

Chapter 1 : The Dysfunctional School by Michael Reist

The Dysfunctional School is a call to all ad In a collection of short reflections, the author describes some of the dysfunctional attitudes and behaviours that diminish learning and hurt children. The Dysfunctional School is a call to all adults responsible for the care of young people to question the traditional approaches of what Michael.

I cooked and cleaned and made sure my little brothers got off to school. My Mom was always depressed and stayed in bed -- she was in the hospital a lot. I guess I never really was a kid. Now, I work hard to get As, take on lots of responsibility, put on this competent front. Inside I still feel really empty. Most of the time I feel pretty alone. They tell me what my career should be, who my friends should be, what kind of car I should drive, and who I should date. Adults raised in dysfunctional families frequently report difficulties forming and maintaining intimate relationships, maintaining positive self-esteem, and trusting others; they fear a loss of control, and deny their feelings and reality Vannicelli, This brochure will help you understand and recognize family dysfunction and its effects, provide some strategies to help overcome these effects, and list some resources for further help. Family dysfunction can be any condition that interferes with healthy family functioning. Healthy families tend to return to normal functioning after the crisis passes. In dysfunctional families, however, problems tend to be chronic and children do not consistently get their needs met. How Do Healthy Families Work? Healthy families are not perfect; they may have yelling, bickering, misunderstanding, tension, hurt, and anger - but not all the time. In healthy families emotional expression is allowed and accepted. Family members can freely ask for and give attention. Rules tend to be made explicit and remain consistent, but with some flexibility to adapt to individual needs and particular situations. Healthy families allow for individuality; each member is encouraged to pursue his or her own interests, and boundaries between individuals are honored. Children are consistently treated with respect, and do not fear emotional, verbal, physical, or sexual abuse. Parents can be counted on to provide care for their children. Children are given responsibilities appropriate to their age and are not expected to take on parental responsibilities. Finally, in healthy families everyone makes mistakes; mistakes are allowed. Perfection is unattainable, unrealistic, and potentially dull and sterile. There are many types of dysfunction in families. Some parents under-function, leaving their children to fend for themselves. Other parents over-function, never allowing their children to grow up and be on their own. Others are inconsistent or violate basic boundaries of appropriate behavior. Below is a brief description of some types of parental dysfunction along with some common problems associated with each. Deficient Parents Deficient parents hurt their children more by omission than by commission. Frequently, chronic mental illness or a disabling physical illness contributes to parental inadequacy. Children tend to take on adult responsibilities from a young age in these families. Children are robbed of their own childhood, and they learn to ignore their own needs and feelings. Because these children are simply unable to play an adult role and take care of their parents, they often feel inadequate and guilty. These feelings continue into adulthood. Controlling Parents Unlike the deficient parents described above, controlling parents fail to allow their children to assume responsibilities appropriate for their age. These parents continue dominating and making decisions for their children well beyond the age at which this is necessary. Controlling parents are often driven by a fear of becoming unnecessary to their children. This fear leaves them feeling betrayed and abandoned when their children become independent Forward, On the other hand, these children frequently feel resentful, inadequate, and powerless. Transitions into adult roles are quite difficult, as these adults frequently have difficulties making decisions independent from their parents. When they act independently these adults feel very guilty, as if growing up were a serious act of disloyalty. Alcoholic Parents Alcoholic families tend to be chaotic and unpredictable. Promises are neither kept nor remembered. Expectations vary from one day to the next. Parents may be strict at times and indifferent at others. In addition, emotional expression is frequently forbidden and discussion about the alcohol use or related family problems is usually nonexistent. Family members are usually expected to keep problems a secret, thus preventing anyone from seeking help. All of these factors leave children feeling insecure, frustrated, and angry. Children often feel there must be something wrong with them which makes their parents

