

# Regaining Balance



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You have just weathered one of the roughest school years in recent history and you deserve a pat on the back for navigating those uncharted waters. No one had a pandemic playbook to pull off the shelf with instructions for dealing with the harsh realities the pandemic brought to bear on public education. Regardless, with the leadership of dedicated school board members and administrators, along with devoted and steadfast teachers and support personnel, the 2020-21 school year is over. It was not a perfect year, but in hindsight, it could have been much worse, logistically, and academically. Anyone with any knowledge of the hard work and sacrifice that was necessary to survive the year and still remain sane knows that it took a series of extraordinary feats to see us through this past school year. My hat is off to you!

Now, as we shift into the summer, district preparations are already well underway for the start of the 2021-22 school year. It should be a year we will remember equally as much as the year we have just left because, hopefully, it will be the year we return to something that resembles what we remember as normal. Budget planning has begun, staffing needs for this fall are being considered, facilities are being made ready for the start of another school year. Everyone is cautiously, but optimistically breathing a little easier, at least with respect to the issues and edicts from COVID-19.

It is a good time for all school board members to restore your governance oversight equilibrium as you transition away from operating in crisis mode. Finding your balance after teetering on the edges of multiple issues throughout last year will enable you to realistically assess where you have been, what lessons you can add to your leadership arsenal, and how best to move forward in a post-pandemic reality. Having leadership tested in a crisis can be a rewarding experience, but more so in retrospect. Most importantly, crisis leadership is the best course of action . . . in a crisis. Calmer waters require a different leadership approach to be effective, one that is more calculated and methodical rather than reactionary. The first step is to recognize your own crisis leadership and strategic leadership styles.

Restoring balance may not be as easy as flipping a switch, but take a deep breath, review where you have been and then revisit where you want to go. Concentrating on your strategic initiatives, the things you may have had to postpone during the events of this past year, can help to reestablish and reenergize your board-superintendent team. Our new normal may not look exactly like our old normal did, but regaining balance will help ensure you reground your leadership focus.