ASBA New Board Institute
Roles and Responsibilities of Board Members
Why do we do what we do?

Embassy Suites, Little Rock, AR
October 17, 2017
Objectives for this Session

- Provide an introduction to school board member duties and responsibilities
- Explore legal and ethical aspects of board work
- Introduce you to resources for school board members
Why do we do what we do?

➢ To assure that the organization mission of properly educating children is being achieved!
How do we know we are doing what we need to do?

- Are the children learning? **How do we know?**
- What do we need to do to get every child to grade level? **How do we know?**
- How does our teacher training/professional development match up with what we are expecting from our teachers? **How do we know?**
- Are we matching our resources to our expectations? **How do we know?**
- Do we have a safe learning environment at every school? **How do we know?**
We accomplish the goal of educating children by:

- Putting a plan into place designed to achieve clearly defined, results/expectations,
- Monitoring this plan against objective indicators of success, and
- Changing the plan when the indicators of success show the plan is not accomplishing what it was designed to accomplish.
Focus on the End Results

- When a board focuses on the END RESULTS or DESIRED OUTCOMES of student learning (the board’s role) not on MEANS (curriculum, teaching methods, textbooks, consultants, personnel, etc.) of getting there (the staff’s work), the board is properly focused.

- Successful school boards obsess about end results, as opposed to “means to an end” (processes).
Why do we do what we do?

- Your local school board makes decisions that...
  - Determine how your community’s children are educated
  - Support teaching and learning, and ensure student achievement
  - Determine how tax dollars are spent
Why do we do what we do?

The behavior and attitude of board members affect the reputation of the entire school system.

Your board’s decisions impact:

- Children and their parents
- The livelihood of school system employees
- The economic well-being of the community and the quality of life in its neighborhoods
Legal Aspects of School Boards and Governance
The Governance Team

- School board members and the superintendent make up the governance team
- Board-superintendent relations are the key to a successful district
- Understand and respect each other’s roles
The Governance Role of School Boards

- School boards (NOT individual members) are “governors” of the district, acting on behalf of the people in their community.
- For all school boards, the bottom line is student achievement.
Team Member Roles

BOARD
Role is to **Govern**
- Hires and may fire the superintendent
- Sets direction and policy
- Monitors progress toward set goals

**Accountable to the community**

SUPERINTENDENT
Role is to **Manage**
- Oversees the day-to-day operations of the district
- Implements policies and goals set by the board

**Accountable to the board**
# Team Member Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Boards GOVERN</th>
<th>Superintendents MANAGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approve staff recommendation &amp; approve dismissal</td>
<td>Recommend all staff for approval or dismissal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluate the superintendent</td>
<td>Ensure the evaluation of all staff</td>
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<td>Approve evaluation criteria &amp; procedures</td>
<td>Supervise/evaluate personnel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delegate day-to-day operations to the superintendent</td>
<td>Manage or assign all operational aspects of the district</td>
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<td>Approve construction projects</td>
<td>Make building &amp; facility construction / renovation recommendation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approve public engagement plan</td>
<td>Implement strategies to involve parents/ community members and create partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Represent public interests</td>
<td>Act in public interest</td>
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Top 10 Duties of School Boards

1. Attend Board Meetings
2. Set Mission and Direction
3. Follow All Laws
4. Make and Follow Policies
5. Hire Staff and Hold Hearings
6. Hire the Superintendent
7. Evaluate the Superintendent
8. Oversee Finances and Budget
9. Visit Schools
10. Get Training
Duty 1. Attend their board’s meetings, including the regular monthly meeting and any special meetings

- Legally convened board meetings are the **ONLY** time you can conduct business.
- Business can’t be conducted unless there’s a quorum.
- All meetings have announcement requirements.
Duty 2. Determine the mission and direction of the school district.

- The board works with the superintendent to identify the overall vision and mission and plans for reaching these.

- The process and outcome of “strategic planning” become the “road map” for the district.

- The board uses the vision to drive planning, decision-making and evaluation of district operations and progress.
Duty 3. Follow all the state and federal laws that govern public schools.

- So many laws govern schools that board members can’t know them all.

- Part of the superintendent’s job is to keep the board posted on Arkansas Department of Education requirements affecting the district.

- Some districts use the services of attorneys to advise them. ASBA has two attorneys on staff that may advise.
Duty 4. Make, enforce, and obey school district policies.

