

**THINGS THAT  
BUG US ABOUT  
EACH OTHER**

**BOARD, SUPERINTENDENT & BUSINESS  
MANAGER RELATIONS**



# **PRESENTED BY:**

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# BOARD PET PEEVES:

- I. The superintendent who fails to share information with the board and the staff regarding issues the district is facing.
  - They keep everyone in the dark so he/she can appear to be the one who knows everything.

# SUPERINTENDENT PET PEEVES:

- I. Board members who believe they're elected because they are the wisest and/or making decisions for the good of the community.
  - This includes Board Members who seek advice from citizens on important decisions and allow that advice to make the decision for them. These are Board Members who do not work for the good of the community – who do not try and see the “whole” picture, whose influence can and will hurt the quality of a board's decisions on important educational issues. It is critical to get feedback from all sides and bring that feedback to the meeting for discussion.

# BUSINESS MANAGER PET PEEVES:

- I. When the superintendent presents a one-sided view or leaves out important pieces of information needed for good decision making by the board, and the board rubber stamps everything.
  - Board Members should ask questions until they have a working understanding of the issues and if they don't, they should delay decisions until they do. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to attend one board meeting a month and know everything going on in the school. This is especially true when all the information given at the board meetings is coming from the same person – so invite others to present information too. If the board and superintendent are informed and upfront, the business manager does not end up in the middle.

# BOARD PET PEEVES:

2. The business manager who shares selective data and details in an attempt to influence board decisions.
  - This person give input they feel the board needs as opposed to providing the information the board requests of them.

# SUPERINTENDENT PET PEEVES:

2. Board members who get engrossed in the details of running a school district and lose track of their main purpose – *what is best for the kids*.

- Remember the best boards spend their time on policy governance. Boards want to remove themselves from the preoccupation with the day-to-day operation of the district – rather than trying to run the district, policies should be created that help either direct certain conditions to exist, or to prohibit things that are unacceptable.
- Board members who forget about the kids and are more concerned about the issues of adults or about certain interest groups. Don't spend too much time dealing with "adult" issues.
- These type members also tend to get too personally involved with issues of special interest to them, or of special interest groups.

# BUSINESS MANAGER PET PEEVES:

## 2. The superintendent is not following through on concerns of the staff

- It could be a student sent to the office for inappropriate dress, to not visiting with custodians about keeping the school clean or discipline of students.
- He/she just does not want to be involved with problems. The staff can see what is going on and has respect for him.

# BOARD PET PEEVES:

3. Superintendent who think they know what is best for the school district and implements their ideas without consulting with the board.
  - They DON'T think they need to involve board members in the discussion or decision-making process.

# SUPERINTENDENT PET PEEVES:

3. Board members who do board business when the board is not in session and the person who get on the board because they dislike an employee or have a “bone they want to pick.”
  - Open Meeting is law and remember: there is no board unless it is in session! NEED I SAY MORE? Seriously, this is often difficult for board members to do, but it is a most important one to follow in order to build a trusting relationship with your chief administrator.
  - We really appreciate the board member who thinks and acts as a “reasonable and prudent” individual - who responds ethically in doing what is best for the community’s school and children.

# BUSINESS MANAGER PET PEEVES:

3. It is the business manager's duty to report to the board if they are certain that the superintendent is not following policy.

- The BIG stuff, not petty tattling, like the Superintendent asking the business manager to do something we know is unethical or downright illegal.
- Many times the board members do not want that information – perhaps because they don't know the steps to deal with it or they just don't want to deal with the unpleasant things.

# BOARD PET PEEVES:

4. The superintendent who is unable, unwilling, or incapable of communicating adequately with principals, faculty, staff, board members and the public.
  - They try to implement changes without preparing for those changes.

# SUPERINTENDENT PET PEEVES:

4. Individual board members who think they are the Chief “Publicity” Spokesperson for the board.
  - Lone rangers; board members who attempt to do all the board business on their own. They talk to the press and members of the community to gain an advantage and/or support and are not speaking for the board as a whole.
  - Best practice is to have message maps in place with any issue that might generate media attention so all board members are stating the same thing.

# BUSINESS MANAGER PET PEEVES:

4. The superintendent won't let the business manager attend conventions, workshops and seminars because we come back with the LEGAL way to handle things.
  - They want to have all the knowledge and power. The business manager is forced to take personal or vacation days to attend workshops and then personally pay for them.

