



# The Key Work of School Boards

## An Updated Framework for Improving Student Achievement



We know what a good school board looks like. The impressive results are evident when a board of education makes student achievement the primary focus.

We have identified the core skills that effective boards need to ensure that all students achieve at high levels. Together these skills form a framework for effective school governance. We call this the Key Work of School Boards. With these skills, boards can guide their vision to fruition by exploring, questioning, assessing, and working with others to improve outcomes for today's students as well as America's next generation.

These web pages highlight all the features you can find in the Key Work of School Boards Guidebook. The full guidebook is available as a **softcover** version and as a

LumiBook™ e-reader in NSBA's Bookstore.

## New Updates, New Areas of Focus

In the newly updated version of the Key Work of School Boards Guidebook, we've preserved the best content from previous editions while expanding the scope of pertinent Key Work areas. This new edition focuses on five subject areas that provide a comprehensive overview of your key governance responsibilities.



### Vision

Effective school boards establish a clear vision with high expectations for quality teaching and learning that supports strong student outcomes.

[Read More](#)



## Accountability

High academic standards, transparency, and accountability undergird a world-class education.

[Read More](#)



## Policy

Policy is how a board sustainably exercises power to serve students. Through policy, school boards establish a set of cohesive guidelines to transform vision into reality.

[Read More](#)



## Community Leadership

Through public advocacy and community engagement, school boards share their concerns and actions with the public.

[Read More](#)



## Board/Superintendent Relationships

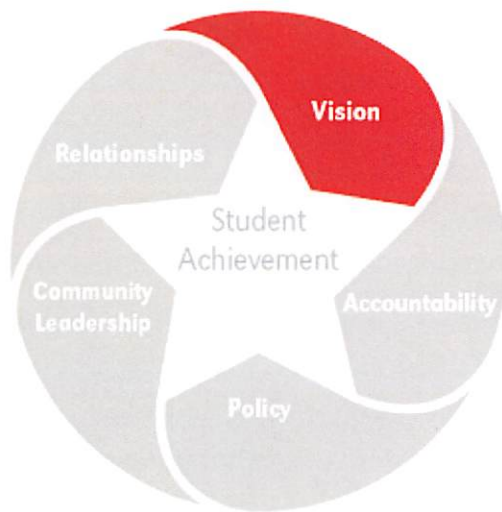
Both the school board and the superintendent have essential leadership roles that are interconnected but different.

[Read More](#)

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# Vision



Ensuring that public education will meet emerging challenges requires a clear vision for the work and operations of school boards in the future. With that vision before us, we can shape proactive strategies that make boards more relevant, credible, and effective leaders of public education.

## Objective

To understand how school boards can develop and implement an effective vision that focuses on student achievement, positively guides district strategies, and involves the community.

## What's in the Guidebook?

### Key Lessons

The Key Work of School Boards Guidebook highlights several important lessons about establishing a vision:

- What Is Vision?
- The Value of a Shared Vision and Core Values
- Creating a Vision
- Translating Vision into Action
- Ensuring Vision Becomes Reality
- Implementing Your Vision

### Helpful Supplements

The Guidebook also includes several helpful supplements to help you establish your vision:

- Sample Mission Statements
- Sample Vision Statements
- Sample Goals and Strategies**
- Vision Self-Assessment

Order the Key Work of School Boards Guidebook in the **NSBA Bookstore**.

## Helpful Links:

**Buy the Key Work of School Boards Guidebook (soft cover)**

**Buy the Key Work of School Boards Guidebook (LumiBook™ e-reader)**

**Developing a Vision and a Mission**

**IASB Research Shows School Boards Make a Difference in Student Achievement**

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# Accountability



School board accountability means taking your fair share of responsibility for student outcomes. Being accountable means answering not only for your actions but also for the results of your actions.

## Objective

To explore how effective school boards maintain public confidence through a shared understanding of expectations, roles and responsibilities, and standards/desired results.

## What's in the Guidebook?

### Key Lessons

The Key Work of School Boards Guidebook highlights several important lessons about implementing effective accountability:

- Strong Focus on Student Results
- Success Measured by Improved Student Achievement
- School Board Responsibilities
- Constructing Excellent Standards
- Student, School, and District Data Are Publicly Reported in an Easy-to-Understand Format
- Accountability is Motivation for Continuous Improvement
- Accountability Does Not Limit the Education Experience
- Accountability and Alignment Are Not Mutually Exclusive

### Helpful Supplements

The Guidebook also includes several supplements to help you implement accountability:

#### **Accountability Questions the School Board Should Ask**

Planning Team Considerations for Developing an Accountability Plan

## Accountability Self-Assessment

### Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Order the Key Work of School Boards Guidebook in the **NSBA Bookstore**.

