

Message to Superintendents from Mary Ann Nelson: Will you help? I'm proposing to explore the superintendent-school board relationship as perceived by you--superintendents in Minnesota. I'm doing this study as the just-named MASA Richard Green Scholar



Results Overview

Date: 9/20/2010 12:21 PM PST

Responses: Completes

Filter: No filter applied

Message to Superintendents from Charlie Kyte (MASA Executive Director) and Romain Dallemand (Chair, MASA Professional Development Committee): Fellow Superintendents, we endorse your participation in this study. MASA's Professional Development Committee selected Mary Ann's research proposal because of superintendent interest in this study. We're hoping for a 100% response rate!

1. Are you a currently practicing superintendent or a retired superintendent in Minnesota?

Currently Practicing		181	85%
Retired (please refer to most recent district for survey questions)		22	10%
Other, please specify		9	4%
Total		212	100%

SECTION I: The following questions are reprinted with permission from the AASA superintendent study (2006) which will yield some interesting comparisons between Minnesota and the national superintendent sample.

2. How many students were enrolled in your district as of October 2009?

1-999		103	48%
1,000-2,999		64	30%
3,000-4,999		19	9%
5,000-9,999		17	8%
10,000-24,999		8	4%
25,000-49,999		2	1%
50,000-99,999		0	0%

Total	213	100%
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3. How many years have you been in your current district as superintendent?






1 or less		33	16%
2		31	15%
3		19	9%
4		24	11%
5		21	10%
6		19	9%
7		11	5%
8		9	4%
9		13	6%
10 or more		31	15%
Total		211	100%

4. How many years have you been a superintendent?





1 or less		18	8%
2		14	7%
3		12	6%
4		16	8%
5		9	4%
6		18	8%
7		11	5%
8		13	6%
9		14	7%
10 or more		87	41%
Total		212	100%

5. In your opinion, what is the most important reason the board hired you? (Choose only one.)

Ability to Maintain the Status Quo		5	2%
Experience as a Change Agent		21	10%
Financial		21	10%

Management Skills		21	1070
Leadership Ability		93	44%
Management Skills (e.g., instruction, personnel, etc.)		18	8%
Personal Characteristics (e.g., integrity, honesty, tact, etc.)		44	21%
Other, please specify:		11	5%
Total		213	100%

6. Which best describes your level of satisfaction with your current superintendency?

Very Satisfied		89	42%
Satisfied		99	46%
Unsatisfied		22	10%
Very Unsatisfied		3	1%
Total		213	100%

7. Which TWO of the following factors do you believe most contribute to your effectiveness as a superintendent? (Designate one from the list below as your #1 choice and one from the list as your #2 choice.)




Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	1	2
Board of Education	59 49%	61 51%
Central Office Team	54 58%	39 42%
Community Support (including the Business Community)	12 50%	12 50%
Interpersonal Relations Skills	68 69%	30 31%
Personal Support System (e.g., family, friends, mentor)	10 43%	13 57%
Preservice Training	3 30%	7 70%
School Principals	23 40%	34 60%
Support from Elected Officials (other than board of education members)	1 20%	4 80%
Teaching Staff	16	28

Teaching Staff	36%	64%
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8. Which TWO of the following factors do you believe most inhibit your effectiveness as a superintendent?
(Designate one from the list below as your #1 choice and one from the list as your #2 choice.)

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	1	2
Board of Education	25 57%	19 43%
Central Office Team	5 62%	3 38%
Collective Bargaining Agreements	27 52%	25 48%
Community Support (lack of)	5 71%	2 29%
Inadequate Financing of Schools	98 77%	29 23%
Inadequate Professional Training	1 14%	6 86%
School Principals	8 50%	8 50%
Special Interest Groups	12 35%	22 65%
State and Federal Mandates	26 32%	55 68%
Teachers Union	26 55%	21 45%
Teaching Staff	5 50%	5 50%
Too Many Insignificant Demands	15 33%	30 67%

9. How effective overall do you think you are as a superintendent?

Very Effective		78	37%
Effective		131	62%
Ineffective		3	1%
Very Ineffective		0	0%
Total		212	100%

10. In general, how do you think your board of education evaluates you?

Very Fairly		89	42%
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Fairly		102	48%
Unfairly		16	8%
Very Unfairly		4	2%
Total		211	100%

11. Indicate the most recent evaluation rating given to you by your board of education. (If you are rated on a different scale, select the one answer that most approximates your rating).

Excellent		101	48%
Good		79	38%
Average		13	6%
Below Average		1	0%
Not Evaluated		16	8%
Total		210	100%

12. Which of the following methods are used by the board to evaluate your performance? (Choose all that apply.)








Criteria Developed in Advance by the Board		52	25%
Criteria Previously Agreed to by the Board and the Superintendent		107	51%
Discussion at a Meeting of the Board and Superintendent		82	39%
Discussion at Executive Meeting of Board Members		37	18%
Written Evaluation Completed by Board Chair and/or Entire Board		120	57%
Other, please specify:		33	16%

13. Are your board's expectations for your performance congruent with the evaluation criteria?

Always		34	16%
Usually		129	62%
Sometimes		36	17%
Rarely		8	4%

Never		0	0%
Total		207	100%

14. In your opinion, which of the following is the most important reason for your board to evaluate your performance? (Choose only one.)



