



Foundational Principles of Effective Governance

As the corporate entity charged by law with governing a school district, each school board sits in trust for its entire community. The obligation to govern effectively imposes some fundamental duties on the board:

1. The board clarifies the district purpose.

As its primary task, the board continually defines, articulates, and re-defines district ends to answer the recurring question — who gets what benefits for how much? Effective ends development requires attention to at least two key concerns: student learning and organizational effectiveness.

- Ends express the benefits the school district should deliver, thereby providing the entire system with clarity of purpose and a clear direction. A school board rarely creates district ends; rather, it most often detects them through listening and observing.
- Ends reflect the district's purpose, direction, priorities, and desired outcomes and are recorded in statements of core values/beliefs, mission, vision, and goals.
- In effective school districts, every part of the organization is aligned with the ends articulated by the school board in written board policy.
- Well-crafted ends enable the school board to effectively and efficiently monitor district performance and assess organizational success (Principle 5).

2. The board connects with the community.

The school board engages in an ongoing two-way conversation with the entire community. This conversation enables the board to hear and understand the community's educational aspirations and desires, to serve effectively as an advocate for district improvement, and to inform the community of the district's performance.

- Community engagement, also called public engagement or civic engagement, is the process by which school boards actively involve diverse citizens in dialogue, deliberation, and collaborative thinking around common concerns for their public schools.
- Effective community engagement is essential to create trust and support among community, board, superintendent, and staff.
- A board in touch with community-wide concerns and values will serve the broad public good rather than being overly influenced by special interests.
- The school board must be aggressive in reaching out to the community — the district's owners — to engage people in conversations about education and the public good. In contrast, people who bring customer concerns to board members should be appropriately directed to the superintendent and staff.

continued

www.iasb.com

3. The board employs a superintendent.

The board employs and evaluates one person — the superintendent — and holds that person accountable for district performance and compliance with written board policy.

- An effective school board develops and maintains a productive relationship with the superintendent.
- The employment relationship consists of mutual respect and a clear understanding of respective roles, responsibilities, and expectations. This relationship should be grounded in a thoughtfully crafted employment contract and job description; procedures for communications and ongoing assessment; and reliance on written policy.
- Although the board is legally required to approve all employment contracts, the board delegates authority to the superintendent to select and evaluate all district staff within the standards established in written board policy.

4. The board delegates authority.

The board delegates authority to the superintendent to manage the district and provide leadership for the staff. Such authority is communicated through written board policies that designate district ends and define operating parameters.

- Ultimately, the school board is responsible for everything, yet must recognize that everything depends upon a capable and competent staff.
- “Delegates authority to” means empowering the superintendent and staff to pursue board ends single-mindedly and without hesitation. A board that does (or re-does) staff work disempowers the staff. High levels of superintendent and staff accountability require high levels of delegation.
- Delegation is difficult for anyone accustomed to direct action. However, to appropriately stay focused on the big picture and avoid confusing the staff, members of the school board must discipline themselves to trust their superintendent and staff and not involve themselves in day-to-day operations.

5. The board monitors performance.

The board constantly monitors progress toward district ends and compliance with written board policies using data as the basis for assessment.

- A school board that pursues its ends through the delegation of authority has a moral obligation to itself and the community to determine whether that authority is being used as intended.
- Unless the board is clear about what it wants, there is no valid way to measure progress and compliance.
- A distinction should be made between monitoring data (used by the board for accountability) and management data (used by the staff for operations).
- The constructive use of data is a skill that must be learned. The board should have some understanding of data, but will typically require guidance from the staff.

6. The board takes responsibility for itself.

The board, collectively and individually, takes full responsibility for board activity and behavior — the work it chooses to do and how it chooses to do the work. Individual board members are obligated to express their opinions and respect others’ opinions; however, board members understand the importance of the board ultimately speaking with one clear voice.