behave this way. Mistrust of others, difficulty with emotional expression, and difficulties with intimate relationships carry over into adulthood. Children of alcoholics are at much higher risk for developing alcoholism than are children of non-alcoholics. Abusive Parents Abuse can be verbal, physical, or sexual. Some verbal abusers are very direct, while others use subtle put-downs disguised as humor. Both types are just as damaging. Definitions of physical abuse vary widely. Many parents, at one time or another, have felt the urge to strike their child. With physically abusive parents, however, the urge is frequent and little effort is made to control this impulse. The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act defines physical abuse as "the infliction of physical injuries such as bruises, burns, welts, cuts, bone or skull fractures; these are caused by kicking, punching, biting, beating, knifing, strapping, paddling, etc. Physically abusive parents can create an environment of terror for the child, particularly since violence is often random and unpredictable. Abused children often feel anger. Children of abusive parents have tremendous difficulties developing feelings of trust and safety even in their adult lives. While parents may justify or rationalize verbal or physical abuse as discipline aimed at somehow helping the child, there is no rationalization for sexual abuse. Sexual abuse can be any physical contact between an adult and child where that contact must be kept secret. When physical contact is shrouded in secrecy then it is most likely inappropriate. Sexual abuse happens to both boys and girls. It is perpetrated by both men and women. It cuts across lines of race, socioeconomic level, education level, and religious affiliation. In most cases, sexual abuse is part of an overall family pattern of dysfunction, disorganization, and inappropriate role boundaries. Responsibility for sexual abuse in all cases rests entirely with the adult. No child is responsible for being abused. Most sexually abused children are too frightened of the consequences for themselves and their families to risk telling another adult what is happening. As a result they grow into adulthood carrying feelings of self-loathing, shame, and worthlessness. They tend to be self-punishing and have considerable difficulties with relationships and with sexuality. Regardless of the kind of dysfunction or abuse, effects vary widely across individuals. Support from other healthy adults, success in other areas, or positive changes in the family can help prevent or minimize negative effects. The following questions may help you identify how you may have been or continue to be affected. Adults raised with family dysfunction report a variety of long-term effects. The following questions may help you assess your own situation. Answering "Yes" to these may indicate some effects from family dysfunction. Most people could likely identify with some of them. If you find yourself answering "Yes" to over half of them, you likely have some long-term effects of living in a dysfunctional family. If you find yourself answering "Yes" to the majority of them you might consider seeking some additional help. Do you find yourself needing approval from others to feel good about yourself? Regardless of the source of dysfunction, you have survived. You have likely developed a number of valuable skills to get you through tough circumstances. Consequently, it is important to first stop and take stock. You may find that much of what you learned in your family is valuable. Many of the survival behaviors you developed are your best assets. For example, people who grow up in dysfunctional families often have finely tuned empathy for others; they are often very achievement-oriented and highly successful in some areas of their lives; they are often resilient to stress and adaptive to change. In examining changes you may want to make in yourself, it is important not to lose sight of your good qualities. Negative effects from growing up in dysfunctional families often stem from survival behaviors that were very helpful when you were growing up, but may become problematic in your adult life. Remember that you spent years learning and practicing your old survival skills, so it may take awhile to learn and practice new behaviors. In most dysfunctional families children tend to learn to doubt their own intuition and emotional reactions. Often outside support provides an objective perspective and much-needed affirmation which will help you learn to trust your own reactions. Help or support can take many forms: Kansas State Counseling Services offers a variety of therapy groups each semester. Learn to Identify and Express Emotions. While this often results in very good sensitivity to others, you may have neglected sensitivity to yourself. Stop each day and identify emotions you are or have been experiencing.

Chapter 2 : 5 Signs of a Dysfunctional Classroom | Education Closet

The purpose of this article is to describe how dysfunctional behavior can interfere with the school's commitment to the learning of each student. All Teams Are Potentially Dysfunctional Lencioni () wrote, "Like it or not, all teams are potentially dysfunctional."