# BOARD PET PEEVES:

5. A superintendent or business manager who blindsides the other by bringing up information at a meeting that the other does not know.
  - Information is usually a zinger towards the other and that makes them both look less than professional.

# SUPERINTENDENT PET PEEVES:

5. Boards who think they are elected to be administrators instead of policy setters and don't recognize that their authority and responsibility are inseparable.
  - Board members should not be micro-managers. The line between policy and practice is thin. Boards are to set policy, and the administration is to carry it out.
  - It is helpful for boards to have clear goals. Board members need to ask themselves to which goal the issue relates and then respond.

# BUSINESS MANAGER PET PEEVES:

5. Board members that use their position to leverage perks  
– extension of deadlines, student discipline, etc.

OR

Children of board members that use the parent's position to leverage special treatment.

# BOARD PET PEEVES:

6. Business managers tend to be too black and white, too concrete, and not open to change.

# SUPERINTENDENT PET PEEVES:

6. Board members who bring complaints from the staff to the board before the complaint has been heard by the chief administrator.
  - Employees, citizens and board members need to follow the established 'chain of command.' Side-stepping this part of policy makes everyone look bad.
  - Don't depersonalize a person in public. Everyone loses when this happens.

# BUSINESS MANAGER PET PEEVES:

## 6. Give the business manager some credit!

- We go to seminars, workshops, etc., and come back with current information. We present it to the board and they all nod and smile. Some months later, an administrator or board member goes to a class or workshop, hears the SAME information we gave the board earlier and presents it to the board. The members act like it is the first time they are hearing anything about it, OR the administrator or board member double checks the business manager's information because they think it "just doesn't sound right." There is no apology or recognition, just dismissal of the fact that we know what we are doing.

# BOARD PET PEEVES:

7. A superintendent or business manager who thinks the board works for them, rather than the other way around.
  - They may sometimes think and act as if they are in charge of the board meeting.

# SUPERINTENDENT PET PEEVES:

7. Board members who express their opinion on a decision/policy outside of a board meeting before the board has made a decision and/or continues dissent after the board's decision.
  - This weakens the board and goes back to being a lone ranger by telling the community that despite being decided by a majority vote, the “battle” on the issue is not yet over!
  - The proper time for this discussion is **ONLY** during the board meeting. Once a decision is made, the board should stand unified on the decision.

# BUSINESS MANAGER PET PEEVES:

7. Board members who don't understand simple accounting or basic business practices or looks to the superintendent to give financial reports even though the business manager is accountable for the financial side of the district.
  - Board members may not understand balance sheets or ask any questions. They don't 'get' the need for Bonding of Employees, Liability Insurance, Separation of Powers, etc., yet they make decisions about the district's budget! Superintendents often come up through the teaching ranks and do not gain any experience in labor law or financial issues.

# BOARD PET PEEVES:

8. Being misled by a superintendent, business manager, or board member who talks out of both sides of their mouth.

➤ Says one thing, does another.

# SUPERINTENDENT PET PEEVES:

8. Board members who are responsive to only a part of the community because they were elected because of an issue prevalent during the election or who play partisan politics.
  - “Single-issue” board members: board members and superintendents need to work to help broaden the new member’s role on the board. If your board hasn’t assigned a role for them, form an advisory committee and make sure they get assigned to one that’s not in their area of concern or ‘expertise’.
  - Hidden agendas and withholding information hurts the board and the delivery of a quality education to the kids!

# BUSINESS MANAGER PET PEEVES:

8. Board members that feel the business manager should not be signing their own payroll checks!
  - This is part of the business manager's job; if you can't trust your business manager with it, you might need to start looking for a new one.

# BOARD PET PEEVES:

## 9. Territory or turf defending

- Superintendents and business managers who view the district's money as their own.

# SUPERINTENDENT PET PEEVES:

9. The unprepared board member who does not do their homework.

➤ This creates tension on the board because other board members come to the meeting prepared, and it slows the meeting down.

➤ Read your packet before the board meeting!

# BUSINESS MANAGER PET PEEVES:

9. The business manager is accountable for the financial side of the district, but the board looks to the superintendent to give the financial reports.
  - Superintendents often come up through the teaching ranks, and do not gain any experience in labor law, etc.



**QUESTIONS?**

A white, scalloped-edged shape, resembling a seal or a decorative frame, is centered on a bright yellow background. The shape has a wavy, irregular border. Inside this shape, the words "THANK YOU!" are written in a bold, teal-colored, sans-serif font. The text is centered horizontally and vertically within the white shape.

**THANK YOU!**