

Board of Education

Roles and Responsibilities

DRAFT

Roles

Research suggests that there are four major tenets of leadership for school boards:

1. Vision—Creating a Shared Vision

- Board keeps students as the focus of the work of schools
- Board adopts a shared vision to guide education
- Board demonstrates its strong commitment to the shared vision and mission by using them to guide decision making and communicating to others

2. Structure—Establishing a Structure to Achieve the Vision

- Board employs a superintendent and establishes a district management system that enables all people to contribute meaningfully to achieve the vision
- Board establishes district processes to use information and make effective decisions
- Board ensures that long- and short-term plans are developed and annually revised through a process involving participation, information gathering, research and reflection
- Board makes decisions that support student learning and school renewal when it reviews and adopts policies and allocates resources
- Board sets high instructional standards based on the best available information of the knowledge and skills students will need in the future
- Board encourages an environment conducive to innovative approaches to teaching and learning and supportive of continuous renewal of education

3. Accountability—Developing Accountability to Measure and Communicate How Well the Vision is Being Accomplished

- Board receives regular reports on student progress and needs based on a variety of assessments in order to evaluate the quality and equity of education in the district
- Board evaluates both superintendent and Board performance
- Board evaluates progress toward achievement of district long- and short-term goals and ensures that policies and allocation of resources effectively support district vision
- Board periodically reports district progress to community and parents

4. Advocacy—Championing the Vision

- Board seeks others who can help expand educational opportunities and meet the needs of the whole child
- Board advocates for children and families and establishes strong relationships with parents and other mentors to help support students
- Board leads in celebrating the achievements of students and others in education
- Board promotes school board service as a meaningful way to make long-term contributions to society

The role of the Board of Education is not to run the schools, but to see that they are well run.

Responsibilities

In order to give the best service to your local community, board members need to develop skills and knowledge in a variety of areas.

1. Policymaking

A major function of the Board of Education, and the foundation upon which the district's structure is built, is the setting of policy. Policies spell out how the district will operate. They should be based on the Board's vision for the district. Boards do not carry out a policy. The responsibility for implementing policy is delegated to the superintendent.

2. Designating the Chief Executive Officer

The Board of Education is responsible for:

- Recruiting
- Hiring
- Evaluating the performance of the superintendent

3. Planning, Goal Setting and Evaluation

The shared community vision is translated into long-and short-range goals. The Board of Education establishes the structure to:

- Accomplish the vision with input from community, staff, parents, and students
- Evaluation is the mechanism by which the Board is held accountable to the public for the goals that are set for education in their communities.

4. Financial Resources

The Board of Education approves and adopts the budget. Much of the responsibility for establishing a structure for the district is affected by this budget.

5. Staffing and Evaluation

The Board of Education is responsible for establishing policy that governs:

- Salaries and salary schedules
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Fringe benefits
- Leave
- In-service training

The Board delegates the tasks of recruiting, recommending for hire, evaluating, promoting, and disciplining staff (in accordance with Board policy) to the superintendent.

6. Instruction

The Board of Education, working with the superintendent and staff, must:

- Set clear expectations or standards
- Adopt policies based on instructional programs

7. School Facilities

The Board of Education is responsible for determining school housing needs and:

- Communicating those needs to the community
- Purchasing, disposing of, or leasing school sites
- Approving long-range facility plans that support the educational programs

8. Students

The Board of Education can accept, modify, or reject policies recommended by the superintendent regarding school operations.

9. Communication With Various Constituencies

The Board of Education is responsible to maintain an ongoing two-way communication with:

- School staff
- Students
- Members of the community

10. Advocacy

Board members, both individually and collectively, need to serve as advocates for children.

11. Adjudication and Investigation

The Board of Education may have to hear appeals from staff members or students/parents on issues which involve board policy implementation.

12. Establishing Bylaws

The Board of Education is responsible for:

- Procedures for the operation of the Board
- Election of officers
- Review and evaluate Board operations and performances
- Establish and maintain effective Board/superintendent relations

13. General

Other activities include:

- Establishing attendance zones for the school district
- Setting strategy and coordinating litigation decisions when the school district is involved in a lawsuit
- Working with (as well as authorizing the administration to work with) city, county and other governmental and non-governmental officials and agencies

**Adapted from Michigan Association of School Boards*