees. For example, regulations permitting reasonable leaves of absence with pay and more extended leaves of absence without pay are often used to advantage. Table 7 lists certain regulations governing leaves of absence for teachers and shows how frequently they were in effect in 1930-31.

¹ There is no general agreement as to the length of period which should be set. Recommendations range from 10 to 25 years. Each board should determine the plan which seems best for the district in question.

TABLE 7.—REGULATIONS GOVERNING LEAVES OF ABSENCE FOR TEACHERS IN EFFECT IN 1930-31¹

Regulation granting leaves of absence	Percent of cities with population					Percent of all cities reporting
	Over 100,000	30,000 to 100,000	10,000 to 30,000	5,000 to 10,000	2,500 to 5,000	
With full salary (or some fractional part thereof) when absence is due to:						
Personal illness.....	96.5	96.3	94.0	88.8	83.6	90.2
Death in family.....	95.3	94.1	86.5	77.2	67.4	80.2
Visiting other schools.....	70.6	75.5	66.9	60.4	55.0	63.2
Attending educational meetings.....	63.5	70.7	65.7	63.6	64.7	65.3
Other reasons.....	43.6	26.6	14.1	11.7	14.2	16.7
Number of cities on which the percentages are based.....	85	188	399	412	402	1486
With full salary in the case of personal illness for a period of: ²						
Less than 5 days.....		5.0	7.7	9.9	13.1	8.9
5 to 9 days.....	22.9	30.5	41.6	49.6	51.4	43.8
10 to 14 days.....	52.1	52.5	38.1	31.3	28.2	36.4
More than 15 days.....	25.0	12.0	12.6	9.2	7.3	10.9
Number of cities on which the percentages are based.....	48	141	286	284	245	1004
For a considerable period of time, ³ absence being granted for:						
Professional improvement.....	78.8	64.0	46.4	36.5	26.5	42.5
Travel.....	60.0	37.1	18.8	14.9	9.5	20.0
Rest.....	55.3	39.8	25.8	20.6	12.4	24.3
Number of cities on which the percentages are based.....	85	186	388	403	388	1450

¹ National Education Association, Research Division. "Administrative Practices Affecting Classroom Teachers." Research Bulletin 10; 55-63; March, 1932. Washington, D. C.: the Association.

² The figures in bold type suggest a minimum standard. Few cities have less generous provisions.

³ All extended absences (those with full pay, those with part of the salary paid, and those without pay) are included in this classification.

Business Problems

Many of the school board's problems have to do with business matters. Some of those discussed in previous sections have their business aspects, for example, the salary schedule. This section directs attention to a number of other business problems with which school boards are confronted.

Building sites—No other phase of business management demands greater foresight or better judgment than the selection and purchase of building sites.¹ The board needs to see not merely the city or district as it is today, but the way it will be twenty or thirty years hence. Many schools are handicapped in their work because industrial developments have grown up around them. Consequently, probable development in the neighborhood of a proposed school site is an important consideration.

The board may adopt either of these alternatives in the matter of school sites: (1) it may purchase building sites well in advance of the building needs of the district, or (2) it may purchase sites as they are actually needed. Either method involves an element of risk. The danger in advance purchases lies in unexpected changes in community development. For example, a new industry may come into the city and draw a large number of people to a part of the city quite removed from the building site selected;² unexpected population centers may grow up under the stimulating influence of an enterprising real estate firm; the closing of an industry may leave a neighborhood with but a handful of its former inhabitants; an industrial area instead of a residential district may grow up around a building site; a quiet street may be converted into a noisy thoroughfare. On the other hand, if the board does not purchase its school sites well in advance, it may have difficulty in buying suitable property. When a district is well developed, land values are much greater. Often the price of a good site is prohibitive. Many boards are forced to buy less desirable school sites because they or their predecessors did not have the foresight to

buy at the right time. Building sites conveniently located but with little or no play space frequently result from this same policy. School boards can afford to buy only a little of the high priced land.