- Policy making is a serious board responsibility, because board policies ultimately affect just about every aspect of the school district.

- The board **MUST ALWAYS** follow its own policies.
Duty 5. Employ a superintendent of schools to oversee the day-to-day operations of the school district.

- The district’s superintendent is the only district employee the board has to power to directly hire or dismiss.

**THIS IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT DECISION SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS MAKE!**
Duty 6. Employ staff and conduct hearings.

- **In hiring**, the board’s role is to make an offer to provide employment to individuals based on recommendations made by the superintendent.

- **In hearings**, the board serves as the finder-of-fact:
  - for employee termination recommendations
  - when employee grievances are not satisfactorily resolved through administrative action
  - when students are recommended for expulsion
Duty 7. Evaluate the superintendent annually or at least before extending his or her contract.

The board should be clear with its superintendent about:

- what it expects from him/her
- what the expectation will look like when completed
- how his/her performance will be measured

The superintendent should receive regular feedback regarding his/her job performance.
Duty 8. Oversee school district finances and all aspects of the budget, never permitting the district to end the fiscal year with a negative balance.

- The superintendent and his/her staff develop and manage a realistic, balanced budget
- The board approves the budget and financial reports
- “Legislative audit” training is required for all board members
Duty 9. Visit district schools and classrooms, when students are present, at least annually and also attend some events and functions.

- The purpose for visits is to gain a sense of the facility, the students, and the people who work there.

- Visits aren’t meant to be a white-glove inspection tour or an opportunity to roam, snoop, collect evidence, give directives, or “take names.”
Duty 10. Take the training and professional development necessary to serve as active, informed members of the school board.

- Newly elected members must earn 9 hours by December 31 of the year following their election.
- **Six hours** of training are **required each year** afterwards.
- Board members can never have TOO MUCH TRAINING!
Law and School Boards
Board Legal Authority / Chain of Command

State & Federal Rules & Regulations

School Board

Adopts Policies/Hires & Evaluates Superintendent

Superintendent

Staff
Legal Basis for Arkansas School Boards

- Arkansas Statutes give certain powers to the **school board as a body**.
- A.C.A. 6-13-620 outlines statutory duties of school boards.
- No authority is given to individual board members by statute.
- A board’s power is through majority votes at the board table.
School board meetings: Legal requirements

- School boards must hold a regular meeting at least once a month while school is in session.
  - Posted on Website > 10 days prior

- If special/called/work session meetings are held, adequate notice must be given to board members and the local media.
  - > 24 hours prior
School board meetings: Legal requirements

- A quorum (a majority of members) is needed to hold a meeting.
- Accurate minutes must be kept of regular and special meetings.
- Executive ("closed") sessions may be held to discuss certain subjects.
Executive Sessions are allowed ONLY to:

- Consider the employment, appointment, promotion, demotion or resignation of an employee (never for “blanket” hiring)
- Evaluate the superintendent
- Sensitive, controversial or uncomfortable subjects are NOT a justification for executive session.
The School Board and The Law

- When legal issues arise, consult an attorney.
- ASBA can provide some assistance, but does not act as legal counsel for school districts.
In the Board Room:

- Use discussion at the board table to build support for decisions.
- Make all decisions in an open meeting in accordance with Arkansas’ Open Meeting Law.
  - Once a decision is made, it is important for all parties to support it
  - Whenever possible, speak with “one voice” on key decisions
Outside the Board Room

Power and authority of...

- **Board Members**
  - No official power
  - Can be a great ambassador or undermine decisions

- **Superintendent**
  - Significant – needs to run the district
Remember:

- Individual school board members have no legal authority
- Authority is exercised only by a majority of the board
Don’t forget to have a good work ethic:

- Do your homework before meetings.
- Do your best to attend every board meeting.
- Share your thoughts before the decision is made.
- Stay current on local, state, and federal education issues.
- Participate in training.
Resources
The mission of ASBA is to promote student focused leadership in public education through training, advocacy and service for local board members.
- a private, nonprofit, membership organization
- provides leadership, training, advocacy and specialized services to AR school boards
- promotes community volunteer governance of public education and continuous improvement of student success.
- open to boards of school districts & charter schools and educational service co-operatives. Businesses may apply as commercial affiliates
- Board of Directors represents 14 regional districts across the state
- represents ___ board members, ___ districts, ___ children
- an affiliate of the NSBA
Thank you for serving and for being here today and remember it is all about the children!