



School Board Standards

A Framework for Good Governance



Coming together is a **beginning**

Staying together is **progress**

Working together is **success**



“School Board Standards” is another project from the Minnesota School Boards Association designed to support, promote and enhance the work of public school boards. Copyright 2005

Dear School Leader,

The concept of standards is a central theme in education today - from the standards students must meet to receive their diplomas to the call for performance standards in teacher contracts. Across the nation, standards and accountability are the buzzwords in education.

MSBA believes school board members should lead the standards movement by example. Boards must demonstrate accountability by measuring their progress against a set of carefully conceived standards. "School Board Standards: A Framework for Good Governance" outlines board standards and notes indicators of those standards so board members can measure their progress. Standards adoption and assessment, we believe, will help boost confidence in public school boards and public schools.

The standards and indicators were developed by a task force of school leaders in 1999. This year, a second group was formed to review and update the report. This new report reflects their work.

The report includes five areas of standards with indicators plus a quick self-assessment for board members to reflect on how their individual behaviors influence the board's work. Since local control is central to MSBA's philosophy, this report includes sections to allow school leaders to add indicators of standards that reflect their unique communities.

This report is not designed to be a simplistic report card. It is meant to prompt discussion; promote healthy, productive board relations; and help boards focus on policy and student achievement.

Your feedback is important to us. If you have comments, ideas or concerns, please contact Jan Rhode at 800-324-4459 or email jrhode@mnmsba.org.

Jan Rhode
Director of Board Development

Bob Meeks
Executive Director

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Each board member should reflect on his or her own performance and behavior as part of an overall assessment of the board.

Individual assessments should be done after a period of private reflection.

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A Board Member's Self-Evaluation

I strive to attend all scheduled board meetings.

I strive to be punctual.

I make a sincere effort to be informed on all agenda items, including asking questions and seeking clarification prior to the meeting.

I participate actively and fully on all issues, including those which may be highly controversial.

I respond to constituent concerns and evaluate staff recommendations without implying a criticism.

I act with professional courtesy during board meetings, being open to those whose views are different from mine.

I demonstrate an ability to think independently, to grow in knowledge, to rely on facts and a willingness to hear and consider all sides of controversial issues.


I convey a sense of loyalty to associates and respect for group discussions.

I make decisions based on what is best for the entire district, avoiding conflicts of interest or using my board position for personal or partisan gain.

I strive to keep focused on policy that supports and enhances student achievement, recognizing that authority for the administration remains with the superintendent.

I help the board expedite meetings by sticking to the agenda and suggesting new or additional items be put on a future agenda.

Using This Report



School Board Standards

Board evaluation instrument

These standards are the basis for the MSBA-endorsed board self-assessment instrument. The self-assessment can be found on our Web site, www.mnmsba.org, under Board Development, School Board Standards. MSBA suggests that boards conduct a comprehensive self-evaluation every two to four years. Detailed instructions for the process can be found online at this site.

Getting the results

After your board has completed the evaluation, MSBA will tabulate the results and prepare a report that maintains the confidentiality of each individual's response. An MSBA staff member will conduct a workshop reviewing the results with the board. There is no charge for this service.

MSBA's Distinguished Leadership Award

The Distinguished Leadership Award is the most prestigious recognition a full board can receive from the Association. "School Board Standards: A Framework for Good Governance" is a central piece of the award process. To earn the recognition, a board must:

- ◆ Pass a resolution to adopt the standards. The resolution can be downloaded from www.mnmsba.org. Click on Board Development, then School Board Standards. Notify MSBA this resolution has been passed.
- ◆ Complete the board self-assessment process.
- ◆ Identify and work on at least one improvement goal based on your assessment results.
- ◆ Complete the Distinguished Leadership Award form, which will ask you to identify at least one improvement goal and show action toward that goal. The form is at www.mnmsba.org. Click on Board Development, School Board Standards. Secondly, identify one policy action during the same year which is intended to directly improve student achievement.
- ◆ After receiving this short application, MSBA will send a staff person to one of your board meetings to complete a short on-site evaluation of a board meeting.

Meet these requirements, and your board will be an award winner!

