

ADMINISTRATION

Policy 300-G (A)

Lines of Authority – Guidelines A

Lines of authority are established by the Superintendent to define who is responsible for what function. They are based on a hierarchical bureaucratic theory of organization that uses authority to establish well-defined organizational structures. A strong rational plan for an organization creates the potential for efficient and effective operations.

However, an organization is not just a tidy plan for functional units, it is also a group of people, who may be thought of as a community. The people in an organization must be personally committed to its purposes and proud of the work they do in order for the rational organizational plan, and the lines of authority that define it, to achieve their potential efficiency and effectiveness. Mere compliance is not sufficient. Commitment is required. That cannot be compelled, only invited and nurtured by articulating a strong purpose, creating a sense of membership and nurturing mutually supportive working relationships.

Therefore, open communication is encouraged. Seeking advice or information, and providing guidance or assistance should not be constrained by lines of authority. As stated in Policy 103, "Open respectful communication and collaborative decision-making shall be encouraged in order to promote a sense of common purpose and community amongst trustees, administrators, teachers, support staff, parents and students." Delegation, direction, assigning resources, supervision and evaluation, on the other hand, must follow lines of authority.

Within a particular functional unit, independent judgment and decision-making is to be encouraged and maximized. The minimum necessary control should be exercised by administrators.

While administrators can delegate authority, they cannot delegate responsibility. Therefore, administrators must establish well understood mechanisms for effective two-way exchange of information with those who report to them to ensure that they are well-informed about the activities and experiences of staff who report to them. This will enable them provide the direction and support necessary for the success of these staff.

All personnel are expected to keep the person to whom they are immediately responsible informed of their activities by whatever means the person in charge deems appropriate, and to be active rather than passive in this regard.

Functional Units

The District can be thought of in terms of functional units, each of which is based on a line of authority.

The most fundamental functional unit in the District is the schools, which deliver on the core purpose of the organization to "enable all learners" as per the Board's mandate. The line of authority pertaining to schools is from the Superintendent to the Area Superintendents, to principals, to teachers and support staff.

Continuing Education provides credit and non-credit programs for both school-aged and adult students. From September to June most programs are for adult students and in the summer most are for school age students.

The line of responsibility is from the Superintendent to the Director of Continuing Education, to the Continuing Education administrators, to the staff and instructors they supervise.

All other functional units in the district are intended to support these two. Thus, other lines of authority must maintain close contact with the educational functions in order to ensure that they are serving their needs. The effectiveness of these functional units is to be determined not only in terms of their own efficiency but also in the effectiveness of the support they provide to others.

Business Services is the largest functional unit providing support for educational operations. It is composed of Financial Services and Facilities Services. Financial Services include accounting, payroll and purchasing functions. Facilities Services include maintenance, operations, grounds and transportation functions. The line of authority for these operations is from the Superintendent to the Secretary Treasurer, to the administrators of the financial and facilities functions that constitute Business Services, to the staff they supervise.

Human Resources provides processes and support systems to assist administrators in selecting the highest caliber personnel for all positions throughout the district, and in providing ongoing support for their growth and development. The Department also negotiates and administers collective agreements with unionized staff and manages contracts for administrators. The line of authority is from the Superintendent to the Director of Personnel Services, to the administrators in the department, to the staff they supervise.

Learning Services provides support to both staff and students. Support for staff includes curriculum, instruction and professional development services. Direct support for students includes a wide range of services throughout the assessment to instruction cycle designed to enable all learners, whatever their learning styles or needs. The line of authority is from the Superintendent to the Director of Learning Services, to the administrators in the department, to the staff they supervise. Even when these staff members work directly with a student, the primary responsibility for student programs and progress remains with the teacher of the class to which the student is assigned.

Technology and Communication Services provides support for all technology related hardware, software and networks as well as for telephone and P.A. systems in the school district. This unit also sets standards for individual items of technology and their interaction. The District's emerging Distributed Learning program, Richmond Virtual School, is managed by this functional unit in collaboration with Learning Services.⁷ The line of authority is from the Superintendent to the Director of Technology and Communication Services, to the administrators in the department, to the staff they supervise.

