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Success Strategies for Leadership Team Evaluation: Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools

Approved by CABE and CAPSS - Spring 2016

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Preface

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) and the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) recognize the critical importance of a strong partnership between every Board of Education and its Superintendent of Schools. This recommended evaluation process collaboratively developed by CABE and CAPSS is an attempt to properly communicate our strong belief that the Board of Education and Superintendent must view themselves and function as the school district's Leadership Team. To that end, we strongly believe that the Leadership Team must share and enthusiastically advocate the same goals and a vision of learning that sets high performance expectations for the entire school community.

It is important to note that the foundational components of the recommended evaluation process are the CABE/CAPSS School Governance Position Statement, adopted March 2004 and revised in 2014, and the CABE Superintendent evaluation instrument and the Board self-assessment. THE Board of Education Chairperson, working with the Superintendent and the rest of the Board of Education, is responsible for carrying out the evaluation of the Leadership Team.

While the Board of Education and Superintendent have different roles and responsibilities, their work must complement each other. Ultimately, all serve to advance the goals and objectives of their community for public education and, most importantly, student learning. As the Board of Education's Chief Executive Officer, Connecticut Education Law (C.G.S. 10-157(a)) requires the Superintendent of Schools' job performance be evaluated annually. Whether written or oral, the annual evaluation of the school district's Chief Executive Officer is one of the most important responsibilities of every Board of Education.

CABE and CAPSS have recommended an evaluation process for the Superintendent of Schools that is collaborative, goal oriented and offers numerous opportunities for focused and targeted feedback from the Board of Education to the Superintendent of Schools regarding his/her job performance. We firmly believe that this collaborative and candid approach to evaluation will improve Board of Education and Superintendent communications and relationships, minimize evaluation surprises and most importantly, enhance the overall success of the school district.

Student achievement across all areas is important and must be assessed in multiple ways. Therefore, growth in student achievement has to be a factor in the assessment of the Superintendent's evaluations. All of the leadership performance areas and specific areas of responsibility outlined in this document should be considered. Indicators related to student academic achievement are necessary, but not sufficient to make final determinations about the Superintendent's job performance.

To increase the effectiveness of the school district's Leadership Team and the overall performance of the Board of Education and its individual members, CABE and CAPSS believe that it is vitally important that every Board of Education conducts a self-assessment each school year.

An annual self-assessment enables the Board of Education to thoughtfully and constructively evaluate its performance as the community's legislative body that develops, evaluates and oversees education policy. CABE and CAPSS strongly recommend Board of Education self-assessment as a necessary and worthwhile activity toward advancing the vision and goals of the school district. It is important that the Board factor the Superintendent's perspective into its self-assessment.

The following is a recommended process and timeline for the annual evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools and the Board of Education self-assessment. It is important to note that the recommended timeline is based upon a traditional evaluation year model (July-June) and can be easily as necessary. The recommended Leadership Team meetings can and should be conducted in Executive Session because they pertain to Board of Education Self-Evaluation and Personnel.

Legal Considerations: Executive Session and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

The Connecticut Freedom of Information law allows for the discussion in executive session of "personnel matters," which includes "the appointment, employment, performance, evaluation, health or dismissal of a public official or employee, provided that such individual may require that discussion be held at an open meeting" (Connecticut General Statute Section 1-200(6)). Under this provision the superintendent's evaluation, as well as the performance of one or more Board of Education members, are appropriate topics for executive session. District goals, procedures, policies and data are NOT appropriate subjects for executive session under the FOI law. All votes must be taken in public – only discussion can occur in executive session.

Note: Based on court decisions in Connecticut, written evaluation documents are likely to be deemed public records subject to disclosure. Such written evaluation documents subject to public disclosure would include any draft evaluation that is circulated among Board of Education members.

Recommended Evaluation Process

The formal evaluation should in no way preclude informal discussions between the Superintendent and Board of Education as needed.

Beginning of New Evaluation Year Meeting – July/September

Step 1: The Board conducts its self-evaluation and goal-setting.

Step 2: The district Leadership Team (Board of Education and Superintendent) meets to discuss goals and objectives. Any discussion of district goals must be held in public. This structured conversation is intended to serve as a goal/priority setting session for the district's Leadership Team for the upcoming school year.

Step 3: In Executive Session the Board of Education has an opportunity to candidly discuss with the Superintendent their performance goals for the year. Some of these will have been reflected in the most recent evaluation of the Superintendent's performance. This discussion should also include the process and format by which the Superintendent's performance will be evaluated.

