

School Board Work Session
Tuesday, January 19, 2021 6:30 PM

Online

Agenda

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **AGENDA ITEMS**
 1. Discuss School Board governance/structure/effectiveness.
4. **ADJOURN**

Minnesota School Boards Association

Ground Rules Worksheet

Agenda Issues		Yes	No	Modify
1	Any board member may request that an item be placed on the agenda for board consideration by contacting _____ at least ____ days prior to the meeting.			
2	Items requiring significant preparation time may be placed on a Future Agenda Items section to get board support before proceeding or on a later agenda.			
3	The superintendent and board chair will develop the agenda ____ days prior to the meeting for which the agenda is prepared.			
4	A consent agenda will be used for items not requiring discussion. (If no, skip items 5 and 6.)			
5	Any board member may ask to have an item pulled from the consent agenda to allow for discussion or individual consideration.			
6	Pulled consent items will be discussed after the consent agenda vote is taken.			

Meeting Preparation Issues		Yes	No	Modify
1	The superintendent will ensure that supporting information required for informed decision-making is provided to the board ____ days before the meeting.			
2	Board members will read all supporting documentation before the board meeting.			
3	Board members will call the superintendent with questions about the agenda item or supporting materials at least ____ days before the scheduled board meeting.			
4	Board members are free to ask questions during the board meeting and will do so respectfully.			
5	Board members will inform the superintendent and board chair of all positive or negative comments received from members of the community about the district.			
6	All board members will receive a copy of any written material prepared in response to one member's request.			

Community Issues		Yes	No	Modify
1	Meeting agendas are available to the public at the meeting location. (and online?)			
2	Procedures for public comment are clear and followed.			
3	Only the board chair will respond to public comment during the board meeting.			
4	Meeting facilities permit barrier-free access.			
5	Meeting facility has adequate space for those attending.			
6	Board members refer persons with positive or negative comments regarding school district operations to the proper staff person or administrator directly responsible for the operational activity.			
7	Board members and staff are respectful towards members of the community who address the board.			
8	_____ will serve as the media spokesperson for the board on board actions.			

During the Meeting Issues		Yes	No	Modify
1	Board members and the superintendent avoid surprises at the board table.			
2	Board members avoid hidden agendas.			
3	Board members use agreed upon rules of order to guide the meeting.			
4	Board members will state their position and vote their conscience.			
5	Board members will treat all present with respect.			
6	Board members agree to attack issues, not attack people.			
7	Board members will not debate issues with members of the audience.			
8	Board members limit deliberations/activities to board work and not administrative/staff work.			
9	Board members ensure only one person speaks at a time and that each member has an equal opportunity to participate.			
10	Board members listen to each other and not engage in side conversations.			
11	Board members will not have long, unnecessary speeches.			
12	Board members model the behaviors we'd expect of students, staff, and community members.			
13	Board members avoid using aggressive tactics.			
14	Board members refrain from taking a position on an agenda item or issue until all relevant information is presented.			
15	Board members will praise publicly, criticize privately.			
16	Board members monitor for compliance with laws and policy.			

After Board Meetings		Yes	No	Modify
1	Board members support, not undermine, the decision of the board.			
2	Board members abide by confidentiality laws of closed sessions.			
3	Board members ensure that all documents, records, reports, etc., are processed and maintained in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, policies, etc.			

Site Visits by Board Members		Yes	No	Modify
1	Board members are encouraged to attend as many school events as their time permits.			
2	Board members may visit any campus after checking with the principal about the best time to visit.			
3	Board members are required to check in with the principal's office and follow campus guidelines for visitors.			
4	Board members may not evaluate staff or give direction to any staff or students.			
5	When visiting with teachers of their own children, board members will make it clear that they are acting as parents rather than board members.			
6	Board members will not request or accept extraordinary consideration or favors from any district employee.			
7	Board members will remember that staff have responsibilities to meet district goals and will limit their time with staff accordingly.			

Timelines		Yes	No	Modify
1	The board, as a whole, will evaluate the superintendent.			
2	The board will perform a self-evaluation or board inservice annually.			
3	The board and superintendent will set goals annually.			

School Board Group Effectiveness Critique

Instructions: Indicate on the scales that follow, your assessment of your school board in the way it functions as a group. Circle the number in each scale that you feel is most descriptive of your board.