To the extent that building needs can be accurately predicted, advance purchases are desirable. In large cities or rapidly growing districts building surveys are advisable. By means of a careful survey, specialists are able to determine building needs with a high degree of accuracy even in such districts. Where conditions are relatively stable, a competent superintendent can supply the board with enough facts so that plans for the future can be safely made.

A school site should not be merely a plot of ground that can be had at a reasonable price. The board should raise the following questions about a proposed purchase:³

1. Is the site near the center of the territory that the school is expected to serve?
2. Do roads and sidewalks make it accessible?
3. Are transportation facilities as good as can be had?
4. Is the plot large enough to accommodate a building of the type and size that is needed and also to provide ample play space?
5. Are the grounds large enough to give the building an esthetic setting?
6. Is the plot located in an attractive vicinity?
7. Does the site have any natural beauty? Will much landscaping be required to make it attractive?
8. Is it removed from fire-hazards, dangerous traffic, offensive trades or businesses, noises, smoke, and malodors?
9. Is the drainage good?
10. Is the surface soil non-erosive?

School buildings—School boards do not properly plan new buildings or supervise their construction, but they have important business duties in connection with them.

It is the superintendent's place to study and report building needs, but the board decides what is to be done about them; that is, it decides whether or not a new building is to be constructed. School board members are not specialists in school-building design and con-

¹California State Department of Education, Division of School House Planning. *School Site Score Card*. Sacramento: the Department, 1930. Engelhardt, N. L. *Score Card To Be Used in the Selection of School Building Sites*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1929. 4 p. National Education Association, Department of Superintendence and Research Division. *Site of Elementary School Sites*. Washington, D. C.: the Educational Research Service, October, 1926. 4 p. Ready, M. M. *School Playgrounds*. U. S. Dept. of the Interior, Office of Education, Pamphlet No. 10. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1930. 40 p. Reese, L. W. "A Score Card for Selecting the Site for a Consolidated School." *American School Board Journal* 70: 79-80; January, 1925.

²Portwood, Thomas B. "New San Antonio School Protected against Industrial Intrusion." *Nation's Schools* 10:29; October, 1932.

³Adapted from the Strayer-Engelhardt *Survey Field Book*. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1931.

struction. Therefore, competent board members do not attempt to plan school buildings. They realize that the usefulness of a building depends on how well it is adapted to the work going on in it, and that the one who knows most about the educational needs can best plan the school building. Efficient school boards spend their time considering plans and recommendations prepared by specialists instead of attempting to make plans about which they know little.¹ It is the function of the superintendent to plan, of the architect to design, of the contractor to build, and of the board to make fundamental decisions with respect to the plans, design, and construction.

In reaching decisions about plans for a new school building, the board may properly ask:

1. Is the building suited to its intended purpose?
2. Is it adaptable to changing conditions and needs?
3. Is it well proportioned so as to eliminate waste?
4. Is it durable?
5. Is it safe? Is it fire and storm resisting? Are there proper exits?
6. Is it well lighted; well heated; properly ventilated; sanitary?
7. Is it well equipped?

8. Is the building attractive in appearance—both exterior and interior?

9. Is the building placed well on the lot?

10. Is it economical in terms of the service it will render?

Duties of school boards with respect to the maintenance and repair of buildings should not be great. Again it is the duty of administrative officers to report conditions and make recommendations. The board should decide what is to be done, instruct the administrative officer to see that its plans are carried out, and hold him responsible for getting the work done in an efficient manner.

Table 8 shows that school boards do not always manage their building problems in the manner recommended above. Many boards still engage directly in purchasing, selling, and renting school property; in planning school buildings; and in supervising their construction and repair. This is especially true in the smaller cities. The practices of school boards in cities over 100,000 in population harmonize best with widely accepted principles of school business administration.