To Assess Present Performance in Accordance with Prescribed Standards		70	33%
To Better Clarify the Role of the Superintendent		27	13%
To Determine Salary Increment for the Following Year		5	2%
To Help Establish Relevant Performance Goals		51	24%
To Identify, Direct, and Encourage Areas in Need of Improvement		44	21%
To Point Out Strengths		0	0%
To Point Out Weaknesses		6	3%
Other, please specify:		10	5%
Total		213	100%

15. How many hours per week do you spend in direct communication with board members (e.g., phone calls, meetings)?





1		22	10%
2		56	26%
3		24	11%
4		24	11%
5		29	14%
6		16	8%
7		9	4%
8		10	5%
9		0	0%
10		13	6%

11		0	0%
12		4	2%
13		0	0%
14		2	1%
15 or more		4	2%
Total		213	100%

16. How do you characterize your present relationship with the board?

Very Good		124	59%
Good		75	36%
Poor		11	5%
Very Poor		1	0%
Total		211	100%

17. In your opinion, which of the following is your board's primary expectation of you as a superintendent?
(Choose only one.)

Educational Leader (e.g., curriculum and instruction, etc.)		40	19%
Political Leader (e.g., board and community relations)		38	18%
Managerial Leader (e.g., general management, budget and finance)		102	48%
Other, please specify:		31	15%
Total		211	100%





18. From your perspective, how well does the board lead the district?

Very Well		52	25%
Well		85	40%
Average		46	22%
Poorly		23	11%
Very Poorly		5	2%




Total	211	100%
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SECTION 2: The following questions explore selected concepts from the literature about superintendent-school board relationships.

19. Does your board have an understanding of the limits upon an individual board member's authority as part of a governance body that acts as a trustee for the school district? (Choose only one.)

Yes, this understanding is demonstrated by all board members and works well.		40	19%
Yes, this understanding is demonstrated by most board members and works well.		109	51%
Uncertain, as this understanding is demonstrated by only some board members and is an area of concern for me.		40	19%
No, this understanding is not demonstrated by the board and is an area of concern for me.		24	11%
No, this understanding is not demonstrated by the board and is not an area of concern for me.		0	0%
Total		213	100%





20. Does your board have a formal policy or practice for staff communications clarifying that board communication with a district staff member requires advance consultation with or goes through the superintendent first? (Choose only one.)

Yes, this policy/practice is followed by all board members and works well.		24	11%
Yes, this policy/practice is followed by most board members and works well.		83	39%
Uncertain, as this policy/practice is followed by only some board		34	16%

members and is an area of concern for me.			
No, there is no established policy/practice followed by the board and is an area of concern for me.		43	20%
No, there is no established policy/practice followed by the board and is not an area of concern for me.		28	13%
Total		212	100%


21.



A Minnesota School Boards Association sample board ethics code states the proper functions of a school board member to meet the legal responsibility of a policy-forming body, and not to act as an administrative officer. Does your board respect the board's policy-making role as separate from the superintendent's role to administer operations? (Choose only one.)

Yes, the separation of roles is observed by all board members and works well.		44	21%
Yes, the separation of roles is observed by most board members and works well.		105	49%
Uncertain, as this separation of roles is observed only by some board members and is an area of concern for me.		35	16%
No, there is no clear separation of duties observed by the board and this is an area of concern for me.		29	14%
No, there is no clear separation of duties observed by the board and this is not an area of concern for me.		0	0%
Total		213	100%

22.






Does your board value collegiality, cooperation, and respectful treatment of other board members and administrative employees including the superintendent? (Choose only one.)

Yes, this value is demonstrated by all board members and works well.		87	41%
Yes, this value is demonstrated by most board members and works well.		79	37%
Uncertain, as this			

value is demonstrated by only some board members and is an area of concern for me.		29	14%
No, this value is not demonstrated by the board and is an area of concern for me.		17	8%
No, this value is not demonstrated by the board and is not an area of concern for me.		0	0%
Total		212	100%



23.

Does your board have a code of ethics or practice requiring serving the interests of students and the district and not being conflicted by loyalties to any school subgroups or special interest groups in the community? (Choose only one.)

Yes, this code/practice is followed by all board members and works well.		48	23%
Yes, this code/practice is followed by most board members and works well.		86	40%
Uncertain, as this code/practice is followed by only some board members and is an area of concern for me.		31	15%
No, this is not an established code/practice followed by the board and is an area of concern for me.		27	13%
No, this is not an established code/practice followed by the board and is not an area of concern for me.		21	10%
Total		213	100%

24.

Have you ever been forced to resign or decided to leave a superintendent position because of poor relations with the board? (Choose only one.)

Yes		33	15%
No		180	85%
Total		213	100%

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