



Introduction to Board Governance

Roles and Responsibilities

Webinar Series: Part 1

Welcome



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Agenda

- ▶ Define Governance and Review of the Essential Elements of Governance
- ▶ Legal Powers of School Boards and School Board Members

What do you know about effective school boards?



School boards are teams—not individuals.

WASB

Essential Elements of Governance

Governance is the **process** where the direction of the organization is set, the **structure** is established, and **accountability** both fiscal and programmatic is assured.



WASB ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF GOVERNANCE

COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT

- Board and superintendent roles with engagement
- Strategies for effective engagement with stakeholders
- Understanding the need for and modeling effective two-way communication
- Key communication skills and the art of effective communication



QUALITY LEADERSHIP

- Board and superintendent roles and responsibilities
- Collective board/superintendent team
- Board operations
- Governing for efficacy
- Governance culture
- Governing with ethics
- Advocacy

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Continuous improvement
- Fiscal and academic accountability
- Quality leadership and succession planning

STRATEGIC FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

- Planning the district's future/strategic planning
- Mission, moral imperative, vision and goals

GOVERNING FOR HIGH LEVELS OF LEARNING FOR ALL CHILDREN

- Governing that makes a difference in student learning
- Supporting school strategies to improve learning for all students
- Modeling a cultural belief that a positive difference will be made for all children

Effective School Board Characteristics

- ▶ Commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement with clear goals that remain top priorities.
- ▶ Have strong shared beliefs and values, including effectively teaching all children.
- ▶ Accountability driven – focused on policies that improve student achievement.
- ▶ Data savvy with student-centered, data-driven decisions.
- ▶ Align resources to meet district goals.
- ▶ Build a collaborative, supportive relationship with staff and the community.
- ▶ Take part in team development and training.
- ▶ Form a united team with the superintendent, leading with strong collaboration and mutual trust.

How well boards carry out their governance responsibilities in many ways determines the quality of the education for the children they serve.



Classroom learning



Hands-on exploration



Collaboration and problem-solving

QUALITY LEADERSHIP



- ▶ Board roles and responsibilities
- ▶ Superintendent roles and responsibilities
- ▶ Collective board/superintendent team
- ▶ Board operations
 - Governing for efficacy
- ▶ Governance culture
- ▶ Governing with ethics
- ▶ Advocacy

Policy

- ▶ Policy book AND decisions/directives of the board
- ▶ Board members use policy to:
 - Provide clear guidance (leadership tool)
 - Remain accountable to the citizens
 - Manage the school district
 - Manage district resources
 - Direct the executive officer (superintendent)

Board and Superintendent Leadership

- ▶ Key documents/processes through which the school board leads and governs:
 - Strategic plan/core beliefs/goals/standards
 - Board policies
 - Annual budget
 - District administrator's job description, contract and evaluation
 - Board's self-evaluation and leadership development plan
 - Roles and responsibilities of board and superintendent

What Effective School Boards Achieve

- ▶ Purposeful governance builds trust and drives results
- ▶ Effective school board actions lead to:
 - Increased student learning and achievement
 - A positive, collaborative district culture
 - Strong leadership modeling for staff and the community

Quality Leadership in Practice



Leadership shapes culture.

What actions does your school board take to demonstrate quality leadership?

STRATEGIC FOCUS ON THE FUTURE



- ▶ Sets long-term direction
- ▶ Aligns mission, vision, values and goals
- ▶ Builds collective commitment to future priorities

A Strategic Focus on the Future Requires



BOARD STRATEGIC
DISCUSSIONS



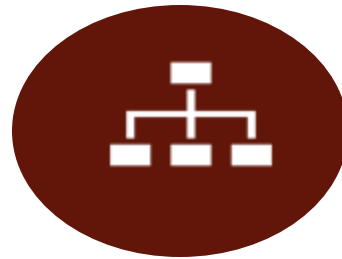
PURPOSEFUL ACTIONS
ACHIEVE COLLECTIVE
COMMITMENTS



ADDRESS COMPLEX
ISSUES



ENGAGE IN ONGOING
LEARNING



DAY-TO-DAY
ADMINISTRATION BY
STAFF

Personal Reflection



What do you and your school board do to ensure a strategic focus on the future?

ACCOUNTABILITY



- ▶ Strives for continuous improvement
- ▶ Ensures academic accountability
- ▶ Ensures fiscal accountability
- ▶ Promotes retention/recruitment of quality staff
- ▶ Engages in succession planning

What Accountability Requires



TRANSPARENCY IN
DECISION-MAKING



OPEN
COMMUNICATION
WITH ALL
STAKEHOLDERS



COMMITMENT TO
CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT

Types of Accountability



Fiscal

District's budget allocated to support student learning while being responsible to the taxpayer



Academic/Program

Policies and decision-making ensure continuous improvement of the services provided to students and staff



High-Quality Staff

Practices that promote retention/recruitment & positive culture



Superintendent Evaluation

Tied to administrative standards and goals



Quality Leadership & Succession Planning

Processes in place to develop skill sets of staff, and ensure continuity of strong leadership



Board Self-Evaluation

Annual Board Development Tool & Meeting Evaluation Survey

Personal Reflection



How does your board hold itself accountable?

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT



- ▶ Transparency
- ▶ Board/superintendent role delineation
- ▶ Strategies for effective engagement
- ▶ Two-way communication
- ▶ Conflict resolution

Community Stakeholder Engagement

- ▶ Form and maintain collaborative relationships
- ▶ Explain the board's concerns and actions to the public
- ▶ Accept the public's concerns as a board
- ▶ Build public support to implement vision
- ▶ *Inform* public opinion
- ▶ Promote the district
- ▶ Celebrate the “good stuff”
- ▶ Tell your story

Personal Reflection



What do you and your school board do to ensure communication and engagement?



