



Presented by: NJSBA Field Service Representative

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NJ School Board Members Are Officials Of The State Of New Jersey



Their power is derived from the Legislature, not the community.



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Who Does What in Public School Governance

A Board represents:

From Trenton to Your Town

Here's how state governance of education works:

 <p>The New Jersey Constitution gives the Legislature the power to govern the schools.</p>	 <p>The Legislature delegates its power and function to make rules and regulations (write the law) to the State Board of Education.</p>	 <p>The State Board, staff the New Jersey Department of Education, has the authority to carry out the mandates created by those higher bodies.</p>	 <p>Within all these laws and regulations, local boards of education can develop their own policies covering a multitude of issues relevant to their local districts.</p>
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Board members are state officials empowered by state law to govern public schools at a local level.

The state

The entire community – listen to all citizens and explain the needs of the school system as a whole.

All students – every policy and action should be based on what is best for the education of all students.



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Who Does What in Public School Governance

Board members are:

Policy Makers

- Policies provide CSA with direction, basis for decision-making and an imperative for action.
- Well-crafted policies minimize ambiguity between the Board and the CSA.
- Bylaws section explains how the board governs itself.

Visionaries/ Goal-Setters

- Set standards for a program of quality instruction, and ensures budget supports the standards and provides for professional development.
- Hold administrators accountable for achievement of goals.

Communicators

- Provide two-way communication between the community and the school district.
- Inform the public, promote public participation in the schools, and work to secure public support for the schools and district goals.

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Overview of Roles

Governance

comes from Greek word meaning "to steer a ship"



Governance is steering



Management is rowing

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Overview of Roles

Board

High-level view as seen through telescope



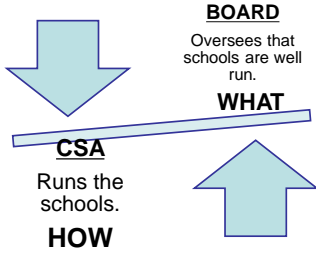
Administration

Up-close detailed view as seen through microscope



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Overview of Roles – Board/Superintendent



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Overview of Roles

LET THERE BE LIGHT!

How many board members does it take to screw in a light bulb?



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... None

- It is up to the Board to say “let there be light.”
- It is up to the Superintendent to decide if it will be incandescent, florescent, candle, solar, etc.
- Then it is up to the Board to approve the purchase of the light bulbs and evaluate the quality of light.

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Role of the Board

What you will hear over and over during your time as a board member:



The role of a Board of Education is not to run the schools, but to see that they are well run.

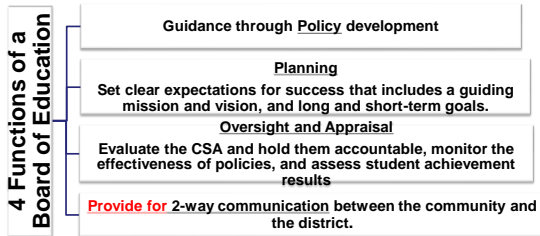
Code of Ethics

d I will carry out my responsibility, not to administer the schools, but, together with my fellow board members, to see that they are well run.

Standards

A direct order was given to school personnel or there was direct involvement in activities or functions that are the responsibility of school personnel or the day-to-day administration of the school district or charter school.

Functions of the Board of Education



Individual Board Members

As individuals, a single board member cannot:
Individual board members have no legal status other than that of any citizen, except when sitting with fellow board members in a legally constituted meeting.

- Make decisions for the Board
- Give unilateral direction to the CSA (or staff)
- Take actions for the Board or
- Speak for the Board – both verbally and written, unless the Board has authorized them to do so.



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Governance Choice – a Fork in a Board's Road

You are elected as an individual, but you must govern as a member of a team. You didn't get to pick the team; you may not even like everyone on the team, but it's your team now and it wins or loses for children as a team. If the board succeeds, you succeed; if the board fails, you fail.

A fundamental choice for any Board is how they, as a group, choose to govern within that team.



As a collection of individuals each with own agenda



OR



As a cohesive unified team working toward a common vision?

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Board Roles Summary

- 4 Functions: Policy, Planning, Oversight & Appraisal, and Two-Way Communication
- Respect the “What” and the “How”
- Board of Education – a Team Sport!
- Communicate, communicate, communicate

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Superintendent's Role

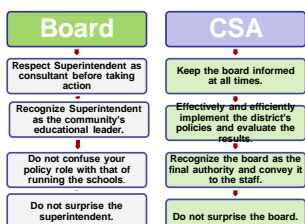
The superintendent is the "implementer-in-chief" of the district.

Chief Advisor to Board	Executive Officer	Educational Leader
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant – background info, alternatives, recommendations. • Staff's liaison to the Board. • Provides briefings on things that require board action or attention. • Keeps board briefed on district operations. • Evaluates and assesses policy implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administers policies. • Runs the school district. • Provides progress updates including emergent issues. • Accountable to the Board for how well the district is run. • Directs staff members through personal action, delegation, and supervisory activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remains active in professional organizations. • Familiar with current ideas in education. • Brings worthwhile ideas to the attention of the board and community.