Mid Year Evaluation Meeting – December / January

Step 1: The Board reviews its performance in light of previously established goals.

Step 2: It is recommended that the Leadership Team meets again in Executive Session to informally discuss their progress on goals and objectives established in July/August. This session also provides the Leadership Team with an opportunity to identify and strategize about new and/or unexpected challenges. This level of team collaboration allows all parties to be contributing members of a fluid, responsive and strategic team.

Step 3: During this same discussion, it is recommended that the Board of Education provide targeted informal feedback to the Superintendent about his/her effectiveness vis-à-vis the previously established goals and objectives. The purpose of this informal feedback session is to assess the Superintendent's midyear performance and provide him/her with an opportunity to properly respond to any Board of Education concerns and avoid unnecessary performance evaluation "surprises" at year's end.

End of the Year Evaluation of the Superintendent – May / June

Step 1: The Superintendent shares a verbal "Year in Review" self-assessment with the Board of Education in Executive Session. This self-assessment may be supplemented by submitting documentation as a formal narrative, portfolio or some other mutually agreed upon format that was established during the Beginning of the Year Meeting, with the understanding that any such written documentation would not be confidential. This document serves as evidentiary documentation regarding the Superintendent's job performance and should aid the Board of Education in completing a comprehensive and fair evaluation of the Superintendent.

Step 2: The Board of Education conducts the evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools according to Board of Education Policy in Executive Session unless the Superintendent exercises his/her statutory right to require that such discussion be held in open session. It is recommended that there be no prior sharing of written performance evaluation commentary (hard copy or electronic) among Board of Education members prior to the Executive Session. The result of the Board of Education's Executive Session discussion regarding the Superintendent's performance should be either a written or verbal draft performance evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools.

Step 3: A meeting in Executive Session should be scheduled by the Board of Education between the Superintendent and the Board of Education, according to Board of Education Policy and Superintendent's contract. The purpose of this follow-up meeting is to share and discuss the Board of Education's draft evaluation with the Superintendent. This session serves as a final opportunity for candid discussion between the Board of Education and the Superintendent prior to the completion of the formal performance evaluation. The Connecticut Superintendent Leadership Competency Framework, developed by LEAD Connecticut, also should be examined as it is intended to focus specifically on effective superintendent leadership. It is included at the end of this document.

Step 4: The formal performance evaluation is completed and presented either verbally or in writing to the Superintendent of Schools by a representative(s) of the Board of Education according to Board of Education Policy and Superintendent's contract. It is important to note that if the Board of Education's performance evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools is in writing, it is a public document and subject to FOIA. Any written copy of the Superintendent's performance evaluation must also be placed in the Superintendent's official personnel file.

Recommended Evaluation Process and Timeline Flowchart

<p style="text-align: center;">Beginning of New Evaluation Year Meeting July / September (Meeting to be conducted in executive session)</p> <p>Step 1: Board Self-Evaluation and Goal Setting Step 2: Leadership Team Goal / Priority Setting. Step 3: Superintendent’s Professional Goals and Objectives.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Mid-Year Evaluation Meeting December / January (Conducted in executive session)</p> <p>Step 1: Board Reviews Its Performance Step 2: Informal Leadership Team discussion regarding progress on goals and objectives. Step 3: Targeted informal feedback provided to Superintendent regarding his/her performance.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">End of Year Evaluation of the Superintendent May / June</p> <p>Step 1: Superintendent presents “year in review” self-assessment to Board of Education regarding his/her performance. Step 2: Board of Education evaluates the Superintendent’s job performance. A draft evaluation is developed during this meeting in districts where a written evaluation of the Superintendent is provided. Step 3: Meeting (in executive session) between Board of Education, as per Board of Education policy and the Superintendent, to share and discuss draft evaluation. Step 4: Formal evaluation is completed and presented to the Superintendent of School by a representative(s) of the Board of Education as per policy.</p> <p>Note: Superintendent’s Evaluation is a public document subject to FOIA.</p>

I. Growth in Student Achievement

Definition: The core mission of all school districts is to ensure growth in achievement for all students. While the superintendent does not deliver instruction directly to children, the superintendent has to establish a set of expectations and take other specific actions that produce a culture and a climate that fosters growth in student achievement.

