



# Solving Ten Tough Board Challenges

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**There are those times when  
you feel like you're  
“darned if you do and  
darned if you don't!”**

**It's kind of like you're playing...**

**Jeopardy**



First of all,

what *are* the ten toughest challenges?

The nominees are....



- 1. Opposing philosophies among board members**
- 2. Negotiations challenges**
- 3. Batting 1000 when it comes to communicating with staff and/or public**
- 4. Hiring the right superintendent**
- 5. Problems between leadership team members**



**6. Major facilities decisions**

**7. Superintendent/treasurer evaluation and accountability**

**8. Chain of command and micro-management**

**9. Making decisions related to budget cuts**

**10. Governing in tandem with Sunshine and Public Records Laws**



Keep in mind....

**GOOD, BETTER** and **BEST** are  
general, relative terms.

Sometimes there is *only* one choice.

Sometimes there is *no best choice*.

Sometimes there is *no “win win”*.



**Always important...**

**Your district's board policy will often  
assist, outline, or even narrow your  
options.**



# 1. Opposing Philosophies Among Board Members







**GOOD:** Agree to disagree. Settle for simple “majority rules”

**BETTER:** Resolve to listen to all sides, then work to carve out compromise

**BEST:** Gather all objective data and evidence to provide clarity and go from there, hopefully toward a truly united vision.



## 2. Negotiations Challenges





**GOOD:** Determine the board's bottom line at the outset and maintain a laser vision toward it.

**BETTER:** Understand priorities, but also where you can give a little in order to gain the most.

**BEST:** Work consistently and openly with union leadership to better understand all perspectives and increase likelihood of seamless and friendly relations.



### 3. Batting 1000 when it comes to communicating





**GOOD:** Your methods may be “old school” but they’re consistent and regular. You’re getting the info “out there” and people know how to find it.

**BETTER:** You’re using many different ways and platforms to reach everyone in your district (including those without school connections).

**BEST:** You’re using the **BETTER** strategy, as well as creating multiple opportunities for feedback “from them to you”.



## 4. Hiring the right superintendent

OSBA leads the way to educational excellence by serving Ohio's public school board members and the diverse districts they represent through superior service and creative solutions.



**GOOD:** Hire someone who did a good job in another district. If she did it for them, she should be able to do it for you.

**BETTER:** Find the person who's good at fixing what's broken in *your district right now*. Worry about the future in the future.

**BEST:** Hire the person whose vision forces everyone to reach for the stars, and give them guidance, support, and time to build the rocket!



