

Policy Type: Governance Process

Board Job Descriptions

RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

(Note: The following responsibilities and functions may involve the combined efforts of the Board and staff.)

The responsibilities of the Board include:

Legal responsibility for the control of the public schools in the Fargo School District.

Civic responsibility of providing quality education, a service essential to the life of the community.

Social responsibility to ensure that all schools serve as centers of growth and development for students and community.

Economic responsibility for prudent management of public resources.

Moral and ethical responsibility to function expediently and impartially to assure the greatest good to the greatest number at all times.

The three major functions of the Board are as follows:

Planning and Governance Policy Review - This should be a joint effort of the Board and the Superintendent, assisted by school personnel. Providing educational services involves relating a large number of elements: children, teachers, curriculum, buildings, money, supplies, transportation, support personnel, state and federal requirements, community interests, etc. Both short and long range planning are mandatory for the efficient and effective operation of a public school system. Of key importance is the development of a strategic plan which sets the direction of the district and offers a means to monitor progress toward specific ends. The outcome of planning usually takes the form of policies which are essential for the direction and guidance of the Board, the Superintendent and his or her staff.

Legislation - Legislation, which follows planning and governance policy review, means approving the means by which policies may be executed. The approval of salary schedules, the ratification of curriculum changes, the decision to call an election on a bond issue are examples of legislative activity. The Superintendent should recommend a course of action for the Board; it is then the Boards' prerogative to accept, reject, or accept with modifications the Superintendent's recommendations.

Appraisal or Evaluation - The appraisal or evaluation of the work of the schools and their personnel means determining whether or not the community is receiving the kind of educational services it should be receiving, whether or not the school money is being wisely and honestly spent, and what changes, if any, should be made. It is recognized that evaluation is a difficult, yet necessary, undertaking. The Board should rely on the Superintendent for data on which evaluation should be based. The Board's evaluation of the Superintendent is the most important single factor in the entire effort of appraisal.

Additional important functions of the Board include:

Judicial - From time to time, it may be necessary for the Board to sit in a quasi-judicial capacity for hearings.

Public Relations - There should be continuing joint effort on the part of the Board, the Superintendent and the staff to inform and engage the public.

Inter-Agency Cooperation - Cooperation with other local, state and national agencies which are dedicated to education and youth services is essential in fulfilling the mission of the district. The resources and expertise available from such agencies can enhance the instructional program and assist the district's personnel in meeting the needs of students and parents.

Board Development - The Board recognizes the need of its members to acquire knowledge regarding school district governance and skills of boardsmanship in order to function effectively in their roles. Programs offered by the North Dakota School Boards Association and the National School Boards Association are opportunities for Board development. Members of the Board shall be encouraged to attend meetings, workshops and conventions designed to provide information and skills which will aid in the effective management of the school district. Attendance at such functions will be at Board expense within the constraints of the budget. The Superintendent shall keep the Board informed of available professional offerings and shall facilitate meeting and travel arrangements as required.

SCHOOL BOARD ETHICS

School board members should be:

1. Committed to high quality education for every student.
2. Honest and sincere, having the courage of their convictions and always voting for or against what they understand to be in the best interests of the district.
3. Willing and capable of assuming responsibilities.
4. Able to work cooperatively with others.

5. Objective and maintain decorum in dealing with all school matters.
6. Willing to maintain confidentiality of privileged information.
7. Aware that the authority of the School Board is as a board. A board member should never make commitments outside of board meetings on behalf of the board.
8. Informed concerning state and federal laws and regulations affecting education.
9. Faithful in attendance at board meetings and diligent in preparation and study to become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings.
10. Willing to conduct school business in open meetings as required by law, even when the subject is controversial or personal.
11. Cognizant that the primary function of the Board is to establish the policies by which the schools are to be administered, but that the administration of the educational program and the conduct of school business shall be left to the employed superintendent of schools.
12. Willing to learn from association with other school board members from around the state and nation, and open to personal development through reading state and national school board association related publications and attending seminars and conventions.
13. Aware that it is as important for the Board to understand the educational program of the schools as it is to plan for the business of school operation.
14. Vigilant against even the appearance of conflict of interest. Board members should become familiar with the laws governing contracts and purchases as they relate to board members and carefully avoid any violation. North Dakota law regulates participation in discussion and voting when a board member has a conflict of interest. (NDCC 15.1-07-17 and 44-04-22)

Fargo Public Schools Board of Education