

10 Criteria for Effective School Board Leadership

Source: Improving School Board Effectiveness: A Balanced Governance Approach

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1. **Role Boundaries:** Understands the difference between role of oversight and micromanagement.
2. **Student Concern Focus:** Supports a broad focus on student concerns to ensure all students are afforded social justice (avoids targeted focus for single categories of students or needs).
3. **Solution Focus:** Understands that the local school district, and each school, has unique and shifting needs, often requiring nonstandard solutions.
4. **Exercise of Influence and Visibility:** Understands that board members possess no individual authority and that power rests in the board as a group only.
5. **Use of Power:** Views power in trustee position as a means of ensuring all voices are heard to reach collaborative solutions; not serving for personal gain.
6. **Vision-Directed Planning:** Engages communities and staff in development of a shared vision focused on student learning – the vision is the foundation of the mission and sets goals that direct board policy making, planning, resource allocation, and activities.
7. **Accountability:** Exhibits high expectations for the learning of all students and holds self and their organizations accountable for reaching those results. Aligns policy, resource allocation, staffing, curriculum, professional development, and other activities with the vision and goals for student learning. The accountability process includes recognition of successes and support where improvement is needed.
8. **Using Data for Continuous Improvement:** Continuous improvement is the antithesis of complacency. Boards use data and information from multiple sources and in various formats to identify areas for improvement, set priorities, and monitor improvement efforts. At the same time, they seek even better ways to do things the organization is already doing well.
9. **Cultural Responsiveness:** The cultural diversity of a community has many facets – social, economic, political, religious, geographical, generational, linguistic, ethnic, racial, and

gender. Boards develop an understanding of this diversity and uphold perspectives that reflect the cultures in their community. Effective community engagement and expectancy strategies build on the strengths of a community's cultural diversity.

10. **Systems Thinking:** Breaks out of the box of single district thinking and acts on an integrated view of education within and across systems and levels. Boards that practice systems thinking open the door for collaborative local, state, and national partnerships, coordinated programs, and shared resource models to improve student learning.

Roles and Responsibilities of a School Board Trustee

1. Ensure creation of a vision and goals for the district and evaluate district success.
2. Adopt policies that guide district actions.
3. Hire a superintendent to serve as administrator of the district and evaluate the superintendent's success.
4. Approve an annual budget consistent with the district vision.