

IDAHO SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION STANDARDS

Standards

A FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

Adopted by the Executive Board of the Idaho School Boards Association on February 25, 2014

OUR MISSION

Provide leadership and services to
local school boards for the benefit of students
and for the advocacy of public education

OUR VISION

Trustee leadership for excellence
in Idaho public education



Standards

The Idaho School Boards Association Standards provide a foundation for the critical discussions and ensuing decisions that must be made by school boards to ensure student success within their respective districts.

I Idaho School Boards Association is committed to meeting the governance challenge by providing every public school board in Idaho with high standards of performance. We believe a straightforward approach to school board quality, accountability, and trust will bring excellence in achievement to both the overall district and the individual classroom.



The Development History

In mid-2012, the Board Leadership Development Committee of the ISBA Executive Board began evaluating draft standards and performance indicators for school boards and board members. In November of 2013, these draft standards were presented to the membership at the Annual Convention. A workshop was held during this event to gather feedback and input on these draft standards. From November to February

the draft standards were vetted by individual boards across Idaho. The draft was further edited for both inclusion and alignment of the key works of school boards as well as readability. In February of 2014, the ISBA Executive Board unanimously approved the Idaho School Boards Association standards upon the recommendation of the Board Leadership and Development Committee.

**The standards help boards constantly look for ways
to become more effective and efficient
leaders in governance.**



Why are the standards important?

The standards matter because quality matters. These standards are designed to better prepare school board members to carry out their governance role. School Districts that are high achieving districts know the importance of a strong School Board and a cohesive Board–Superintendent Team. This type of quality in the boardroom helps drive student success.

What do the ISBA Standards mean to me and my Board?

These standards have been created not only to define the role of the School Board Member but also to provide the specific steps for development and continual improvement of a District's quality management team. This will allow the Board to monitor the progress of student achievement and district goals and thus ensure success. One cornerstone of the standards is continual improvement. No Board should ever be content with where they are at any given moment. The standards help boards constantly look for ways to become more effective and efficient leaders in governance. The standards will allow for a systemic evaluation of not only the individual's contribution to the District's success but also of the ability of the Board to govern effectively.

The Governance Challenge

Local school boards face the challenge of increasing public confidence in Idaho's system of school districts by improving the performance of school boards and their board members.

Framework for the Idaho School Boards Association Standards

The Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA) is committed to assisting school boards with meeting the governance challenges in their respective districts by creating a new reality in which every public school board in Idaho meets high standards of performance as identified by the Idaho School Boards Association Standards.

ISBA has fashioned a straightforward response to public and legislative concerns about school board quality, accountability, and trust. Rather than appointing a task force to spend years studying the problem, ISBA has stepped forward with the development of standards, which we invite the public to use to judge school boards and evaluate their actions. These standards set forth exactly what ISBA believes school boards should be committed to and held accountable for in their governance role. We believe these standards reflect widely held public values, will move public education forward, and will build public confidence.

The Future of Board Standards

ISBA intends to utilize the board standards framework in a variety of ways. We are reshaping our board training program to address the following: developing the most locally appropriate form of these standards; providing practical application of standards in local districts, and preparing school board members to carry out their governance role. ISBA is also pleased to provide an evaluation tool to measure school board performance based on the framework within the Idaho School Boards Association Standards.

A person cannot teach what he or she does not know or lead where he or she does not go.

Definition of Terms

Accountability reflects commitment that all functions and resources within the district focus on student learning and achievement. Governance actions promoting accountability include: development of district policies focused on student growth and wellbeing; monitoring of student achievement targets; compliance with local, state, and federal laws; alignment of district operations with the district vision and goals; and transparency with the public.

Alignment refers to the lining up of all district systems and processes towards the vision and mission of the district. Components include: goals, strategic plan, and measurable outcomes: standards, curriculum, instruction, assessments, district operations, resources, and staffing.