¹ Betelle, J. O. "The Trend in School Building Design." *Architecture* 65: 249-52; May, 1932. Butterworth, J. E. *Score Card for One Teacher School Buildings*. New York: World Book Co., 1921. 4 p. Cooper, F. I., chairman. *Report of Committee on School House Planning*. Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1925. 164 p. Dresslar, F. B. *American School Buildings*. U. S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Education, Bulletin, 1924, No. 17. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1925. 100 p. Engelhardt, N. L. and Engelhardt, Fred. *Planning School Building Programs*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1930. 574 p. Engelhardt, N. L. *Standards for Junior High School Buildings*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1932. 161 p. Holy, T. C. and Arnold, W. E. *Standards for Junior High School Buildings*. Columbus: Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University, 1932. National Council on Schoolhouse Construction. *Guide for the Planning of Elementary School Buildings*. Milwaukee: the Council, 1932. National Education Association, American Educational Research Association. "School Buildings, Grounds, Equipment, Apparatus, and Supplies." *Review of Educational Research* 2: 411-16 (bibliography); December, 1932. Moehlman, A. B. *Public School Plant Program*. Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1929. 405 p. Strayer, G. D. and Engelhardt, N. L. (A series of score cards for school buildings of various types). New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, since 1920.

TABLE 8.—BUSINESS PRACTICES OF SCHOOL BOARDS IN 1,000 CITIES IN 1931

Administrative job	In 49 cities over 100,000 in population, the board		In 170 cities 30,000 to 100,000 in population, the board		In 430 cities 5,000 to 30,000 in population, the board		In 351 cities 2,500 to 5,000 in population, the board	
	Approves	Executes	Approves	Executes	Approves	Executes	Approves	Executes
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Purchase and sale of buildings and grounds.....	23	6	93	57	191	162	162	159
Preparation of building plans.....	27	2	89	23	181	87	132	91
Supervision of construction	12	5	76	26	151	78	120	84
Supervision of repair work	18	4	90	19	212	51	163	66
Rental of buildings and properties.....	18	5	78	33	128	61	89	58
Selection of textbooks.....	28	0	106	7	188	10	130	6
Selection of instructional supplies.....	23	0	93	8	170	9	138	6
Selection of other supplies..	18	0	93	15	175	12	146	17
Preparation of budget.....	28	3	116	15	154	36	184	48

Based on data collected by the Research Division of the National Education Association for the Commission on Educational Leadership of the Department of Superintendence.

Textbooks, equipment, and supplies—The selection of textbooks, equipment, and supplies is the work of a specialist. Their purchase is an administrative detail. Neither is the proper function of school boards. More important duties demand their attention. That this is recognized by a large majority of school boards is indicated in Table 8. In the 49 cities over 100,000 in population, not a single school board actually selects textbooks and supplies and relatively few do so in the smaller cities. Questions of policy such as the following must be answered: (1) Are the books, the equipment, or the supplies really needed? (2) Must some need of equal or greater importance be disregarded if this particular purchase is authorized? (3) What should be the specifications of the product that is to be purchased? (4) If it could be purchased from either local or outside dealers, shall competition be limited to local dealers? (5) What evidence should the board require that this product represents, or does not represent, a wise purchase? Any board that gives adequate attention to matters of policy will find little occasion to select textbooks, school furnishings, or the particular brand of thumb tacks, paper clips, and rubber bands that are to be purchased.

Policies with respect to capital outlay—The purchase of school sites, the construction of school buildings, and the purchase of school equipment require the investment of capital. Often the amount is rather large. In every instance the management of capital is an important function of the school board. Capital investment may mean the expenditure of a sum of money for land, buildings, or equipment; or it may mean the assumption of a debt for these things. In either case the district commits or assigns a portion of its money to this purpose. It is an important form of investment, whether it involves the use of money on hand or the creation of a public debt.

This bulletin can do no more than direct attention to a few of the fundamental issues that every board must face and cite a few simple axioms of financial administration.¹

Among the more important questions of policy that must be settled in each case are the following.

