

Table 6.1 – Expectations of Board Chairs and Heads of each other

WHAT CHAIRS EXPECT OF HEADS	WHAT HEADS EXPECT OF CHAIRS
Communication with the board	Trust / honour the process
Collaboration	Partnership
Executive presence	Understanding
Integrity	Mission-focussed
Communicators	Process-oriented
WHAT HEADS THINK CHAIRS SHOULD EXPECT FROM HEADS	WHAT CHAIRS THINK HEADS SHOULD EXPECT FROM CHAIRS
Integrity	Constructive feedback
Vision	Trust
Leadership	Support
Management	Strategic thinking
Partnership	Communication

Source: Derived from Kraus-Blackney, B. (2014), pp.1-2

When the board is not meeting, the Chair is the board’s conduit of communication with the Head, and through the Head, to the school. In this capacity, the Chair is the one trustee with the authority to speak on behalf of the board in an official capacity. This is the formal side of the relationship, but there is an equally important, informal aspect of the relationship. For the sake of the school, both the Head and the Chair must make every effort to develop positive personal chemistry. The Chair must act effectively as a confidante, sounding board, critical friend and advocate for the Head, and indeed by virtue of the position, the Chair has some responsibility for the Head’s health and morale. In short, the Head and the Chair must model the governance-management partnership in action.

The relationship between the Chair and the Head works best with frequent communication. Indeed, when school boards are facing difficulties, the state of the Chair-Head relationship is one of the first areas where questions need to be asked.

A common practice is for the Chair to meet weekly with the Head, usually in the Head’s office, but when this is not possible, then elsewhere or over the telephone. These meetings can cover a myriad of matters, including the Head’s health and personal needs, specific concerns of either the Head or the Chair, serious issues in the school (such as a potential teacher dismissal or student expulsion), the board’s strategic priorities, possible future strategies and initiatives, and much more.