Governance refers to the governing board's leadership role in conjunction with district administrators, including the superintendent, in making plans, decisions, and judgments that address three major aspects of the district. These aspects include:

1. Strategic planning (long term):
In what direction should our school district be headed over time?
2. Operational planning (short term):
Where or what should our school district be now and in the near future?
3. Monitoring (current status):
How well is our school district working?

The types of work to be completed through governance include:

- (a) Development and support of a partnership between the board and the superintendent;
- (b) Evaluation of the superintendent's performance,
- (c) Monitoring the district's performance, and
- (d) Working together to make strategic and operational planning decisions.

The **School Board** consists of an elected body of community members who, in their governance role, provide democratic oversight and represent public ownership of schools within a school district. The board serves as a bridge between public values and professional expertise.

The Standards

of Idaho School Boards Association

Standard 1

VISION & MISSION

The Board supports the development, articulation, and stewardship of a district vision of learning that is shared and supported by schools and the community.



1.1 The Board develops a shared vision for education and student learning that enhances student achievement, incorporates community priorities, and reflects student needs.

Indicators

- Educational stakeholders (schools, families, and community) participate in the development and/or revision of school district vision.
- The Board annually reviews the district's vision and mission statements when or before adopting board and district goals to support them.
- Core values to be implemented through the vision, mission, goals and strategic plan are identified and articulated.



1.2 The Board demonstrates strong commitment to shared vision through decision-making.

Indicators

- The Board uses the vision as a guide in planning, decision-making, and evaluating district operations.
- The Board communicates its rationale for decisions to the community as a way to reinforce its commitment to the district's vision.
- Board behavior models core values and sets the expectation that core values will drive and shape the climate to be developed within individual schools.

Beliefs About School Board Governance

Actions of school boards should be directed toward:

- Allocating resources effectively;
- Creating and monitoring systems of student achievement, professional performance, and financial management;
- Developing sound operational policies based on state and federal laws and applying them consistently;
- Engaging the public in planning processes that:
 - Assist with the development of the board's vision and priorities,
 - Supports query by board members and the public, and
 - Provides accurate interpretation and application of appropriate information;
- Establishing policies and resources for effective instruction and student learning;
- Generating community support to provide adequate resources for educational programs;
- Supporting growth in achievement for all children;
- Hiring a superintendent (CEO) who is best qualified to accomplish the board's vision;
- Providing the policies, expectations, and resources for safe, orderly school environments;
- Incorporating the district's vision and mission with School Board actions.

Standard 2

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Board continuously monitors district progress towards vision, mission, goals, and strategic plan utilizing relevant data to measure growth and promotes shared accountability for improved student achievement.

2.1 The Board ensures that a strategic plan as well as long and short-term goals, aligned with the district's vision, are developed and in place.

Indicators

- The Board engages in annual planning and review.
- Input is invited from school staff, students, community, and other stakeholders throughout development of the plan.
- Planning involves extensive participation, information gathering, and reflection.

2.2 The Board ensures non-negotiable goals for student achievement are established and aligned to the vision and strategic plan.

Indicators

- The Board allocates resources to facilitate student achievement consistent with school district goals and plans.
- The Board encourages and supports innovative approaches to teaching and learning in line with the district's vision, mission, strategic plan, and targeted goals.
- The Board proactively identifies and/or addresses issues affecting the education of students.
- The Board sets high instructional achievement goals based on the best available information about the knowledge and skills students will need in the future and their current levels of achievement.

The difference between politics and statesmanship is philosophy.



2.3 The Board regularly reviews assessment data on achievement towards high instructional standards, including progress on long and short-term goals.

Indicators

- The Board ensures a variety of indicators are used for evaluating progress.
- The Board pays close attention to climate and culture within individual schools and the district, realizing that climate significantly impacts the behavior and performance of students and teachers.
- The Board reviews measurable data to monitor progress and effectiveness.
- The Board schedules time for periodic review of goals and data.
- Board members consider all recommendations brought before them against the "IS IT GOOD FOR KIDS" (and student achievement) criteria.

