

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. To effectively meet the challenges of public education, school boards and superintendents must function together as a governance leadership team. Each leadership team will annually assess its development needs both as a corporate body and as individuals. As a team, they will focus on the improvement of locally developed student outcomes and provide support for opportunities and experiences through vision and goals, systems and processes, progress and accountability, advocacy and engagement, and synergy and teamwork. Teams ensure that their districts provide equitable and effective educational programs and services for all students. The Framework for School Board Development has been approved by the State Board of Education to provide the critical areas of development for all public school boards.

Framework

- I. **Vision and Goals**—The board ensures creation of a shared vision and locally developed, measurable goals that improve student outcomes and provide support for opportunities and experiences. The board:
 - Keeps the district focus on the well-being of all children
 - Adopts a shared vision that incorporates input from the community to reflect local aspirations as well as present and future needs for all children
 - Ensures that the vision aligns with the state's mission, objectives, and goals for education established by law or rule
 - Adopts a reasonable number of specific, quantifiable, research-based, and time-bound goals that align with state law, are developed with community input, and support the vision to improve student outcomes
 - Embraces, supports, and fulfills the vision that all students receive what they need to learn, thrive, and grow, including resources, opportunities, and experiences
 - Uses the vision and goals to drive all deliberations, decisions, and actions

Framework for School Board Development

II. **Systems and Processes**—The board ensures systems and processes are in place to accomplish the vision and goals. The board:

- Regularly develops, reviews, and adopts board policies for effective support of the district's vision and goals
- Approves a budget that aligns with and maximizes resources to fulfill the district's vision and goals
- Monitors multiple, measurable elements of student progress and achievement throughout the year
- Incorporates equity when making decisions and evaluating systems and processes
- Focuses its actions on following board operating procedures while providing oversight of the superintendent, policymaking, planning and goal setting, progress monitoring, and evaluation, while avoiding involvement in daily operations and management
- Approves goals, policies, and programs that ensure a safe and secure learning environment
- Ensures the equitable distribution of resources, opportunities, and experiences based on the diverse needs of students and schools
- Adopts a planning calendar and engages in a decision-making process consistent with state law and rule to help achieve the district's vision
- Ensures that the district's planning and decision-making process enables all segments of the community, families, and staff to meaningfully contribute to achieving the district's vision
- Welcomes and values all people and cultures as important stakeholders in the process for student success
- Ensures the district has a system that monitors for sound business and fiscal practices
- Adopts policies regarding hiring, assigning, appraising, terminating, and compensating school district personnel in compliance with state laws and rules
- Ensures the district adopts a protocol regarding the recruitment, determination of professional development needs, building of leadership capacity, and retention rates for the district's teachers
- Fulfills the statutory duties of the local board of trustees and upholds all laws, rules, ethical procedures, and court orders pertaining to schools and school employees

Framework for School Board Development

- III. **Progress and Accountability**—The board sets clear goals, provides resources and support, evaluates goal attainment, and engages in ongoing objective feedback on progress and commitments. The board:
- Holds itself accountable to its adopted vision, goals, commitments, and operating procedures
 - Ensures progress toward achievement of district goals through systematic, timely, and comprehensive reviews of relevant reports and student data that illustrate progress toward locally developed student outcome goals
 - Ensures equity throughout the system by regularly identifying inequities, updating policies, and appropriately distributing resources
 - Differentiates among resources, intermediate measures, and outcomes, especially when focusing on student outcomes
 - Monitors and evaluates the allocation of resources in support of the district's vision and goals and sustainability
 - Reviews the efficiency and effectiveness of district operations and use of resources in supporting the district's vision and goals
 - Employs and annually evaluates the superintendent on the achievement of district goals, including locally developed academic goals, demonstration of educational leadership, and management of daily operations
- IV. **Advocacy and Engagement**—The board promotes the vision and engages the community in developing and fulfilling the vision. The board advocates on behalf of Texas public schoolchildren. The board:
- Demonstrates its commitment to, and advocates on behalf of, the shared vision and goals by clearly communicating them to the superintendent, staff, and community
 - Regularly reports district progress to families and the community, which could include an online dashboard for the community
 - Ensures multiple forms of two-way communication will be used to engage, empower, and connect students, families, staff, media, and community with the district
 - Builds collaborative relationships and partnerships with families and community, business, nonprofit, higher-education, education support organizations, and governmental leaders to influence and expand educational opportunities and experiences to meet the needs of students
 - Recognizes the respective roles of and provides input and feedback to the legislature, State Board of Education, and the Texas Education Agency to ensure maximum effectiveness and benefit to Texas schoolchildren
 - Promotes school board service by educating the community about the role of a school board and encouraging leadership opportunities within the community

Framework for School Board Development

- V. **Synergy and Teamwork**—The board’s duties are distinct, and the board works effectively as a collaborative unit and as a team with the superintendent to lead the district in fulfilling the vision and goals. The board:
- Recognizes its distinct role in establishing the vision and the goals, adopting policies that guide the district, setting priorities, establishing governance protocols to oversee management of the district, adopting and overseeing the annual budget, and hiring and evaluating the superintendent
 - Recognizes each individual trustee’s duty as a trustee and fiduciary for the entire district
 - Remains focused on its goals and priorities, as opposed to individual agendas separate and apart from the shared vision
 - Annually evaluates its performance as a team, with attention given to the district’s vision and goals; fulfilling the board’s duties, responsibilities, and commitments; and the board’s working relationship with the superintendent
 - Makes decisions as a whole only at properly called meetings and recognizes that individual members have no authority to take individual action in policy or district and campus administrative matters
 - Respects the right of individual members to express their viewpoints and vote their convictions and honors the decisions of the majority
 - Develops teamwork, problem-solving, and decision-making skills as a team with its superintendent
 - Understands and adheres to laws and local policies and respects the superintendent’s responsibility to manage the school district and to direct employees in district and campus matters
 - Adopts and adheres to established policies and procedures for welcoming and addressing ideas and concerns from students, families, staff, and the community
 - Establishes and follows local policies, procedures, and ethical standards governing the conduct and operations of the board
 - Understands the leadership role of the board president and adheres to local policies and procedures about the duties and responsibilities of the board officers

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

Framework for School Board Development

- 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

Framework for School Board Development

- 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