Communication Across Functions

It is essential to establish mechanisms and habits of communication across functions in order to avoid isolation within functional units. Communication across functional boundaries can occur through formally organized cross-functional meetings and systematic distribution of information, but also benefits from mutual knowledge and respect amongst individuals that enables ongoing informal contact.

Executive Team

The administrators with responsibility for each of the primary functional units in the district comprise an "Executive Team" that reports to the Superintendent.

The Superintendent convenes regular meetings of the Executive Team to discuss district issues, seek advice and ensure communication and collaboration amongst the various functional units in the district. Meetings of the Team provide a forum for discussion of challenges and opportunities that its members encounter in fulfilling their individual responsibilities. Minutes are taken and shared in-camera with Trustees to provide them with a window onto the daily operations of the school district.

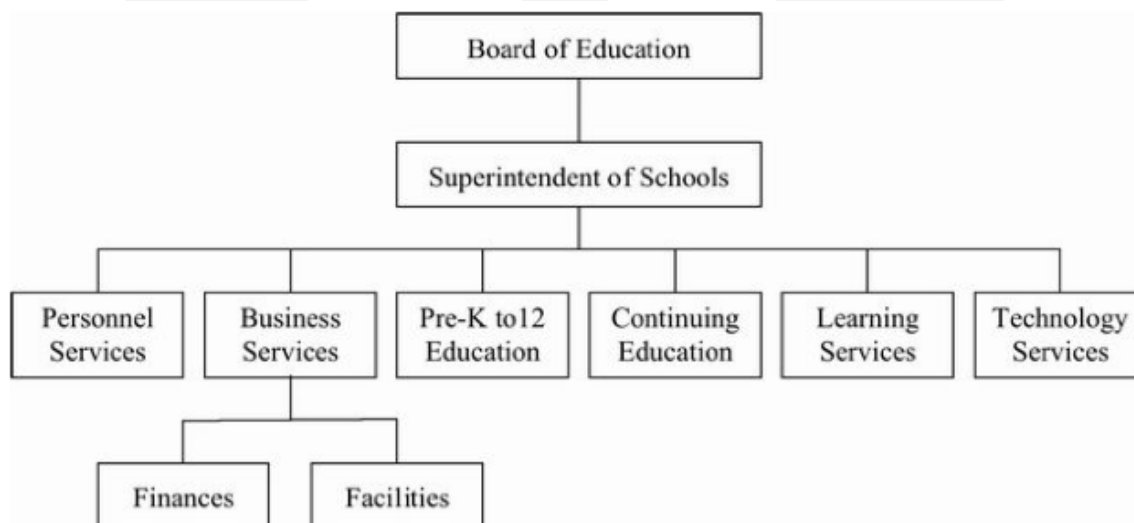
The Executive Team is not a decision-making body. It is a forum for deliberation and support that contributes to well-informed and carefully-considered actions by its members, and to well-integrated actions within the District as a whole. Members of the Executive Team accept responsibility for supporting each other through their collaboration. This enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of all the functional units for which they are responsible, without displacing or diminishing any member's authority.

The responsibilities of members of the Executive Team are shown in the Executive Team Organizational Chart. The members of the Team responsible for service functions will prepare similar organizational charts that define the lines of responsibility within the functions for which they are responsible.

In defining lines of authority and preparing organizational charts, members of the Executive Team will be guided by the following principles. Each member of staff:

- will be told clearly to whom s/he is responsible and for what;
- will be responsible to only one immediate supervisor whenever possible; and
- will be told to whom s/he can appeal in case of disagreement with an immediate supervisor.

Executive Team Organizational Chart



Members of the Executive Team are assigned to these functions as follows.

Human Resources Services: Director of Human Resources

Business Services: Secretary Treasurer

Pre-K to 12 Education: Area Superintendents

Continuing Education: Director of Continuing Education

Learning Services: Director of Learning Services

Technology Services: Director of Technology

⁷When Richmond Virtual School has become sufficiently established, responsibility will be moved from Technology and Communications to Pre-K to 12 Education or Learning Services as deemed appropriate at the time.