2.4 To build or expand capacity to function as a high impact school board, the Board and its individual members model continuous improvement efforts through annual evaluation of Board duties, performance, responsibilities, and its ability to work as a team.

Indicators

- Periodically (throughout the year), the Board takes the time to self-reflect, to diagnose, and to examine its strength, limitations, and mistakes.
- The Board carries out its annual self-evaluation and sets goals for improvement.
- The Board solicits public input regarding its performance toward achieving performance expectations and reports its findings to the public.

Standard 3

ADVOCACY

The Board champions the district's vision by advocating for a thorough and efficient system of public education that reinforces education as a keystone of democracy.

3.1 The Board communicates high expectations for student learning that are aligned with the district vision and mission, have clear goals and include plans for meeting expectations.

Indicators

- The Board articulates conviction and belief that all students can learn and that student learning can improve regardless of existing circumstances or resources.
- The Board ensures that established non-negotiable goals for student achievement are communicated to staff, families, community, and other stakeholders.

3.2 The Board leads in celebrating the achievements of students and accomplishments of others who contribute to education.

Indicators

- Board members attend and/or participate in recognition ceremonies when appropriate.
- The Board establishes policy to ensure individuals and groups are recognized for accomplishments.
- The Board recognizes students and others for accomplishments as part of their regularly scheduled meeting activities.

3.3 The Board advocates by establishing strong relationships with families, community, and others to help support students.

Indicators

- Board members weigh actions of individuals and groups that have the potential to impact the school system and act in the best interest of students.
- The Board adopts policy to encourage parent and family, community, and other stakeholders' involvement.
- The Board maintains legislative awareness and communicates with members of local, state, and federal legislative bodies.
- The Board represents student educational interests to other agencies, local authorities, organizations, and state government.
- The Board supports community resources that provide basic academic or enrichment activities that will extend learning opportunities for students.
- The Board supports partnerships with individuals, groups, and organizations to promote educational opportunities for all students.

3.4 The Board promotes school board service as a meaningful way to make long term contributions to the local community and society.

Indicators

- The Board actively informs the community about the role and purpose of school boards.
- The Board involves interested community members.
- The Board provides information to staff and the public about the features of school board service to promote understanding, increase interest, and to advocate for public school education.



Standard 4

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Board supports alignment of all district policies, operations, and programs with the district vision, mission, goals, and strategic plan while meeting students' educational needs.

4.1 The Board adopts a collaboratively developed district strategic plan focused on learning and achievement outcomes for all students.

Indicators:

- Measurement of student academic progress and needs are based on valid and reliable assessments.
- The Board ensures that multiples measures of assessment are used to monitor student achievement/progress.
- The Board receives regular updates on overall student progress and needs.
- Board reports on student progress are linked directly to district vision and mission, specific goals for student achievement, and the strategic plan.

4.2 The Board keeps the district and community focused on educating students.

Indicators:

- The Board clarifies their actions based on established non-negotiable goals for student achievement and the district's strategic plan.
- The Board complies with Open Meeting Law requirements.
- The Board conducts an annual performance evaluation of the superintendent's performance and reports their findings to the public.
- The Board develops written performance expectations for the superintendent based on the district vision, mission, goals, and strategic plan.
- The Board ensures that established non-negotiable goals for student achievement guide all Board deliberations and actions.
- The Board monitors district performance toward accomplishing the vision, mission, goals, and the strategic plan and reports their findings to the public.

Leaders create energy in others by instilling purpose.

4.3 The Board authorizes the superintendent to establish district-wide management systems for the purposes of:

- Compliance with local, state, and federal requirements.
- Effective decision-making processes.
- Enabling school personnel, families, and community to help the district and individual schools achieve their vision and mission.
- Making recommendations for establishing and/or updating policies.
- Maximizing the use of district resources to align with the district vision, mission, goals, and strategic plan.

