

Eight Characteristics of an Effective School Board:

1. Effective school boards commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision.
2. Effective school boards have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn, and of the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels.
3. Effective school boards are accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.
4. Effective school boards have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.
5. Effective boards are data savvy; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.
6. Effective school boards align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.
7. Effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.
8. Effective school boards take part in team development and training, sometimes with their superintendents, to build shared knowledge, values and commitments for their improvement efforts. - See more at: <http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Public-education/Eight-characteristics-of-effective-school-boards/Eight-characteristics-of-effective-school-boards.html#sthash.Do3UYUTd.dpuf>

The descriptions of ineffective boards mentioned in the research:

1. Only vaguely aware of school improvement initiatives, and seldom able to describe actions being taken to improve student learning.
2. Focused on external pressures as the main reasons for lack of student success, such as poverty, lack of parental support, societal factors, or lack of motivation.
3. Offer negative comments about students and teachers.
4. Micro-manage day-to-day operations.
5. Disregard the agenda process and the chain of command.
6. Left out the information flow; little communication between board and superintendent.
7. Quick to describe a lack of parent interest in education or barriers to community outreach.
8. Looked at data from a “blaming” perspective, describing teachers, students and families as major causes for low performance.
9. Little understanding or coordination on staff development for teachers.
10. Slow to define a vision.
11. Did not hire a superintendent who agreed with their vision.
12. Little professional development together as a board. - See more at:
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In *Getting There from Here*, Goodman and colleagues (1997) concluded that those with a strong board/superintendent relationship had greater student achievement as measured by dropout rates, the percentage of students going to college, and aptitude test scores. Goodman's review of characteristics of quality governance included several that were directly related to school boards and their relationships:

- A trusting and collaborative relationship between the board and superintendent;
- Creation by the board of conditions and organizational structures that allowed the superintendent to function as the chief executive officer and instructional leader of the district;
- Evaluation of the superintendent according to mutually agreed upon procedures; and
- Effective communication between the board chair and superintendent and among board members.

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