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**MSBA's
Distinguished
Leadership Award is
the most prestigious
recognition a full
board can receive
from the Association.**

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The National School Boards Association has a publication about the Key Work of School Boards. You can find it at www.nsba.org.

MSBA offers an online course called "The Key Work of School Boards." Look for it at www.mnmsba.org.

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The Fundamental Roles of School Boards

Vision

The board, with extensive community participation, envisions the community's educational future and then formulates goals, defines outcomes and sets the course for its public schools.

Structure

To achieve the vision, the board establishes a structure and creates an environment to ensure all students the opportunity to attain their maximum potential through a sound organizational framework.

Accountability

Because the board is accountable to the community, it regularly assesses student achievement, staff and all conditions affecting education.

Advocacy

The board serves as education's key advocate on behalf of students and their schools in the community to advance the vision.

Fulfilled through...

Conduct & Ethics

The board performs in a manner that reflects service to the community on behalf of students by conducting district business in a fair, respectful and responsible manner.

Standards and Indicators



The following pages contain checklists to help board members assess how well the board functions in its fundamental roles. Sample materials are referenced under the standards.

Vision (V1-V4)	
The board, with extensive community participation, envisions the community's educational future and then formulates goals, defines outcomes and sets the course for its public schools.	
Standards	Indicators
<p>V1. The board keeps the district focused on the educational welfare of all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The priorities for board meeting time are issues related to student achievement. <input type="checkbox"/> The board has adopted goals, approved student-performance objectives and established policies that provide a well-balanced curriculum resulting in improved student learning. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____
<p>V2. The board, working with its community, has developed and adopted a written statement of the district's vision.</p> <p><i>MSBA/MASA Policy 104</i></p> <p><i>Sample vision statements at www.mnmsba.org ➤ board development ➤ standards ➤ vision statements</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The district vision/mission statement is posted and published in prominent places. <input type="checkbox"/> Decisions are guided by the vision. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____
<p>V3. The board has a process to review, update and communicate the vision to and for the district.</p> <p><i>MSBA/MASA Policy 104</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The board demonstrates its commitment to the vision, mission and goals by clearly communicating them to the superintendent, staff and community. <input type="checkbox"/> There is a written process in policy for periodic review of the vision and goals: MSBA/MASA Policy 104. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____



Vision continued	
Standards	Indicators
<p>V4. The board has developed and adopted long- and short-range plans to work toward achieving the vision of the district.</p> <p><i>MSBA/MASA Policy 616</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The district has an active advisory committee for comprehensive, continuous improvement of student achievement. <input type="checkbox"/> The district incorporates recommended and approved goals into district planning. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____

Structure (S1-S7)	
<p>To achieve the vision, the board establishes a structure and creates an environment to ensure all students the opportunity to attain maximum potential through a sound organizational framework.</p>	
Standards	Indicators
<p>S1. The board has written policies that are clear, concise, current and in compliance with all laws.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The district has a process for policies requiring annual review: MSBA/MASA Policies 413, 414, 415, 506, 522, 524. <input type="checkbox"/> At a minimum, all policies are reviewed on a 3-year cycle. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____
<p>S2. The board uses the superintendent as its CEO and delegates through written policy full authority for the superintendent to manage district affairs.</p> <p><i>MSBA/MASA Policy 304 (Supt. duties)</i> <i>MSBA/MASA Policy 209 (Code of Ethics)</i> <i>MSBA Online Training: Board-Supt. Relations</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate roles of the board and superintendent are in written policy. <input type="checkbox"/> The board understands the distinction between its role as a policy-making body and that of administration. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____

