

Plans for Board Development

Guidance from the Iowa Association of School Boards:

The Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB) encourages school boards to use the summer months to develop a calendar for whole board learning for the 2020–21 School Year. This should include time for general board learning (such as: board operations, legal, policy, finance, advocacy, etc.) and time to learn and regularly discuss progress reports at the board table on:

- ❖ Student learning goals.
- ❖ Implementation and impact of key initiatives and professional development of staff on improving instruction and student learning.

At the Board Table:

IASB encourages school boards to utilize their [At the Board Table](#) exercises to support learning right at the board table.



At the Board Table is an opportunity to add a board development item to your agenda. Boards that take time to discuss how they will work together, generally find their common work at the board table to be easier and more effective. Estimated time commitment varies between 15 and 45 minutes per discussion.

It's possible to consider this section as an individual board member, but it is much more effective if the entire board engages in the discussion. Working as a team improves when boards come to a common understanding of ground rules and responsibilities.

Participation in an *At the Board Table* discussion earns 5 Better Boardsmanship credits. The *At the Board Table* discussion exercises are organized according to the IASB Standards for Effective School Boards (on the next page).

Directions:

- a) Review IASB's six Standards for Effective School Boards and choose an *At the Board Table* discussion that fits the needs of your board.
- b) Download the Facilitation Guide.
- c) Follow the instructions and meeting prep tips.

Board Self-Assessment:

Another option that IASB advises is for a board self-assessment. It writes:

“Board self-assessment is an important step for your board that can help define where your board wants to be in the future and areas to focus board improvement efforts. The self-assessment process includes completion, discussion, and consensus about the overall effectiveness of your board's work.”

The Standards for Effective School Boards



In pursuit of world-class education that results in high achievement for all Iowa students, effective school boards:

1. VISIONARY TEAM: Operate as a visionary governance team in partnership with the superintendent.

- **Vision and Planning** – Develops a shared vision and plans for student achievement that reflects common values and core beliefs of the school community.
- **Operating Practices** – Uses productive practices for its own operations and development.
- **Decision-Making** – Ensures board decisions are based on data and deliberation.
- **Board/Superintendent Relations** – Cultivates a strong relationship and partnership with the superintendent, based on clear expectations and accountability.

2. STUDENT LEARNING: Provide effective leadership for quality instruction and high, equitable student learning.

- **Clear Expectations** – Sets and communicates high expectations for student learning with clear goals and a focus on strengthening instruction.
- **Conditions for Success** – Supports conditions for success through board actions and decisions.
- **Accountability** – Holds the system accountable to reach student learning goals.
- **Collective Commitment** – Builds the collective commitment of community and staff to achieve the student learning goals.
- **Team Learning** – Learns together as a whole team to inform decision-making around the student learning goals.

3. DISTRICT CULTURE: Foster a culture that enables excellence and innovation.

- **High Quality Staff** – Empowers the superintendent in hiring and developing the best employees available to meet the district's goals.
- **Shared Leadership** – Supports structures that develop instructional leadership and collaboration.
- **Staff Learning** – Supports research-based staff professional development aligned with district goals.
- **Environment** – Fosters a safe and secure environment for all students, staff, and visitors.

4. POLICY & LEGAL: Lead through sound policy, ensuring transparent, ethical, legal operations.

- **Policy Leadership** – Develops sound, written policy to clarify the board's intent for district direction.
- **Legal** – Ensures that board and district actions are in compliance with state and federal laws, appropriately addressing legal issues when they arise.
- **Ethics** – Models ethical and legal behaviors which enable the board to stay focused on district goals.
- **Transparency** – Establishes policies and ensures processes that are open and accountable.

5. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY: Sustain and enhance district resources through planning and fiduciary oversight.

- **Financial Health** – Monitors and evaluates the financial health of the district, ensuring accountability and transparency in board decision making.
- **Financial Forecasting** – Ensures strong financial planning for the district.
- **Budgeting** – Ensures the district budget aligns with district goals and multi-year plans.
- **Risk Oversight** – Ensures sufficient risk management is in place to protect district resources.
- **Facilities** – Ensures school facilities enhance and enrich student and staff learning.

6. ADVOCACY: Advocate for public education and the needs of Iowa students.

- **Championing Local Governance & Public Education** – Clearly articulates and advocates for the value of public education and the important role of local school governance.
- **Legislative Advocacy** – Develops and strengthens on-going relationships with policymakers around improving student achievement and the needs of public education.
- **Community Engagement** – Fosters engagement and collaboration with all stakeholders to ensure high and equitable student learning.