BOARD MEMBERS ARE FROM MARS....
LABOR UNIONS ARE FROM VENUS...

...AND SUPERINTENDENTS ARE FROM URANUS!

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Challenging relationships between Board of Education Members, Labor Unions and Superintendents have had a long history!
Superintendents are often ill prepared for the task of serving as instructional leaders dealing with parents and the community while successfully working with Board members and labor unions.
What language barriers exist between people from differing “planets” communicating with one another?
Example Language Barriers

Subject: Collaboration

Board of Education Language: Figure it out Superintendent

Labor Union Language: Pay Raise

Superintendent Language: 5-Year Contract Please
Example Language Barriers

Subject: Summer Break

Board of Education Language: Do I have kids in school?

Labor Union Language: Vacation!

Superintendent Language: Fall State Assessment Results.
Example Language Barriers

Subject: Budget Cuts

Board of Education Language: Bottom Line

Labor Union Language: My Job!

Superintendent Language: Student Programs
Example Language Barriers

**Subject:** Tax Rate

**Board of Education Language:** Lower taxes

**Labor Union Language:** Additional revenue

**Superintendent Language:** Balanced budget
Overcoming Language Barriers

1. **Speak Slowly and Clearly** – Ensure “your” point is communicated.
2. **Ask For Clarification** – Ensure you understand “their” point.
3. **Frequently Check for Understanding** (Vital) – On the same page if even agreeing to disagree!
4. **Avoid Idioms** – “Out in left field.” What?
5. **Be Careful of Jargon** – How educators speak, but not necessarily others?
7. **Be Specific** – What are the exact expectations?
8. **Choose Your Medium of Communication** – Carefully decide how the communication of information will take place. E-mail when critical….really?
9. **Provide information via Multiple Channels** – Communication, communication and communication!
10. **Be Patient** – A virtue and we know....

(Material derived from: culturosity.com – Kate Berardo, 2007)