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AI and Other Board Challenges

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CABE/CAPSS Convention

Mystic Marriott, Groton

November 20-21, 2026



The Strategic Goal

To prepare
EVERY student
for **learning, life,**
and **work**
beyond school.

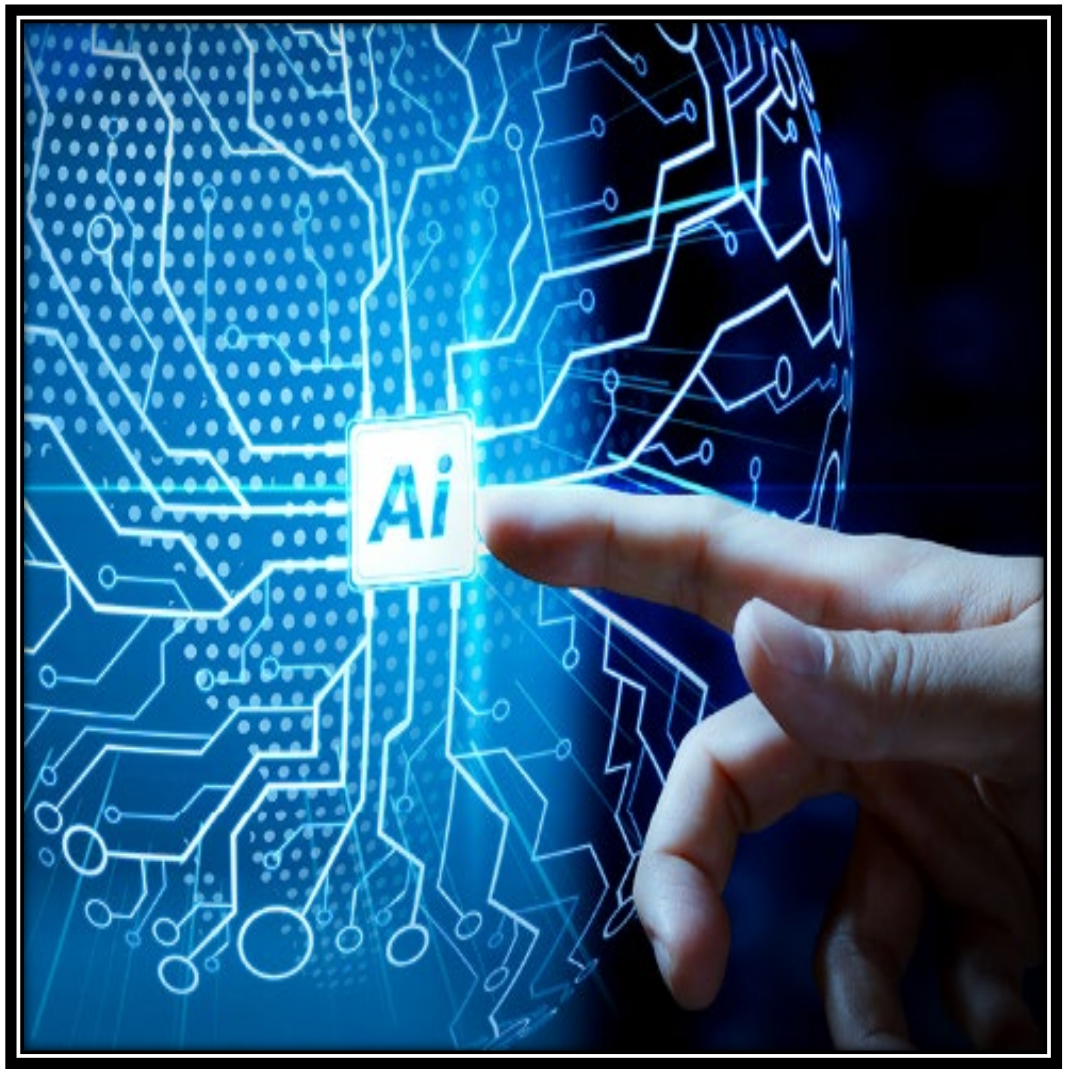


The Strategic Question

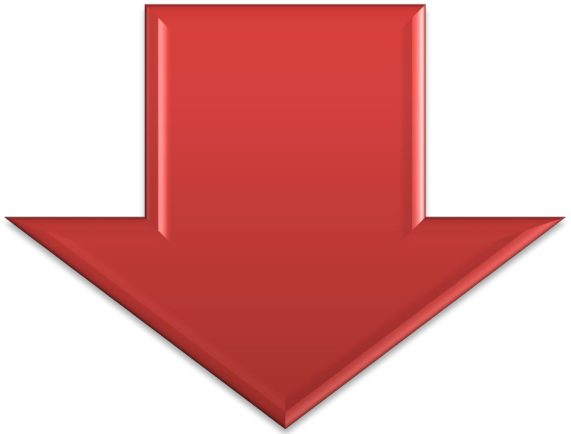
What does it mean (what is required) to prepare **EVERY** student for **learning, life,** and **work** beyond school in an era of artificial intelligence?

Three big ideas…

- Good, bad, or indifferent, AI is here to stay. What we are witnessing now are the beginning, not the end, of the changes that are coming.
- If it were only AI to consider, it would still be a lot – but there are other challenges coming down the pike as well.
- Boards that are prepared will fair better than those who are not.



