



INDEPENDENT SOCIETY BOARD VS. SDA DELEGATED BOARD

Dimension	Independent Society Board (FISBC / AMS context)	Seventh-day Adventist School Board (Delegated Model)
Legal Authority	Board is the highest governing authority of the school society	Authority is delegated by the Conference Board of Education
Ownership / Employer	Society owns school; board is legal employer	Conference owns/operates schools; Conference is the employer of certificated staff
Board Power	Board holds full fiduciary, employment, and strategic authority	Board authority exists only when meeting in official session and within policy limits
Personnel Authority	Board hires, evaluates, disciplines, and terminates staff	Board recommends; Conference Board of Education makes final decisions
Principal Relationship	Principal accountable directly to board	Principal accountable to both local board and Conference superintendent
Governance Focus	Strategic governance (“noses in, fingers out”)	Strategic governance plus system alignment and collaboration
Policy Authority	Board sets and revises policy independently	Board develops local policy in harmony with Conference, Union, NAD policy
Risk & Liability	Risk held primarily by the society	Risk shared; Conference retains legal responsibility and oversight
Constituency	Society members elect board and receive reports	Church constituency + Conference + Union representation
Role of Superintendent	Often external or advisory	Integral system leader with supervisory authority
Primary Board Question	“What is best for <i>this</i> school?”	“What best serves <i>this</i> school within the Adventist system?”

Key takeaway: SDA boards are not weaker boards — they are system-embedded boards whose effectiveness depends on alignment, trust, and disciplined governance within a multi-tier structure.