

Indicators of Effective Boards and Board Members

Ethics are essential to the successful operation of the educational system. The Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) has developed indicators of effective boards and board members that encompass the most important responsibilities of a board of education. Ethics are intended to ensure that the conduct of a school board holds the respect and confidence of the community, staff, students and all constituents. It's the belief of MASB that high ethical standards translate into a focus on student achievement, culture and conduct at board meetings and consistent accountability.

Focus on Student Achievement

Board members:

- Ensure the district has a comprehensive, performance-based plan for improving student achievement.
- Advocate for and support a strategic plan.
- Set the agenda, seek information and ask questions consistent with the plan.
- Focus on issues that improve student achievement.

Accountability

Board members:

- Are informed about the issues before the board.
- Play an active role in committee meetings and work sessions.
- Seek information and ways the board and community can be better informed about the district's progress through an objective analysis of data.
- Base decisions, comments and questions on objective data.
- Visit schools and other community events, in accordance with district policy, to hear from stakeholders and to help shape a positive public opinion about the district.

Culture and Conduct at Board Meetings

Board members:

- Value differences of opinion and don't let differences degenerate into personality conflicts.
- Focus the board agenda and meeting on issues related to improving student achievement.
- Publicly support the superintendent and staff.
- Seek to build consensus and an environment of trust and respect among their fellow board members.

Ethics

Board members:

- Ensure that familial or business relationships or special interest group affiliations don't contribute to a bias in decisions.
- Ensure that solicited or received money, services, or other items of value from vendors or special interest groups don't influence decisions or public perceptions.
- Ensure that commitments and directives are in the best interest of the entire board and district and not the individual board member.
- Create an environment that discourages micromanagement or undermining of the superintendent.