The impact of AI



More of…

Less of…



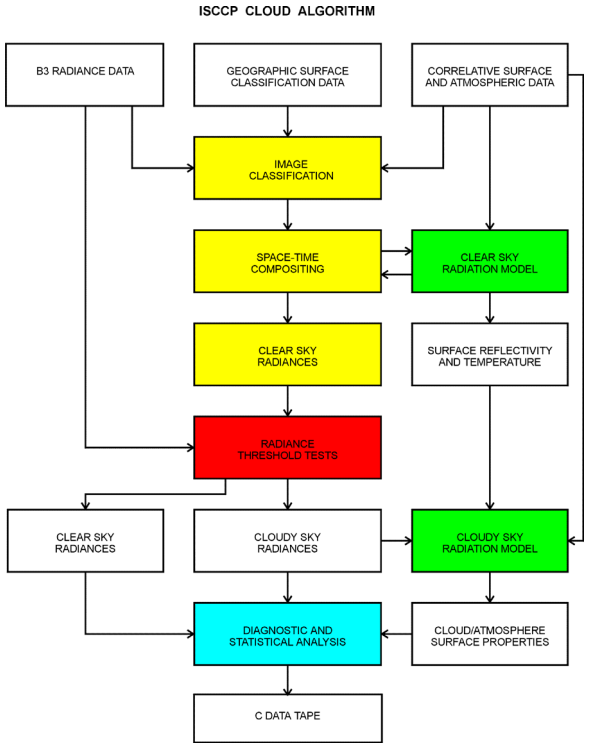
Rethinking Economic Opportunity

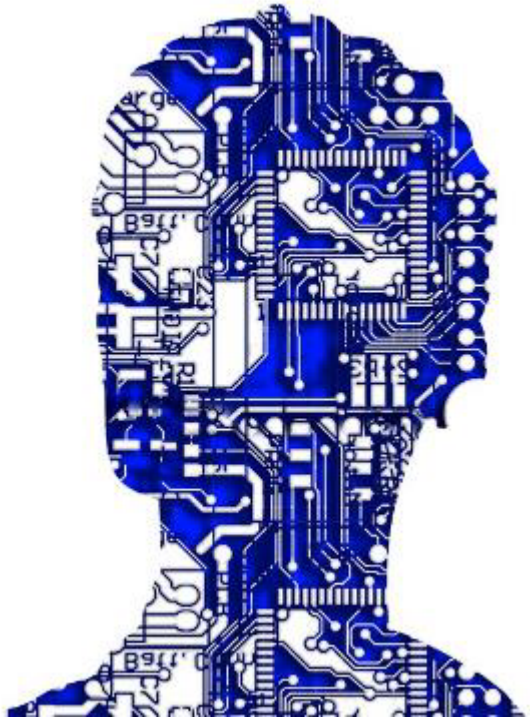
Driven by the pursuit of capital and these new tools, we are in the early phase of an economic transformation that will redefine what it means to be employed and up-end our industrial era assumptions about learning and work.



Robots, Algorithms, and Artificial Intelligence







Laying waste to the non-creative workforce.

Shallow skilled, non- strategic, non-creative thinkers are already at risk.





Is this the end of lawyers?

No, AI is not going to be end of lawyers…

…but it is going to be the end of lawyers who don’t use AI.

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The first few rungs of several job ladders are disappearing…



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We are preparing next generation workers…

The future of work probably won't even look like work…



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Think of it this way…

Transactional work will be done by AI.	Transformational work will be done by human beings.

AI Reflection…

Are your teaching, learning, and assessment systems currently aligned with transactional or transformational work?



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An Essential AI Question

What does it mean to be educated, to be intelligent – in an era of artificial intelligence?



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Less of – More Of

AI in Schools

Less of…

- Ignorance is bliss
- Blame, block, and banish
- Treating AI as just another tool

More of…

- Intentional applications
- Human centered, integrated, and ethical mindset
- Understanding the difference between AI and anything that has come before



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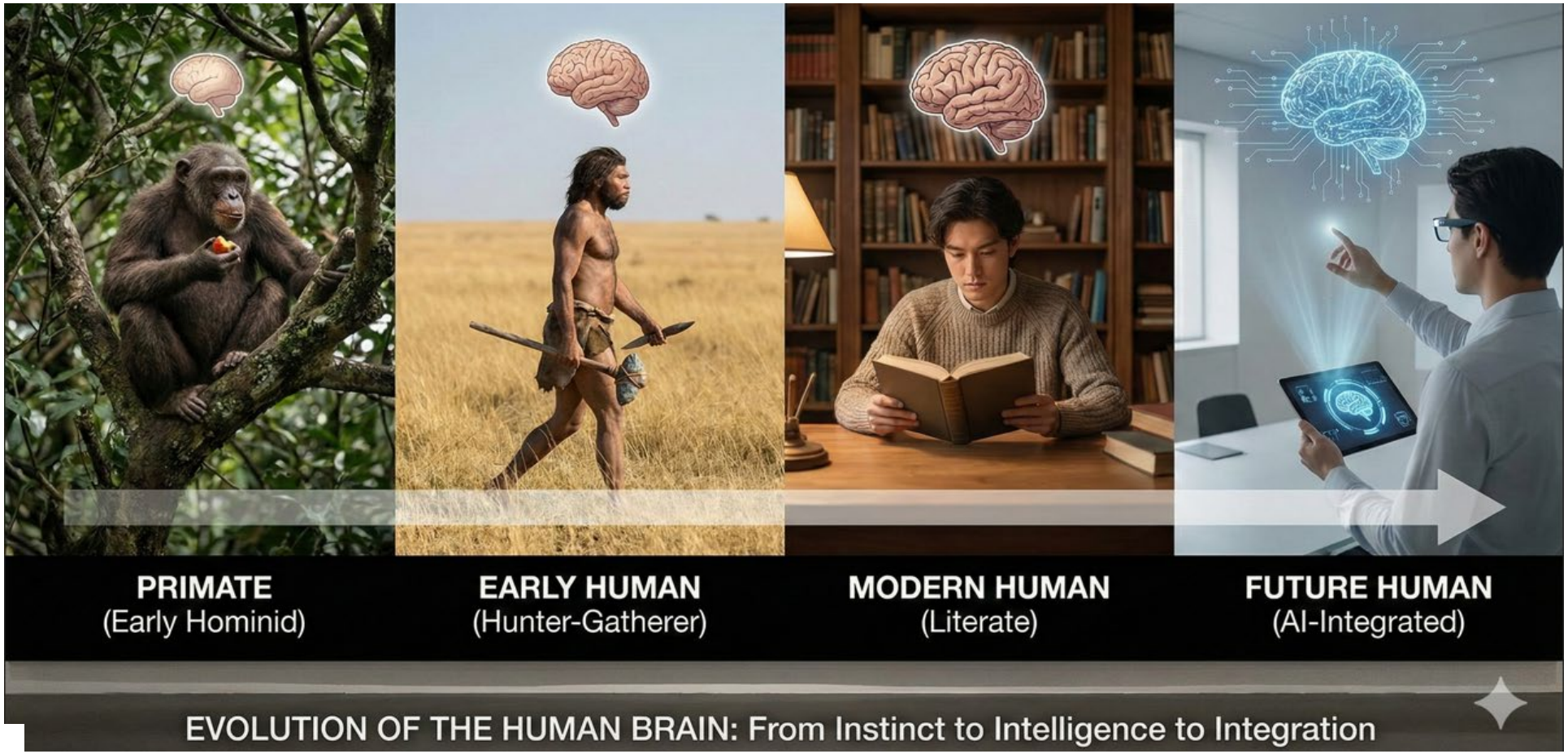
The Impact of Perspective

We are witnessing brain evolution in real time…



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Think of being a student right now…



Less of – More Of

Big Picture

Less of…

- Common Core
- Portrait of compliance
- College for all
- A place you have to go

More of…

- Common skills
- Portrait of a learner
- College and/or career
- A place you would want to go

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Honestly, my biggest fear…

…is not how much education will be changed by AI.