1. Is an additional outlay needed?
2. How large an outlay does the need justify?
3. How soon should it be made?
4. How will money be obtained to make the investment?
5. Can the investment be made out of cash on hand?
6. Does the need justify borrowing part or all of the sum?
7. Would this investment be wise in terms of probable future needs as well as in terms of present needs?
8. If any part of the money must be borrowed, how shall the loan be arranged? How long shall it run? How will it be paid?
9. Does the total capital outlay of the school district including the proposed investment represent only a reasonable proportion of the wealth of the district? In other words, Can the district afford the investment?

In determining policies with respect to questions such as those just given, the following axiomatic statements may be helpful:

1. Capital outlay should always be justified by a demonstrable need.
2. Capital investments should be carefully planned, well in advance of the time when the investment is to be made.
3. Capital investments are not permanent. Buildings and equipment do not last forever.
4. Capital outlay should always be made in the interest of the whole population group and not for the advantage of any special group.
5. Since the postponement of any payment increases the amount that must be paid, it is practical economy to borrow as little as possible and for as short a period as possible.
6. No debt should be contracted in excess of the debtor's ability to meet the obligation.
7. Provision for payment should constitute an integral part of every debt arrangement.
8. The period of indebtedness should not exceed the period of usefulness of the land, building, or equipment for which the debt is incurred.
9. Serial bonds² (i. e., an issue retired by annual payments) are quite generally regarded as better than term bonds³ or sinking fund bonds.⁴
10. Stinginess is not the same thing as economy. The refusal to make a capital investment may be extremely costly.

¹For fuller discussions of the management of capital see Morrison, H. C. *The Management of the School Money*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932. Chapters 1-9. Moehlman, A. B. *Public School Finance*. Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1927. Rainey, H. P. *Public School Finance*. New York: Century Co., 1929. Reeder, W. G. *The Business Administration of a School System*. Boston: Ginn & Co., 1929. Engelhardt, N. L. and Engelhardt, Fred. *Public School Business Administration*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1927. Smith, H. P. *Business Administration of Public Schools*. New York: World Book Company, 1929.

²See Fowlkes, John Guy. *School Bonds*. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1924.

³In the case of "term bonds"—also called "straight bonds"—the entire issue is payable at the end of a specified period or term, perhaps twenty or twenty-five years. Presumably the funds will come from current revenue.

⁴"Sinking fund bonds" are retired by payment in a lump sum at maturity with funds set aside and invested annually for that purpose.

The foregoing list is by no means exhaustive. It merely gives a few simple truths which no school board can afford to disregard. School board members need as thorough an understanding of business and economic principles as they can acquire, especially in districts where the school system is really a large business enterprise. In addition, the board should avail itself of as much expert counsel and leadership as possible.

The school budget—A budget is a financial plan.¹ It is like a blue print. It shows just where each part of the financial "material" is to be placed. From the blue print a contractor can estimate just what materials will be needed. When work begins, the blue print serves as a guide. When the building is completed, it is judged by whether or not it conforms to the blue print. A school budget likewise serves this threefold purpose: (1) it shows how much money will be needed and for what purposes, (2) it serves as a guide in spending, and (3) it shows how well finances have been managed. Either a blue print or a budget is sometimes disregarded. Many defects are found in buildings because the builders did not follow their blue prints. Likewise, many financial difficulties are the result of failure to follow the budget. Few would argue that because blue prints are sometimes disregarded they should be abolished. A builder who does poor work with a blue print is not likely to do better work without it. Clearly, the fault lies with the builder, not with the blue print. The same reasoning is valid in the case of a budget.

