



A Window into Life as a School Business Official

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While the scope of their duties varies based on a number of factors, under any circumstance, the day of a school business official includes an array of challenges, each competing for the SBO's time. Your understanding of what school business officials go through on any given day is central to your ability to position yourself as a solution to those challenges. So let's take a look at a typical day:

5:30 a.m. – Heading downstairs to start the coffee, she opens the newspaper to glance at the headlines, checks her email for anything that needs immediate action, and then heads upstairs to get ready for work.

7:45 a.m. – She arrives to a full inbox—on her desk and on her computer. A voice-mail announces that the main server at a high school has crashed again. Maybe new servers can't wait for 2013 after all.

8:30 a.m. – Ten minutes on the phone with an irate parent who says her child's special nutritional needs are not being taken seriously prompts her to make a note to talk with food services.

8:45 a.m. – She calls the superintendent to review progress on an upcoming renovation. *Yes*, the architect is on schedule. *No*, the school board hasn't signed off on the expenditures.

9:00 a.m. – During the district's first teleconference on the 2012–2013 budget no one is convinced that that synthetic-turf fields will recoup their costs within three years. Wait until she tells them healthcare costs will rise by 15%.

11:00 a.m. – She sets to work on the proposed bond issuance for the 2013 capital outlay and immediately feels her assistant's glare: The performance appraisals. "I know accounting needs them today, but I really should *read* them first."

12:00 p.m. – With a tuna sandwich in

hand, she's catching up on professional reading when a counselor quietly comes in. A student has been classified "homeless" and requires transportation to and from his grandparents' house 40 miles away. The phone rings. It's Bill, a salesman for a scheduled call on modular furniture for the aforementioned renovation. "Sorry Bill," she says, "reschedule for 3:00 p.m.?"

2:00 p.m. – Did she really just spend two hours on the transportation needs of one student? Closing the door, she pulls up the RFP for the furniture Bill had called about. She takes an inventory of specifications from personnel, realizing no one even *considered* costs. Why haven't they created a system to track specifications and costs of past projects?

3:00 p.m. – Bill calls back, delivering great news. Material costs for the furniture have dropped substantially and he's also found a federal grant rewarding the use of sustainable products. Bill will email the details.

4:00 p.m. – Three colleagues arrive for a meeting on a new drivers' education facility. The phone rings. School's letting out all over the district so she has to answer. It's Donna from a paper company she isn't familiar with. Donna wants to talk about the district's needs and won't take "no" for an answer. She makes an appointment to talk with Donna next week and turns back to her meeting.

5:30 p.m. – She's tired and hungry but can't leave until she's narrowed a stack of job applications to three. That accomplished, she types email answers to three suppliers and another to HR, begging for a one-day reprieve on the performance appraisals. She texts her husband that she's on her way and then grabs her coat. As she walks to her car, there's just enough time to talk to the IT coordinator about the servers.

Now, where do you see yourself fitting into this day?