- The school board’s role as trustee for the community is unique and essential to both the district and community.
- While the board must operate within legal parameters, good governance requires the board be responsible for itself, its processes and contributions. Board deliberations and actions are limited to board work, not staff work.
- The board seeks continuity of leadership, even as it experiences turnover in membership. The board accomplishes this by using written board policies to guide board operations, by providing thorough orientation and training for all members, and by nurturing a positive and inviting board culture.

Principle #5 of the IASB Principles of Effective Governance

“The Board Monitors Performance”

This month we will review foundational principle #5 of the Association’s principles of effective governance.

5. The board monitors performance.

The board constantly monitors progress toward district ends and compliance with written board policies using data as the basis for assessment.

- A school board that pursues its ends through the delegation of authority has a moral obligation to itself and the community to determine whether that authority is being used as intended.
- Unless the board is clear about what it wants, there is no valid way to measure progress and compliance.
- A distinction should be made between monitoring data (used by the board for accountability) and management data (used by the staff for operations).
- The constructive use of data is a skill that must be learned. The board should have some understanding of data, but will typically require guidance from the staff.

It is important that the Board provides staff with clarity on the “ends” it expects and which type of data that the Board expects for monitoring performance at the Board level.

Board policy 2:245 provides an explanation of the types of program evaluation that the school board has outlined to be used in reviewing programs and for future decisions.

Work at the May 31 retreat may also help generate some thoughtful anticipated “ends” for 2016-17 and beyond.

School Board

Program Evaluation Philosophy

The Board of Education desires to support the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of quality instructional and operational programs.

In order for the School Board to monitor and evaluate whether the educational program is attaining approved and desired objectives, the Board shall direct and support the Superintendent to engage in the following:

- a. A self-evaluation of its own performance as a Board Governing Team at least every two years.
- b. A review and evaluation of the present curriculum, co-curricular, extra-curricular and operational programs and initiatives at least every two years.
- c. A review and projection of curricular, personnel and instructional resource needs at least every two years.
- d. A review of present and future facility needs at least every two years.

The Board further believes that Program Evaluation is the systematic assessment of the worth or merit of some object.

Goals of Program Evaluation

1. To provide feedback relative to a clear goal or outcome of a program, position, or process.
2. Feedback is useful when it helps make decisions, and leads to richer questions.

Four Types of Evaluation for Our District

Needs Assessment: Should be completed prior to implementation, but would also provide information as to sustainability and long-term viability of a program. Needs to ask who is being served, for what purpose, and for what outcomes.

Process Evaluation: What are the steps involved in providing a specific program, what resources are needed including costs, human resources, time, space, special assistance, etc.

Outcome Evaluation: Answers the question, "Did the program, process, or person cause the intended effect on the specifically desired target outcome(s)?"

Cost Analysis: After a determination is completed of the three previous evaluation types, a cost analysis helps provide the information necessary for decision-makers to decide whether or not the costs are feasible to absorb in achieving the desired outcome. This may also involve cost trends and alternative sources of revenues.

Approved by Board Action 01/08/2015
Reviewed by Board Action 06/11/2015

School Board

Access to District Public Records

Full access to the District's *public records* is available to any person as provided in the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), this policy, and implementing procedures.

Freedom of Information Officer

The Superintendent shall serve as the District's Freedom of Information Officer and assumes all the duties and powers of that office as provided in FOIA and this policy. The Superintendent may delegate these duties and powers to one or more designees, but the delegation shall not relieve the Superintendent of the responsibility for the action that was delegated. The Superintendent or designee(s) shall report any FOIA requests and the status of the District's response to the Board at each regular Board meeting.

Definition

The District's *public records* are defined as records, reports, forms, writings, letters, memoranda, books, papers, maps, photographs, microfilms, cards, tapes, recordings, electronic data processing records, electronic communications, recorded information and all other documentary materials pertaining to the transaction of public business, regardless of physical form or characteristics, having been prepared by or for, or having been or being used by, received by, in the possession of, or under the control of the School District.