Areas of Responsibility:

- Establishes a system whereby data is collected on a regular basis regarding student achievement in all curricular areas and whereby that data is used to identify areas of instruction in which focus and emphasis needs to occur.
- Establishes a structure whereby plans for growth in student achievement are set and then, regularly revised in accordance with the relevant data regarding student achievement.
- Establishes a structure whereby staff is held accountable for implementing the plans to enhance student achievement and for the intended growth in student achievement.
- Establishes assessable goals for determining whether achievement growth strategies are successful and methods for conducting the relevant assessments.
- In concert with the Board of Education, establishes assessable school system goals for yearly performance in student achievement and methods for conducting the relevant assessments.
- In concert with the Board of Education, establishes reasonable assessable goals within the context of available resources and Board support for the Superintendent's proposals for the superintendent's own performance with respect to:
 - The extent to which the superintendent has provided the leadership required to enhance student achievement by meeting the areas of responsibility listed above.
 - The extent to which the school system has met the established system goals for student achievement.

II. Educational Leadership

Definition: Educational leadership is grounded in relationships: working with the Board of Education, community and staff to define a comprehensive vision for the schools; identifying the values and ethics under which the schools function; creating a culture and climate that nurtures and capitalizes on talents and skills; setting high performance expectations for students and staff; and continuing to sustain and improve quality research-based programs to enhance teaching and learning.

Areas of Responsibility:

- Works with the Board of Education, staff and community to develop and implement a vision for the school system that inspires action and commitment and aligns with the values and ethics under which the district functions.
- Works with the board of education to develop and implement a plan of action and a strategic operating plan that aligns with a theory of action.*
- Promotes a school culture and climate of continuous improvement and accountability.
- Builds capacity by designing and implementing comprehensive professional development plans for staff.
- Establishes structures and processes that sustain a culture and climate of continuous improvement.
- Provides instructional leadership in the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment, evaluation of staff and data informed decision making to optimize learning for all students.

*A theory of action identifies a specific set of actions that if taken will result in a specified outcome that is grounded in a vision of learning.

III. Organizational Management

Definition: Organizational management concerns the effective facilitation of the day-to-day operations of the school district and its programs.

Areas of Responsibility:

- Develops and manages a comprehensive approach to human capital that aligns to district vision, strategies and goals consistent with Board of Education policy, recruiting, hiring and retaining personnel for the district and includes a system of support, supervision and consistent evaluation.
- Develops and manages a comprehensive approach to fiscal resources that align to district vision, strategies and goals for consideration by the Board of Education (BOE).
- Reports regularly to the BOE on the status of the budget and any other fiscal concerns or issues.
- Develops and executes effective plans, procedures, routines and operational systems that support the day to day operations of the district.
- Assists the BOE in developing policies and establishes regulations to implement the policies.

IV. Community Relations

Definition: Strong community relations are critical to the success of the superintendent and the school system. The superintendent must earn respect and trust from the community and in turn, respect community members.

Areas of Responsibility:

- Continuously communicates and collaborates with families and community, regional and state stakeholders to support student learning and development at home, school and in the community.
- Addresses family and community concerns in an equitable, effective and efficient manner.
- Represents effectively the district to the local community.

V. Board of Education Relations

Definition: A strong relationship with the Board is critical to the success of the superintendent and the school system. The superintendent must earn respect and trust from the Board and in turn, respect Board members.

- Builds trusting, collaborative and respectful relationships with Board members.
- Provides professional advice and keeps the BOE informed and updated on educational issues and the needs and operations of the school system.
- Keeps BOE members informed about significant operational issues in a timely manner.

VI. Personal and Professional Qualities and Relationships

Definition: Personal and professional qualities and relationships are critical to the effectiveness of leaders and managers. Superintendents must continue to refine and develop their skills and contemporary knowledge; lead ethically and make decisions based on sound professional practice; interact in a manner that best represents the interests of the school district; and maintain a healthy balance between professional obligations and personal life.

Areas of Responsibility:

Demonstrates:

- A belief that every student can achieve at high levels.
- An urgency to improve student achievement.
- The ability to manage resistance to change and to engage in difficult conversations to maintain a consistent focus on high levels of achievement.
- The ability to explore how identity and life experiences shape assumptions and unconscious biases.
- The ability to work with diverse people and be sensitive to cultural differences.
- The ability to build trusting, respectful relationships to improve student learning.

- The ability to interact effectively with individuals and groups both within and outside the school district to accomplish the goals of the district.
- The ability to use consensus building and negotiation strategies and conflict resolution skills to lead authentic stakeholder engagement.
- Provides for a safe and orderly work environment.
- Delegates authority appropriately.
- Gives staff sufficient authority and support.
- Establishes an effective professional development system for staff that is aligned with its responsibilities for teaching and learning.
- Communicates effectively with staff regarding district goals, objectives and issues.
- Political savvy and respectful engagement across all stake holder groups.
- Effectively anticipates and responds to challenges and remains focused on the vision of high expectations when faced with adversity.
- Builds trusting, respectful relationships to improve student learning.
- Maintains high standards of ethics, honesty and integrity in all professional matters.
- Maintains poise and exhibits diplomacy in the full range of his/her professional activities.
- Is a strong advocate for public education and demonstrates the courage to support his/her convictions.