Disrespect ; [7] especially contempt. Emotional intolerance family members not allowed to express the "wrong" emotions. Stifled speech children not allowed to dissent or question authority. Hypocrisy "Do as I say, not as I do. Judgmental statements or demonization "You are a liar! Gender prejudice treats one gender of children fairly; the other unfairly. Discussion and exposure to sexuality: Older siblings given either no or excessive authority over younger siblings with respect to their age difference and level of maturity. Frequent withholding of consent "blessing" for culturally common, lawful, and age-appropriate activities a child wants to take part in. Regularly forcing children to attend activities for which they are extremely over- or under-qualified e. While many instances of such manipulation occur in shared custody situations that have resulted from separation or divorce, it can also take place in intact families, where it is known as triangulation. List of other dysfunctional styles[edit] "Using" destructively narcissistic parents who rule by fear and conditional love. Abusing parents who use physical violence, or emotionally , or sexually abuse their children. Perfectionist fixating on order, prestige, power, or perfect appearances, while preventing their child from failing at anything. Dogmatic or cult -like harsh and inflexible discipline , with children not allowed, within reason, to dissent, question authority , or develop their own value system. Inequitable parenting going to extremes for one child while continually ignoring the needs of another. Abuse among siblings parents fail to intervene when a sibling physically or sexually abuses another sibling. Abandonment a parent who willfully separates from their children, not wishing any further contact, and in some cases without locating alternative, long-term parenting arrangements, leaving them as orphans. Role reversal parents who expect their minor children to take care of them instead. Ultra- egalitarianism either a much younger child is permitted to do whatever an older child may, or an older child must wait years until a younger child is mature enough. Dynamical[edit] Coalitions are subsystems within families with more rigid boundaries and are thought to be a sign of family dysfunction. The polarized family a parent and one or more children on each side of the conflict. The balkanized family named after the three-way war in the Balkans where alliances shift back and forth. Free-for-all a family that fights in a "free-for-all" style, though may become polarized when range of possible choices is limited. Children[edit] Unlike divorce, and to a lesser extent, separation, there is often no record of an "intact" family being dysfunctional. As a result, friends, relatives, and teachers of such children may be completely unaware of the situation. The six basic roles[edit] Children growing up in a dysfunctional family have been known to adopt or be assigned one or more of the following six basic roles: The Mascot or Family Clown: Effects on children[edit] Children of dysfunctional families, either at the time, or as they grow older, may also: Have moderate to severe mental health issues, including possible depression , anxiety , [17] and suicidal thoughts. Become addicted to smoking, alcohol , or drugs , especially if parents or friends have done the same. Bully or harass others, or be an easy victim thereof possibly taking a dual role in different settings. Have mixed feelings of love&€"hate towards certain family members. Have difficulty forming healthy relationships within their peer group usually due to shyness or a personality disorder. Spend an inordinate amount of time alone watching television, playing video games, surfing the Internet, listening to music, and other activities which lack in-person social interaction.

Chapter 3 : Dysfunctional family - Wikipedia

The dysfunctional school - Uncomfortable truths and awkward insights on school, learning and teaching Here is a book that looks at schools from the inside, from the point of view of.

Email The Eight Most Common Characteristics of a Dysfunctional Family Far from the idyllic families that were portrayed on radio and television fifty years ago, families that are depicted in media nowadays are more realistic, in the sense that they often exhibit characteristics of dysfunction. While the term "dysfunctional family" is thrown around somewhat carelessly nowadays, there are certain hallmark characteristics of dysfunctional families that are common. Does a family that has one of these characteristics automatically qualify as "dysfunctional"? Of course, it depends on the severity of the problem and the way in which it cascades to cause other problems. Here is a list of some of the most common qualities of a dysfunctional family.

Dysfunctional Family Characteristic 1 - Addiction One of the most prominent characteristics of a dysfunctional family is addiction on the part of one or more of its members. This addiction need not be to drugs or alcohol, but it typically manifests itself by making it difficult for family members to communicate, and may affect the family financially. Typically addiction is a problem suffered by the adults in the family, though adult children and teenagers may suffer from addictions in various forms.

Dysfunctional Family Characteristic 2 - Control Another hallmark characteristic of dysfunctional families is control. Control means that one member of the family exerts his or her will on some or all of the other family members. This may manifest itself, for example, as a husband not permitting his wife to see male friends, or as a parent not allowing their child to go to reasonable school events, such as football games and dances. Control usually occurs from spouse to spouse or from parent to child in a dysfunctional family. This control usually results in emotional "stunting" and may make people feel as if they are not entitled to an opinion or to a life of their own. Control may be overt, or it may be in the form of causing people to feel guilty for wanting to "step outside the box." Typically, fear results from the unpredictability of a single or multiple members. This may be unpredictability with regard to financial matters, emotional state, or reactions to novel situations. This affects a family by making its members fearful of the actions of a single or multiple members. Typically an adult plays this role, and may be a spouse or parent.

Dysfunctional Family Characteristic 4 - Conflict A more obvious indicator of a dysfunctional family is conflict. While a certain amount of conflict is expected in a normal family, constant, heated conflict is not. If a serious argument erupts over slight misunderstandings on a frequent and unyielding basis, there is a good chance that there is a certain level of dysfunction within the family. Likewise, undertones of conflict and resentment can also be an indicator of a dysfunctional family. The conflict may also take place in passive-aggressive terms. Conflict may occur between any member of a family, and affects the family by increasing tension and resentment among its members.