# 5. Problems between leadership team members







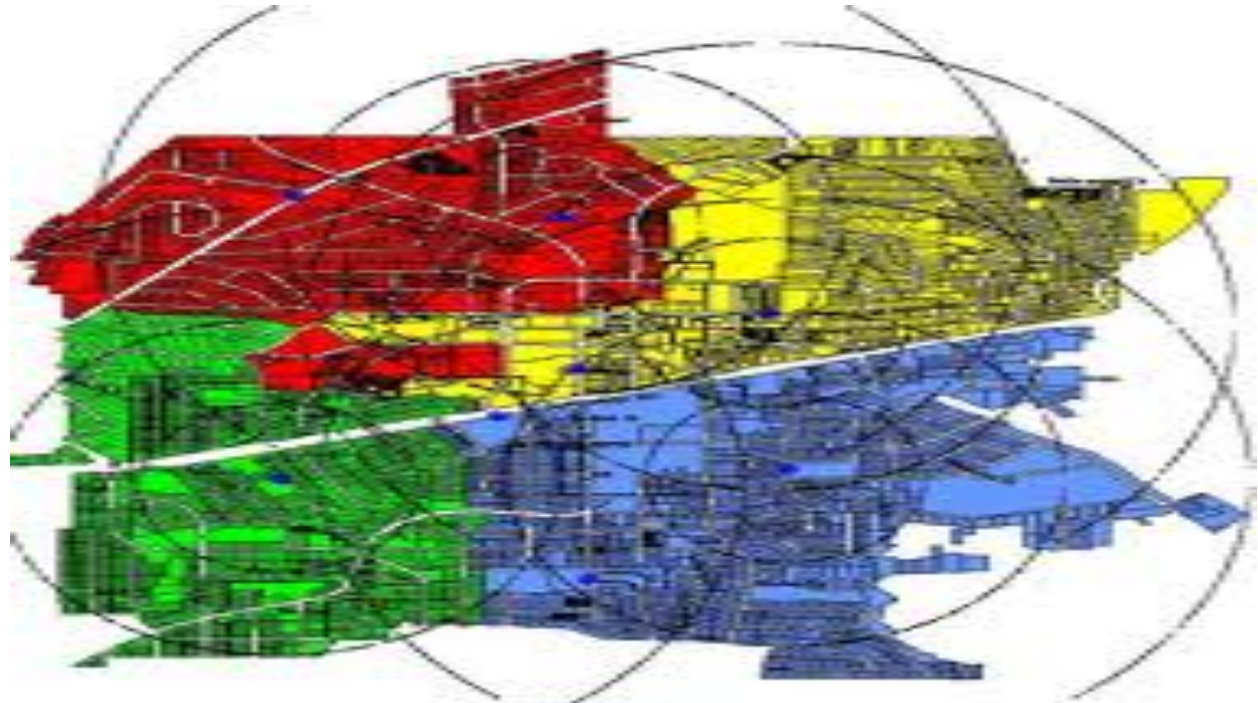
**GOOD:** No one ever said you'd all get along *all the time*. Get the work done despite the issues.

**BETTER:** Figure out what and where the problems are and address issues honestly, openly and *not personally* when they arise.

**BEST:** Use the **GOOD** strategy when all else fails. Use the **BETTER** strategy whenever possible, and commit to *asking yourself* whether you've thoroughly considered the other person's perspective.



# 6. Major student housing decisions



Map 9





**GOOD:** After doing a good cost analysis, do what saves the most money.

**BETTER:** Determine the costs, benefits and impact of several options, and make decisions based on the best balance of each.

**BEST:** Involve community members in the creation of the **BETTER** plan. Create investment by all stakeholders. Monitor, evaluate, and amend the plan as it unfolds. Present options and decisions based on how they could/would *affect and assist* learning.



# 7. Superintendent and treasurer evaluation and accountability





**GOOD:** Do individual evaluations and have board president compile/summarize.

**BETTER:** Meet annually as a group with superintendent and treasurer to discuss progress and challenges. Determine or revise expectations for improvement.

**BEST:** Set annual goals and objectives as a leadership team. Meet regularly to assess progress and address road blocks. Complete summative evaluation and set new objectives each year.



## **8. Chain of command and micro-management**



**GOOD:** Clearly and consistently state roles and responsibilities. Hold all groups and individuals accountable.

**BETTER:** Along with **GOOD**, work to find appropriate ways to satisfy individual passions for greater impact.

**BEST:** Work as true team to allow all to learn, question, seek advice or support to do the best job possible for all students.





# 9. Increasing achievement with decreasing resources







**GOOD:** Resolve to make all decisions on costs only after understanding their affect on all students.

**BETTER:** Incorporate **GOOD** strategy while working with your legislators, OSBA, and your community to be part of ongoing conversations at local and state levels.

**BEST:** Do **GOOD** and **BETTER** as well as ensure *achievement by all* is an active and daily mantra and the basis by which all key decisions are made.



# 10. Governing in tandem with Sunshine and Public Records laws





**GOOD:** Understand the laws and follow them. Ensure staff are trained accordingly.

**BETTER:** Work to assure your community (and the media) that the board respects these laws. This will lead to greater trust in general, and in particular when executive sessions must be held.

**BEST:** Follow **GOOD** and **BETTER** *and* hold all board members accountable for confidentiality in executive session and appropriate use of email & text messages.



**Being a board member will always bring challenges!**

**Being a member of an elected body will always present challenges!**

**But always remember....**





Thank you!  
Enjoy Capital Conference!



Ohio School Boards Association



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