

BULLETIN BOARD

Good Information is Crucial to Making Good Decisions

The key to good decisionmaking is having good information. District administrators often bring years of educational expertise with them to work every day to help them make the best decisions possible for the teaching and learning of students.

But to ensure that a school is as effective as it can be at educating students, administrators must also make daily decisions about everything from financial choices to legal issues to negotiation strategy.

Financial Choices

While the board of education sets a budget for a district, it must rely on administrators to help build the budget and execute it. School business managers rely on a variety of sources for information, including the district's internal records. Districts also should have access to financial data of other districts to serve as points of comparison.

Legal Issues

A school district is many things at once, including a government agency that educates children, as well as one that employs adults. That means that there are a variety of legal obligations a district has to a variety of people and entities. School officials must have easy access to legal information to make sound choices that respect the rights of people learning and working in their buildings, as well as that protect the district from litigation risk.

Negotiation Strategy

Most school district employees are members of bargaining units whose employment is governed by a contract. That contract must be negotiated between the employee's union and the school district's negotiator. To ensure that a contract fits the needs of the district, the district's negotiation team must understand, at the very least, how their employees' pay and benefits compare to other pay and benefit packages in other districts. Negotiators must also have access to effective contract language, whether in other districts' contracts or developed with legal expertise.

Having access to this type of information and data that is useful, timely and always available, can help districts make more-informed and better decisions. MASB is working to help administrators ensure that they have the expertise needed to make decisions about these key areas. MASB's Erin service, for instance, provides a variety of financial, compensation and legal information that districts need to make sound decisions.

We'll be launching a revamped Erin this fall so please be sure to look for it in the coming months.



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