Requesting Records

A request for inspection and/or copies of public records must be made in writing and may be submitted by personal delivery, mail, telefax, or email directed to the District's Freedom of Information Officer. Individuals making a request are not required to state a reason for the request other than to identify when the request is for a commercial purpose or when requesting a fee waiver. All requests for inspection and copying shall immediately be forwarded to the District's Freedom of Information Officer or designee.

Responding to Requests

The Freedom of Information Officer shall approve all requests for public records unless:

1. The requested material does not exist;
2. The requested material is exempt from inspection and copying by the Freedom of Information Act; or
3. Complying with the request would be unduly burdensome.

Within 5 business days after receipt of a request for access to a public record, the Freedom of Information Officer shall comply with or deny the request, unless the time for response is extended as specified in Section 3 of FOIA. The Freedom of Information Officer may extend the time for a response for up to 5 business days from the original due date. If an extension is needed, the Freedom of Information Officer shall: (1) notify the person making the request of the reason for the extension, and (2) either inform the person of the date on which a response will be made, or agree with the person in writing on a compliance period.

Notwithstanding the above, the Freedom of Information Officer shall respond to requests for *commercial purposes* and to *recurrent requesters* (as those terms are defined in Section 2 of FOIA) according to Sections 3.1 and 3.2 of FOIA.

When responding to a request for a record containing both exempt and non-exempt material, the Freedom of Information Officer shall redact exempt material from the record before complying with the request.

Copying Fees

Persons making a request for copies of public records must pay any applicable copying fee. The Freedom of Information Officer shall, as needed, recommend a copying fee schedule for the Board's approval. Copying fees, except when fixed by statute, are reasonably calculated to reimburse the District's actual cost for reproducing and certifying public records and for the use, by any person, of its equipment to copy records. No fees shall be charged for the first 50 pages of black and white, letter or legal sized copies. No copying fee shall be charged for electronic copies other than the actual cost of the recording medium.

Fees for Responding to a Request for a Commercial Purpose

In addition to copying fees, persons making a request for a *commercial purpose*, as defined in FOIA, must pay a fee of \$10 for each hour spent by personnel in searching for and retrieving the record. However, no fees shall be charged for the first 8 hours spent by personnel in searching for or retrieving a requested record. The District also charges the actual cost of retrieving and transporting public records from an off-site storage facility when the public records are maintained by a third-party storage facility under contract with the District. Whenever the District charges any fees to a requester making a commercial request, the Freedom of Information Officer shall provide the requester with an accounting of all fees, costs, and personnel hours in connection with the request for public records.

Access

The inspection and copying of a public record that is the subject of an approved access request is permitted at the District's administrative office during regular business hours, unless other arrangements are made by the Freedom of Information Officer.

Many public records are immediately available from the District's website including, but not limited to, a description of the District and the methods for requesting a public record.

Preserving Public Records

Public records, including email messages, shall be preserved and cataloged if: (1) they are evidence of the District's organization, function, policies, procedures, or activities, (2) they contain informational data appropriate for preservation, (3) their retention is required by State or federal law, or (4) they are subject to a retention request by the Board Attorney (e.g. a litigation hold), District auditor, or other individual authorized by the School Board or State or federal law to make such a request. Unless its retention is required as described in items numbered 3 or 4 above, a public record, as defined by the Illinois Local Records Act, may be destroyed when authorized by the Local Records Commission.

LEGAL REF.: 5 ILCS 140/, Illinois Freedom of Information Act.
105 ILCS 5/10-16 and 5/24A-7.1.
820 ILCS 40/11
820 ILCS 130/5.

CROSS REF.: 2:140 (Communications To and From the Board), 5:150 (Personnel Records),
7:340 (Student Records)

Adopted by Board Action 06/02/1998
Amended by Board Action 11/14/2007
Amended by Board Action 08/12/2010
Amended by Board Action 06/11/2015