

## **Understanding The Key Work of School Boards- An Overview**



National School Boards Association

[www.nsba.org](http://www.nsba.org)



### **THE KEY WORK OF SCHOOL BOARDS GUIDEBOOK**



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THE KEY WORK OF SCHOOL BOARDS

## Today's Agenda

- Walk through each of the 5 Key Action Areas
- Participate in discussions around each of the areas
- Identify ways this information can inform the work of your school board
- Determine some possible next steps

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THE KEY WORK OF SCHOOL BOARDS

## Key Work Guidebook Chapters

- Overview of the concept
- Selected samples where appropriate
- Self-assessment
- Roles and responsibilities of the board and superintendent

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THE KEY WORK OF SCHOOL BOARDS

- Vision
- Accountability
- Policy
- Community Leadership
- Board/Superintendent Relationships



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## VISION

Effective school boards establish a clear vision with high expectations for quality teaching and learning that supports strong student outcomes. They establish clear and specific goals to move their district forward.

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## Elements of Vision

- Vision Statement
- Mission Statement
- Core Beliefs and Values
- Strategic Plan
- Goals
- Clear Focus and Direction
- Constancy of Purpose

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## Strategic Planning & Goals

- In creating a strategic plan, the board-staff leadership team must develop a process to identify goals that mark progress toward the vision and strategies to achieve the goals.
- Staff is responsible for creating work plans to implement the strategies; reviewing the goals; strategies and work plans with the board and reporting regularly on progress, needs and adjustments to continue moving toward the vision.

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### Your Turn: Assess Your Board

- Turn to page 15 in your Guidebook and complete the Self-Assessment
  - Identify 1-2 Strengths of your Board
  - Identify 1-2 Growth Areas for your Board
  - List any questions you may have about this area

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### ACCOUNTABILITY

- High academic standards, transparency and accountability undergird a world-class education.
- True accountability depends on open decision making, community engagement and support and receptivity to new ideas and constructive criticism.
- School Board accountability means taking your fair share of responsibility for student outcomes.
- Being accountable means answering not only for your actions but also for the results of your actions.

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### Elements of Accountability

- Strong focus on student results
- Standards
- Assessment and Analysis of data
- Alignment

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## Excellent Standards

Excellent standards:

- Help teachers and principals set priorities for use of instructional time
- Provide a measure for identifying students who need extra or different instructional support to succeed
- Establish consistent expectations for performance, allowing all children to be challenged and receive a quality education
- Are easily understood by everyone

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## Accountability and Alignment

- Resources:
- Curriculum
- Staffing
- Training
- Books and Materials
- Technology
- Supplemental services (extended day, tutoring, summer school, etc.)

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## Accountability – Your Turn

In a trio discuss one of the following questions from page 20 of the Key Work Guidebook

- How are achievement measures and results reported to teachers, parents and the public?
- What role do student achievement results play in the evaluation of the superintendent?
- Have we asked the Superintendent and staff how staff, parents and students learn what is expected of them?

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## POLICY

### Elements of Policy:

- Definitions of policy and guidelines/regulations
- Questions to ask throughout the process

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## POLICY

- Policy governance is not simply updating the policy manual every few years. It is the board's opportunity to shape, mold and modify their community's future through discussion, debate and thoughtful consideration of important issues contained in board policy.
- Boards with a thorough understanding of policy development and implementation can be powerfully effective.

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## Policy & Regulations

POLICY The Board	GUIDELINES/REGULATIONS Superintendent and Staff
The who, what and why	The how
Sets goals	Supports and implements board policy
Resolves issues	Provides direction for administrative decisions and district procedures
Defines and aligns administrative responsibilities	Generally designed by the administration
Establishes oversight and evaluation procedures	

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## Top 9 Policy Dangers

1. Blurring the line between policy and administrative regulation
2. Failure to maintain policies and regulations
3. Lack of communication to staff around policy changes
4. Inadequate training of staff
5. Failure to follow existing policies and regulations
6. Misalignment between policy, regulations and practice
7. Badly maintained historical records
8. Failure to seek advise of counsel
9. Reactive policy-making

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## COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

**The art of influence through listening, legislation, strategic engagement in generating public and parental support**

- Advocacy
- Parental Engagement
- Business and Political Engagement
- Public Participation
- Collaboration

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## Collaboration

- Communicate, communicate, communicate
- Consider restructuring board meetings
- Model collaboration for others
- Invest in the process of relationship building
- Invite others to the table
- Focus on the things that unite rather than those that divide
- Clarify and agree on who speaks and when

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## Community Engagement/ Promotion

- Central to the board's leadership role – your office is anywhere a citizen is (Walmart, grocery store, football game, etc.)
- As a board you have to develop an effective strategy to balance competing interests and forge consensus