1. Goals and objectives

There is a lack of commonly understood goals and objectives.

Board members understand and agree on goals and objectives.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. Utilization of resources

All board member resources are not fully recognized and/or used.

Board member resources are fully recognized and used.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. Trust and conflict

There is little trust among board members and conflict is evident.

There is a high degree of trust among board members and conflict is dealt with openly and worked through.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. Leadership

One person dominates, and leadership roles are not carried out or shared.

There is full participation in leadership; leadership roles are shared by board members, where appropriate.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. Policies and procedures

There is little control, and there is a lack of understanding of policies and procedures to guide the board functioning.

There are effective policies and procedures to guide board functioning; board members follow policies and procedures and regulate themselves.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. Interpersonal communication

Communication between board members is closed and guarded.

Communication between board members is open and participative.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. Problem solving/decision-making

The board has not established or agreed upon approaches to problem solving and decision-making.

The board has well-established and agreed-upon approaches to decision-making and problem solving.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. Experimentation/creativity

The board is rigid and does not experiment with how things are done.

The board experiments with different ways of doing things and is creative in its approach.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. Evaluation

The board never evaluates its functioning or group process.

The board often and openly evaluates its functioning and group process.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Based on your assessment of your board, what specific actions do you think should be taken to improve the board's effectiveness?

MSBA Board Teamwork Self-Assessment

This basic assessment will be used to assist the board to better function as a team by generating discussion at a board study session. The board team consists of the board members and the superintendent. Please answer each question as honestly as possible. Remember, you are trying to ascertain how well the board functions as a team overall, not focusing on one event. Keep this in mind as you respond to these questions.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1	The board team adopts a district vision and/or mission for district improvement.					
2	The board team adopts annual goals and priorities for district improvement.					
3	Improving student learning is the primary focus of our board team decision-making.					
4	The board team ensures the budget reflects the district's strategic goals and priorities.					
5	The board team uses district provided data and reports to assess progress and identify areas needing improvement.					
6	The board team conducts business only at properly called meetings under the Open Meeting Law.					
7	All board team members maintain confidentiality regarding sensitive communication.					
8	Information is shared equally with all board team members.					
9	Our board team members are open and honest with each other.					
10	Our board team members communicate with one another in a respectful manner.					
11	All board team members support the decision of the board even when the vote is not unanimous.					
12	Our leadership team conducts comprehensive orientation activities to familiarize new board members with their role on the team.					
13	The board chair and superintendent work together to develop a tentative agenda for the board to approve at its meeting.					
14	Our board meetings are effective.					
15	All board members are prepared for meetings.					

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
16	The board team has a process for public participation at its board meetings and follows it.					
17	The board team understands and follows the district chain of command.					
18	Our superintendent exhibits confidence and trust in each member of the board.					
19	Each board member exhibits confidence and trust in the superintendent.					
20	The board demonstrates support and respect for the superintendent's role as the chief executive officer of the district.					
21	The board evaluates the superintendent's performance at least annually.					
22	The board evaluates the superintendent's performance against predetermined goals.					
23	Direction to the superintendent comes from the board as a whole, not individual board members.					
24	Our board team deals with conflict openly and honestly.					
25	The board team conducts district business in accordance with established ethical standards.					
26	The board team works to ensure a process is in place for effective internal and external communication.					
27	The board team uses the policy manual to make decisions and to define its expectations of the school district.					
28	Our board team reviews the district policies on a three-year cycle.					
29	The board team appropriately establishes and uses committees.					
30	Our board supports a culture of professional development for itself and district staff.					
31	Our board team participates in an annual self-assessment to set and/or review progress of the board's improvement goals.					

Comments/Notes:

MSBA School Board Self-Evaluation



Welcome to the MSBA **School Board Self-Evaluation**.

Research shows that high-functioning school boards have a positive impact on student learning and development. MSBA strives to provide exceptional services to boards, with the goal of strengthening school board governance practices. To that purpose, we are offering a new, electronic **School Board Self-Evaluation** to provide data to boards that guides goal-setting for continual improvement.

