

**VETERAN BOARD  
MEMBER TRAINING**

*MAXIMIZING LEADERSHIP:  
EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE  
PRACTICES AND EFFECTIVE  
METHODS OF SUPPORTING  
AND SUPERVISING THE  
LOCAL SUPERINTENDENT*

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**ADÁN'S BACKGROUND**

- First Career in Engineering – Work Experience at Sandia National Labs and Fortune 500 Research and Development
- HS Teacher and Principal at Elementary, Middle, & High School
- Superintendent in three New Mexico School Districts
- Executive Director of a Regional Education Cooperative
- NMPED Deputy Cabinet Secretary of Finance and Operations
- Small Business Owner
- School Board Member

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**SESSION OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this workshop, participants will:

- have the knowledge and tools to engage in effective governance practices that support and supervise the local superintendent
- leave with practical strategies that can be implemented to strengthen board-superintendent relationships, improve communication, and ensure effective leadership, ultimately contributing to the district's overall success and student achievement.

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**SCHOOL BOARD'S STATUTORY ROLE**

**NMSA 22-5-4. Local school boards; powers; duties.**

A local school board shall have the following powers or duties:

- subject to the rules of the department, develop educational policies for the school district;
- employ a local superintendent for the school district and fix the superintendent's salary;
- review and approve the annual school district budget;
- ...
- ...
- ...
- N. ...

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**SCHOOL BOARD'S ROLE - 3**

**Fiduciary Responsibility**

A fiduciary duty is the legal responsibility to act solely in the best interest of another party. "Fiduciary" means trust, and a person with a fiduciary duty has a legal obligation to maintain that trust.

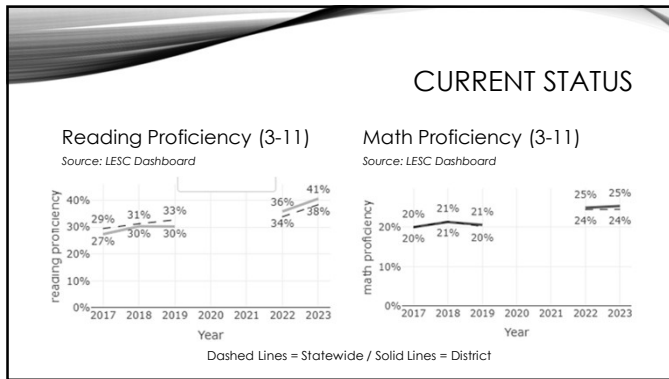
*Source: University of Texas – McCombs School of Business*

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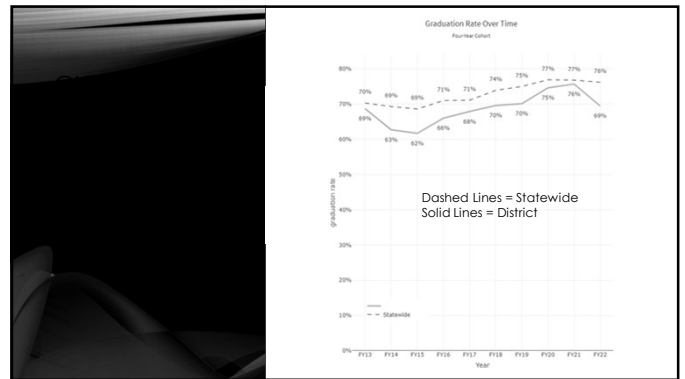
**SUPERINTENDENT'S ROLE**

- NMSA 22-5-14
- Local superintendent; powers and duties.
  - The local superintendent is the chief executive officer of the school district.
  - The local superintendent shall:
    - carry out the educational policies and rules of the state board [department] and local school board;
    - administer and supervise the school district;
    - employ, fix the salaries of, assign, terminate or discharge all employees of the school district;
    - prepare the school district budget based on public schools' recommendations for review and approval by the local school board and the department. The local superintendent shall tell each school principal the approximate amount of money that may be available for his school and provide a school budget template to use in making school budget recommendations; and
    - perform other duties as required by law, the department or the local school board.