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## Your Turn: Assess Your Board

AREA	Fully Achieved	Mostly Achieved	Partially Achieved	Beginning to Achieve	Don't Know/ Unsure
We keep our community informed in a variety of ways					
We use work sessions as a means of both informing our work as a board and keeping the community engaged					
Our social media policy is clear and includes strategies to involve the community in two-way conversations					
We actively advocate for student achievement as a top priority					

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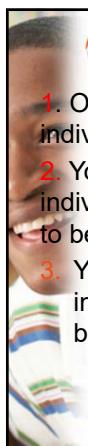
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## Three Realities

- One becomes a board member as an individual but serves as a member of a team.
- You do not have the authority as an individual to fix the problems you believe need to be fixed.
- Your success as a board member is inextricably tied to the success of your board.

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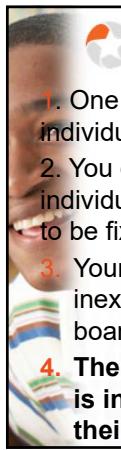
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## Four Realities

1. One becomes a board member as an individual but serves as a member of a team.
2. You do not have the authority as an individual to fix the problems you believe need to be fixed.
3. Your success as a board member is inextricably tied to the success of your board.
- 4. The success of the Superintendent/CEO is inextricably tied to the success of their board.**

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## BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIPS

- Roles and relationships
- Norms
- Communication
- Board Self-Evaluation
- Superintendent Evaluation

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## BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT TEAMS: A RELATIONSHIP OF TRUST

The Board	The Superintendent/CEO
Why?	How ?
What?	When?
How Much?	Where?
Vision	Who?
Mission	
Goals	Objectives
Policies	Action Plans
Monitor	Regulations
Vote	Procedures
	Implement
	Recommend

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## Roles and Relationships

- Are we in agreement on board and superintendent roles and responsibilities?
- Do we regularly review how our board /superintendent team works together?



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## Board Self-Evaluation

- Helps ensure accountability
- Helps the board improve their service
- Sets an example for staff
- Identifies opportunities for improvement
- Helps to define success for your board and your district

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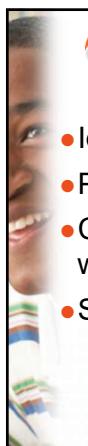
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## Purposes of Superintendent Evaluation

- Identify standards for performance
- Provide feedback on performance
- Create opportunities for dialogue on what is important in the organization
- Set direction for the superintendent

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### Benefits of an Effective Evaluation Process

- Defining expectations
- Enhancing communication
- Identifying and prioritizing district/board goals
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities

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### Benefits of an Effective Evaluation Process

- Promoting professional development (superintendent and board)
- Fulfilling legal requirements
- Making employment decisions
- Providing a framework for superintendent and board accountability

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### Elements of an Effective Evaluation Process

- Basis and process for evaluation is mutually agreed to "up front"
- Process includes periodic occasions for review and reflection
- Feedback is given in a timely way so that corrective action can be taken
- Emphasis is on progress toward board and system goals/priorities

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### Elements of an Effective Evaluation Process

- Confidentiality is respected and enforced
- Assessments are based on data collected according to the process
- Formal evaluation is balanced and specific
- Continuing professional development is encouraged and valued

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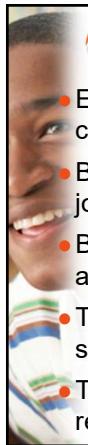
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### Indicators of a Good Evaluation

- Evaluation is conducted in a positive climate
- Board is familiar with the superintendent's job
- Board gives the superintendent frequent and timely feedback
- The board's judgments are supported with specific examples
- The evaluation focuses on performance results, not personalities

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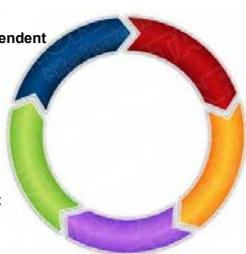
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### Evaluation Cycle

Develop Instrument  
Set Goals  
Board and Superintendent

Board Self-Assessment



Mid-point update  
Superintendent Self-Assessment  
Board Feedback

End of year evaluation  
Superintendent Portfolio  
Board Members individually complete evaluation

Discussions – Board and Superintendent  
Board Completes Written Evaluation

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#### Eight Traits of Effective School Boards

- Commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction
- Have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students
- Are accountability driven
- Have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community
- Are data savvy and use it to drive continuous improvement
- Align and sustain resources to meet district goals
- Lead as a united team with the superintendent
- Take part in team development and training

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#### THE KEY WORK OF SCHOOL BOARDS

**Write down 3 things you learned today...**

**What will you do about them?**

*Thank You!*

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