A school budget consists of two major parts. One is an estimate of probable revenue from every source. The other is an estimate of the expenditures that will be made. If the fact were not disregarded in hundreds of cases, it would be unnecessary to add that *expenditures should not exceed revenue.*

It is the function of the superintendent to supply the board with facts and to recommend for their consideration the various estimates which make up the budget. It is the function of the board to study the facts and recommendations submitted by him and to decide what the budget shall be. The principle is widely

accepted that a budget is more useful when it is made out in rather great detail. Of course, the detailed budget should be summarized under a few larger heads, but the estimator can be more accurate if he goes into considerable detail in listing budget items. Another advantage in the detailed budget lies in the fact that the board can make an intelligent modification of a major budget item only if it knows the individual items which enter into the larger one.

A school budget is neither a fad nor a universal remedy for all financial ills. It is indeed a useful—an almost indispensable—device, but it has no magical powers. It is not a guarantee of economy or efficient management. It is as good as, and not one particle better than, the judgment of those who make and adopt it. However good, it is valuable only to the extent that it is followed intelligently. No one can foresee every circumstance. Consequently, the rigorous adherence to the exact letter of a budget might conceivably be very unwise. A reasonable amount of flexibility and intelligent adaptation should be expected. Nevertheless, the value of the budget lies in using it. Therefore, the board should know, month by month, how the budget is being followed. It is the function of the superintendent to keep them informed in this particular.

Accounting and auditing—Two follow-up procedures in school finance deserve special comment, namely, accounting and auditing. Every school board has a right to insist that best methods of school accounting should be employed.² The method used should be simple, adequate, businesslike. Unless the accounting system is a good one, the board can hardly tell how well or how poorly funds are being managed. Auditing the books is a procedure so indispensable that it should require no defense. However, many public accounts go without an audit. Too many people have the idea that an audit casts suspicion on the honesty of those who have handled the accounts. That is not its purpose. An audit is never concerned with honesty or dishonesty. It is an impersonal, fact-finding inquiry. The audit merely shows who spent a given sum, at a given time, for a given purpose. One must look beyond the audit to

¹ Engelhardt, N. L. "Superior School Budgets." *School Executives Magazine* 50: 309-10; March, 1931. Lovejoy, P. C. "Administering the School Budget Efficiently." *Nation's Schools* 5: 92; January, 1930. Soper, Wayne. "By Their Budgets You May Know Them." *School Executives Magazine* 49: 310-12; March, 1930. See also the references listed in footnote 1, p. 36.

² Engelhardt, Fred and Von Borgersrode, Fred. *Accounting Procedure for School Systems*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1927. 130 p. Fowlkes, J. G. *Handbook of Financial Accounting for Schools*. Eau Claire, Wis.: Eau Claire Book and Stationary Co., 1924. 56 p. National Education Association, Research Division. "School Records and Reports." *Research Bulletin* 5: 226-346; November, 1927. Peal, A. J. *Simplified School Accounting*. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1925. 118 p.

determine whether the person who made the expenditure was honest or dishonest. Instead of being a reflection on the character or motives of anyone, an audit is the finest safeguard to the person who handles accounts. The more honest an official is, the more anxious he should be to have his accounts audited frequently and regularly. The school board is unfair to the district and unfair to those who handle school money unless this impersonal follow-up procedure is regularly employed.

Protection of funds—School boards are the stewards of large sums of public money. These sums should be safeguarded as carefully as possible. Therefore, all officials who handle funds should be bonded with corporate bonds.¹ Likewise, care should be exercised in selecting the bank or banks in which school funds are deposited. Linn makes the following recommendations with respect to depositories:²

1. Do not consider any bank with a paid in capital smaller than \$25,000 (or preferably \$50,000).
2. If local banks are not equally safe, select a depository outside the school district.
3. Select a bank with a record for dependable service.
4. Never deposit funds in excess of 50 percent of the combined capital and surplus of the bank or in excess of 25 percent of the bank's total deposits.
5. Require of the bank either a surety bond or collateral equal to the amount of the deposit.

Summary

Although the work of school boards has by no means been completely described, some of the more important problems have been considered and general principles relating to their performance have been set forth. Since many of the principles suggested apply equally well

to duties other than those to which they are applied in this discussion, most phases of school board work have been touched upon, directly or indirectly.