The **School Board Self-Evaluation** results reflect the collective responses of the school board team (board members and superintendent), building a profile of your board's work in five standards of board practice (Conduct and Ethics, Vision, Structure, Accountability, and Advocacy and Communication) — proven to support student achievement. The board standards will:

- Provide responsible school district governance
- Set and communicate high expectations for student learning with clear goals and plans for meeting those expectations
- Create conditions district-wide for student and staff success
- Hold school district accountable for meeting student learning expectations
- Engage the local community and represent the values and expectations they hold for their schools

The **School Board Self-Evaluation** contains 71 questions and takes just 20 to 25 minutes to complete. The evaluations are anonymous and targeted to your individual board. As soon as all members of the team have taken the evaluation, you will be contacted with the summary results within a couple of business days. The evaluation and basic report are provided as a benefit of your MSBA membership — at no cost to your district.

If your school board would like to dig deeper into the self-evaluation and data, MSBA provides an opportunity to use your evaluation data as an in-district workshop. Contact Gail Gilman, ggilman@mnmsba.org, or call 800-324-4459 for the cost associated with this board in-service and to arrange a date for an MSBA staff member to facilitate.

Thank you in advance for your time and thoughtful efforts in completing the School Board Self-Evaluation.

MSBA looks forward to serving your school board and being the association, “Where Minnesota School Boards Learn to Lead.”

70+ questions
board team

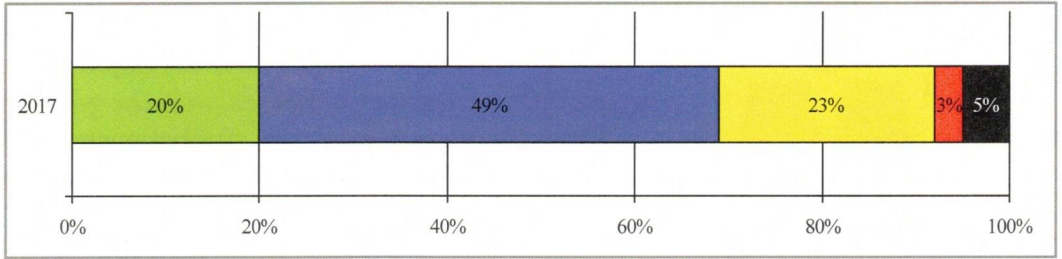
online



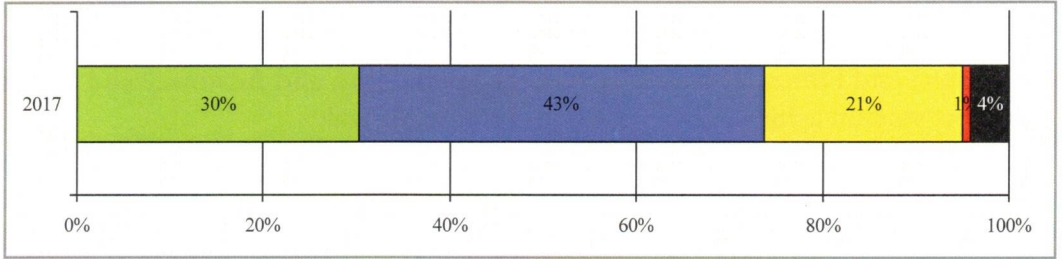
Framework for Governance: Aggregate Data



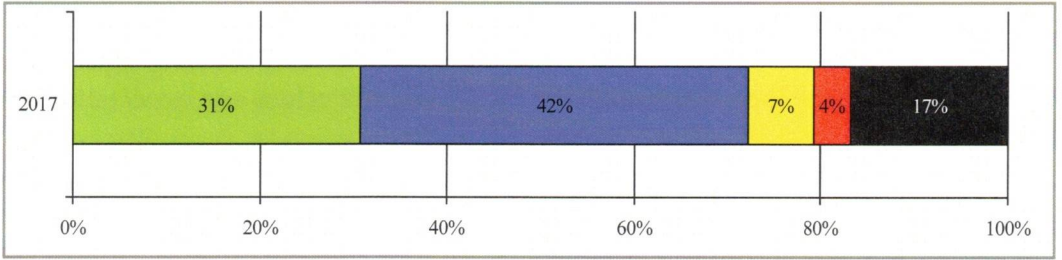
**Standard 1
Conduct and Ethics:**
Provide responsible school district governance