Structure continued	
Standards	Indicators
<p>S3. The board oversees district management by employing a superintendent and evaluating his/her performance in providing leadership, managing operations and performing duties assigned by law.</p> <p><i>MSBA/MASA Policy 304</i></p> <p><i>MSBA/MASA Guidelines at www.mnmsba.org ► board development ► standards ► MSBA/MASA guidelines</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The district has an active advisory committee for comprehensive, continuous improvement of student achievement. <input type="checkbox"/> The district incorporates recommended and approved goals into district planning. <input type="checkbox"/> Superintendent contracts are ratified with appropriate public disclosure and as a separate agenda item. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____
<p>S4. The board adopts a budget that incorporates sound fiscal practices and allocates resources to best achieve the vision, mission and goals.</p> <p><i>MSBA/MASA Policies 701 & 701.1</i></p> <p><i>Sample budget timeline at www.mnmsba.org board development ► standards ► budget timeline</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The budget process allows an opportunity to examine and discuss allocations as they relate to vision and goals. <input type="checkbox"/> During the fiscal year, the board periodically reviews the budget and ends the fiscal year within agreed-upon parameters. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____
<p>S5. The board authorizes the employment, leave of absence, discipline & dismissal of staff after considering the superintendent's recommendation.</p> <p><i>MSBA Service Manual Ch. 1; Ch. 13 Law Bulletin M MSBA Model Teacher Contract Ch. 3 Appendix 5</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The district has a written hiring procedure, leading to a recommendation to the school board. <input type="checkbox"/> The board honors district contracts. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____



Structure continued

Standards	Indicators
<p>S6. The board provides safe, adequate facilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The district has a current five-year facilities plan and budget. <input type="checkbox"/> The district meets safety guidelines and has received no out-of-compliance reports. <input type="checkbox"/> District facilities are periodically evaluated in terms of the district mission, vision and goals. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<p>S7. The board encourages & supports working cooperatively with families, businesses, community organizations and other agencies.</p> <p><i>MSBA/MASA Policy 902</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The board actively involves local civic organizations in support of the district vision and collaborates with other agencies. <input type="checkbox"/> The district welcomes active community involvement and seeks parental involvement. <input type="checkbox"/> The district building-use policy encourages community use of facilities. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

Accountability (A1-A4)

Because the board is accountable to the community, it regularly assesses student achievement, staff and all conditions affecting education.

Standards	Indicators
<p>A1. The board reviews key policies for effective implementation.</p> <p><i>MSBA/MASA Policy 208</i></p> <p><i>MSBA Accountability Report at www.mnmsba.org ► board development ► standards</i></p> <p><i>Department of Education CLASS data site at www.education.state.mn.us</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The board uses a review-and-comment process for those implementing key policies and those affected by the outcomes. <input type="checkbox"/> The board uses agreed-upon data (i.e., curriculum, goals, budget) to evaluate outcomes of policies over time. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____



Accountability continued	
Standards	Indicators
<p>A2. The board provides for itself, the superintendent and all staff ample opportunity for professional growth and increased competency through training and inservice.</p> <p><i>Phase Orientation information at www.mnmsba.org ➤ board development ➤ phase series</i></p> <p><i>MSBA/MASA Policies 212 & 425</i></p> <p><i>Sample local orientation information at www.mnmsba.org ➤ board development ➤ standards ➤ local orientations</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Board members attend Phases I-IV and other training opportunities on a regular basis. <input type="checkbox"/> Funds are budgeted to support training for board and staff. <input type="checkbox"/> The board has a process to share training information at board meetings. <input type="checkbox"/> The board has a process for experienced members to offer a local orientation to incoming board members. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____
<p>A3. The board ensures progress toward the achievement of district goals.</p> <p><i>MSBA/MASA Policy 616</i></p> <p><i>Sample accountability/curriculum reports at www.mnmsba.org ➤ board development ➤ standards ➤ sample accountability reports</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The board reviews the system accountability report for curriculum instruction and assessment to monitor progress of student achievement. <input type="checkbox"/> The board encourages and evaluates ongoing staff training. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____
<p>A4. The board demonstrates fiscal responsibility.</p> <p><i>MSBA/MASA Policy 703</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The board reviews and accepts the annual audit. <input type="checkbox"/> Board members are accessible. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____



Advocacy (AD1-AD3)

The board serves as education's key advocate on behalf of students and their schools in the community to advance the vision.