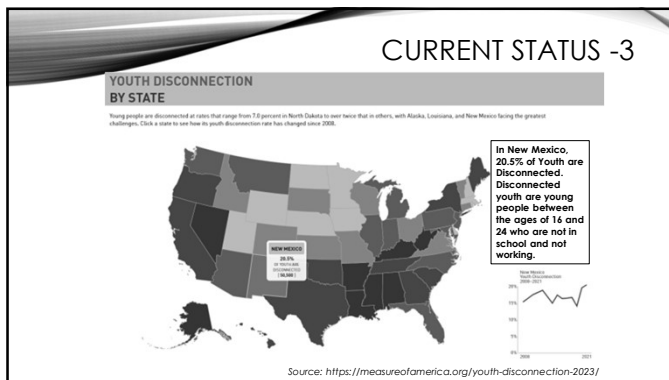
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- ### ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS
- State-Driven System
    - SB 137 (2024) – The School Support and Accountability System
      - Support designations based on the US Dept. of Education’s Elementary and Secondary Education Act
        - Targeted Support
        - Comprehensive Support
        - More Rigorous Intervention
      - Indicators of academic achievement
        - Student Proficiency on the NM Standards-Based Assessment
        - Student Growth on the NM Standards-Based Assessment
        - English Language Proficiency as measured by NWPED Assessment
        - High School Graduation (4-, 5- and 6-year Cohort Rates)
      - Indicators of School Quality (at much lower weight)
        - Absenteeism
        - College, Career, and Civic Readiness
        - Educational Climate of the School
  - Curse of Governor Lew Wallace:
 

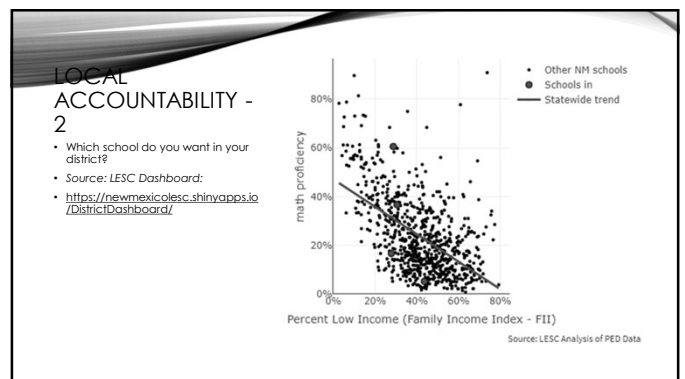
While serving as Governor of New Mexico, on December 4, 1879, Lew Wallace (1906) penned a letter to his wife, writing:

*I wish my successor, whoever he be, was come. Of course, he will do just as I did, have the same ideas, make the same attempts, and with the same heartiness of effort, soon cool in zeal, and finally say, 'All right, let her drift.' Every calculation based on an experience elsewhere fails in New Mexico. (p. 926)*

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- ### LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY
- School Boards are where the locus of control is closest to the conditions of the community.
  - There are few mechanisms that can drive accountability more potently than what can be generated at the local level.
  - What is at stake:
    - Young adults not succeeding in life.
    - Low employment rates.
    - Low college success rates.

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## STUDENT OUTCOMES FOCUSED GOVERNANCE

- Framework presented by Airick Journey Crabill in his book: Great on Their Behalf. Basis of national school board leadership program.
- Premise: Schools exist for the single purpose of improving student outcomes.
- Critical to differentiate Outcomes from Inputs and Outputs.
  - **Inputs** – Resources and activities invested in a particular program or strategy that are usually knowable at the beginning of a cycle and that are a measure of effort applied, e.g., staff, books, programs, facilities, buses, curriculum.
  - **Outputs** – Result of a particular set of inputs that is knowable in the midst of a cycle and that is a measure of the implementation of the program or strategy, e.g., formative / short-cycle assessments / interim assessment scores, benchmark scores, grades, quarterly financials.



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## STUDENT OUTCOMES FOCUSED GOVERNANCE - 2

- **Outcomes** are the impact of the program or strategy that is usually knowable at the end of a cycle and that is a measure of the effect on the intended beneficiary.
- Another definition of Outcomes: The most important and measurable things a student should know (cognitive) or be able to do (skills) after completing the course/program.
- Examples of Outcomes:
  - End-of-Year / Summative Assessments
  - Graduation Rates
  - CTE (e.g., Welding, Auto Mechanic, OSHA) Certifications

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## STUDENT OUTCOMES FOCUSED GOVERNANCE - 3

- Goals – Community vision in the form of SMART Goals on student outcomes.
- Guardrails – Prohibitions on the superintendent's authority.
- Positive Student Outcomes Follow Effective Leadership
- In the current environment, what are the things that are necessary for positive student outcomes?
  - Students are safe, engaged, healthy, and thriving.
  - Staff is engaged, motivated, and retention is high.
  - Superintendent and district leadership is stable.
  - School board is effective.