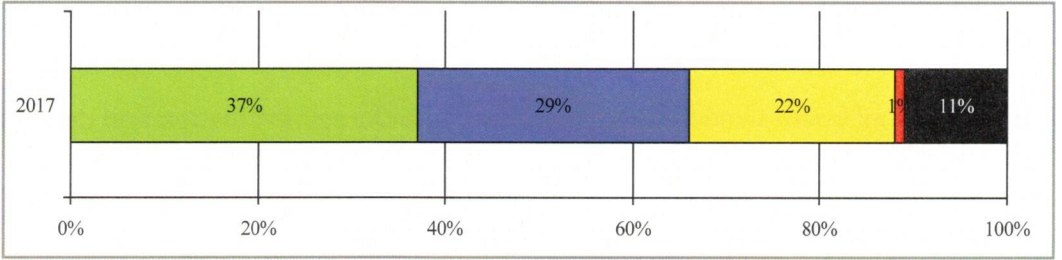
**Standard 2
Vision:**
Set and communicate high expectations for student learning with clear goals and plans for meeting those



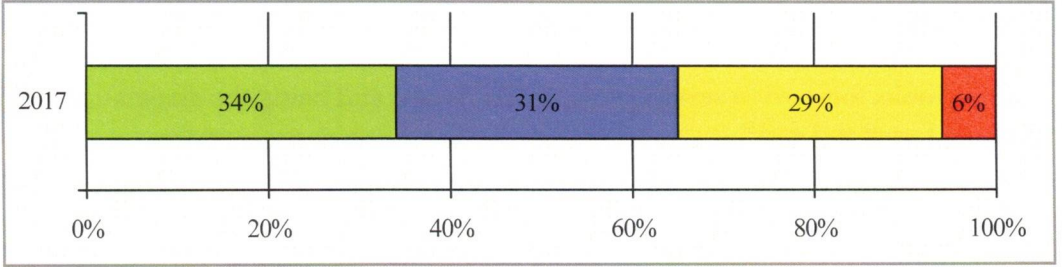
**Standard 3
Structure:**
Create conditions district-wide for student and staff success



**Standard 4
Accountability:**
Hold school district accountable for meeting student learning expectations



**Standard 5
Advocacy and Communication:**
Engage local community and represent the values and expectations they hold for their schools



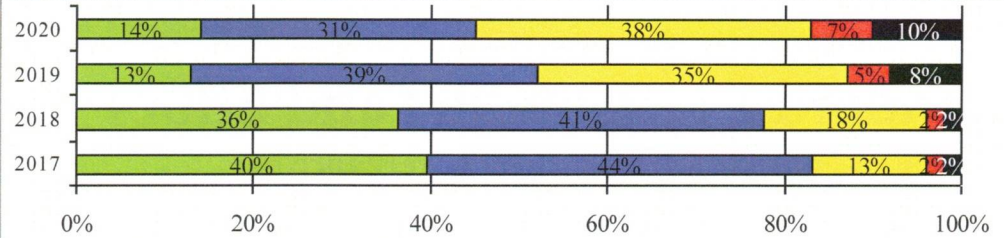


Framework for Governance: Aggregate Data

■ Always
 ■ Most of the time
 ■ Some of the time
 ■ Never
 ■ Don't know

Standard 1 Conduct and Ethics:

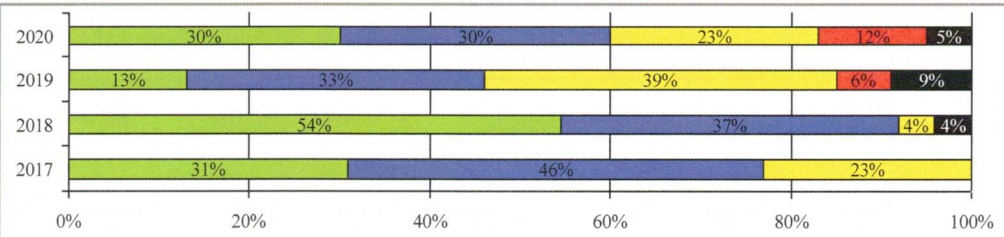
Provide responsible school district governance



