

What does a Superintendent/District Administrator do?

As I work with students throughout the district, I am never surprised to hear that many don't know what a superintendent/district administrator does. As a former elementary principal and high school associate principal, I understand that the student experience focuses on their building and in the elementary years, they are still developing knowledge that other schools exist both in our community and in other communities. The broadening of their world is a wonderful experience to move through with students. However, when a parent asked the question, I paused to think that this might be a wonderful question to begin with in developing some writing on the website that would share information about the district.

So, let's start with a basic fact. There are two common titles for what I do: superintendent and district administrator. They can be used interchangeably. The true difference between them is that district administrator is the legal term.

The district administrator wears a variety of leadership hats that I can share in no specific order. First, the district administrator ensures sound **fiscal planning** for the district. This includes short-term planning as well as looking ten or twenty years into the future. You can imagine with the recent changes in our economy that this can be challenging. However, our fiscal planning has also benefited from lower interest rates and refinancing that will save us money over the long run. Second, the district administrator is responsible for **instructional leadership that leads to student achievement**. Our initiatives relating to RtI (Response to Intervention), curriculum alignment, and professional development of all teaching and support staff are just a few examples. **Board relations** and ensuring the Board has all needed information to move forward with the vision of the district is a vital part of the role. In addition to this part of the role of working with the Board, there are various governance aspects including compliance with open meetings laws, cooperative development of Board agendas, **Board development** and contract law. The district administrator is also responsible for **general operations**. Buildings and grounds must be maintained at high standards to protect the investment. Processes must be orderly and timely to provide needed materials. Fourth, district administrators are responsible for all **legal compliance** as well as legal services for the district. This includes the **development of policy** with the school board and **administrative guidelines** with our administrative team. Having forward vision in all that we do is also a part of the role. This includes **strategic planning and the execution of that plan** with measureable goals in student achievement and a variety of other areas. **Enhancing and evaluating leadership in the district** also plays a role in the day-to-day activities of the district administrator. Teaching principals is a part of the role as well as building skills within the leadership of the district at the district office. We all continue to grow in our field as research shows us new possibilities for working with students or systemic improvement. **Communication** is also a role for the district administrator. Developing the two annual newsletters for the community to showcase the best of our current practice, community relationships, student achievement and programming is vital to developing community support. Another role of the district administrator can be best described as working with **special projects**. This year, our charter school is one of those special projects. Finally, the role of the district administrator is as the **"face of the district."** Representing our school district locally, statewide and nationally is vital to our learning and continuous growth.

As you can see, the role is varied. It is a commitment to the district and students well beyond a typical work week involving nights and weekends of service. But, it is rewarding beyond measure when the duties of the job allow for a few minutes at a celebration of student achievements like an art show, NHS inductions, an athletic event, choral or band performance. And, it is immensely rewarding as I visit classrooms and see the quality work being done. This is where the work of all our district staff shines in service to our community and region!

Dr. Susan Borden

District Administrator