

BOARDSMANSHIP

The research on effective school boards is fairly recent, so there is not a lot out there. There is a recent book by Asbury and Gore: Improving School Board Effectiveness plus a series in Texas Lone Star in April, May, June and August 2017.

Boards with high achievement function differently than those with low achievement.

BSAS board self-assessment survey. Developed and used in Washington State. Assesses 5 standards, 22 benchmarks and 69 key indicators. Once the board takes this, you can look at the scores in each of the 22 benchmarks and compare them to where they should be to see where the board's strengths and weaknesses lie. These are the 5 standards and the correlating benchmarks for each standard:

Governance

Ethical Conduct Diverse Perspectives Roles and Responsibilities
Policies Driving Student Success Healthy Relationships Teamwork

Expectations

Improved Learning for All Districtwide Vision Achievement
Plan Student Achievement Goals

Conditions

Safety and Security Sustaining Quality Employees Learning
Essentials Management for Learning Goal Driven Budgeting

Accountability

Achievement Throughout District Superintendent Evaluation
Valid and Reliable Assessments

Community

Community Collaboration Transparency Community
Communication Diverse Input

Everyone in the district has separate but overlapping roles:

Community -Engagement. Board -Governance. Superintendent - District Leadership. Principal - school leadership .Teacher - Instruction. Student - Achievement. Parent - involvement.

Somehow we need to reach out to the community regularly so they have the chance to feel heard and don't feel like they need to be coming to the board or board members with micromanaging issues. We also need to be sure we are engaging with all the different populations in our community. Somehow we need to be talking to our minority populations separately as a group to see what else we need to be doing for the kids in our community.

High achieving boards do:

Discretionary District Governance for **High Student Achievement**

1. Hold the superintendent accountable
2. Responsibly govern and district
3. Set expectations for student learning
4. Engage the community
5. Create the conditions for student and staff success

Of the 5 standards, the community and board are responsible for community. Only the board is responsible for Governance, expectations and conditions, and the board and superintendent are responsible for accountability.

When you rank the standards (via several studies), the order of importance is:

1. Accountability
2. Governance
3. Expectations
4. Conditions
5. Community

There was a lot of information included on the slides at the presentation. They are on the OSBA website under boardsmanship.

My take away is that we could be doing a better job at self-evaluation, using a tool that allows us to quantitatively rate our board so that we can get a substantive handle on where we are compared to where we should be. Can we look into BSAS? Or something similar? After listening to this presentation, I think our board does a good job in a lot of ways, but we have some things we should be changing.

Another thing they said was that it is not very effective for us to change chair people every year, especially if we have a lot of things going on. They said it is particularly ineffective to just use the next person in line. That is kind of what we have always done, and we may need to re-think that. There is nothing that says a person can't be chair for 2 years in a row. I think there is likely some sort of limit (?) but it didn't sound like it was one year.

Also, one thing we are not doing as a board other than attending meetings is essentially our own learning group. Maybe we should consider doing a study of the book by Alsbury and Gore?

Another point they made is that accountability is the most important standard, and that that should include some specific numbers. For example, we expect student achievement in this area to improve by x%. We expect that the graduation rate will improve by x%, or that the gaps narrow by x%, setting more concrete goals.