Indicators

- District-wide management systems directly support implementation of the district vision, mission, goals, and strategic plan.
- Evaluation of district operations ensures compliance with legal requirements and enables the district's vision, mission, goals, and strategic plan.
- Policies are developed that support strong leadership by district administration.
- The Board ensures that financial and human resource decisions are aligned with the district's vision, mission, goals, and strategic plan.
- The Board establishes policy requiring internal and/or external evaluations of district operations as well as administrators, teachers, and staff.
- The Board exercises fiduciary responsibility through alignment of financial and human resources systems with district vision, mission, goals, and strategic plan.

Standard 5

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Board encourages and seeks collaboration with families and community members, responding to diverse interests and needs and mobilizing community resources.

5.1 The Board establishes and maintains effective communications to inform and engage parents, students, staff, and community members.


Indicators:

- The Board ensures district information and decisions are communicated community-wide.
- The Board ensures district transparency through processes that are open and accountable.
- The Board solicits input from staff and a wide spectrum of the community so that a diverse range of interests and perspectives on issues is considered.
- The Board uses a clear format to periodically report district performance to the public.

5.2 The Board represents the community's values and expectations for schools.

Indicators

- The Board engages and promotes community support by seeking input, building support networks, and generating action to support the mission, vision, goals, and the strategic plan of the district.
- The Board establishes policies enabling personnel, families, the public, and other stakeholders to provide input to school programs and activities in meaningful ways.



*“Leadership
is action, not
position.”*

Standard 6

BOARD OPERATIONS & TRAINING

The Board demonstrates its commitment to improving student achievement through effective governance practices and informed systems thinking and data-informed decision-making while also increasing community engagement.

6.1 The Board and its individual members conduct district business in an ethical, fair, respectful, and responsible manner.

Indicators

- Board leadership reflects the educational vision and performance set forth by the Board as a whole and the district's established vision, mission, goals and strategic plan.
- Board members' actions in and away from the boardroom and ensuing official decisions reflect best practices from professional development trainings.
- Individual board members support decisions of the majority after honoring each member's individual right to express opposing views and convictions.
- The Board and its individual members perform in a manner that reflects service to the community on behalf of students.
- The Board makes decisions as a group, only at properly called meetings, and recognizes that individual members have no authority to take individual action.
- The demeanor and actions of the Board, as a whole as well as that of individual members, reflect an acknowledgement and acceptance of their role as models for students and as representatives of the community.

6.2 The Board ensures that district operations and Board meetings are effective, efficient, and transparent through policy, established procedures, and proper Board governance.

Indicators

- Expenditures for board activities are clearly identified in the budget and support the development of a high-impact school board.
- The Board aligns all aspects of its operations with the established Professional Standards of the Idaho School Boards Association.



- The Board completes periodic review of agenda formulation, meeting protocol, and effectiveness of meetings.
- The Board hosts informal opportunities for the public to discuss district performance issues.
- The Board solicits input from the superintendent, staff, and community regarding refinements needed to meet the district's vision, mission, goals, and strategic plan.
- The budget for all district expenditures is easily identifiable and available to the public.
- The Board ensures strong leadership and management of the school system by hiring, setting goals with, and evaluating the superintendent.
- The Board engages in ongoing relationship building with the superintendent as part of their efforts to develop a positive and strong Board – superintendent partnership.

6.3 The Board demonstrates a commitment for continuous improvement of decision-making skills, governance function, problem solving strategies, school finances, superintendent-board relationship, teamwork, etc. through an intentional plan for board development.

Indicators

- Board members attend and fully participate in all board development functions paid for by district funds.
- Individual board members report the results of attended board development activities to other board members and to the community during board meetings.
- The Board, in collaboration with the superintendent, takes responsibility for orientation of all new Board members.
- The Board budgets for and participates in board development activities to further develop their governance function and other skills.
- Individual board members report on attended board development activities to other board members and to the community during board meetings.
- The Board, as a whole or as individuals, completes core content area trainings in governance, finance, ethics, superintendent evaluation, and strategic planning.

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