Rather, it is that **it will not change enough to remain relevant.**



Coherence/Focus



Align the Systems That Matter Most



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Less of – More Of

Goals for Learning

Less of…

- Facts and dates
- Formulaic writing
- Calculation procedures
- Isolated subject silos

More of…

- Curation & verification
- Creative synthesis
- Algorithmic thinking
- Interdisciplinary problem solving



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- Complex Thinker
- Creative Thinker
- Effective Communicator
- Collaborative/Cooperative
- Community Contributor

CPS Student Performance Standards



The main thing…

…is to make sure

the main thing

is actually treated as

the main thing.

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Less of – More Of

Instruction

Less of…

- One size fits all
- Screens just because
- Covering all of it
- Legacy scope and sequence

More of…

- Customized for you
- Intentional use
- Learning & mastery
- Aligned with future focused skills

Definition of High-Quality Durable Learning

We believe that the following instructional conditions are most likely to result in a positive learning environment conducive to the long-term acquisition of the Cheshire Public Schools Student Performance Standards

Characteristic	Definition
Application	Ability to identify and use the appropriate knowledge and skills in a variety of situations.
Explanation	Justify thinking and provide supporting evidence for reasoning or conclusions drawn.
Connections	Relate ideas and concepts within the content and among content areas.
Proof	Provides (cites or creates) evidence to support an idea, concept or process.
Finding Solutions	Devise one approach among alternatives on how a problem or challenge can be solved. Develop a plan or sequence of steps and have more than one possible response or solution.
Creation	Investigate and apply to the real world (authenticity) and include non-routine or previously established manipulations or connections within and across disciplines, content areas, and multiple sources Development of a new idea, product, or process to solve a problem, communicate a feeling, or advance an idea New interpretation or perspective that reshapes existing thinking

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Less of – More Of

Assessment

Less of…

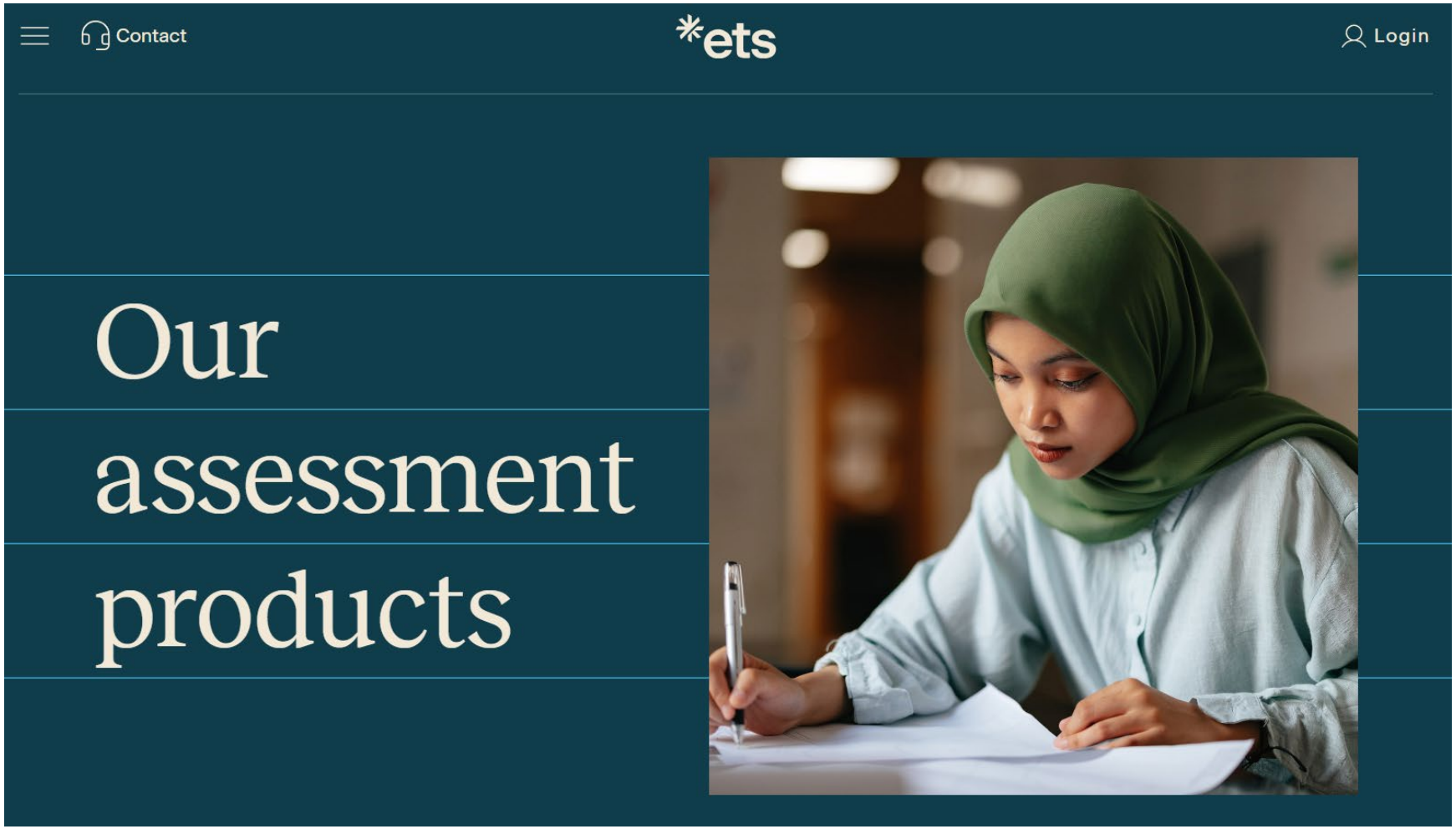
- Time on summative
- Focus on grades
- Standardized tests
- Comparative scoring

More of…

- Time on formative
- Focus on growth
- Self reflections
- Personal growth



What about the tests?



