

District Conditions, Actions, and Structures That Exist for Effective Governance

What does it look like when a school district is operating smoothly, the board is governing well, and the superintendent/board relationship is highly functional?

What conditions exist?

- There is a high degree of trust between the Board and Superintendent.
- Confidentiality is maintained.
- There are clear expectations for the superintendent, and it is clear which decisions are the Board's to make and which are the Superintendent's.
- Board goals and priorities are established on an annual basis.
- There is open communication among members at the Board table.
- Roles are clearly defined.
- A high degree of professionalism exists between the Superintendent and Board.
- There is a focus on issues, not on personalities.
- All Board members receive all information from the Superintendent.
- The Board and Superintendent view themselves, and are viewed by the community, as moving in the same direction.
- Difficult conversations are had well, at the Board table, during which Board members can disagree with one another and challenge thinking without defensiveness.
- Board decisions are supported by the full Board once made, even if there are dissenting votes.
- Environmental scanning and scenario planning are practiced regularly.
- Community confidence is high in the Board and for the overall direction of the District.
- There are high levels of engagement with staff and with the community.

What key actions or structures exist in school districts that lead to strong governance and highly functional board/superintendent teams?

- The Board President and Superintendent meet on a regular basis to review and plan agendas and stay abreast of District conditions.
- A strategic plan exists, and annual district objectives are developed as a part of (and consistent with) the District's long range strategic directions.
- The Superintendent evaluation process is aligned to District priorities and mutually agreed upon expectations, and is handled consistent with Board Policy.
- The Board participates in regular self-assessments to evaluate their own governance abilities and to set goals for Board growth.
- A well-developed new Board Member Orientation exists with intended outcomes and key information about Board operations, educational performance, fiscal conditions, and strategic directions.
- A mutually agreed upon set of governing principals exist.
- Board development is attended to.
- Board policies are updated on a regular interval to remain current.
- A Board/District calendar is maintained with key actions/activities identified by month.