Standard 2

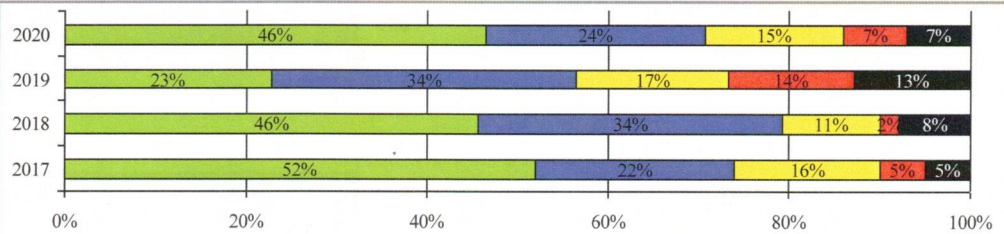
Vision:

Set and communicate high expectations for student learning with clear goals and plans for meeting those expectations



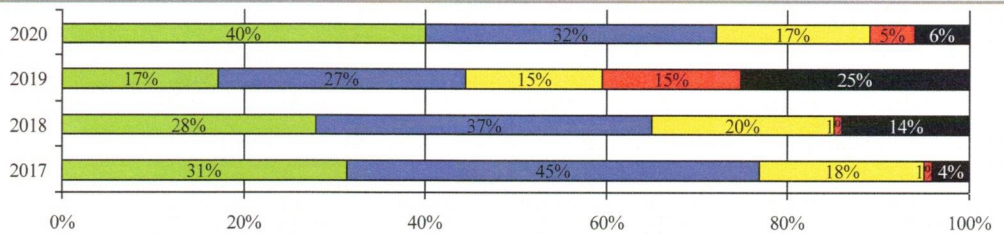
Standard 3 Structure:

Create conditions district-wide for student and staff success



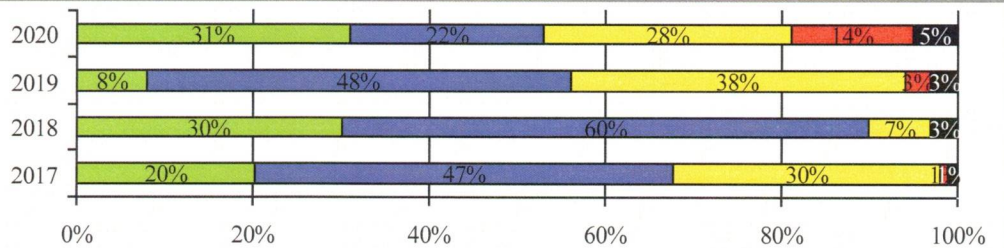
Standard 4 Accountability:

Hold school district accountable for meeting student learning expectations



Standard 5 Advocacy and Communication:

Engage local community and represent the values and expectations they hold for their schools



MSBA Self-Evaluation Report



MSBA Self-Evaluation Report

Standard 1 Conduct and Ethics

Provide responsible school district governance by:

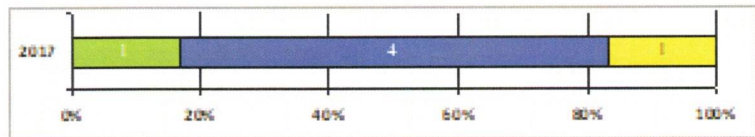
Benchmark of Success B

Ensuring the board is accountable and open to the public including seeking divergent perspectives in its decision-making process.

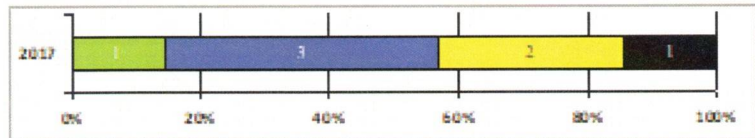
■ Always
 ■ Most of the time
 ■ Some of the time
 ■ Never
 ■ Don't know

To what extent does our board:

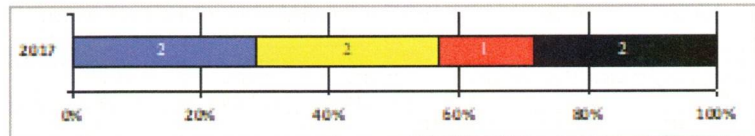
Q 5 Provide information to the public that supports board discussions and decisions?