## Helpful Links:

**Buy the Key Work of School Boards Guidebook (soft cover)**

**Buy the Key Work of School Boards Guidebook (LumiBook™ e-reader)**

**The Nature of Assessment: A Guide to Standardized Testing**

**A Policymaker's Primer on Testing and Assessment**

**The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)**

**A New Kind of Testing**

**Assessment: What School District Policy Makers Can Do**

**IASB Research Shows School Boards Make a Difference in Student Achievement**

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# Policy



Policy permeates and dominates all aspects of school operations. It also presents the most powerful lever for the exercise of leadership.

## Objective

To examine how effective school boards use policy to remain accountable to citizens for the governance and management of schools and to explore how visionary policy can support the district's educational mission and philosophy.

## What's in the Guidebook?

### Key Lessons

The Key Work of School Boards Guidebook highlights several important lessons about implementing an effective board policy:

- What is Board Policy?
- Operating as a Cohesive Management Team
- What Strong Policies Achieve
- Policy Implementation and Monitoring
- Matching Policy to Mission and Goals

### Helpful Supplements

The Guidebook also includes several supplements to help you implement effective policy:

- Board Policy vs. Administrative Guidelines Comparison Chart
- What Effective Policies Accomplish
- Ensuring Policy Leadership Checklist**
- Questions to Ask During Policy Development or Amendment
- A Suggested Checklist of Key Work Policies

## Policy Self-Assessment

Order the Key Work of School Boards Guidebook in the **NSBA Bookstore**.

Your State School Boards Association is your first resource for helpful policy development and assessment services.

## Helpful Links:

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**Buy the Key Work of School Boards Guidebook (LumiBook™ e-reader)**

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# Community Leadership



Effective boards recognize public schooling's impact on the community, and understand how strong connections mean everyone is invested in successful schools.

## Objective

To analyze how effective school boards employ the art of influence – through legislation and strategic engagement, to generate public and parental support.

## What's in the Guidebook?

### Key Lessons

The Key Work of School Boards Guidebook highlights several important lessons about the board's role in community leadership:

- The Board's Advocacy Role: An Overview
- Working with Legislators
- Community Engagement/Promotion
- Parental Engagement
- Business and Political Engagement
- Public Participation
- Board Self-Governance
- Messages That Matter

### Helpful Supplements

The Guidebook also includes several supplements to help you engage in community leadership:

- List of Steps to Building Collaborative Relationships
- Summary of Roles and Responsibilities in Community Leadership**

Order the Key Work of School Boards Guidebook in the **NSBA Bookstore**.

## Helpful Links:

**Buy the Key Work of School Boards Guidebook (soft cover)**

**Buy the Key Work of School Boards Guidebook (LumiBook™ e-reader)**

**Involving Communities**

**Alaska ICE (Initiative for Community Engagement)**

**"What Counts?" Program in Maryland**

**Learning First Alliance**

**Making the Difference: Research and Practice in Community Schools**

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# Board and Superintendent Relationships



To develop a productive partnership, the board and superintendent must draw on, and respect, the backgrounds and abilities of everyone involved.

## Objective

To understand how the board-superintendent leadership roles are interconnected as well as the process for decision making and evaluation.

## What's in the Guidebook?

### Key Lessons

The Key Work of School Boards Guidebook highlights several important lessons about the relationship between the board and superintendent:

- The Role of the Board and Superintendent
- Elements of an Effective Board/Superintendent Team
- Board Training/Retreats
- Board/Superintendent Communication
- Superintendent's Performance Evaluation
- Establishing Norms and Bylaws to Ensure Effective Governance
- Board Self-Evaluation

### Helpful Supplements

The Guidebook also includes several supplements to help you engage in an effective relationship with your superintendent:

- Suggested Activities to Develop a Plan for Roles and Procedures
- Checklist for Planning for Superintendent Evaluation

### **Checklist for Superintendent Evaluation**

Order the Key Work of School Boards Guidebook in the **NSBA Bookstore**.

### **Helpful Links:**

**Buy the Key Work of School Boards Guidebook (soft cover)**

**Buy the Key Work of School Boards Guidebook (LumiBook™ e-reader)**

**Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards**

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