

**Fresh Start Series Workshop Session I:
*What To Do When A Board Member
Becomes Non-Supportive***

Location: The Northland Inn, Brooklyn Park, MN

Date: 03/18/09

Time: 9:30-4:00 (1:00—2:45)

Statistics Regarding the Superintendency

- The average tenure is between 2.75 and 6 years
- Rural superintendents have a longer average tenure than urban superintendents
- Superintendent tenure has remained relatively static over the last 30 years
- Many superintendents have served over half their career in one district
- Superintendent's relationship with school board is a decisive element of superintendent tenure

Group Exercise: Top 5 Reasons the Superintendency Proves Frustrating to the Superintendent

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Group Exercise: Top 5 Reasons Board Members Become Frustrated With A Superintendent

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Established Reasons for Superintendent Frustration

- School boards want yes women/men
- Politics and bureaucracy
- Micromanagement and role interference
- Time
- Special interest groups and community pressures
- Lack of fiscal resources

Maverick Board Members

- Lone Rangers
- Showstoppers
- High Water Supporters
- Secret Agents
- Ax Grinders
- Crowd Pleasers

What To Do With A Non-Supportive (Maverick) School Board Member

- Is the issue with a single board member or multiple board members?
- Is the non-supportive board member your chair? If so, do you see the chair's position changing during reorganization?
- Can your board chair or other members of the board intervene on your behalf?
- Can you dialogue with the non-supportive board member?
- Can or should you and your supportive board members marginalize the non-supportive member?

Reality Check

- The superintendent's relationship with the board chair is statistically significant and therefore critical to survival as the superintendent.
- Conflict with the school board is often the reason that superintendent's leave a particular district and a top reason for non-extension of contract.
- Can you or do you want to last longer than the non-supportive board member?
- To what extent is the non-supportive board member compromising your general welfare?
- Is it time to find another position?

Final And Miscellaneous Thoughts

- Elections can alter the make-up of the school board in dramatic fashion.
- Does MSBA do an adequate job with school board members?
- The superintendency has experienced increased scrutiny.
- It is difficult to recruit principals to the profession.
- Simply leaving one district for another does not guarantee an escape from non-supportive board members. If you wish to stay in the profession, you will need to learn how to manage life with a non-supportive member.

