

Your other option would be to hire a consultant to conduct an independent, third-party evaluation of the operation of your Business Office. Such a consultant would compare your Business Office operation with similar offices at other schools.

Whichever approach you choose, the review process will be similar. The evaluation should cover:


Staffing – Are there sufficient people, properly trained, with the appropriate equipment to do the work being asked of them? Alternatively, do you have too many people with overlapping job responsibilities, wasting resources that might be better deployed?

Financial policies and procedures – For example, do you bundle all your tuition and fees into one amount or bill everything separately? Multiple charges equal multiple transactions and billing entries (and multiple calls from parents with questions about their bill). If you schedule your Finance Committee meetings three business days after the end of each month, how feasible is it for the Business Manager to produce a monthly financial statement in that span of time, and to get it into the hands of the Finance Committee for review prior to the meeting?

Workload – A review of the Business Manager's responsibilities may reveal that too much is expected of this person. The Business Manager's job has grown more complex due to increasing requests for financial information as well as outside regulations (human resource, benefits, environmental, etc.).

The report should provide an independent analysis of the problem and proposed solutions. Using the report, you and the Business Manager should develop a plan to resolve the concerns, and the plan should be submitted to the HSEC.

From there, it is up to you and the Business Manager to work through the plan to rectify the concerns of the Board. Keeping the Board informed of your progress will be critical. The Board takes its fiduciary responsibilities seriously. In the end, the members have to be satisfied that their concerns have been addressed.

The best way to avoid Board anxiety about financial management is to work diligently to strengthen and maintain your fiscal success relationship with your Business Manager. Being an active partner in the financial management of the school with your Business Manager is essential to effective school leadership. 

Plant, Facilities, Equipment, and Services

Items

On-site Defibrillators Save Lives

• • At least 250,000 Americans die each year of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA), largely because defibrillators don't reach them in time. More than 90% of victims survive when defibrillation occurs within two minutes of SCA. The chance of survival drops to less than 5% if defibrillation is delayed more than 10 minutes. Private-independent schools, particularly those with sports programs, should consider purchasing a defibrillator in case of such an emergency.

Schools may be liable if they do not have defibrillators on campus. The Olmsted Falls School District in Ohio was sued by the family of a young athlete who suffered cardiac arrest after winning a race in gym class. She died six days later. The \$2.5 million lawsuit claimed that school officials did not make provisions for notification of emergency personnel from the outdoor track and did not have defibrillators on the grounds.

Philips, a leader in defibrillation technology, has developed a device that is perfect for school situations. The HeartStart Onsite Defibrillator was designed for people with minimal training. It weighs only three pounds (with battery and pads cartridge) and is easy to use with voice instructions that are paced to the user's actions. The pads, once applied, automatically assess the victim's heart rhythm and determine if a shock is needed. The machine directs the user accordingly. If a shock is not needed, the device provides instructions for CPR treatment.

The defibrillator reminds the user to call emergency medical services. When the EMS team arrives, a summary of care can be retrieved from the device's internal memory, providing information for further treatment.


To learn more about this product, visit the Philips Web site at www.medical.philips.com/heartstart

Beat Car Pool 'Creep' With Electronic Dismissals

• • The after-school car pool process can be a nightmare. Frustrated parents wait in long lines as teachers with walkie-talkies direct students to their appropriate rides. The late-afternoon ritual can be tedious at best, and even dangerous if the school parking lot is chaotic.

St. Elizabeth Catholic School (MD) found a better solution. The school turned to MHR Technologies, Inc., a Maryland-based company that provides schools with software and services to help facilitate a safer and faster student pick-up process. To speed up the procedure, the company mounted small plastic tags on parents' windshields; the radio frequency identification tags (similar to E-ZPass™ tags) emit coded radio signals. Receivers were placed in the school parking lot. When parents arrive, the school computer system is automatically alerted, and the appropriate children can then be dismissed.

Each tag contains information that is car-specific. If parents wish to change any information – such as a child being picked up by another car pool group – they can do so through a personal computer using an approved password. St. Elizabeth's parents and school staff members report vast improvements in the dismissal process. "I used to get here 25 minutes early each day to not wait in the line," one parent said. "Now I come closer to dismissal."

To learn more about this product, visit MHR Technologies online at mhrtechnologies.com 

Correction:

In the article "Board/Head Relationships: Brutal Facts and Eternal Faith" (*Ideas & Perspectives*, 28-16-63), we erroneously cited NAIS. We regret our error.