Dysfunctional Family Characteristic 5 - Abuse Abuse, whether physical or emotional, is another characteristic of a dysfunctional family. The way in which abuse affects a family is obvious, as it punishes and diminishes a single or multiple family members. Abuse typically occurs from one spouse to the other, or from a parent to a child. Sometimes children also abuse each other, whether through physical or emotional means.

Dysfunctional Family Characteristic 6 - Perfectionism Although it may not seem to be a characteristic of a dysfunctional family, perfectionism very much is one. Perfectionism can be a reflection of unrealistic expectations towards other family members, and may also be an indicator of the areas in which the perfectionist family member feels that he or she is inadequate. Perfectionism may result in low self-esteem in other family members, and may be self-perpetuating. Typically, perfectionism occurs in parents towards their offspring.

Dysfunctional Family Characteristic 7 - Poor Communication Poor communication is another hallmark of a dysfunctional family. Communication may be strained, ineffective, or nonexistent. Family members may have difficulty communicating their wants and needs to other members, which can result in misunderstandings and little self-expression. Poor communication often occurs throughout the entire dysfunctional family.

Dysfunctional Family Characteristic 8 - Lack of Diversity A lack of diversity in a family is a sign that a family may be dysfunctional. Diversity, in this instance, refers primarily to differences in interests and beliefs between family

members. If all of the family members share the same interests and beliefs, there is a high probability that one member of the family is acting to control and manipulate the others. An example of this would be several children from a family that all have the same interests and aspirations as one of their parents. A lack of diversity usually occurs in families where there are children, though some people may be emotionally quashed in romantic relationships to the point where they adopt all of the interests of their partner.

Chapter 4 : Is your school board dysfunctional?

The Dysfunctional School is a call to all adults responsible for the care of young people to question the traditional approaches of what Michael Reist refers to as "factory schooling." "The processes of school have lead to the loss of the love of learning in most students.

Not only will a dysfunctional board of directors often fail to make decisions that are in the best interest of the organization, its dysfunction has the potential to move outside the confines of the boardroom, causing negative publicity. Knowing the signs of a dysfunctional board of directors will help you fix the board before larger problems occur.

Lack of Confidentiality Much of what the board of directors discusses should be kept within the organization. When board members do not keep this information confidential, problems often ensue. Members of the board may think they are simply sharing the information with close friends, but it could be misconstrued and released to stockholders, causing undue stress, or shared with competing organizations. Leaking information is a sign of dysfunction within a board.

Conflicting Agendas Board members need to be on the same page when it comes to the future of an organization and its initiatives. If board members have conflicting agendas related to the direction of the organization, it will be hard for the board to make decisions. In addition to being on the same page as one another, board members must also be on the same page as the head of the organization.

Lack of Order Meetings Involving the board of directors should function in an orderly manner. If board members quickly jump from topic to topic, argue with one another or fail to discuss the most important matters at hand, the board is dysfunctional. Board meetings should contain a designated leader and an agenda to make them productive.

Lack of Respect Occasionally board members experience a lack of respect for the CEO of a company and vice versa. This often happens when board members have been in place for a long time and a new CEO enters the company. All parties must develop respect for one another based on their common interest in working for the good of the organization in order to keep the board from becoming dysfunctional. A lack of respect between new and older board members or factions is a sign that there might be dysfunctionality within the board.

Hostile Environment A meeting of the board of directors can be a hostile environment, particularly when board members do not get along with one another. This type of environment stifles productivity and prevents board members from sharing constructive opinions. A meeting may become a venue for personal attacks rather than for focusing on coming to business decisions or providing constructive discourse.

Secret Meetings While some information the board discusses should remain confidential, organizations should become concerned if a board of directors regularly holds secret meetings or meet on an unofficial basis. Not only may some board members be left out of these meetings, but decisions could be made without the input of crucial members of the organization, or with unethical motives.

Personal and Political Agendas Board members should not allow personal and political agendas to cloud their decision-making. If board members continually propose moves that would benefit them personally or take a political stance, the image of the company could be compromised. Personal and political agendas also lead to more disagreements among board members, and they are indicative of a dysfunctional board.

