

Individual School Board Members

Guiding Principles

DRAFT

Advocacy | Civility | Courage | Empathy | Inquiry |
Integrity | Regard for Authority of the Board | Selflessness

The Individual School Board Member Is Motivated By and Focuses On What Is In The Best Interest Of All Students.

Questions to evaluate successful adoption of this standard include:

1. Does the Board member primarily concern him/herself with the goals that have been identified in the district plan?
2. Does the Board member demonstrate concern for all students in action, deed and decisions?
3. Is the Board member able to set aside personal issues and participate as a member of a Board?
4. Does the Board member maintain confidentiality when expected to do so?
5. Does the Board member advocate for viable and effective PreK-12 public education? (Such as by contacting legislators about PreK-12 issues, legislation, state education funding; talking with parents and community members about how they can positively advocate for and participate in their district, etc.)

The Individual School Board Member Believes In The Importance Of And Actively Engages In Lifelong Learning.

Questions to evaluate successful adoption of this standard include:

1. Is the Board member actively engaged in learning new concepts, skills, or best practices?
2. Is the Board member willing and able to develop competency in matters related to school governance such as school finance and policy, as well as school and labor law?
3. Does the Board member seek out and engage in learning opportunities to improve his/her ability to serve effectively on a Board of Education?

The Individual School Board Member Understands And Respects Both The Authority And Responsibilities Of The Board Of Education.

Questions to evaluate successful adoption of this standard include:

1. Does the Board member act in accordance with Missouri law, which does not vest individual members with any type of independent legal authority?
2. Does the Board member demonstrate a clear grasp of the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Education and the superintendent?
3. Does the Board member follow established policies and procedures?
4. Does the Board member support decisions of the Board of Education after a vote is taken regardless of his/her individual position prior to the vote?
5. Is the Board member able to identify, discuss, and resolve conflict with respect and civility?
6. Does the Board member come to meetings having read the background materials and adequately prepared to address items on the agenda?
7. Does the Board member demonstrate understanding of and respect for school district structure and protocols?
8. Does the Board member declare and avoid engaging in conflicts of interest?

The Individual School Board Member Approaches School Governance Work With A Spirit Of Inquiry.

Questions to evaluate successful adoption of this standard include:

1. Is the Board member open to discussion without prejudging issues?
2. Does the Board member seek clarity and understanding before forming an opinion?
3. Does the Board member actively seek common ground and work to foster productive relationships with all other members of the Board of Education as well as the superintendent?
4. Does the Board member seek out and respect perspectives that are different from his/her own?

Glossary of Terms

- **Accountability** - Accountability is accepting responsibility for ensuring the conditions are in place for positive student outcomes and learning to occur.
- **Advocacy** - Advocacy is actively supporting that which is in the best interest of Missouri's public school students.

- **Civility** - Civility is about more than just politeness, although politeness is a necessary first step. It is about disagreeing without disrespect, seeking common ground as a starting point for dialogue about differences, listening past one's preconceptions, and teaching others to do the same. Civility is the hard work of staying present even with those with whom we have deep-rooted and fierce disagreements. It is political in the sense that it is a necessary prerequisite for civic action. But it is political too in the sense that it is about negotiating interpersonal power such that everyone's voice is heard, and no one is ignored.
- **Commitment to Learning** - Commitment to learning describes a dedication to the belief that everyone can learn and that lifelong learning is key to an individual's ability to create positive outcomes.
- **Confidential** - Board members become aware of information of which unauthorized disclosure could be prejudicial to the interest of the district and/or illegal.
- **District Plan** - At minimum, a district plan lays out the objectives a district intends to accomplish including the steps it will take to accomplish those objectives as well as the timeframe and metrics that will be used to evaluate progress. (See Strategic Plan)
- **Empathy** - Empathy is the capacity to understand, be aware of, be sensitive to and vicariously experience the feelings, thoughts and experience of another.
- **Inclusivity** - Inclusivity is the policy of including people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized. This includes Board members, stakeholders, and students.
- **Integrity** - Integrity is the concept of consistency of one's actions, values, methods, measures, principles, expectations, and outcomes.
- **Inquiry** - Inquiry is an approach to understanding that is constructed in the process of people working and conversing together as they pose and solve problems, making discoveries and testing new knowledge in the course of shared activity.
- **Regard for Authority of the Board** - Regard for the authority of the Board is the ability of an individual Board member to respect and support the vote of the Board of Education even if his/her position was contrary to the decision.
- **Reliability** - The extent to which a measurement gives results that are very consistent.
- **Selflessness** - Selflessness is putting the needs and concerns of others ahead of one's self.
- **Stakeholders** - Individuals and groups who have an interest in the welfare of a community's children and public school district including, but not limited to,

district residents, students, parents, business owners/operators, district staff members, etc.

- **Stewardship** - Stewardship is the careful and responsible management of the school district's resources including finances, facilities, human resources, etc.
- **Strategic Plan** - A strategic plan is a document that empowers school districts to plan for continuous change and is used to communicate with the entire school community the Board of Education's vision for the district, goals related to making that vision a reality and the actions needed to achieve those goals, as well as related support materials such as timelines and measurements. It is established via a process that engages stakeholders in assessing the internal and external environments, analyzes the implications or relevant trends, and identifies effective strategies for achieving the desired future state of the school district.
- **Transparency** - Transparency describes a Board's obligation to share information with citizens. Information on how officials conduct the public business and spend taxpayers' money must be readily available and easily understood.
- **Validity** - Validity of an assessment is the degree to which it measures what it is supposed to measure.
- **Vision** - A vision describes in detail the desired future state of a school district. It announces to staff members, parents, and students where a district is heading and why they should take the trip with you.
- **Vision-Driven** - Vision-driven describes a Board that, in partnership with the superintendent and stakeholders, establishes a shared vision and plans for the school district to attain that vision.

**Adapted from Board of Education Governance Standards - Michigan Association of School Boards*