Working As a TEAM

What Do We Know?

Effective school boards in high achieving districts:

1. Have a good working relationship with their superintendents.
2. Understand their role in the overall school system.
3. Understand the importance of a strong collaborative board team.
4. Set goals and focus on results.
5. Align and sustain resources to support educational programs.
6. Hold themselves and their superintendent accountable for district success.
7. Understand they set the tone for the culture of the district.

Essential Agreements Mutually Agree Upon

▶ Strategic Focus

- Areas the district needs to work on to improve

▶ Roles and Responsibilities

- Staying in your lanes while helping one another along the journey

▶ Collaborative Relationship

- Establish norms and nurture trust

Board-Superintendent Team

The Board (the big picture)	The Superintendent (the details)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why• What• How much	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How• When• Where• Who• How much
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vision• Mission• Goals• Policies• Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Objectives• Action Plans• Regulations• Procedures• Implementation
VOTES	RECOMMENDS

Caveat

Both board and superintendent **need to be mindful** of when they cross the line into each other's lane.

There is a difference between authority and responsibility.

Keys to Effective Relationships

- ▶ **Trust** requires a commitment by all members to be open and willing to learn from each other.
- ▶ **Respect** is a feeling of deep admiration for someone elicited by their abilities, qualities or achievements.

Important Things for Board Members to Remember

- ✓ **Be patient ... You were elected for a term of office; take advantage of the time to learn.**
- ✓ Be trustworthy.
- ✓ Contribute to creating a positive, powerful board culture.
- ✓ **Represent the needs of ALL of your community.**
- ✓ Be a leader on your board and in your community.
- ✓ Choose to govern professionally.
- ✓ **Always remember you and your board are modeling the ethical standards you expect the children in your district to emulate.**



Legal Roles and Responsibilities of School Boards

Board's Legal Roles & Responsibilities

- ▶ School Board and District Administrator roles and responsibilities are determined by state and federal law.
 - Laws define what must be done.
 - Laws identify what gets decided locally.

School Board Duties and Powers

State Statute	
<u>§120.12</u>	Enumerates a list of specific duties of a school board in common and union high school districts.
<u>§120.13</u>	Enumerates a list of specific powers of a school board in common and union high school districts.
<u>§120.10</u>	Enumerates a list of specific powers of an annual meeting (which, for unified school districts, are powers of the school board).
<u>§120.44(2)</u>	Gives unified school districts the powers and duties of the common school board and annual meeting.
Other statutes (particularly in chs. <u>118</u> , <u>120</u> , and <u>121</u>) create other powers and duties.	

Enumerated Powers vs. Broad Powers

- ▶ “The school board of a common or union high school district shall, subject to the authority vested in the annual meeting and to the authority and possession specifically given to other school district officers, have the **possession, care, control and management of the property and affairs of the school district.**” (§120.12(1))
- ▶ “The school board of a common or union high school district may do **all things reasonable** to promote the cause of education, including establishing, providing and improving school district programs, functions and activities for the benefit of pupils.” (§120.13)
- ▶ “A unified school district is a body corporate with the power to sue and be sued, to levy and collect taxes, to acquire, hold and dispose of property and to do **all other things reasonable** for the performance of its functions in operating a system of public education.” (§120.44(1))
- ▶ See WASB’s December 1996 Legal Note “**The New Era of Expanded Powers and Duties for Wisconsin School Boards**”

“Broad Powers” Imply the Power to Delegate Many (but not all) Powers and Duties

- ▶ Delegation can occur through policy, through specific board action/authorization, and sometimes the delegation of authority is implied through practices.
- ▶ Some **non-delegable** acts are of obvious significance.
 - (e.g., adopting and amending the budget, approving questions to submit to referendum, employment and dismissal of teachers and administrators, etc.)
- ▶ Some arguably **non-delegable** acts don't seem all that significant in light of other responsibilities that can be delegated.
 - (e.g., a statute provides that each school board shall adopt written policies that include procedures for the storage of pupil medications)
- ▶ [WASB Legal Comment October 2012](#)

Examples of Board Roles Through a More Legalistic Lens

▶ **Legislative**

- Making policy, determining the budget and the tax levy.

▶ **Judicial**

- Serving as an impartial decision-maker in a “due process” hearing (finding facts, applying law/policy, reaching conclusions, issuing orders).
- For example, expulsion proceedings, non-renewals and terminations of employees.

▶ **Executive**

- Serving as an employer (hiring, evaluating, compensating).

Governance Protocols – How do you do business?

Question?	Local District Answer
How is the board meeting agenda is developed and reviewed and by whom?	
Placing items on the board meeting agenda?	
Obtaining additional information about board meeting agenda items before the meeting?	
Obtaining answers to questions about board meeting agenda items before the meeting?	
Alerting the board president of the desire to speak on a particular agenda item?	

Governance Protocols – How do you do business?

Question?	Local District Answer
Introducing new Ideas for the board's consideration?	
Responding to staff or community complaints or concerns at board meetings?	
Communications between and among the board, board members and the superintendent?	
Communications between the board and other staff?	
Responding to community or staff complaints or concerns outside of board meetings?	

Governance Protocols – How do you do business?

Question?	Local District Answer
How, when and whom to notify about visiting school sites or participating in district activities?	
Board member participation on district committees and in district activities?	
When and how the board conducts a self-evaluation?	
When and how the board evaluates the superintendent?	
Is there a policy that defines the relationship between the board and superintendent?	

Thank you!



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