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## STUDENT OUTCOMES FOCUSED GOVERNANCE - 4

- 5 Steps to Effective School Boards:
  1. **Focus Mindset** – Requires that schools only exist to improve student outcomes, that student outcomes don't change until adult behaviors change, starting with the school board, and that school boards exist to represent the vision and values of the community.
  2. **Clarify Priorities** – Requires that the school board listen to the community's vision for what students should know and be able to do and listen for the community's non-negotiable values that must be honored while in pursuit of the vision.
  3. **Monitor Progress** – Requires that the school board work collaboratively with the superintendent to develop a multi-year calendar that describes which data will be discussed during which months, that the superintendent brings forward reports in accordance with the calendar, and that the school board invest at least 50% of its time each month on what worked, what didn't work and what is next.

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## STUDENT OUTCOMES FOCUSED GOVERNANCE - 4

- 5 Steps to Effective School Boards:
  4. **Align Resources** – Requires that school boards minimize time spent on anything that is not directly related to Goals and Guardrails, or legally required, and that decisions only evaluate alignment with Goals and Guardrails.
  5. **Communicate Results** – Requires that the school board make school board operations transparent and observable, and that the school board regularly arrange time for two-way communication with the community about its vision and values, identify dates each year when it will report back to the community about progress and train the community on its use of Goals and Guardrails.
- Important that boards differentiate and honor differences between board work and superintendent work.

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## STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Foundational to Every Conflict in the Superintendent-Board Relationship and Board Member to Board Member Relationship
- Community-based Data Collection During Strategic Planning can Enhance All Decision-Making
- Staff-based Data Collection During Strategic Planning can Enhance All Decision-Making
- Requests for Consideration can be Directed Back to the Strategic Planning Process (either to eliminate consideration or to earmark consideration)
- A Formalized Process for Strategic Planning can Allow for Heated Tensions to be Addressed in an Informal Setting Instead of a Formal Board Meeting

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## SUPERINTENDENT TENURE

- ... average tenure in a position is around five years, but it differs according to the size of the district and its demographics. A study done last year by the Broad Center showed that the higher the poverty level of the district, the shorter the superintendent's stay. That was also true for districts with higher numbers of students of color. In addition, female superintendents seem to have a shorter tenure than males. **Source: AASA**
- Finding 3: Superintendent tenure is positively correlated with student Achievement - McREL found two studies that looked specifically at the correlations between superintendent tenure and student achievement. The weighted average correlation in these two studies was a statistically significant .19, which suggests that length of superintendent tenure in a district positively correlates to student achievement. These positive effects appear to manifest themselves as early as two years into a superintendent's tenure. **Source: Waters & Marzano, 2006, p. 4**

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## SUPERINTENDENT TENURE - 2

- No recent reliable data are available for New Mexico Superintendent tenure; however, some estimate at fewer than 3 years. Some districts have had decades with multiple periods of more than two superintendents in a single year.
- Anecdotal evidence of the disadvantages of short superintendent tenures from my own experience working with school districts:
  - Failed reform initiatives
  - Stagnated academic outcomes
  - Failed finances
  - Inequitable representation on statewide leadership positions
  - I have yet to see a district with high superintendent turnover achieve exceptional student academic outcomes
- Caveat: there are always exceptions - when a superintendent must go.

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## SELECTING A SUPERINTENDENT

Things to ideally keep in mind if you are looking for a superintendent:

- Passion for positive educational outcomes for all students.
- Experience at many positions within the school system.
- Skill in managing staff.
- Aptitude in school finance.
- Ability to be visible in the community.
- Ability to seriously consider recommendations from all board members.
- Ability to recognize the importance of the school board's role in the educational system.
- Ability to walk away from issues when the board has made a decision. Know how much of a rebel you want.
- Knowledge and understanding of the community and the board's vision.

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## UNITED STATES LAWS AND REGULATIONS



• <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/>

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## NM COMPILATION COMMISSION / NM ONESOURCE




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- Main Page: <https://nmonesource.com/nmos/en/nav.do>
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- New Mexico Administrative Code: [https://nmonesource.com/nmos/nmac/en/nav\\_date.do](https://nmonesource.com/nmos/nmac/en/nav_date.do)

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## NMSBA POLICY SERVICE

- The NMSBA Policy service is one option for navigating the challenges of keeping up with the ever-changing educational policy landscape.
  - The service has an attorney contracted to manage policy updates.
  - The service periodically distributes new policies and updated policies as needed.
  - The service can adapt policy recommendations to fit local needs.
  - More information: <https://www.nmsba.org/policy-service/>



