

# Framework for School Board Development

## Preamble

The mission of the public education system of this state is to ensure that all Texas children have access to a quality education that enables them to achieve their potential and fully participate now and in the future in the social, economic, and educational opportunities of our state and nation (Texas Education Code, §4.001).

The board of trustees is the governing body for Texas public schools and holds the ultimate responsibility for the district's success in educating students. Above all else, trustees owe the highest duty to students and their parents, and the board represents taxpayers, attempting to maximize learning outcomes while minimizing resources required. To effectively fulfill the mission of educating students, the board must provide leadership and direction, working in collaboration with the superintendent to implement the board's vision and goals. Each year, the board will self-assess its governing performance both as a corporate body and as individual trustees. On an ongoing basis, the board will monitor the progress of the district's superintendent in leading the district toward the achievement of the board's vision and goals. The board's governing performance is focused on five core areas:

- setting a clear vision and goals for students,
- evaluating the likely success of the superintendent's strategic plan, including its incorporation of effective systems and processes designed to meet the board's vision and goals,
- monitoring progress in the effective implementation of the plan and its critical systems and processes,
  - ensuring transparency of goals, progress, processes, and resources,
- maintaining accountable governance to achieve the mission.

The Framework for School Board Development, approved by the State Board of Education, outlines the critical governing performance areas for all public-school boards.

## Framework

- I. **Vision and Goals**-The board ensures creation of a shared and measurable vision and set of goals for student outcomes. The board:
  - o Prioritizes support for understanding and achieving state-identified outcomes goals for students
  - o Develops a measurable vision for what will be true for the district's students if the district is fully successful in its mission in the long term, attempting to ensure the vision is shared among the majority of the district's parents and taxpayers
  - o Adopts a reasonable number of specific, quantifiable, research-based, and time-bound student outcome goals that lead toward achieving the board's long-term vision
  - o Establishes locally developed, near-term measurable goals for student opportunities and experiences support the board's long-term vision

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- o Uses the vision and goals to drive all deliberations, decisions, and actions

**II. District Strategic Plan-The** board evaluates the superintendent's strategic plan to achieve the board's vision and goals for students, ensuring the plan's systems and processes appear sufficient to accomplish the vision and goals. The board:

- o Ensures a plan is developed, includes appropriately prioritized actions, and describes key systems and process that support its execution
- o Ensures the plan includes components designed to determine whether and how well it is implemented over time
- o Approves a budget that aligns with the plan and maximizes efficient use of resources to ensure the plan can be successfully executed with a minimum of taxpayer dollars
- o Takes steps to ensure adequate flexibility of the superintendent to adopt procedures that support the plan's execution, while clearly delineating when a policy must require board approval
- o Ensures that the superintendent's planning and decision-making processes are designed to maximize the likelihood of success, including the need to make evidence-based decision, and where appropriate, incorporating key stakeholder engagement to support changes needed
- o Ensures the plan incorporates components designed to support sound business and fiscal practices
- o Ensures the plan incorporates components designed to maximize the talent, skill, growth, and efficacy of district personnel
- o Verifies that the plan fulfills the statutory duties of the district, including all laws, rules, ethical procedures, and court orders pertaining to schools, school personnel, and school board members

**III. Monitoring Progress-The** board ensures the superintendent and leadership team provide a cadence of reports to facilitate the monitoring of progress of the district's strategic plan toward the achievement of student outcomes goals and the district's long-term vision. The board:

- o Coordinates with the superintendent to identify key measures of progress and performance tied to the district's strategic plan, and aligns on a format and calendar of reporting
- o Ensures progress toward achievement of district goals through systematic, timely, and comprehensive reviews of relevant progress reports and performance data that illustrate progress toward the district's goals and vision.
- o Consistently prioritizes board time and attention on the aspects of the strategic plan most likely to impact the board's student outcomes goals
- o Annually reflects on summative the board's student outcomes goals and the relationship between improvement in reaching the long-term vision for students and progress and performance measures reported from the district's strategic plan

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- o Annually evaluates the superintendent on the implementation of the district's strategic plan and the achievement of the board's goals

**IV. Transparency-**The board promotes clarity for parents and taxpayers with regard to the performance of the district and the resources used. The board:

- o Ensures the district's measurable student outcomes vision and goals are prominently and consistently communicated, both for Internal staff and for parents and taxpayers
- o Ensures that current student outcomes are well understood, by parents for their own children, by parents for their schools, and by taxpayers for the entire school district, and by staff
- o Ensures the district's strategic plan is clear, readily accessible, and regularly communicated
- o Ensures that district action plan progress reports are readily accessible
- o Ensures district financial information, including district revenue and its sources, and district expenditures, are clear and readily accessible
- o Ensures that district procedures of use by parents are clearly communicated and the district takes steps to ensure they are easy to follow

**V. Accountable Governance** -The board's duties are distinct from the superintendent and other district personnel, as the entity with ultimate responsibility to ensure the district is making progress in achieving its vision for students. The board:

- o Works collaboratively with the superintendent and the superintendent's leadership team, providing sufficient autonomy to implement the district's strategic plan while establishing a tone at the top supportive of taking actions needed to achieve the district's vision for students
- o Provides feedback when appropriate on perceived strengths and weaknesses of the district's strategic plan, while working to deeply understand the kinds of prioritized actions, systems and processes likely to make the most progress toward achieving the district's vision for students
- o Provides recurring feedback on the sufficiency of progress in implementation, while working to ensure the superintendent and district leadership team are empowered to take actions needed to make sufficient progress
- o Determines whether to renew or continue a superintendent's employment as the leader of the school system, and whether and how to reward or recognize a superintendent's significant progress in achieving the district's vision
- o When it is necessary to hire a new superintendent, evaluates all available options

to select a candidate with the greatest likelihood of making progress to achieve the district's vision for students

- o Oversees the district's audit plan, and when appropriate the district's Internal auditor, for the purpose of ensuring financial statements and other information provided to the board can be relied upon to make decisions
- o Supports individual members to address constituent concerns by ensuring those constituents know how to avail themselves to district systems and processes designed to address their concerns
- o Makes decisions as a whole only at properly caned meetings and recognizes that individual members have no authority to take individual action in policy or district and campus administrative matters
- o Respects the right of Individual members to express their viewpoints and vote their convictions, while individual board members recognize they have an ethical duty to be bound by decisions of the board as a body corporate
- a Establishes and follows local policies, procedures, and ethical standards governing the conduct and operations of the board, Including the duties and responsibilities of the board president and board officers
- o Is responsible for understanding and adhering to laws governing public education in Texas
- o Utilizes Executive Session within the guidelines of the Texas Open Meetings Act to discuss the allowable items in relation to the effectiveness of the district efforts. To allow complete transparency within the board, the presence of the superintendent at an Executive Session is at the discretion of the board. The superintendent shall continue to make comments in open session on any agenda item