The school board has been represented as an agency concerned with (1) making decisions on matters of school policy, (2) delegating administrative duties, and (3) making a continuous follow-up. The importance of each phase of this threefold task should now be apparent. If the board does not adopt definite policies, the school system resembles a ship lost in mid-ocean. Its captain, the superintendent, is without chart or compass. His experience may enable him to bring it safely to port; but the risk is great for the shippers, the captain, and the cargo. The board must assign administrative routine to its executive officers if it is to perform its own major functions. The follow-up serves two purposes. In the first place, it shows how well board policies are being executed. Second, the outcome of present policies should enable the board to plan more wisely for the future. Either value is sufficient to justify careful and continuous study of the results attained. Frequent and adequate reports from those to whom authority has been delegated are of first importance. Failure to delegate authority is the height of folly, but giving authority without fixing responsibility is equally unwise.

Board work may be summarized in a concrete manner by contrasting the methods of an efficient school board with those of an inefficient one. Figure V presents such a contrast. A school board can readily determine whether its own practices with respect to each of these items most resemble those of District A or District B.

¹ Linn, H. H. *Safeguarding School Funds*. Contributions to Education, No. 387. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1929. p. 22-68.

² *Ibid.*, p. 69-148. See especially p. 130-31.

OUR SYSTEM of public education is the most nearly folk-made of any national system of education in the world. It is the product of more than 145,000 school boards scattered throughout forty-eight states, and acting for their respective communities. In responsiveness to popular sovereignty, in adaptability to varying need and aspiration, and in richness of experimentation conducive to flexibility and to progress, our management of public schools is without a peer.—National Advisory Committee on Education, 1931.

FIGURE V.— TWO TYPES OF BOARD PROCEDURE

In school district "A"	In school district "B"
1. Board members consider official matters any-time, anywhere.	1. All school business is transacted in board meetings.
2. The board meets on call wherever it is convenient.	2. There is a regular time and place for board meetings.
3. The board meeting is used to approve bills, study catalogs, or wrangle about the best way to teach long division.	3. A large portion of the board meeting is used to decide important questions of policy.
4. There are many standing committees.	4. The board has no standing committees.
5. The board has neither policies nor rules.	5. Rules and regulations are adopted covering the most important policies.
6. The board employs as superintendent almost anyone who has the proper license and re-places him as soon as a cheaper man can be found.	6. The board employs the best superintendent that can be obtained and retains him in- definitely.
7. Board members "run the schools" them- selves.	7. Administrative duties are delegated to the superintendent.
8. Board members consider themselves well enough informed on every question and seek no one's advice.	8. The board frequently asks the superintendent for information and advice.
9. The board receives all applications and selects all employees without the assistance of the superintendent.	9. The superintendent nominates all employees to the board.
10. Employees are given direct instructions about what they are to do by the board or any of its members.	10. The superintendent is authorized to place, supervise, and transfer all employees and to recommend their dismissal when necessary.
11. The board does not come to the defense of the superintendent in carrying out its policies.	11. The board supports the superintendent loy- ally in the performance of his duties.
12. Very few reports are requested and the board pays little attention to those received.	12. The board requires adequate reports con- cerning business and financial matters, edu- cational achievements, and the efficiency of employees.
13. New teachers are hired as cheaply as possible and their salaries are increased only when necessary.	13. A salary schedule attracts and holds good teachers.
14. The board buys the "left-overs" for school sites.	14. The board acquires desirable sites for new school buildings.
15. The board plans new buildings and supervises their construction.	15. The board secures the service of experts in planning and building new buildings.
16. The board contracts debts carelessly and makes little effort to meet outstanding obli- gations.	16. The board borrows as little money as possible for as short a time as possible.
17. The board takes no thought for the morrow, hoping that it will provide for itself.	17. The board adopts and follows a budget that is carefully worked out by the superintendent.
18. Board members resent the idea that accounts should be audited.	18. All accounts are audited at regular intervals.
19. The board ignores legal provisions.	19. The board is careful to conform to school law.
20. School publicity is left entirely to chance.	20. The board keeps the public informed about its policies and about school activities.