Lack of Trust Employees in an organization must trust the board of directors in order for it to be functional. If the majority of employees do not trust members of the board, the advice and decisions the board makes may be ignored or may lead to high turnover rates within the company, among other things.

Dominating Members Members of a board of directors should work as a team to make decisions to benefit the organization. This may involve harassment of other board members, talking loudly to dominate the conversation or immediately shooting down any dissenting opinions.

Nonparticipants Some board members sit on a board only for the prestige of the position. These members may attend meetings but rarely speak or offer any opinions on decisions. Those who refuse to participate in the conversation may be as damaging as members who control the conversation and take up space that could be filled by members who work to advance the organization. Too many nonparticipants around a board table spells "dysfunctional."

Chapter 5 : Are 80% of South African schools “dysfunctional”? | Africa Check

I visited almost fifteen schools this past year as an arts integration expert and saw many great teachers and students working together to create great Dysfunctional classroom experiences.

Dysfunctional Family Relationships Understanding Dysfunctional Relationship Patterns in Your Family Many people hope that once they leave home, they will leave their family and childhood problems behind. However, many find that they experience similar problems, as well as similar feelings and relationship patterns, long after they have left the family environment. Ideally, children grow up in family environments which help them feel worthwhile and valuable. They learn that their feelings and needs are important and can be expressed. Children growing up in such supportive environments are likely to form healthy, open relationships in adulthood. Children growing up in such families are likely to develop low self esteem and feel that their needs are not important or perhaps should not be taken seriously by others. As a result, they may form unsatisfying relationships as adults.

Types Of Dysfunctional Families The following are some examples of patterns that frequently occur in dysfunctional families. One or both parents have addictions or compulsions e. One or both parents use the threat or application of physical violence as the primary means of control. Children may have to witness violence, may be forced to participate in punishing siblings, or may live in fear of explosive outbursts. One or both parents are unable to provide, or threaten to withdraw, financial or basic physical care for their children. Similarly, one or both parents fail to provide their children with adequate emotional support. One or both parents exert a strong authoritarian control over the children. Often these families rigidly adhere to a particular belief religious, political, financial, personal. Compliance with role expectations and with rules is expected without any flexibility. There is a great deal of variability in how often dysfunctional interactions and behaviors occur in families, and in the kinds and the severity of their dysfunction. Be forced to take sides in conflicts between parents. Be ignored, discounted, or criticized for their feelings and thoughts. Have parents that are inappropriately intrusive, overly involved and protective. Have parents that are inappropriately distant and uninvolved with their children. Have excessive structure and demands placed on their time, choice of friends, or behavior; or conversely, receive no guidelines or structure. Experience rejection or preferential treatment. Be restricted from full and direct communication with other family members. Be allowed or encouraged to use drugs or alcohol. Be locked out of the house. Be slapped, hit, scratched, punched, or kicked. Later as adults, these people may find it difficult to trust the behaviors and words of others, their own judgements and actions, or their own senses of selfworth. Not surprisingly, they may experience problems in their academic work, their relationships, and in their very identities. But that permission can come only from you. Like most people, parents in dysfunctional families often feel threatened by changes in their children. Change begins with you. Some specific things you can do include: Identify painful or difficult experiences that happened during your childhood. Make a list of your behaviors, beliefs, etc. Next to each item on the list, write down the behavior, belief, etc. Pick one item on your list and begin practicing the alternate behavior or belief. Choose the easiest item first. Once you are able to do the alternate behavior more often than the original, pick another item on the list and practice changing it, too.

Special Considerations As you make changes, keep in mind the following: Stop trying to be perfect. You do not have the power to make others change. Set clear limits “ e. Recognize that when you stop behaving the way you used to, even for a short time, there may be adverse reactions from your family or friends. Anticipate what the reactions will be e. Changes may be slow and gradual; however, as you continue to practice new and healthier behaviors, they will begin to become part of your day to day living. Simon and Schuster,

Chapter 6 : Five Dysfunctions of a Professional Learning Community – Whole Child Education

Despite investments, community goodwill and some good ideas, efforts at school reform often fail because of a lack of trust among teachers, principals and parents. Frequently, this creates.

