

## Chapter 14: The Board's Relationship with Library Staff

### **The only employee who reports directly to the board is the library director.**

Understanding the nature of the relationship between the board and other staff members will prevent organizational problems and contribute to a smooth running library. Decisions by the board affect working conditions, salaries and benefits and other personnel matters.

The director is responsible for hiring, supervising, evaluating, and, if necessary, disciplining and dismissing staff. The director is accountable to the board for the performance of all staff. Employees need to clearly understand the authority of the library director, who is accountable to whom and who has responsibility for what.

The board hires the director to be the expert in management of the library, including the management of all other personnel.

- The board has no direct responsibility for day-to-day supervision of staff other than overseeing the director.
- Board members have no authority to issue orders to staff or make demands of staff except through the director.
- The board has no direct responsibility for assessing staff performance other than the director's.

Staff members may sometimes go around the director and take concerns and complaints directly to the board or to individual board members. It is the board member's responsibility to remind the staff member about the proper procedure for concerns or complaints. The board does not act on complaints from the staff, except through a grievance procedure outlined in board policy. Concerns or complaints that come directly to board members should be reported to the director for resolution.

As a board member, you should show concern for the well-being of staff. Encourage retention of good staff by budgeting for competitive pay and benefits and for training and continuing education. Work with the director to recognize and acknowledge good staff performance and say thanks to staff through specific board action.

Examples of when board members may interact with staff include:

- In committee settings
- In the planning process
- When staff are asked by the director to make reports at the board meeting
- If board members volunteer at the library
- During library social events