



MASB Board of Education Governance Standards

Suggestions for Adopting and Utilizing the Standards

MASB's Board of Education Governance Standards are intended to help support school boards in their efforts to govern responsibly and effectively on behalf of all students.

By adopting the Governance Standards, boards are taking an important step toward:

- Demonstrating their commitment to governing effectively on behalf of students;
- Promoting greater self-accountability; and
- Providing a useful tool for the community to assess how the board is doing.

The following pages provide advice for boards about how to locally adopt the BOE Governance Standards. Once adopted, boards may utilize the Standards in a number of ways to help strengthen their ongoing commitment to effective governance.

Local Adoption

Local boards are encouraged to review, discuss and adopt the Board of Education Governance Standards. To formally adopt the Standards, the item should be placed on a meeting agenda and the board should pass a resolution (sample language is provided as part of the toolkit). Adopting the Standards is an important step for the board and sufficient time and attention should be given to the item on the agenda.

Utilizing the Standards

Adopting the Standards is a significant first step toward demonstrating the board's commitment to effective governance. Once adopted, there are many ways—both large and small—that boards can take action to further their commitment on behalf of the students they serve.

These include:

Displaying the Board of Education Governance Standards

The Governance Standards can help to establish a common vocabulary in the district and county office of education about governance. To achieve this, the Standards should be readily accessible to the governing board and periodically communicated to staff and the public.

Displaying the Standards also helps to reinforce the board's commitment. Suggestions for ways to display the Standards include:

- Posting them at the central office and in the boardroom. (Districts that adopt the Standards can purchase plaques through MASB for this purpose.)
- Including a copy of the Standards as regular pages in the board meeting agenda packet.
- Posting the Standards on the district or county website.

Making the Standards Part of the Local Organizational Culture

The BOE Governance Standards are based on 30 years' worth of research that show a correlation between effective board governance and student achievement. School leaders throughout the state helped to develop the Standards, but each board that adopts them should utilize them in a manner that works best locally. For the Standards to have maximum value, governance teams must take local "ownership" of them. We recommend a number of ways that boards can begin to do this, including:

- Regular discussion of the Standards. Governance teams should devote time, ideally as part of board working sessions, to discussing the Standards. In particular, governance teams should consider reaching agreements about what would indicate success for the board in meeting each of the Standards. This might also take the form of adopting local "performance indicators," "protocols" or "norms" to back up each Standard. An outside facilitator might be useful for these discussions so that all members of the governance team can participate. This work will serve to further reaffirm the board's commitment to creating and maintaining a positive organizational culture. The board may wish to begin by discussing a specific section of the Standards or a specific Standard.
- Periodically evaluating the board's own effectiveness. Effective boards employ a number of strategies to periodically evaluate their effectiveness. These range from formal workshops to brief "progress checks" at the conclusion of regular meetings to utilizing professional facilitators and soliciting outside feedback. Individual boards should determine which strategies work best for them. In any case, the BOE Governance Standards provide a framework for conducting this periodic evaluation as well as to enhance the board's "self-accountability." Boards that adopt the Standards and develop their own norms or indicators will be a long way toward having established their own evaluation mechanism.

Participating in Continuing Education

As the Standards demonstrate, serving on a school governing board is a complex role. Both new and experienced board members can benefit from continuing education and professional development opportunities. MASB offers a range of programs and resources, such as the Board Member Certification (CBA) classes, Annual Leadership Conference, Board Self-Assessment (in the process of being revised) and custom workshops, all of which fully integrate the concepts contained in the BOE Governance Standards.

Reviewing and Reaffirming the Standards

Following the initial adoption of the Standards, boards should review and reaffirm the Standards and any related bylaws, policies and agreements at least annually as part of the board's organizational meeting. Every time a new member joins the governance team, it's also a good idea to review the Standards and the governance team agreements related to them.

For additional information about the Board of Education Governance Standards, visit www.miboardstandards.com, or contact the MASB Leadership Development and Executive Search Services Department at mmccarthy@masb.org or 517.327.5900.