

How the Superintendent Stole Christmas Case Study Module Standard Six Superintendent

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Scenario

This is your second year as the superintendent of a financially stressed and academically deficient district. It is early December late in the afternoon on a Friday. You have found a deficit in the budget and must rectify the situation at next Tuesday's board meeting.

You are ready to leave the office for a restful weekend with the family following a stressful week of crunching numbers. You are stopped in the parking lot by a group of teachers thanking you for the \$250 Christmas bonus. They can tell by your expression that you don't have a clue what they are talking about. One of the teachers informs you that Mrs. Spendall, a new board member, stopped by each classroom thanking the teachers for their hard work in raising student achievement. She went on to say there would be a \$250 bonus in their December pay envelope for all their hard work.

With 137 full-time faculty, you head home wondering where you are going to come up with the \$34,250 to pay them. As you enter the driveway, it dawns on you, that you may also have to give the 48 staff members the bonus as well, which would increase the obligation to \$46,250.

Questions

1. What actions would you take that would show sensitivity to the teachers and staff in your district?
2. What contractual issues do you face as the superintendent?
3. What actions would you take that would show sensitivity to Mrs. Spendall?
4. How would you address the economic issues at the next board meeting? Give a rationale for your decision.

Standard Six

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by **understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, and cultural context.**

Standard Six Performance Expectations

- Models strategies of conflict resolution as applied to the larger political, social, and economic contexts of schooling.
- Communication occurs among the school community concerning issues and potential changes in the environment in which school operate.
- The school community works within the framework of policies, laws, and regulations enacted by local, state, and federal authorities.

Extended Learning

1. Role-play your initial conversation with Mrs. Spendall.
2. Role-play this as an informational item at the next board meeting.
3. Role-play your final decision at the December district faculty meeting.
4. Develop a 5-minute presentation related to the role and responsibility of a board member.

Key Terms

- Contracts/Legal Issues
- Conflict Resolution
- Board Relations
- School Finance and Economics
- Sensitivity to internal/external publics
- Financially Stressed District
- Academically Deficient

Recommended Resources/Support Materials

- Missouri School Public Relations Association – <http://info.csd.org/mospra/mosprahome/html>
- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education – School Laws and Legislation Section - www.dese.mo.gov/
- School and Community Relations, Bagin, Gallagher, and Kindred. Allyn and Bacon (2002)
- [You'd Better Have a Hose If You Want to Put Out the Fire: The Complete Guide to Crisis and Risk Communications](#) by **Rene A. Henry**
- Missouri Association of School Administrators – www.mcsa.org/masa
- Missouri School Boards Association – www.msbnet.org/

Notes to the Instructor

1. This case is one that can be used to determine students' entry level skills in:
 - Communication/Sensitivity
 - Board Relations
 - Financial Issues
 - Legal Issues
 - Local Politics
2. Students will increase their knowledge of boards of education, their power structures and working outside the system.
3. Students will increase their knowledge of contracts and contractual obligations.
4. Students will increase their knowledge financially stressed districts.
5. Students will write a reflection of their findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Scoring Guide

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| 2 | Response specifically cites two of the three: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Models strategies of conflict resolution as applied to the larger political, social, and economic contexts of schooling.▪ Communication occurs among the school community concerning issues and potential changes in the environment in which school operate.▪ The school community works within the framework of policies, laws, and regulations enacted by local, state, and federal authorities. |
| 1 | Response specifically cites one of the three listed above. |
| 0 | Response omits reference to any of the essential facts. |

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Dr.'s Kern and Arnold both teach educational administration courses and have used case studies, vignettes and problem-based learning modules in their classrooms. Each has written for the Missouri Professors of Educational Administration (MPEA) web site for instructional material and has served on the executive board for MPEA.