Desirable Qualifications for Board Members

No other type of public service merits leadership of higher quality than does education. School board members should be the ablest men and women of the entire district.¹ However, as in the case of most public officials, the legal qualifications for school board members are in most cases low, including a few general items, such as, a minimum age requirement, residence in the district, citizenship, payment of taxes, parentage, voting qualifications, ability to read and write, ownership of property, and good character. The best judgment of the people is, therefore, the real safeguard of the office.

Educational qualifications—One of the foremost educational qualifications for a school board member is a sound educational philosophy, an abiding faith in education, and a desire to provide the best educational opportunities possible. In other words, a correct attitude toward education is extremely important. A good education is also a desirable qualification for members, but there is no definite standard which can be advocated.² Whether the board member is a college graduate or only a high-school graduate is less important than his attitude toward education and his knowledge of what is best in present educational theory and practice. Every board member should have a general acquaintance with current issues in education; otherwise, his educational leadership can hardly be constructive.

Business qualifications—It is generally conceded that one of the best standards of business ability is the degree of success which people have in the management of their own business affairs. Therefore, school board members ought to be persons who have managed their own affairs well. Business training and business experience constitute a valuable type of preparation for school board members, for they assume joint responsibility for a business enterprise of considerable proportions.

Personal qualifications—School board members need the same personal qualifications which make for success in any undertaking.³ It may be assumed at once that they should be honest and conscientious, and have good judgment and

common sense. In addition, certain traits of character seem to be especially needed.⁴

First there is open-mindedness or willingness to learn; the ability to listen to reason and to change one's opinion. The school board member who knows all there is to know about everything is not likely to exert a very helpful influence in board action.

Ability to cooperate is also important. The board member needs to pull with the team; to be loyal to his colleagues and to employees of the board. He should be able to give and to take; to lead and to follow. He will be called upon to support policies adopted by the board which do not meet with his personal approval. He should know, especially, how to work with the superintendent or any other executive officer charged with administering school affairs. He should know how to delegate responsibility to others and what responsibilities should be delegated. He should be willing to do his part of the active work of the school board and assume his share of the responsibility for board action.

Courage is a third trait which is essential. A board member is confronted with many situations which demand courageous action. He must often defend his point of view before other members of the board. He must be able to stand criticism. He must be ready to assume responsibility for things that go amiss. He must often stand squarely against organized propaganda or pressure of one kind or another.

A self-rating scale for school board members—This bulletin is written in the belief that most board members would like to do their work a little better; that they often say with Burns,

Oh wad some power the giftie gie us
To see ourselves as others see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us
And foolish notion.

Consequently, it seems well to conclude the discussion with a self-rating exercise.⁵ Board members will find it stimulating to see how many of the questions in Figure VI they can answer with an emphatic "Yes."

¹ Davis, B. E. "Board Member of Tomorrow." *Journal of Education* 114: 454-55; December 21, 1931. Murphy, R. "Who Is the Good School-Board Member?" *American School Board Journal* 85: 25-26; October, 1932. National Education Association. "Resolutions." *Proceedings, 1920* Vol. 58. Washington, D. C.; the Association, 1920, p. 26.

² Hines, J. F. "Qualifications of School Board Members." *American School Board Journal* 77: 38; August, 1928.

³ Hoel, C. H. "Traits and Qualifications of School Board Members in Ohio." *American School Board Journal* 75: 39; December, 1927. Struble, G. G. "A Study of School Board Personnel." *American School Board Journal* 65: 48-49; October, 1922.

⁴ The traits listed in the paragraphs which follow are presented without any intention of ranking them in the order of their importance.

