



# Robbinsdale Area Schools School Board Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, July 28, 2010 at 4:30 PM

Robbinsdale Area School Board Workshop

Education Service Center Boardroom, 4148 Winnetka Avenue North,  
New Hope, Minnesota

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1. Welcome and Introductions

Mary Delagardelle, Iowa Association of School Boards' (IASB) director of leadership development and coordinator of the "Lighthouse Project" research team, will provide an overview of the Lighthouse Project. The goal of the IASB is "that the results of this study could serve as a 'lighthouse' to guide school boards in their efforts to improve student achievement."

Presenter: Chair Walsh

2. Brief Overview of the Lighthouse Project

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3. What's at Stake if Nothing Changes

4. Key Roles of the Board

5. Specific Board Actions that Positively Impact District Efforts to Improve Achievement

6. Next Steps

# IASB Research Shows School Boards Make a Difference in Student Achievement

School boards in high-achieving districts are significantly different in their knowledge and beliefs than school boards in low-achieving districts. And, this difference appears to carry through among administrators and teachers throughout the districts, according to results of a research study released in September 2000 by the Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB).

In the arena of educational research, the effect of school boards on student achievement is largely uncharted territory. The IASB study is one of only a few ever to study school boards based on quantifiable, reliable measures of student achievement.

IASB researchers conducted nearly 160 interviews with board members and educators in three high- and three low-achieving districts over the course of nearly two years. Because Iowa does not have a reliable statewide student achievement database, the interviews were conducted in Georgia, where a comprehensive database exists. IASB used reliable data to ensure that the schools were not only comparable to each other but to districts in Iowa in terms of enrollment, percent of children living in poverty, spending per student, household income and other factors.

## **The results show that school boards in districts with high student achievement:**

- Consistently expressed the belief that all students can learn and that the school could teach all students. This "no excuses" belief system resulted in high standards for students and an on-going dedication to improvement. In low-achieving districts, board members had limited expectations and often focused on factors that they believed kept students from learning, such as poverty, lack of parental support or societal factors.
- Were far more knowledgeable about teaching and learning issues, including school improvement goals, curriculum, instruction, assessment and staff development. They were able to clearly describe the purposes and processes of school improvement efforts and identify the board's role in supporting those efforts. They could give specific examples of how district goals were being carried out by administrators and teachers.
- Used data and other information on student needs and results to make decisions. The high-achieving boards regularly monitored progress on improvement efforts and modified direction as a result.
- Created a supportive workplace for staff. Boards in high-achieving districts supported regular staff development to help teachers be more effective, supported shared leadership and decision making among staff, and regularly expressed appreciation for staff members.
- Involved their communities. Board members identified how they connect with and listen to their communities and focused on involving parents in education.

## **Related Information:**

- [IASB Lighthouse Research Report](#), published in the *IASB Compass*, September 2000.
- [The Lighthouse Inquiry](#): The technical research report of IASB's Lighthouse Study.

For more information, contact [Mary Delagardelle](#), Iowa School Boards Foundation executive director.