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## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

- Communication
  - Multiple avenues of communication to stay in touch.
  - Reliance on school board to be a communication mechanism for important information to community. Not just what but why.
  - Uniform distribution of information to all board members.
  - When possible, try to get most significant information out to board members before they hear it from the community.
  - Create events that allow superintendent and board to get to know each other as individuals.
  - Board should actively monitor behaviors that appear to reflect cliques or voting blocks on the board. An occasional split vote represents the genuine nature of diverse personal perspectives.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS - 2

- Community Relations
  - Unified presentation at public events.
  - Visibility at public events, even non-school events.
  - Proactive communication in written format, at public meetings, and through public media outlets to solicit input and demonstrate transparency of decision-making.
  - Be diligent in ensuring that bond funds align with campaign efforts.
- Conflict Management
  - Conflicts should be redirected to the best interest of students.
  - When possible, conflicts should be mediated in private and not on public display.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS - 3

- Conflict Management (continued)
  - The superintendent should help mediate conflicts between board members before conflicts become entrenched.
  - Board members must recognize and accept the democratic process when they are the losing side of a split vote. They should feel obligated to advocate for their position but then accept the decision of the majority with minimal hurt feelings and disrespectful acts toward opposing board members.
  - Conflict management can be mediated by the development of relationships outside of board meetings.
  - It is important to genuinely consider the proposals and perspectives of all board members, even those in the minority of a split board, and give careful feedback even if the proposal and perspectives are not adopted.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS - 4

- Conflict Management (continued)
  - The superintendent should help mediate conflicts between board members before conflicts become entrenched.
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## WORK SESSIONS

- It is still an official board meeting, so it must be announced and handled like other board meetings, according to the NM Open Meetings Act and other applicable statutes.
- If appropriately used, this is an opportunity to discuss critical issues without the formality of a regular board meeting.
  - Acts as a pressure relief for issues that are stewing for the community, individual board members, lead staff members, and the superintendent.

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## EVALUATION AND GOAL SETTING

- The superintendent should be encouraged to take feedback as an opportunity to improve. The board of education can reinforce this by remaining focused on the evaluation process as an opportunity to truly assist the superintendent in succeeding and not simply using it as an opportunity to find fault. NOT AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GOTCHA.
- The board and superintendent should cooperatively create goals for the school year in a summertime meeting or work session so that expectations are clear to all involved.
- The superintendent and board should actively and continuously monitor progress toward goals throughout the year. Using this approach, there should be no surprises during formal evaluation.

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## EVALUATION AND GOAL SETTING - 2

- The superintendent, with the administrative team, should be active in preparing materials documenting the progress made on goals assigned during evaluation.
- If you are using the outcomes-based model of goal setting, the measurable goals on which the superintendent will be evaluated are integral to the process.
- Establish an interim goal monitoring calendar.
- As much as possible, goals should be SMART goals.

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**S M A R T**

SPECIFIC    MEASURABLE    ACHIEVABLE    RELEVANT    TIME-BOUND

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## SMART GOAL PRACTICE

- The percentage of high school seniors successfully (grades of A, B, or C) completing dual-credit courses will increase from 13% in the 2023-2024 school year to 18% in the 2024-2025 school year.

**S M A R T**

SPECIFIC    MEASURABLE    ACHIEVABLE    RELEVANT    TIME-BOUND

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## SMART GOAL PRACTICE

- School climate at Vista Grande High School will improve in the 2024-2025 school year.

**S M A R T**

SPECIFIC    MEASURABLE    ACHIEVABLE    RELEVANT    TIME-BOUND

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## SMART GOAL PRACTICE

- The percentage of students proficient in English Language Arts in grades 3 through 5 will increase from 8% in the 2023-2024 school year to 75% in the 2024-2025 school year as measured on the NMPED summative assessment.

**S M A R T**

SPECIFIC    MEASURABLE    ACHIEVABLE    RELEVANT    TIME-BOUND

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## REFERENCES

- Crabill, A. J. (2023). Great on Their Behalf: Why School Boards Fail, How Yours Can Become Effective (First). Lioncrest Publishing.
- <https://effectiveschoolboards.com/publications/>
- Domenech, D. (2019, December 1). Extending superintendents' tenures. Extending Superintendents' Tenures. <https://www.aasa.org/resources/resource/extending-superintendents-tenures>
- Waters, J. T., & Marzano, R. J. (2006). (working paper). School District Leadership that Works: The Effect of Superintendent Leadership on Student Achievement (pp. 1-25). McREL

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