

The Research on School Board Effectiveness

NMSBA Leadership Retreat
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Agenda



Introduction



Goals



Present
Research



Discussion



Questions

Introduction

An overview of educational leadership research focused on how school boards affect student outcomes, impact district functions, and influence the community in which they serve.

We will discuss practical ways to implement the research in order to impact your school board's effectiveness.



Goals

- Take this opportunity to reflect on your board's collaboration as you hear about the research.
- Engage in discussion regarding the implementation of these practices.
- Leave today with a better understanding of the correlation between school board function and student outcomes.



Research

2011

Eight Characteristics
of Effective School
Boards

2014

Are School Boards
Aware of the
Educational Quality
of Their Schools

**Please write
down one
factor you
believe will
show up in all
the research.**

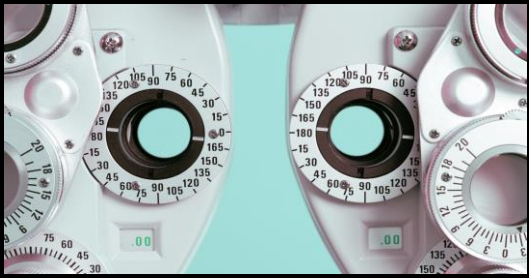
2013

The Impact of School
Board Governance on
Academic
Achievement in
Diverse States

2018

The Association
Between Local Public
School Board Member
Beliefs and Behaviors &
Student Academic
Achievement

What are the Eight Characteristics?



Vision

Commitment to clearly defined goals



Knowledge

Processes, Community, and Potential



Accountability

Goal setting with monitoring



Strong Relationships

Working together / Boundaries



Data Savvy

Identification and Direction



Resources

Align & Sustain



United Leadership

Superintendent + Board



Engagement

Development & Training

Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards

High Achieving Districts

- Adopt specific goals, informed by data, with policies to support
- Positive talk; Focus on achievement rather than administrative issues
- Strong communication; Willingness to discuss unfavorable data without blame
- Support professional development even in financial uncertainty
- Stay in role; Trust superintendent to lead; Stay informed

Low Achieving Districts

- Slow to define vision; Blame external factors for student achievement
- Negative talk; Micromanagement; Confusion of roles; Interpersonal conflict
- Disregard for processes and chain of command
- Not all information shared equally; No consideration of data
- No set plan for professional development; No joint problem solving

“

School boards should work to minimize conflict and maximize cooperation.

Michael Ford

“The Impact of School Board Governance on Academic Achievement in Diverse States”

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The Impact of School Board Governance on Academic Achievement in Diverse States

Study

- Compared **Florida, Nevada, Utah, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin**
- Factors assessed: Vision, Standards, Assessment, Accountability, Alignment, Climate & Culture, Collaboration, Community Engagement, and Continuous Improvement
- Differences in states: System Structure, Demographics, Budget, and Performance

Findings

- Predictors of academic outcomes do not vary substantially between states
- Significant differences exist across states in structure and demographics
- School boards' engagement in strategic planning showed impact
- Interest groups in districts detract from student achievement
- **The three (3) most notable factors that can make the most immediate impact are Vision, Accountability, and Continuous Improvement**

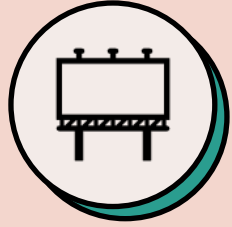
Are School Boards Aware of the Educational Quality of Their Schools?

- Dutch board members surveyed
- Focus on:
 - Attaching importance to steering the quality of education
 - Contributing to the quality of school education
 - Governing Style



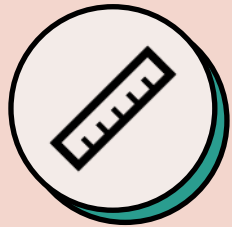
Pay Attention

The more boards pay attention to their governing role, the more they are aware of the state of the district.



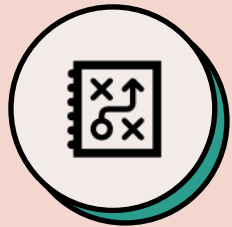
Belief

School boards belief in their own capacities and significance matter.



Contributions

Attaching importance to steering the district is a prerequisite for quality contributions.



Not One-Size-Fits-All

What matters is the ability of the board to adapt its governing style to the situation and stick to roles.



Awareness

By attaching importance to steering the quality of education, the more boards think they can contribute and the more aware of it they become.

“

A clear relationship exists between time spent on certain board behaviors and student academic achievement.

Brenda D. Vishanoff

“The Association Between Local Public School Board Member Beliefs and Behaviors and Student Achievement”

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The Association Between Local Public School Board Member Beliefs and Behaviors and Student Achievement

Study

- Aimed to find a correlation between board members sincerely held beliefs and student academic achievement
- Focused on comparing high and low achieving districts based on board member behavior
- Coupled beliefs and behavior to find factors on student achievement

Findings

- No significant correlations between mindset and achievement
 - **School boards are correctly placing value on meaningful educational goals, but it is simply not enough to affect student achievement outcomes.**
- Districts that reported spending more time discussing progress in student learning saw higher achievement in student academic outcomes.
- Districts that regularly asked for reports about staff collaboration saw higher achievement as well.



The general consensus among the research reviewed is that school boards can have an immediate impact in student academic outcomes by sharing a vision, holding themselves accountable to that shared vision, and making a commitment to continuous improvement around that vision.

Questions?

How we get there

Vision

Clearly define goals of board without overwhelming your efforts.

Collaborate with Superintendent on shared vision.

Commitment to vision; revisit often; Utilize resources.

Where does the board want the District to go?

Accountability

Goal setting with monitoring.

Use of data may be helpful to inform progress or reversion.

Show up for your district by participating in training and development and by staying in your lane.

Who is responsible for certain student outcomes?

Continuous Improvement

What will you do when a board member falls short of group expectations?

What will you use to evaluate progress?

Has the board made informed decisions to keep outcomes moving in the right direction of the vision?

Thank you!

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Resources

1. Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards
<https://www.nsba.org/Services/Center-for-Public-Education/school-boards>
2. The Impact of School Board Governance on Academic Achievement in Diverse States
<https://dc.uwm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1334&context=etd>
3. Are School Boards Aware of the Educational Quality of Their Schools?
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271836435_Are_School_Boards_Aware_of_the_Educational_Quality_of_Their_Schools
4. The Association Between Local Public School Board Member Benefits and Behaviors and Student Academic Achievement
<https://huskiecommons.lib.niu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=6324&context=allgraduate-thesesdissertations>