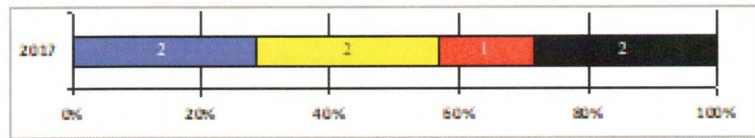
Q 6 Follow a defined process for gathering input prior to making critical decisions?



Q 7 Carry out annual assessments of its performance?



Q 8 Set goals for its improvement?



Notes:

Standards for School Board Leadership

The Role of the School Board

As the entity legally charged with governing a school district, each school board is responsible to its community for governing efficiently and leading effectively to provide for equitable education, resulting in high student achievement.

The following five standards are essential to being an effective, high-performing school board team.

Standard 1: Conduct and Ethics

The school board, as a whole, provides leadership to the community on behalf of the school district by conducting its business in a fair, respectful, legal, and responsible manner.

An effective, high-performing school board strives to meet the following benchmarks:

- A. Recognize the school board team consists of school board members and the superintendent and evaluates its performance at least annually.
- B. Take full responsibility for its activity and behavior at and away from the school board table.
- C. Encourage its members to express their individual opinions, respect others' opinions, and vote according to their convictions.
- D. Speak with one voice after reaching a decision.
- E. Spend time on board governance work rather than staff work - focuses on the ends not the means.
- F. Provide for orientation and ongoing training for all school board members.
- G. Follow established policies, including the chain-of-command, by directing people with concerns to the appropriate staff.
- H. Set an example of respectful and civil leadership.

Standard 2: Vision

The school board, with community input, envisions the educational future of the community and then formulates the goals, defines the outcomes, and sets the course for the school district.

An effective, high-performing school board strives to meet the following benchmarks:

- A. Use clear, focused, attainable, and measurable goals and outcomes to support gains in student achievement.
- B. Develop a strategic plan which includes well crafted school district belief statements, mission statement, vision statement, goals, and objectives that enable the school board to evaluate school district performance.
- C. Regularly monitor the strategic plan to evaluate progress toward goal achievement and school district success.
- D. Ensure that the school district belief statements, mission statement, vision statement, goals, and objectives are reflected in school board policies, mirrored in the budget planning and implementation efforts, and is supported district-wide.
- E. Communicate the strategic plan and the progress to the community.

Standard 3: Structure

The school board, to achieve its vision, establishes organizational and physical structures for student and staff success.

An effective, high-performing school board strives to meet the following benchmarks:

- A. Create organizational and physical structures based on equity in which all students and staff have the resources and supports to maximize achievement.
- B. Advocate and provide for learning through rigorous curriculum, effective technology, and a safe and secure environment.
- C. Select and employ one person – the superintendent – as the school district’s chief executive officer to lead and manage the school district.
- D. Hold the superintendent accountable for school district performance and compliance with written school board policy.
- E. Delegate the authority to the superintendent to recommend and evaluate all school district staff within the standards established through written school board policies.
- F. Accept ultimate responsibility for the care, management, fiscal oversight, and control of the school district while understanding that the day-to-day operations will be conducted by the staff.

Standard 4: Accountability

The school board is accountable to the community for constantly monitoring the conditions affecting the school district as a whole.

An effective, high-performing school board strives to meet the following benchmarks:

- A. Recognize the duty to itself and the community to determine whether the authority delegated to the superintendent is being used as intended.
- B. Evaluate the superintendent’s performance at least annually.
- C. Use student achievement data and other indicators when available as the basis for assessing progress toward school district goals and compliance with school board policies and state and federal laws.
- D. Recognize the distinction between “monitoring data” (data used by the school board to address accountability) and “management data” (data used by the staff for operations).

Standard 5: Advocacy and Communication

The school board advances its vision at the local, regional, state, and national levels.

An effective, high-performing school board strives to meet the following benchmarks:

- A. Focus on community-wide concerns and values that best support equity and student achievement rather than being influenced by special interests.
- B. Develop communication strategies to build trust between the school board and the superintendent, staff, students, and community.
- C. Utilize a public relations strategy that supports the flow of information into and out of the school district.
- D. Engage and build relationships with both public and private stakeholders.
- E. Advocate on local, state, and national levels.