



**2011 OSBA
Board Leadership
Institute**

Cheryl W. Ryan
Consultant, School Board Services
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**Trouble in Paradise – When Board
Work Doesn't Feel Like a Vacation!**

Vacation Disasters

- ✓ Flight Delays or Cancellations
- ✓ Food Poisoning/Sprained Ankles
- ✓ Accommodation Disappointments
- ✓ Lost Baggage or Money



Board Service Conflicts (Paradise Killers)

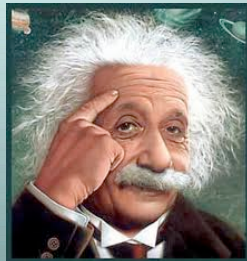
- ✓ Flight Delays: Conflict Between Board Members
- ✓ Food Poisoning: Conflict With the Leadership Team (Superintendent, Treasurer, Central Office Administrators)

Board Service Conflicts (Paradise Killers)

- ✓ Accommodations Disappointments: Conflict within the community
- ✓ Lost Baggage or Money: Conflict due to one baaaaaad board member!

Our Friend
Albert Einstein

“No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.”



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What causes Board-Board Conflict?

- ✓ Role Pressures
- ✓ Differences in Perceptions
- ✓ Different Goals
- ✓ Differences in Position or Status
- ✓ Differences in Values

**Paradise Killer:
Scene 1**

Following board elections, two board members come onto the board to join the other three. Two of the veterans have been around for 12 and 16 years respectively. They have seen and done it all and are ready to show the newbies how it's done. The newbies have some good ideas and really want to contribute. How should they move forward?

Paradise Killer: Scene 2

Virginia has been board president for seven straight years, and everyone tells her she is the best ever. This is her calling! Mike has been on the board three years and would really like an opportunity to lead. How should he move forward?



Surviving Leadership Team Conflict

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What the Board must be able to do?

Be willing to talk honestly

Be willing to assign and be accountable to goals and results

Be willing to take action

Paradise Killer: Scene 3

The superintendent believes a situation at the elementary school was handled very badly and wants to put a letter of reprimand in the principal's personnel file. The principal is very popular and two of the board members do not want to have this added to the public record.

Paradise Killer: Scene 4

Ted and his board colleagues are considering some very difficult budget decisions, including possible cuts in staff. They are working on several scenarios but no decisions have been made. Ted attends a baseball game and sits down next to Bill, who is the treasurer's neighbor. Bill begins to ask Ted in specific detail about some of the potential cuts.

Paradise Killer: Scene 5

Nirvana Local is negotiating Sue the superintendent's renewal contract. Sue is very popular with the staff and community. One board member hates her, however, and two others have mixed feelings. Two others are big fans, including Paula the president. Sue knows most people love her and is insisting on a five-year deal.



Conflict within the Community

Tension Because...

- ✓ You were elected on a platform
- ✓ You came in with an agenda
- ✓ The community wants immediate action
- ✓ The community is tapped out!
- ✓ Community cultures have deep roots

Paradise Killer: Scene 6

Nirvana's board knows that hiring the coach isn't their job, but the football program hasn't had a winning season in years and some great athletes are leaving the district to play elsewhere. The community has had it and wants things turned around.....now.

Paradise Killer: Scene 7

Nirvana local privatized busing nine years ago and the town is still angry. The last two levy requests have failed and community morale is low. The board really wants to get over this hump. How should they move forward.

**Conflict due
to one
baaaaaad
board
member!**



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Bad Apple Strategies

- Allow everyone to be heard
- Use a Code of Conduct
- Don't ignore bad behavior – address it openly
- Recruit high integrity individuals
- A last resort: public censure

**Paradise Killer:
Scene 8**

Milt was elected to deliver results and by gosh he's going to get the job done. He believes "his people" need to know, so doesn't honor executive session confidentiality. He badgers staff continually for "important data" and believes it's his duty to "make reports" at board meetings or at the band concert.

**Paradise Killer:
Scene 9**

Sheila is silent at board meetings and refuses to engage in public debate. She prefers her online blog, which is refreshed after every meeting or work session. She engages in hallway gossip but denies such participation when openly questioned.

Paradise Killer: Scene 10

Mabel's retired, so being a board member is her "job". She makes it a point to stop into the school buildings almost daily. She has some fabulous ideas, so often delivers letters or to-do lists to staff members, and then makes sure to call and "follow up". At board meetings, she loves to provide progress reports on all her "work".

Ask Yourself....

1. Do I address conflict honestly, openly, and at the time it occurs?
2. Do I offer constructive criticism?
3. Do I keep students at the center of my board work?
4. Can I keep a confidence?

Ask Yourself....

5. Am I able to respect my colleagues even when I disagree with them?
6. Do I move forward with the will of the majority?
7. Have I participated in decisions that will leave my district in a better place than when I arrived?