By Rob Levit T Do you recognize yourself in one or more? We are all human and we all have off days and weeks. The fixes are easy, just have the courage and self-awareness to realize things have got to change. PS – there are other signs too, please share them and propose fixes! The teacher is checking emails, texting or grading papers while students are doing worksheets. We are the role models for students while they are at school. If students are doing worksheets , walk around and check their work. Sit down with a struggling student and give them the individual attention they need. The teacher yells and scolds students on a frequent basis. After the initial shock of being yelled at and scolded, students become desensitized to it and ignore the teacher. Remember how the adults talked in the Peanuts cartoons? On Day 1 of school and everyday after, establish and review a three step code of conduct, create clear and identifiable consequences, and make the entire group responsible for discipline. Create a simple system of rewards that is easily trackable and that students participate in. Be ultraconsistent in reinforcing the expectations, over and over and most importantly – catch students in the act of doing great work and praising it. Students text, use earbuds or check social media in class. Electronic devices without intentional educational purpose are destroying classroom structure and distracting BOTH students and teachers. If students have finished all their work doubtful!! Problem students are placed in the back of the Dysfunctional classroom and ignored. Placing problem students in the back of the room is the worst strategy possible. Kids know what it means – it means that you have given up on them and the other students know it too. It sends a negative validation to problem students. Create opportunities for high performing students to help struggling students. Ask struggling students to come up and point things out on the smartboard, maps, etc. Get them out of their seats. Make them your assistant, paper passer, etc. Whatever you do, do not allow them to be discarded to the back of the room and isolated from the class if at all possible. Your Dysfunctional classroom should be vibrant, organized and filled with colorful displays by students. Generic classrooms produce generic students. Students get great satisfaction at seeing their work displayed. Displaying student work shows that you care about what they produce and want to showcase it. Plan your calendar to include one arts integration project to be displayed per quarter. Allow students to speak about their own work and how they produced it. Start a student journal project so that at the end of each unit, they have the chance to sketch and write about what they learned. Share entries at the end of each unit. He is currently Executive Director of Creating Communities and was the first Artist-In-Residence at Hospice of the Chesapeake, where he created and infused healing activities for the well-being of staff, families and patients.

Chapter 7 : Dysfunctional Systems - Wikipedia

with the adage that a dysfunctional school is what one defines a dysfunctional school to be, and it will explore the conditions and consequences of conceptual variations. Keywords: dysfunctional schools, operational definition, policy, intervention, South Africa.

We looked at the evidence. The article does not say when or where the minister was reported to have made the claim. Roets said that the figure was also included in a article titled Education in SA: A tale of two systems by Nicholas Spaul, an education researcher in the economics department at Stellenbosch University. When is a school dysfunctional? Children line up on the first of school in January But the department no longer classifies schools according to whether they are functional or dysfunctional, basic education spokesman Elijah Mhlanga told Africa Check. Mhlanga said that the department profiles schools based on their performance. High schools were assessed based on their matric examination results and primary schools were evaluated using their annual national assessment results. He has yet to respond. Two types of school systems Education researcher Spaul has conducted further research in this area since He said that the department monitored various things in schools including curriculum implementation, school nutrition and governance and management. High schools show similar trends Research conducted on grade 9 pupils in South Africa showed similar results to the primary school data. The study tested 11, pupils in South African schools in and It said that it has its own ranking system, based on performance, but did not provide Africa Check with any evidence to counter the claim. While the test data is between five and eight years old it is the most recently published standardised testing available. The correct figures for South Africa are 9, grade six students and 1, grade six teachers in nearly schools. We apologise for the error and have corrected it in the report. This is subject to: Crediting Africa Check in the byline, keeping all hyperlinks to the sources used and adding this sentence at the end of your publication: View the original piece on their website", with a link back to this page. Comment on this report.

Chapter 8 : dysfunctional - Dictionary Definition : calendrierdelascience.com

South Africa's "dysfunctional" educational system is one of seven ways in which the country's government "abuses black people". This was argued by the deputy chief executive of the Afrikaner civil-rights organisation AfriForum, Ernst Roets, in a Mail & Guardian article published earlier this month.

