



# School Board Communication

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Superintendent, Saint Peter Schools

# Who is this guy?

- ◇ Started in the business field as a retail manager
- ◇ Elementary teacher for 13 years
- ◇ High School Assistant Principal for 3 years
- ◇ Elementary Principal for 2 years
- ◇ Assistant Superintendent for 1 ½ years
- ◇ Duluth Superintendent for 8 ½ years
- ◇ Saint Peter Superintendent 51 days

*What we choose to share  
changes perceptions... Let's  
try this again.*

# Who is this guy?

- ◆ Husband, Father, Brother, Son.....and Grandfather to be
- ◆ I am third generation American.
- ◆ I am French, Norwegian, and German.
- ◆ I grew up as the 5<sup>th</sup> and youngest child in my family
- ◆ My father was disabled when I was 2
- ◆ My family received government commodities of cheese and powdered milk
- ◆ My mother went from a stay at home Mom to successful real estate broker and business owner
- ◆ I am the first person in my family to graduate from college

*Does it change your perception?*

# What could possibly go wrong?

- ◆ Surprises with deadline
  - ◆ Feel forced to make a decision without information
- ◆ Misperceptions/miscalculations
  - ◆ Not knowing where board members stand with a given issue
- ◆ Dysfunctional Board Member relationships
  - ◆ Everything is a battle (bring your shield)
- ◆ Sabotage
  - ◆ When you don't know the forces for and against or the numbers behind them

*Yes, I do have a story for each of these.... Another time. Let's just say I've learned from experience!*

# Relationships Matter

- ◇ Who are your board members?
  - ◇ Family, career, history
- ◇ Why are they on the School Board?
  - ◇ Inspiration, passion, giving back, spite?
- ◇ Who do they talk to or have influence with?
  - ◇ What are they hearing? What/who will they tell?
- ◇ How do they view their role on the school board?
  - ◇ Advocate? Questioner? Problem Solver?
- ◇ How do they view your role as Superintendent?
  - ◇ Your communication will effect the answer

# Potential & New Board Members

- ◆ Introductory Meeting
  - ◆ School Board Member Commitments & Roles
  - ◆ Provide with written materials for reference
  - ◆ Hot Topics
  - ◆ Accessibility to information
  - ◆ Equal for all Candidates
- ◆ Orientation for New School Board Members
  - ◆ Meet with Board Chair & discuss meeting schedules and “how things work”
  - ◆ Meet the admin team, learn roles
  - ◆ Additional communication with new processes and procedures

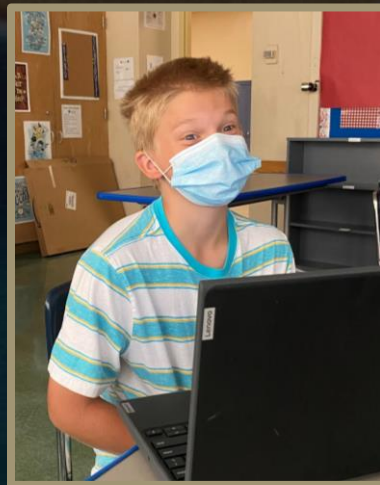


# My Ongoing Communication

- ◆ Weekly Meeting with the Board Chair
  - ◆ Be direct, open, and honest
    - with the good, the bad, and the ugly
  - ◆ Ask questions
  - ◆ Come with solutions in mind—
    - this is an opportunity to try out ideas and plant seeds
  - ◆ Ask for feedback
  - ◆ Listen.

# My Ongoing Communication

- ◆ Weekly updates to the whole School Board
  - ◆ What have you been working on?
  - ◆ Who have you met with and what did you talk about?
  - ◆ What is coming up soon?
  - ◆ Updates on ongoing projects
  - ◆ Nothing confidential!
  - ◆ Invites to events
  - ◆ Pictures!



**Reopening Surveys:** As of Friday afternoon we have had **1259 responses** to the survey. The majority of families indicate they will attend in-person instruction as allowable by the State (**86%**). Another **13%** would prefer all on-line instruction, which leaves about **1%** that say they are going to have some alternate plan. Not bad for a day and a half. We will start scrubbing data today and making a list of families to contact directly next week. Our hope is that by the end of next week we will know everyone's preferences for the coming year. Feel free to share the [link](#) with anyone who needs it-- or continue to repost my tweets and facebook posts!







# My Monthly Meeting Communication

- ◆ School Board Committees & Meetings
  - ◆ Context- the bigger the decision, the bigger the discussion
    - ◆ Why is an item before them?
    - ◆ How did you arrive at this recommendation?
    - ◆ Who was involved in the decision making?
    - ◆ Why is this the best recommendation?
    - ◆ How does it further the district vision and goals?
  - ◆ Opportunity to praise others- give credit where credit is due!

# My Monthly Meeting Communication

- ◇ Potentially Contentious Decisions
  - ◇ No surprises- share what you know
  - ◇ Be prepared
  - ◇ Allow adequate time – Days? Weeks? Months?
  - ◇ Over Communicate.... *"Didn't we already do that?"*
  - ◇ Predict questions/arguments and provide board members with the answers they need
  - ◇ Individual conversations with school board members
    - ◇ Be careful not to create a serial board meeting by sharing the thoughts of other board members
  - ◇ Don't present it alone- include others who were involved
  - ◇ Have a communication plan to follow the decision

# If You Need Them With You...It's as Easy as 1,2,3

01

TALK TO THEM  
BEFORE

02

TALK TO THEM  
DURING

03

TALK TO THEM  
AFTER

*If you are getting a lot of questions, you probably need to communicate more or differently —look for the why behind the questions.*

A close-up photograph of a hand pouring milk from a glass pitcher into a dark-colored coffee cup. The coffee has a latte art design on its surface. The scene is dimly lit, with the background being dark and out of focus. The overall mood is warm and inviting.

Questions?

*Thank you!*

*Cup of coffee?*