



## THE SCHOOL BOARD

You may have heard about your district's school board and wondered what role it plays in your child's education.

Texas school board members (or trustees) are elected by the community to make important decisions about the local school system. Trustees are not paid, so school boards bring together people who are passionate about quality education and commit much of their time to this crucial public service.

The school board provides local, citizen governance and oversight of education at a point close to the parent and child. Though ultimate responsibility for education rests with the state, Texas has delegated much of that responsibility to the local school board. Within the framework of state and federal law and State Board of Education and commissioner of education rules, individual school districts have significant latitude in shaping the educational programs of their schools.

Responsibilities of the board can be grouped into five categories:

### **Adopt goals and priorities and monitor success**

The school board sets the course for the district's schools by adopting goals and priorities to keep the district moving in a positive direction. The board has a vision statement to guide it when setting goals. An example of a vision statement is:

#### ***Our students:***

- *Choose to be productive members of society who are fully equipped to continue their preparation for the future*
- *Are confident and self-assured. They have a positive vision of the future and goals to achieve their vision*
- *Are well rounded academically, physically, and spiritually*
- *Are proud of their school and community and appreciate learning as a life-long endeavor*
- *Are creative problem solvers who make sound decisions*
- *Value and accept diversity*
- *Feel safe at school*

#### ***Our learning environment provides:***

- *An evolving and innovative curriculum that meets the diverse needs of all students and equips them to be positive and contributing members of society*
- *A highly qualified, dedicated, and caring staff recognized as the best*
- *Homes, classrooms, and campuses working together in harmony to support a safe and nurturing educational experience*
- *Modern technology and training that maximizes learning for all*

- *Proactive and effective communication between staff, students, and their guardians that ensures student success*
- *The optimal staffing and facilities to meet the needs of all students*

#### ***Our district and community:***

- *Work as a team providing resources necessary to achieve a world-class education*
- *Recognize the district as the heart of learning, caring, and support for all the community*
- *Acknowledge education as a privilege and proudly accepts responsibility for the learning process*

To that end, the board reviews regular reports from administration on district operations and progress toward goals.

### **Adopt policies and review for effectiveness**

A key responsibility of the board is to adopt local policies that guide how the district operates.

Local school boards govern by adopting policies that must be consistent with and within the scope allowed by federal and state laws and regulations.

Important decisions are made based on district policies. District policy also provides a record of the decisions the board has made.

### **Hire and evaluate the superintendent**

One of the most critical decisions a board makes is whom to hire as superintendent. The superintendent, as chief executive officer of the district, is responsible for implementing policies set by the board and is the person held accountable for the smooth and successful operation of its schools.

While the board's focus is oversight of management, policymaking, planning, and evaluation, the superintendent's focus is on implementation and managing day-to-day operations.

Through yearly written performance evaluations and ongoing discussions, the board assesses the superintendent's progress toward district goals.

### **Adopt a budget and set a tax rate**

The superintendent and staff formulate the school district budget and present it to the board for approval. If the board has revisions, the superintendent makes those changes. After conducting a public hearing to receive comments, the board adopts the budget and approves a tax rate to ensure the budget is adequately funded.

### **Communicate with the community**

Board members are the link between the school system and the public. As advocates for public education, board members help build support and report district progress by communicating with the community, students, staff, parents, and the media.

Board meetings are open for members of the public to attend. Many school boards set aside time for public comment to listen to citizen input and concerns. From time to time, the school board may hold a "closed" session during a meeting to discuss a confidential matter.