Dysfunctional board behaviors have common denominators. These checkpoints can help you avoid them. While the conversation can center on administrators and teachers, the topic seems to surface most frequently when people talk about school boards. On this planet leadership is not the result of electoral success. Examples of elected school board members who are dysfunctional leaders A newly elected school board member files a freedom of information request two weeks after his election and before attending his first board meeting! Because his family squirrels away money in such an account, he assumes that the school district does the same thing. A newly elected school board member wants to approve every news release issued by the school district, and wants final editing rights on the school district newsletter. A newly elected school board majority votes to assign members of the board to district classrooms for the purpose of evaluating teachers. A waiter elected to the school board begins his tenure by telling cooks what to serve in the school lunch program. A newly elected school board member spills all the details of an executive session on negotiations to the union. A school board member requests a master key so that he can randomly visit class rooms and school offices nights and weekends. But the reality is that none of them is moving the system forward, let alone contributing to the well being of students. They are -- as business people might say -- "in over their heads. Fortunately, dysfunctional behaviors like those above have some common denominators. That makes them easier to diagnose and remedy. Other commonalities include the absence of school board orientation programs, a lack of district direction, and a planning process that never progresses to implementation. The "checkpoints" below can signal dysfunction. If your board keeps hitting potholes, try to determine which of the checkpoints might be related to your bumpy ride. And, if your school board is doing okay, use them as reminders that will keep you on course. School Board Checkpoints To get in synch with your community and exhibit true leadership, understand that Vision, mission and priorities are the domain of the school board and superintendent Too many school districts have allowed school improvement teams or other groups to develop district direction and purpose. School improvement teams exist to improve teaching and learning. The school board and superintendent must be concerned with the entire school district -- "the big picture. When a school improvement team or other special focus group takes over vision, mission, and priorities, the perspective tends to be rather narrow. School district vision, mission, and priorities are big picture concerns. Being prepared makes everyone on the board look good. Remember, the perception is the reality. Some people have a great deal of confidence in their school boards; others have very little. Most are somewhere between the extremes of the continuum. If these checkpoints indicate that you might be on the wrong side of the "confidence continuum," there are some corrective measures you can take. Does it clearly state where the school district is headed and why? Lack of a vision unravels boards and can make board life miserable. Worse yet, it can result in a drifting school district. Does your district have a process designed to move it toward its vision? Does the process engage people in meaningful ways? Is it systemic and continuous? Boards that generate confidence project an image of professionalism, fairness, and efficiency. Board members understand their role and their responsibilities. And their agenda is always in the best interest of the entire community. Checkpoints can provide insights into the way your school board functions. And, they can serve as keys to unlocking public confidence in you and the schools that you represent. This means providing quality programs and services in such a way that people want to do business with our schools. Banach is Assistant Superintendent at the St. Clair Intermediate School District How boards conduct their business is as important as the business that they conduct. Public confidence should increase as people observe you in action. If your board meetings are the hottest program on cable TV, seek help. It takes hard work to understand the full range of issues and agenda items facing a school district. When board members take action based on informed consensus, they need to explain what was involved in their decision-making process; e. Yet, despite the hard

work and the explanations, narrow-minded people sometimes say that board members are "rubber stamps. Asking questions is okay. Sincere questions demonstrate that you want to learn. School boards are responsible to all the people in their community Every decision about every item must be made with the interests of everyone in mind. School districts are often called school systems. People who study systems tell us that a system is " People who do not serve on boards find this difficult to understand. When people address the school district through employees or members of the school board, they are expressing some thing of special interest to them. The school district is not well served by school board members who play the Lone Ranger or Rambo. Understand how your board "does business. Lack of attention to these things can derail a board, and when things start going downhill these are the things that get really important. Deal with them now. School board members are targets. People try to pick them off, one at a time. Make sure you know about those board "understandings. In a democratic society, the majority rules. There is dialog and debate, and then a vote. The vote determines outcome and direction. Executive sessions are permitted by law so that certain matters can be discussed in confidence. Leaking confidential information is a violation of the public trust When school board members play "stump the stars. Ambushes and sniping are terrorist techniques, and surprises should be saved for birthdays. Teachers, administrators, and other staff members are usually on the school board agenda to inform or to enhance board member understanding, not to be embarrassed or "raked over the coals. When board members attend school events and district activities, people notice. You can share what you "soak up" with your board colleagues at the next meeting. Communication means different things to different people. When people say that there has been a communication breakdown, do some serious thinking about what they really mean.

Chapter 9 : Top Ten Signs of a Dysfunctional Board of Directors | calendrierdelascience.com

Whether or not a school is dysfunctional depends largely on how dysfunctionality in schools is defined and measured. Dysfunctionality, as any construct, is subject to definition and interpretation, and it is thus always marked by perspectivism. But regardless of the definition games occasionally.