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Superintendent's Role

The Board-Superintendent Collaborative Relationship



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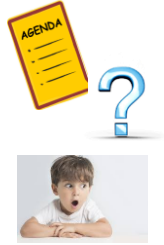
In Summary - Roles



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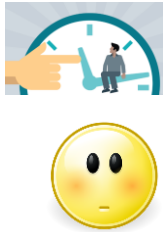
Board Member's Meeting Responsibilities

- **Studying the agenda** and supporting documents. (A 12-Month Planning Calendar is available.)
- **Referring all questions**, or need for further information, to the committee chair, board president or superintendent before the meeting.
- **Surprise free meetings.** If a board member has received a complaint or is dissatisfied with the agenda, he or she should call the board president or superintendent prior to the meeting to try and resolve the problem.



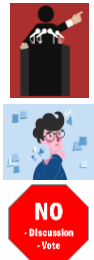
Board Member's Meeting Responsibilities (cont.)

- **Give the responsible party time to prepare an answer.** Referring to the point above, asking for clarification or additional info before the meeting allows the responsible person to develop thoughtful answers that might not be possible without time to gather information.
- **Avoid embarrassment.** When the member is not prepared, he or she may be caught by surprise at the meeting, causing needless delay in reaching decisions on the agenda.



Board Member's Meeting Responsibilities (cont.)

- **Not "playing" to the audience.** A school board member does not represent a particular area, interest or group, and must work for the welfare of all children in the district. Base decisions on what is best for the total community rather than a particular area, vested interest group, or organization.
- **Thoughtful votes.** Board members must feel reasonably comfortable with their votes. Sometimes this means delaying a decision for further research. And sometimes it means trusting the judgment of the superintendent or other staff expert.
- **Conflicts of Interest.** Board members who have a conflict of interest will need to recuse themselves on any votes related to that conflict of interest. (Check with your board attorney re: conflicts.)



Questions Done Right

- You should be asking questions - probably a bunch.
- But you're not now the manager of the district! Ask the RIGHT questions!
 - Ask questions relevant to your role
 - high level and strategic is where the board does its work.
 - Ask them in an optimal manner
 - Right time and setting - no "gotchas"
 - Right tone - inquisitive rather than accusatory



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Tips for Board Member Effectiveness

- Take off your "private sector" hat.
- Accept that education has a different set of rules.
 - Taking action requires lengthy discussion and buy-in from various stakeholders.
 - Staff are managed under the terms of a negotiated agreement.



No surprises at the Board table.

PLEASE DO NOT		
Blindside fellow board members or administrators with tough questions or controversial issues.	Grandstand as the one member who feels the pain of the audience.	Try to get things done alone as one member.

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Tips for Board Member Effectiveness

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- The Board has 1 employee - the superintendent.
- All other district staff report to the superintendent.

- Respect the chain of command.
- All Board communication funnels through the superintendent.
- There may be situations, such as the administrative liaison to a Board committee, that a member may work with. But this is directed by the superintendent.



1 or 2 members cannot direct the superintendent - only the Board majority.

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Tips for Board Member Effectiveness

As a public official:



Careless and negative remarks now carry a greater weight.

Sharing confidential information causes real harm.



You are not the educational expert. Respect the expertise of the superintendent.

Model behavior for your students to emulate.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

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Tips for Board Member Effectiveness

Spend your time and energy doing the Board's work rather than doing the job of those you hired.

- DO NOT:** Get involved in the day-to-day operation of the school district or frequent the board office or schools (except as parent or board business).
- Contact staff directly. Board has 1 employee – the superintendent.
- Take on a task that is the job of a staff member.
- Engage in practices outside the chain of command.
- Make individual requests to the superintendent outside the work of the Board.

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10 Important Additional Things For A New- Any Board Member To Remember...

1. Be patient. . . You were elected for a term of office; take advantage of the time to learn. You are only new once.
2. Choose to govern professionally; it will determine your legacy. Most important, develop a governance mindset.
3. Be a systems thinker. Connect the dots.

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**10 Important Additional Things For
A-New- Any Board Member To Remember...**

- 4. Have a strategic focus. Understand and be proud of the awesome responsibility of setting the direction for the district.
- 5. Commit to deep learning. Always do your homework. You cannot be part of something you don't understand.
- 6. Be trustworthy; build trust with your board, your district, and your community.
- 7. Contribute to creating a positive, powerful board culture; understand how your board works.

**10 Important Additional Things For
A-New- Any Board Member To Remember...**

- 8. Represent the needs of all your community, not a part.
- 9. Be a leader on your board, in the district, in the community.
- 10. Always remember you and your board are modeling the ethical and moral standards you expect the children in your district to emulate.

Oversight or Overstepping?

- Believing the district needs to be fiscally conservative, a member who is a CPA identifies several line items in the budget that could yield savings for the district. He compiles a report and shares it at the next board meeting for consideration.
- The high school principal updates the Board at a meeting on the school's remote learning plan. A member asks the principal how the plan is addressing the school's widening racial and socioeconomic academic gap.

Oversight or Overstepping?

- A board member believes the district has not been proactive in responding to a recent decline in enrollment. The member contacted the superintendent and requested a detailed staffing and analysis report to be created and shared with the Board.
- The XYZ School District is planning a capital project that includes a synthetic multipurpose field. One member is opposed, believing the field poses serious health and environmental risks. The member uses social media to share information on the issue and links an article with the comment, 'Don't be fooled or misled, toxic turf is hazardous to your child's health!'

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Governance Choice

- "Effective governance requires that adults, on behalf of the children they serve, find avenues of agreement, so that they can govern the district in an effective manner."



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QUESTIONS



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For all you do for your students, staff and community!



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