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"What gets measured, gets done."

Peter Drucker

Content Area(s)	Assessment	Grade(s)	Testing Window
English Language Proficiency	LAS Links	K-12	January 5 - March 6, 2026
English Language Proficiency	Connecticut Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency (CAAELP)	K-12	January 12 - March 6, 2026
English Language Arts (ELA) & Mathematics	Connecticut Smarter Balanced	3-8	March 23 - May 29, 2026
English Language Arts (ELA) & Mathematics	Connecticut SAT School Day	11	March 2 - April 30, 2026*
English Language Arts (ELA) & Mathematics	Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA)	3-8 and 11	March 23 - May 29, 2026
Literacy Universal Screening	Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment	K-3	September 8 – October 17, 2025 December 8 – February 6, 2026 April 20 – June 5, 2026
Science	Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessment	5, 8, and 11	February 2 - May 29, 2026 (Grade 11) March 23 - May 29, 2026 (Grades 5 and 8)
Science	Connecticut Alternate Science Assessment (CTAS)	5, 8, and 11	Dates to upload to the DEI: March 23 - May 29, 2026 The CTAS can be administered all year.
Physical Fitness	Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment	4, 6, 8, and once during high school	September 2, 2025 - May 29, 2026
Language, Literacy, Numeracy, Physical/Motor, Creative/Aesthetic, and Personal/Social	Kindergarten Entrance Inventory	Kindergarten	Snapshot Date: October 15, 2025 Submission Due Date: December 5, 2025

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In the news…

Today we at the Stanford Accelerator for Learning are kicking off an important discussion « Responsible Assessment in the AI Era » in collaboration with ETS, bringing together researchers & leaders to reimagine how assessment can evolve in a world shaped by AI. AI is not just changing how students learn; it is forcing us to rethink what we value, how we measure it, and who our systems are truly designed to serve. When machines can generate answers, assessment can no longer be about recall or speed. It must illuminate the skills that matter most in an AI-driven world: curiosity, judgment, creativity, collaboration, and relational intelligence.

We are asking big questions: • How do we move from summative tests to learning-embedded, feedback-rich systems? • How do we design multimodal assessments that capture how people really learn? • How do we shift from static snapshots to continuous, multimodal signals of learning—listening for growth, sense-making, effort, and connection over time? • How do we ensure assessments are culturally and socially relevant—building trust rather than fear?



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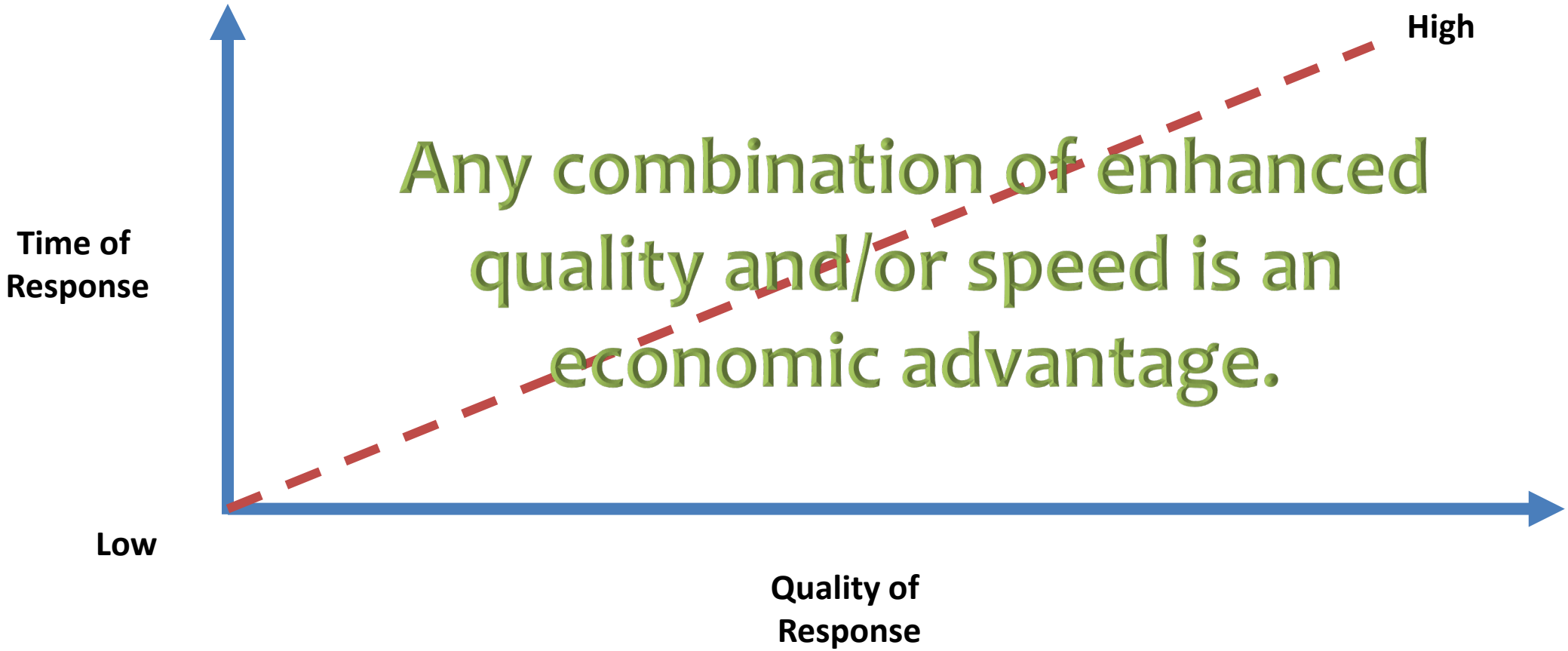
Your students that are in Kindergarten this fall are members of the class of 2039.