Standards	Indicators
<p>AD1. The board promotes the welfare of the district and all children through the political process at the local, state and national level.</p> <p><i>MSBA Lobby Line: 800-864-6722</i></p> <p><i>MSBA Governmental Relations information at www.mnmsba.org ► governmental relations</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Board members serve as representatives on other agency boards. <input type="checkbox"/> The board is active in the MSBA legislative resolution and reporting processes. <input type="checkbox"/> Board members get to know their local legislators and invite them into the district. <input type="checkbox"/> The board ensures the impact of major legislative actions is reported to the public. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____
<p>AD2. The board recognizes the achievements of students, staff and others in education.</p> <p><i>Sample agendas at www.mnmsba.org ► board development ► standards ► sample agendas</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There is a section on the agenda devoted to recognitions. <input type="checkbox"/> The board recognizes students, staff and others via letters of commendation, awards or events. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____
<p>AD3. The board takes leadership in securing community support for the district's mission, vision and goals and the resources needed to achieve them.</p> <p><i>MSBA Ambassadors for Public Education at www.mnmsba.org ► communications ► ambassadors</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Board members are willing to speak at community meetings and events. <input type="checkbox"/> The board initiates referendums as needed to meet district needs. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____



Conduct and Ethics (CE1-CE6)

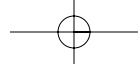
The board performs in a manner that reflects service to the community on behalf of students by conducting district business in a fair, respectful and responsible manner.

Standards	Indicators
<p>CE1. The board creates an atmosphere of openness and respect by seeking input from students, staff and community members on specific issues when appropriate.</p> <p><i>MSBA/MASA Policy 206</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The board has used a task force or board forum within the last three years. <input type="checkbox"/> There is a process of student representation to the board. <input type="checkbox"/> The board has a policy of allowing public comment. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____
<p>CE2. The board, its members and the superintendent work together in a climate of trust and mutual respect.</p> <p><i>Code of Ethics, Service Manual, Ch. 1</i> <i>MSBA/MASA Policy 209</i></p> <p><i>Phase III information at www.mnmsba.org ➤ board development ➤ phase series</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The board strives for open communication among its members, the superintendent and other administration via appropriate channels. <input type="checkbox"/> Board members exhibit courage in deliberations and decisions. <input type="checkbox"/> Board members avoid demeaning verbal or nonverbal communication. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____
<p>CE3. The board redirects specific complaints and requests to the superintendent or other staff members as appropriate.</p> <p><i>MSBA/MASA Policy 206</i></p> <p><i>Meet and Confer, Service Manual, Ch. 3</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The board has and follows a policy dealing with complaints. <input type="checkbox"/> No specific concerns are dealt with at the board level until appropriate channels have been followed. <input type="checkbox"/> The district schedules meet and confer four times a year, as directed by law. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____

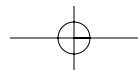
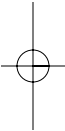
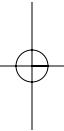


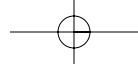
Conduct and Ethics continued

Standards	Indicators
<p>CE4. The board develops skills in teamwork, problem-solving and decision-making.</p> <p><i>MSBA/MASA Policy 213</i></p> <p><i>Phase III information at www.mnmsba.org ➤ ➤ board development ➤ phase series</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The workload is divided among members. <input type="checkbox"/> The work of subcommittees is honored. <input type="checkbox"/> The board uses methods (such as study sessions, regular meetings, work groups or public forums) to study, analyze and build understanding of issues. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____
<p>CE5. The board respects the majority decision after honoring the right of members to express opposing viewpoints and vote their convictions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Individual members refrain from undermining a decision made by the majority of the board. <input type="checkbox"/> Board members do not publicly criticize individual opinions and decisions. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____
<p>CE6. The board establishes and follows local policies, procedures and ethical standards governing the conduct and operation of the board.</p> <p><i>MSBA/MASA Policies 203.1 & 205</i></p> <p><i>MSBA Online Training: Parliamentary Procedure</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Members recognize they have no authority to take individual action in policy on district and building administrative matters. <input type="checkbox"/> The meeting time, place and facilities accommodate the board, staff and public to the fullest extent possible. <input type="checkbox"/> The board has adopted and follows rules of order and the Open Meeting Law. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____

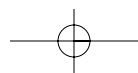
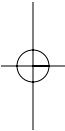
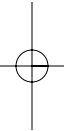


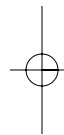
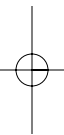
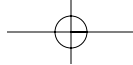
Notes





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