



► PRESERVING THE HERITAGE



► APPRAISING THE PRESENT



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○ SERIES 2 | ○ ISSUE 2 | ○ APRIL 2007



# Trustee *focus*

ADDRESSING KEY ISSUES FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOL TRUSTEES AND PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR A SECURE FUTURE.

**The Christian School's Greatest Need.** This is part two of a three-part series on developing the school's leadership team. Part one focused on stability in leadership and part three will focus on mentoring the CEO.

## Evaluation: A Force for Positive Growth

By John Schimmer, Ed.D.

*"Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account."*  
Hebrews 13:17

The process of annually evaluating the CEO, coupled with the board's own self-evaluation is good for the board, good for the CEO, and good for the school. Where applicable, it is also good for the sponsoring church. Everyone wins when the board places evaluation as a high priority of governance.

### **It's Good For The Board**

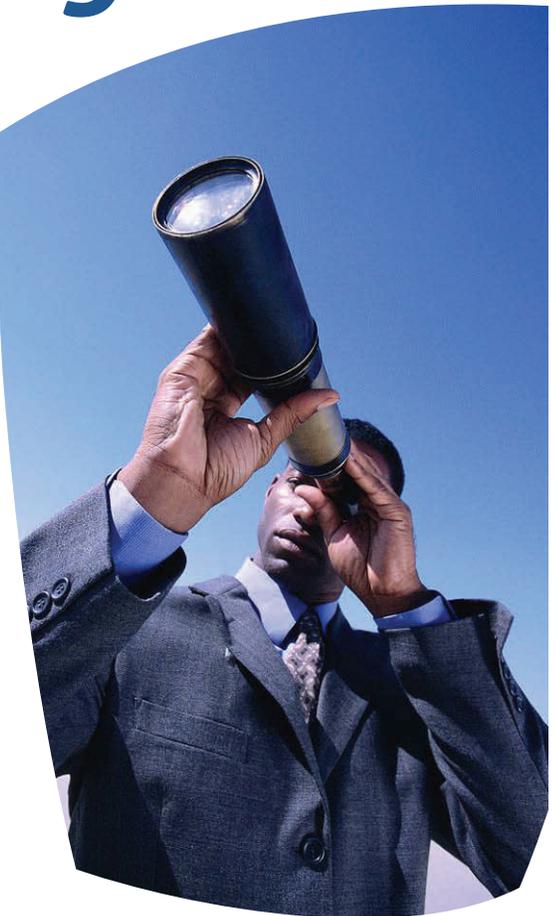
If the trustees fail to accept the responsibility of evaluating the CEO, others will do it for them. From the first day on the job, teachers, students, parents, and individual trustees are making judgments about the CEO. This informal assessment will run the

gamut from appearance to professional skills.

The board must always be able to assure the school's stakeholders that the trustees are working closely with the school head in a supporting, growing, and empowering way.

The evaluation process will help the trustees to further understand the multi-faceted nature, complexities, as well as the moral, spiritual, and legal responsibilities of the CEO position. It also helps the board to annually evaluate the workload and determine when additional administrative assistance is needed.

This collective board process unifies the board concerning the CEO's strengths and weaknesses, which



translates into a **one voice** position, replacing the individual assessments of individual trustees.

### **It's Good For The CEO**

It is extremely important for the board to acknowledge that their head of school is the most important person in



the organization (school) and consequently the trustees are committed to helping him/her be successful. The board evaluation policies assure the CEO that the process will be fair, objective, empowering, and that the completed report represents the one unified voice of the Trustees.

Good leaders want to grow. They enjoy working for boards that see growth as a priority. When a good system is in place, they will accept it as a positive tool for professional growth.

The process helps the CEO to understand explicitly the board's vision, values, and priorities. It keeps the administrator focused on the priorities, and those issues which the board identified as needing specific attention in the next school year such as what needs to be achieved and avoided.

The CEO benefits from the affirmation through commendations received for how well he/she is assisting the board and the school

community in achieving the mission and vision of the school.

### ***It's Good For The School***

When the trustees do a thorough job of annually assessing their own performance and that of the CEO, the entire school community benefits. One of the more important benefits is the longevity of the professional staff. Administrators and teachers enjoy working where they are appreciated and where the board invests time and resources to make things better. When the staff has confidence in the leadership, they willingly commit considerable energy to creating a great school.

Healthy relationships are grounded in trust and respect. When the CEO evaluation is done properly and the intended results are achieved, the level of trust will increase significantly.

Assessment is an essential component of the educative process. It helps the school maintain its vision, uniqueness, and competitive edge. The school's standing with its accrediting agency is also strengthened since regular staff and program assessment is required by most accrediting associations

### ***It's Good For The Church***

When the school is a ministry of one particular church, it is essential that a spirit of trust and cooperation exists between the two entities. The senior pastor, as overseer, empowers the school board to act on behalf of the ministry, and the board empowers the CEO to lead the school. Empowerment and reasonable oversight are essential to team building. The board, in its fiduciary capacity, serves as a trustee

for the owner, the church body. As such, the trustees have the responsibility of making sure the school is, and becomes, all the church wants it to be, avoiding practices or circumstances which may reflect badly on the church or move the school in a direction that is not in harmony with the priorities and goals of the church.

A written policy requiring an annual evaluation of the school's leadership creates a systematic, planned way for the pastor, or his designee, to voice concerns about the school's direction, policies, strategic initiatives, or leadership to the school board. This process, protected by both church and school board policies, supports the *one voice* principle of board leadership, as well as the biblical principle —“all things done in a fitting and an orderly way.” (1 Cor.14:40)

Evaluation increases the confidence of the pastoral staff and church leadership that the school continues to be an integral and inseparable ministry of the church. It also affirms that their input is welcomed, and in matters that affect the overall ministry, the church governing board is the final authority.

When the church leaders know that the school CEO is annually evaluated by the school board, they are assured that proper accountability is in place. A harmonious relationship between the church and school, and between the pastor and the school's leadership team, is a powerful testimony to the congregation, to the school family, and to the community.

### **Getting Started**

Developing a biblical philosophy and your CEO evaluation program policies and procedures will be developed in **Part 3** in the June *Director's Desk*.

**“Assessment is an essential component of the educative process. It helps the school maintain its vision, uniqueness, and competitive marketing edge.”**

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Dr. Schimmer served 27 years as the South-Central Regional Director and 48 years in the field of education, both private and public. Through his service on numerous boards, his leadership with ACISI, and his consulting role, he has influenced more than 300 Christian school boards.

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