AI will absolutely not be going away…



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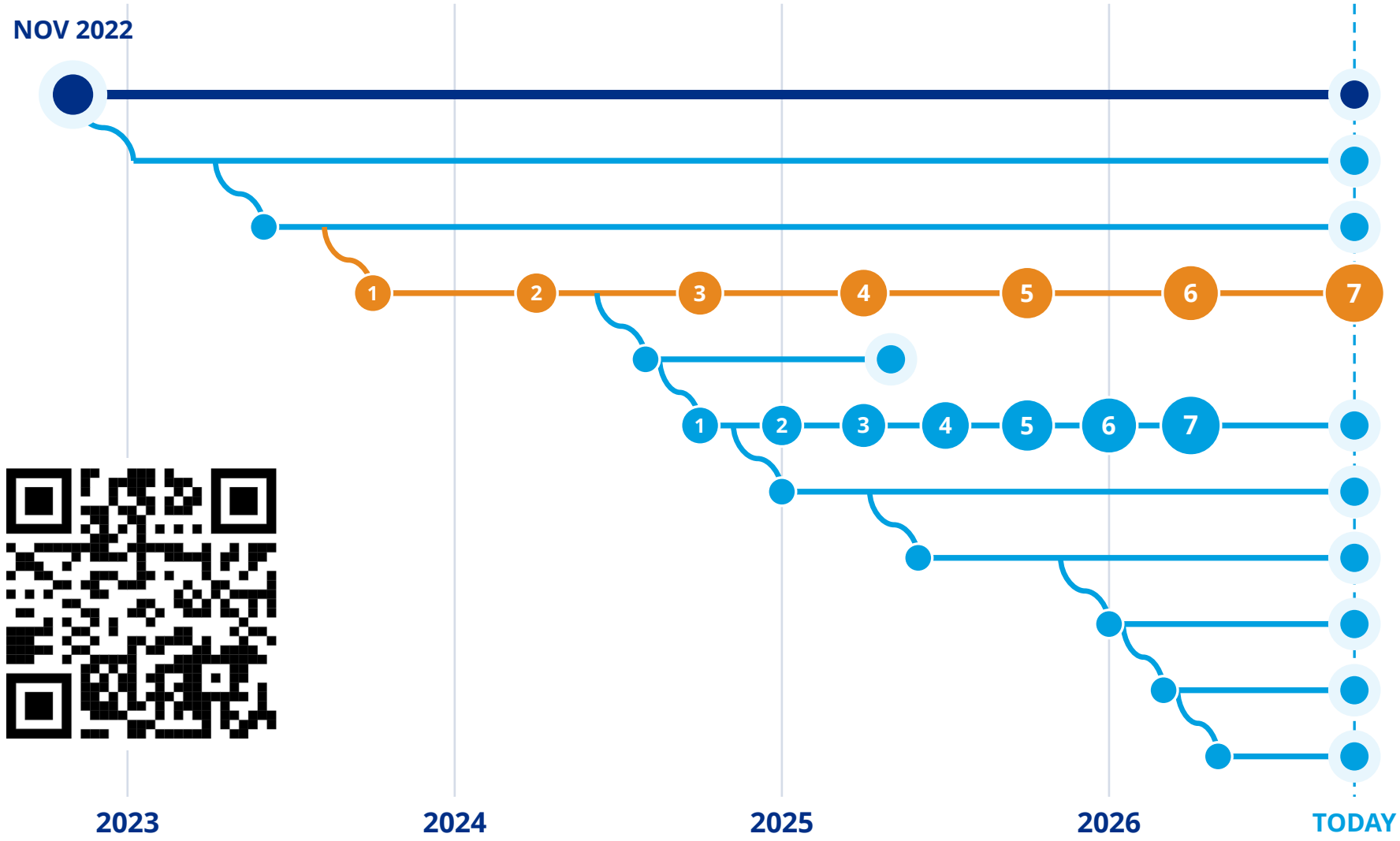
How Our AI Work Keeps Growing



OUR AI SERVICES

PIP & Capstone
Since Nov 2022 | Sidekick AI built in

AI Webinars
Since Nov 2022

Embedded PD Supports
Since 2023

AI Conferences
Fall & Spring | 7 held, all sold out

Sidekick AI Academy
2024-25 school year

Micro-credentials
Since Fall 2024 | 7 cohorts, next one Winter 2026

Workforce Development
Since Winter 2025

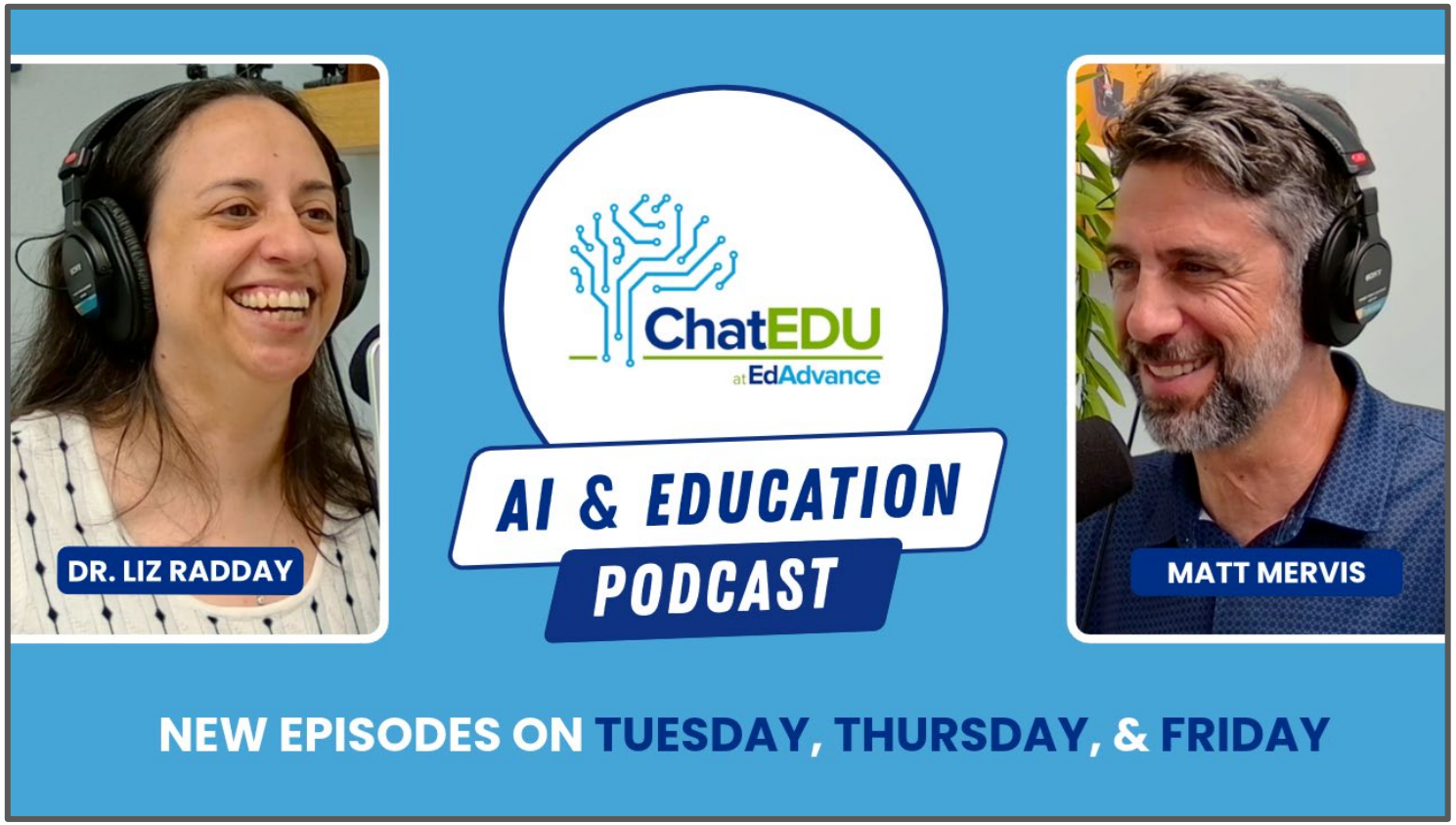
EdAdvance Studio (SpEd)
Since 2025

LearnAI Student AI Literacy
Since 2026

Google AI Trainings
Since 2026

Screen Shift
Since 2026

ChatEDU: AI & Education Podcast



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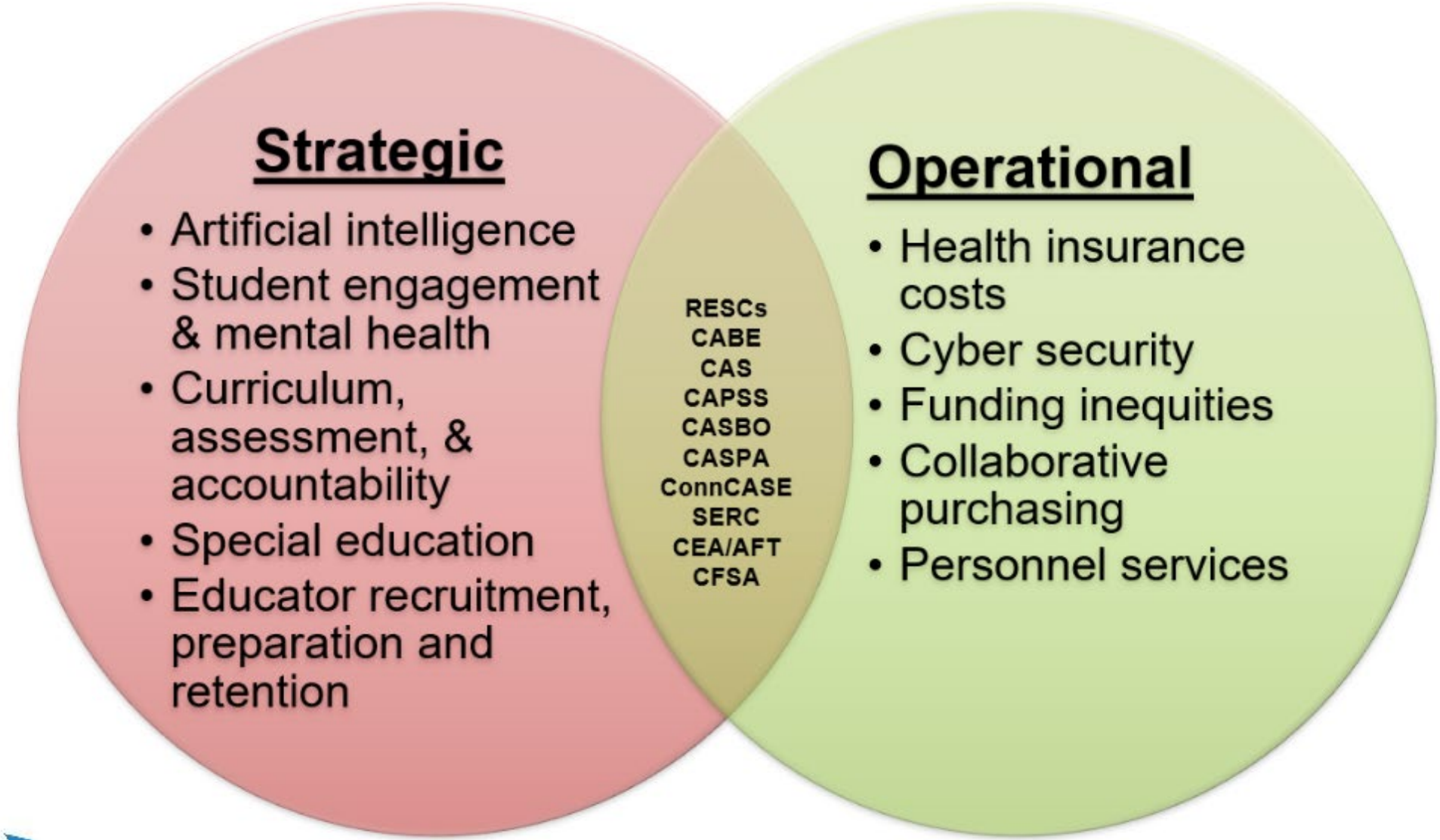
Scan to LEARN MORE

Forbes

#1 Podcast: *Shaping AI in Education in 2025*

Looking even farther ahead, challenges for all of us…



Five Rules of ALL Successful Boards/Members

1. Stay focused on the Mission – success for ALL students in life, learning and work beyond school.
2. Stay in your lane – understanding and respect for statutory and practical considerations of Board and Board Member roles and responsibilities.
3. Systems orientation – focus on how the work gets done.
4. Common cause vs. special cause problem solving.
5. Be prepared, stay positive, communicate, and follow your bylaws, and policies.

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Our Mission

To prepare
EVERY student
for **learning, life,**
and **work**
beyond school.



One key here…

Do you all agree on what is required to prepare **EVERY** student for **learning, life,** and **work** beyond school?



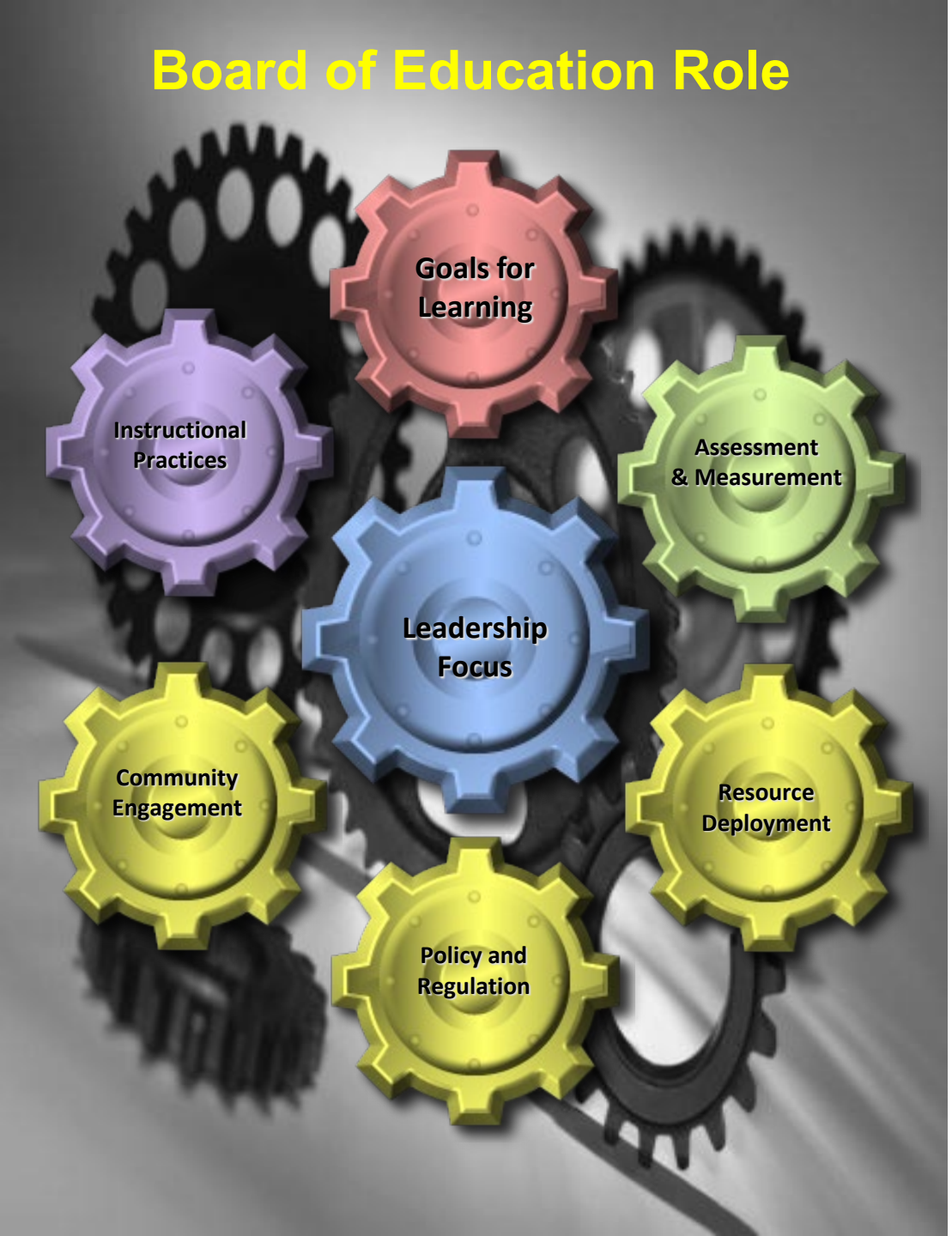
Specific Mission ACTIONS

- Make the district Mission YOUR Mission.
- Seek alignment between Mission and policy decision-making.
- Ask questions about Mission progress and demand a balanced report of student performance feedback.
- Engage and support the mission in the community.
- Put your resources (money/budget) where your Mission is.



The Bottom Line…

Boards that are mission/purpose driven are more successful than those who are not.



A Board Member's ROLE

- Your authority is only vested as a member of the Board of Education
- You do not gain or lose any rights or authority as a member of the Board
- You cannot do anything on your own – building coalitions and acting as a board is your only productive pathway to influence a change.

If you are working on your own in your role as a Board member to influence a school-based decision, change a behavior, or force a management practice within the school …

… you are out of your lane.



Stay in Your Lane - Levels of Decision Making

Level	Outcome	Primary Accountability	Board Role	Example
Statute	**Federal or state laws that govern public education.**	Congress and state legislature with input from constituents	Watch, listen, and advocate if appropriate.	**C.G.S. 10-212c *Life-threatening food allergies: Guidelines, district plans*** requires the Connecticut State Department of Education to develop guidelines for the management of students with life-threatening food allergies and have these guidelines available by January 1, 2006.
Policy	**Local district implementation of statute or local values. Broad guidelines that set the district's course of action.**	**Board of Education with statutory guidance and input from constituents and staff**	**Compose, review, and vote for approval – important for compliance and decision making.**	**Policy No. 7 - 107* The Danbury Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to maintain a healthful school environment. Relative to this responsibility, the Board will strive to provide a school environment that is free of potential allergen producing substances.**
Regulation	**Practical staff guidelines for the implementation of policy. They are specific to each district and formulated for the particular needs of that district.**	Superintendent & staff with input from Board of Education	Awareness and support regarding their existence. No formal role in creation or implementation.	The goal of the Danbury Public Schools Food Allergy Management Plan is to maintain the health and safety of students with life threatening allergies in ways that are developmentally appropriate, promote self-advocacy and competence in self-care, and provide educational opportunities.
Implementation	**The actual day-to-day application of regulation in the context of school and actual events.**	Superintendent and staff at all levels.	**None.**	An elementary school with a peanut allergy student creates a peanut free table in the lunchroom and places peanut free signs in common areas where that student is.

Consider the following… what would you do?

If this happens…	I would…
A friend comes to you to complain about the quality of a teacher that his/her child has…	
There is an incident in the school and parents want to know what the disciplinary decisions made following it are…	
A parent comes to you to complain about a topic that is in a book his/her student is reading…	
A member of the Board of Finance complains to you about the school budget…	
You receive an invitation to speak to a local group about educational issues facing the Board of Education.	

A Systems Orientation

- Recognition that all work is part of a process.
- Recognition that the way the work is done defines the process and becomes the system of work.
- Recognition that work quality is absolutely driven by that system of work.
- The principle of 85/15
- More than any other decision you make, the WAY you do the work of your program will have the largest impact on how effective your program is.



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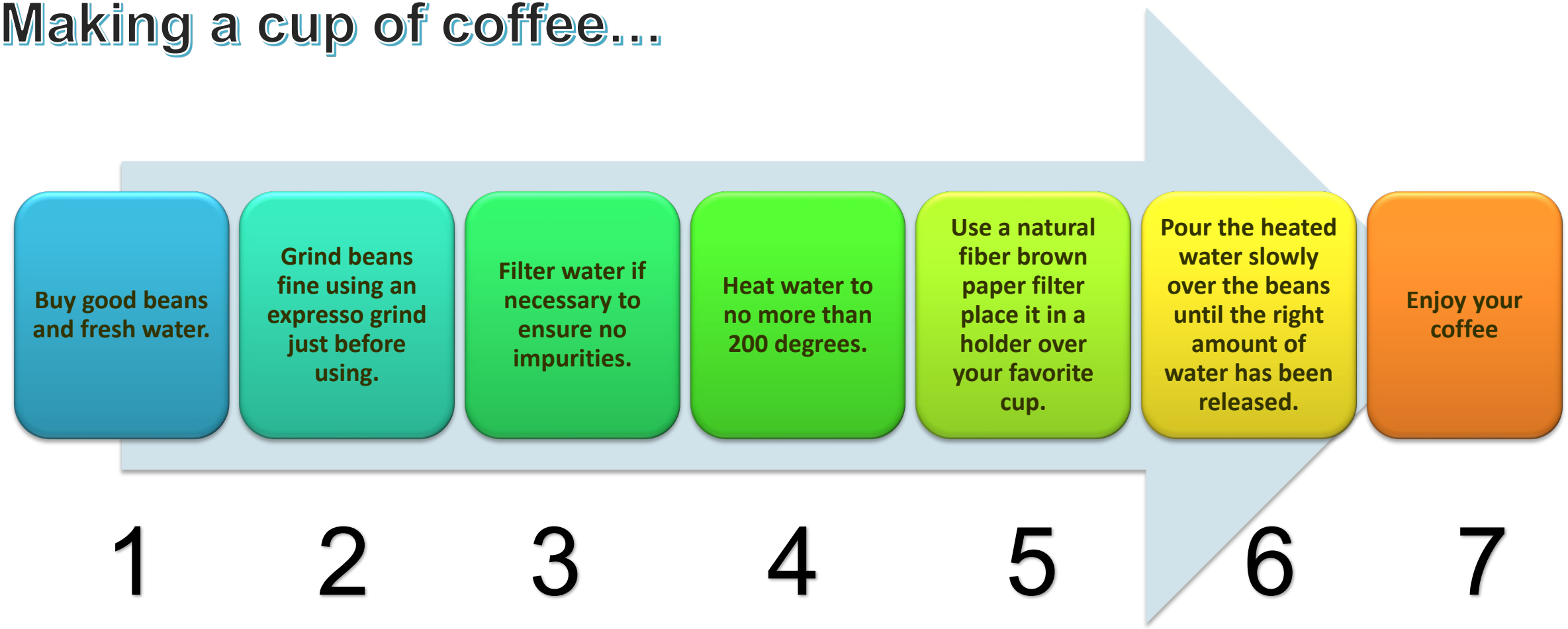
A Systems Example

Making a cup of coffee…



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Which Do You Relate More To?

Linear Thinkers	Systems Thinkers
Break things into component pieces	Are concerned with the whole
Are concerned with content	Are concerned with process
Try to fix symptoms	Are concerned with the underlying dynamics
Are concerned with assigning blame	Try to identify patterns
Try to control chaos to create order	Try to find patterns amid the chaos
Care only about the content of communication	Care about content but are more attentive to interactions and patterns of communication
Believe organizations are predictable and orderly	Believe organizations are unpredictable in a chaotic environment



Making the Jump to Systems Thinking By *Jim Ollhoff, Michael Walcheski*

Common and Special Causes

One of Deming's most significant insights.





All Risks/Problems Are NOT Created Equal

Common Cause issues can and should be controlled or improved through systemic improvements – when based on data, these changes can improve system performance.

Special Cause issues *cannot* be controlled or improved through systemic improvements.

Key Statute Reminders for Boards/Members

1. Other than private one on one conversations, everything you do as a board member – outside of Executive Session – is part of the public record (all email, conference calls, everything). Anything you do to avoid that reality is breaking the law.
2. Meeting types (regular, special, and emergency) all have provisions that protect the public nature of doing the public's business. Exemptions are made for executive sessions (6 acceptable criteria – security, personnel, evaluation, disclosure of exempt records, litigation, real estate) caucuses, and non-meetings (negotiations, executive searches, chance encounters). NO VOTE ON A TOPIC may be taken outside of the public view.
3. Public records – like the board's business, all records of the board are also public. Any protected documents that can be viewed by the board but not by the public can be viewed by board members but no document that is protected from public view and is not part of board business cannot be viewed by a board member under any individual circumstances.
4. The presiding officer should use the rules of parliamentary procedure (Robert's Rules) appropriately so that good order and reasonable decorum are maintained and that the business of the Board is conducted fairly. The technical rules and parliamentary procedure may be relaxed as long as the meeting accomplishes its purposes and the rights of the absentees and minorities are protected.

ByLaws – A Board's Framework for Governing Themselves

May include, but are not limited to…

- **Board member behaviors and membership expectations –** general guidelines for how Board members conduct themselves both inside and outside the realm of the board.

- **Conflicts of interest and Code of Ethics** - spell out opposition to board members' financial conflicts, board position on nepotism, assure adherence to board's bylaw on ethics.

- **Policy and bylaw formulation, adoption and amendment-.** include process, time constraints, if any, the number of required readings for policies and bylaws; the required vote for adoption.

- **Public participation at board meetings** - procedures for the public to speak at regular meetings; special meetings, sub-committee meetings, and exemptions to public presence at meetings.

- **Agenda preparation and publication** - address who prepares agenda; timelines for receiving it prior to meeting; and availability to public and press.

- **Voting methods, quorums, and participation** – define what and when regular business is enacted by a majority of those present and voting (at least a majority of the required quorum) list when more than a simple majority is required if appropriate.

- **Minutes** - include guidance for what is to be included, expectations for their creation, posting, voting for approval and public comment if appropriate

- **Board evaluation** - indicate if and when the board, as part of the evaluation process of the superintendent, will also conduct a self evaluation of its own effectiveness for the purposes of continuous improvement.

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