⁵ For another rating scale for school board members see Mendenhall, Edgar. *A Rural School Board Measuring Stick*. Pittsburg, Kansas: Department of Rural Education, Kansas State Teachers College, 1925.

FIGURE VI.—SELF-RATING SCALE FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

	Yes	No
1. Do I want every child to have the best educational opportunities that our district can afford?.....	()	()
2. Do I have a good general understanding about current problems in education?.....	()	()
3. Do I help to elect the most desirable employees for our school system?....	()	()
4. Do I loyally support those who carry out the policies of the board?.....	()	()
5. Am I willing to delegate administrative duties to the proper persons?.....	()	()
6. Do I stand for a just wage for efficient service?.....	()	()
7. Do I insist that all agents of the board be held strictly responsible for efficient service?.....	()	()
8. Do I use my influence to secure frequent and adequate reports from all agents of the board?.....	()	()
9. Do I get facts, study them, and make my decisions in the light of them?...	()	()
10. Do I recognize the difference between economy and stinginess?.....	()	()
11. Do I think in terms of the future as well as the present?.....	()	()
12. Am I well informed as to the resources of the district which I represent?..	()	()
13. Can I form opinions of my own and at the same time retain an open mind? ()	()	()
14. Do I cooperate well with other board members; with employees; with other official groups; with the public?.....	()	()
15. Do I work for the success of all the board's policies—even those adopted against my voice and vote?.....	()	()
16. Do I do my part of the work and shoulder my share of the responsibility?..	()	()
17. Am I informed about the school law in my state?.....	()	()
18. Am I free from the dominance of any party or faction in my school district?.....	()	()
19. Do I refuse to speak or act PERSONALLY on matters which properly belong to the board as a whole?.....	()	()
20. Am I conscientious about my work and prompt and regular in my attendance at board meetings?.....	()	()
Total (Count the number of checks in each column).....		

A Five-Inch Shelf of Books for School Board Members

The books in the brief list presented here deal directly with the school board member and his official duties. A more extensive bibliography can be compiled readily from the footnote references cited throughout the bulletin. Magazine articles written especially for school board members often appear in periodicals in the field of school administration, such as, the *American School Board Journal* (Milwaukee Bruce Publishing Co.), *Nation's Schools* (Chicago: Nation's Schools Publishing Co.), and *School Executives Magazine* (Lincoln, Neb.: School Executives Magazine Co.).

1. ALMACK, JOHN C. *The School Board Member*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1927.
2. GRILL, GEORGE W. *Minutes of a Board of Education*. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1932.
3. KEYWORTH, MAURICE R. *Legal Aspects for the Records of Boards of Education*. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1931.
4. MENDENHALL, EDGAR. *The City School Board Member and His Task*. Pittsburg, Kansas: College Inn Book Store, 1929.
5. MOREHART, GROVER C. *The Legal Status of City School Boards*. Contributions to Education, No. 270. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1927.
6. OLSEN, HANS C. *The Work of Boards of Education*. Contributions to Education, No. 213. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1926.

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION can serve its constituency best by holding its executive officer, the superintendent of schools, responsible for a high degree of efficiency in the administration of the school system. It should provide him, upon his nomination, with a staff of competent associates. The Board members should expect to spend their time in Board meeting acting as a committee of the whole in the consideration of the proposals brought to them by their executive officer. He will present matters of major importance for decision by the Board. He will seek to demonstrate by such evidence as is available the wisdom of the action which he advocates. The Board will call upon the executive officer from time to time for evidence in support of his efficient execution of the policies which it has adopted. The superintendent of schools has a right to expect that after the Board of Education has adopted a policy or program for the school system it will continue to support him in his attempt to carry it into action. The right relationship between the Board of Education and the superintendent of schools will be brought about only when the members of the Board cease to think of their function as having anything to do with the execution of the policies which they adopt.—Survey of the Schools of Chicago, Illinois, 1932.