

Information Requests that Support Effective Governance

A governing board requires timely, accurate, and relevant information to fulfill its responsibilities. At the same time, Student Outcomes-Focused Governance recognizes that every request for information requires organizational time, expertise, and attention. Effective boards therefore approach information requests with the same intentionality they bring to every other aspect of governance.

The Board's role is not to direct the day-to-day work of the organization, but to establish the community's vision for student success, adopt goals and guardrails, monitor progress toward those priorities, and hold the Superintendent accountable for results. Information requests should support those responsibilities.

When information requests become disconnected from Board decisions, adopted priorities, monitoring responsibilities, or legal obligations, they can unintentionally redirect the attention of the Superintendent and staff away from the work of improving student outcomes. Every hour devoted to producing information is an hour that cannot be devoted to implementing strategies, supporting schools, developing staff, or serving students.

Effective Board information requests generally:

- support an upcoming Board decision;
- strengthen the Board's monitoring of adopted Goals and Guardrails;
- help the Board fulfill its legal or fiduciary responsibilities;
- seek information that is relevant, actionable, and proportional to the governance purpose being served; and
- consider whether the requested information already exists before asking staff to create something new.

Likewise, effective Boards recognize that not every question requires a new report, analysis, or presentation. Sometimes existing monitoring reports, dashboards, agenda materials, or publicly available information already provide the answer needed for effective governance.

The accompanying resources are intended to help Board members reflect on two questions before requesting information:

1. **Will this information help the Board fulfill one of its governance responsibilities?**
2. **Is the value of this information proportional to the organizational time and resources required to produce it?**

Student Outcomes-Focused Governance is built upon disciplined governance and disciplined execution. By asking purposeful questions and requesting information strategically, Boards allow the Superintendent and staff to focus their time and expertise where they matter most - improving student outcomes.