Board of Education Self-Evaluation

Check the most appropriate rating box on a scale of 5-1 (5 representing the highest rating, 1 the lowest) for each question. A "NA" rating is also provided if you are unable to rate on an item for any reason. A space for comments is also provided on page 11 and 12.

Vision	5	4	3	2	1	Not sure
1. The Board has a vision/mission for the school district with a primary focus on student achievement.						
2. The vision/mission and goals are developed collaboratively with staff and the community.						
3. The Board institutes a process for long-range and strategic planning that aligns with the vision/mission for the district.						
4. The Board uses the district policy manual to create a culture that supports the vision and goals of the district.						
5. The Board expresses in the vision/mission the belief that high quality instruction in every classroom is the foundation for high achievement for all students.						
6. The Board communicates clearly the goals and expectations for the district, staff, and students with an emphasis on high achievement for all students in the district.						
7. The Board develops goals that align with the vision/mission for the district, foster continuous improvement and remain the highest priorities.						
Total Vision						
Community Leadership						
8. The Board communicates and interprets the school district's vision/mission to the public and listens, and incorporates appropriate community perspectives into board actions.						
9. The Board works to promote the accomplishments of the district within the district and community at large.						
10. The Board advocates at the national, state and local levels for students and the school district and promotes the benefits of public education.						
11. The Board collaborates with other school boards, superintendents, agencies, and other bodies to inform federal, state and local policy makers of concerns and issues related to education.						
12. The Board provides community leadership on educational issues by creating strong linkages with appropriate organizations, agencies, and other groups to provide for healthy development and high achievement for all students.						
Total Community Leadership						

Check the most appropriate rating box on a scale of 5-1 (5 representing the highest rating, 1 the lowest) for each question. A “NA” rating is also provided if you are unable to rate on an item for any reason. A space for comments is also provided on page 11 and 12.

Board Operations	5	4	3	2	1	Not sure
13. The Board ensures the District policy manual is up-to-date and comprehensive.						
14. The Board conducts meetings that are efficient, effective and focus primarily on student achievement and other district priorities.						
15. The Board makes decisions based on analysis of relevant research and data.						
16. The Board adopts a fiscally responsible budget based on the district’s priorities and regularly monitors the fiscal health of the district.						
17. The Board collectively executes its legal responsibilities and ensures the district adheres to all federal and state laws and board policies.						
18. The Board provides appropriate support (including quality professional development) for programs and initiatives consistent with the vision/mission of the district.						
19. The Board conducts a comprehensive orientation to familiarize new board members with their role on the team.						
20. The Board conducts an effective annual self-evaluation.						
21. The Board participates in professional development specifically regarding its roles and responsibilities and on relevant content areas.						
22. The Board belongs to, actively supports and participates in professional organizations.						
Total – Board Operations						
Board Ethics	5	4	3	2	1	Not sure
23. The Board establishes a <i>Code of Ethics</i> and conducts business in accordance with the code.						
24. The Board members maintain confidentiality regarding sensitive communications.						
25. The Board members honors board decisions even when the vote is not unanimous,						
26. The Board does not let politics interfere with district business.						
27. The Board deals with both internal and external conflicts openly, honestly and respectfully.						
Total Board Ethics						

Check the most appropriate rating box on a scale of 5-1 (5 representing the highest rating, 1 the lowest) for each question. A "NA" rating is also provided if you are unable to rate on an item for any reason. A space for comments is also provided on page 11 and 12.

Board Superintendent Team	5	4	3	2	1	Not sure
28. The Board works effectively with the Superintendent as a collaborative leadership team to focus priorities around high achievement for all students in the district.						
29. The Board sets aside time, at least semi-annually, to discuss board/superintendent relations.						
30. The Board demonstrates support and respect for the Superintendent's role as the chief executive officer of the district.						
31. The Board provides direction to the Superintendent as a whole, not from individual Board members.						
32. The Board follows the chain of command as identified by board policy.						
Total – Board Superintendent Team						
Grand Total						
Average						

Please add any additional comments here (comments will be shared with participants):

Vision:

Community Leadership:

Board Operations:

Board Ethics:

Board/Superintendent Relations:

General Comments:
