

# Board Retreats

A retreat is a rare opportunity for the board to work at its “game” and to achieve a new standard of performance and satisfaction. Though the purposes for retreats vary, the main point is to use this opportunity to accomplish something that can't be done through routine meetings.

The best time for a board retreat is the right time for you and your board. Some boards prefer weekend retreats so that members do not have to lose time away from their employment. Many boards choose the summer months, often scheduling their retreat just prior to the start of school. When selecting the time for your retreat, do not forget to poll your board and your superintendent for each person's suggestions to keep conflicts to a minimum.

## Realistic Expectations

Remember that relationships and practices that have been in operation for years cannot be undone in one or two days. What can and should result from a board retreat is that lines of communication are opened or reopened, problems are addressed and solutions suggested.

The greatest benefit of a retreat can be that the board has the opportunity to sit down, relax and spend quality time discussing important and sensitive issues in an unhurried manner.

**These issues and more can be handled productively in the retreat setting:**

1. How do new members fit into your team?
2. How well do you really know or understand your colleagues?
3. How well do you know your superintendent and his or her methods of operating?

## Guarantee a Quality Retreat:

While the location, costs and logistics of a board retreat are important concerns to address, there are five major elements of a quality retreat to consider if you want to be assured of a positive experience:

- ➔ Present the following for approval prior to the retreat:
  - a) expected outcomes of the meeting,
  - b) goals and objectives for the meeting,
  - c) budget,
  - d) agenda, and
  - e) method of evaluating the event.
- ➔ Ensure all members have event materials for review five to ten days in advance.
- ➔ Make sure your facilitator knows your expected outcomes, goals and objectives, budget, agenda, and methods of evaluation prior to the event.
- ➔ Advertise the retreat to make sure media and community understand purpose of retreat.
- ➔ Do not bring hidden agendas. Stick with stated goals and objectives.

# Board Retreat Information:

TSBA facilitators work with school boards in the following general areas:

- Basic boardmanship
- Board member relations
- Board/superintendent relations
- Teambuilding
- Communication and public relations
- Conflict resolution
- Effective board meetings
- Advocacy
- Visioning and goal-setting
- Strategic planning

If you have an interest in this service, call TSBA at 615-815-3901 or email [tammyg@tsba.net](mailto:tammyg@tsba.net).



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