

# On Their Behalf: A Discussion on School Board Effectiveness

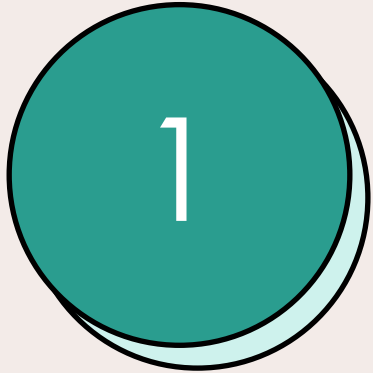
2024 NMSBA Annual Convention

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# Agenda



Intention



Review  
Research



Reflection



Discussion



Questions

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# Intention

I would like to set the intention for this workshop to be used as a reflective tool for you in your role as a school board member or working directly with school board members.

The information I am discussing with you today comes from my own experience as a classroom teacher, an education researcher, and a practicing education attorney. To note, my focus in every role has always been student outcomes.



# Goals

- Identify failures of school boards.
- Encourage deeper reflection of participants' role in serving students.
- Foster discussion among board members that can continue in the work they address in their respective communities.
- Pinpoint areas in your district that could be more effective.



# Research

**2002**

Local School Boards  
Under Review

American Educational  
Research Association

(Land)

**2011**

Eight Characteristics of  
Effective School Boards

(Dervarics)

**2013**

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

(Ford)

**2005**

The effective school  
board: do whatever it  
takes to get your board  
to understand its role  
and to communicate  
civilly with each other

(Crane)

**2013**

Effective board  
leadership: factors  
associated with  
student achievement

(Johnson)

# Research

**2014**

Does School Board  
Leadership Matter?

(Shober)

**2018**

The association between  
local public school board  
member beliefs and  
behaviors and student  
academic achievement

(Vishanoff)

**2023**

Strategies to Enhance  
Effectiveness of School  
Boards in Governance

(Gersich)

**2014**

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

(Hooge)

**2023**

Great on Their Behalf

(Crabill)

# 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

# Identifying Failures

## Knowledge-Based

- Failure to focus on outcomes
- Trained to fail
- Expected to fail
- Designed to fail

## Skill-Based

- **Not focused** when goal setting
- **Not focused** on board's time
- **Not monitoring** progress

## Mindset-Based

- "This is the way we've always done it"
- "Great on my behalf"
- "Effort and intent equals results and impact"



“

School boards should work to minimize conflict and maximize cooperation.

Michael Ford

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

”

“

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”

”

“ “ Avoiding failure is important but it only prevents failure; it doesn't cause effectiveness. To be effective, school board members must engage in a never-ending continuous improvement process.

Airick Journey Crabill  
"Great on Their Behalf"

” ”

# 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?



# Questions?

1. What attitudes, knowledge, or approach will you incorporate moving forward that will help your district become high achieving? (Dervarics)
2. How does your mindset limit or expand your capacity to serve as a board member for your community? (Vishanoff)
3. What is an example of a time when my adult behavior may have made it harder for students to be successful? (Crabill)

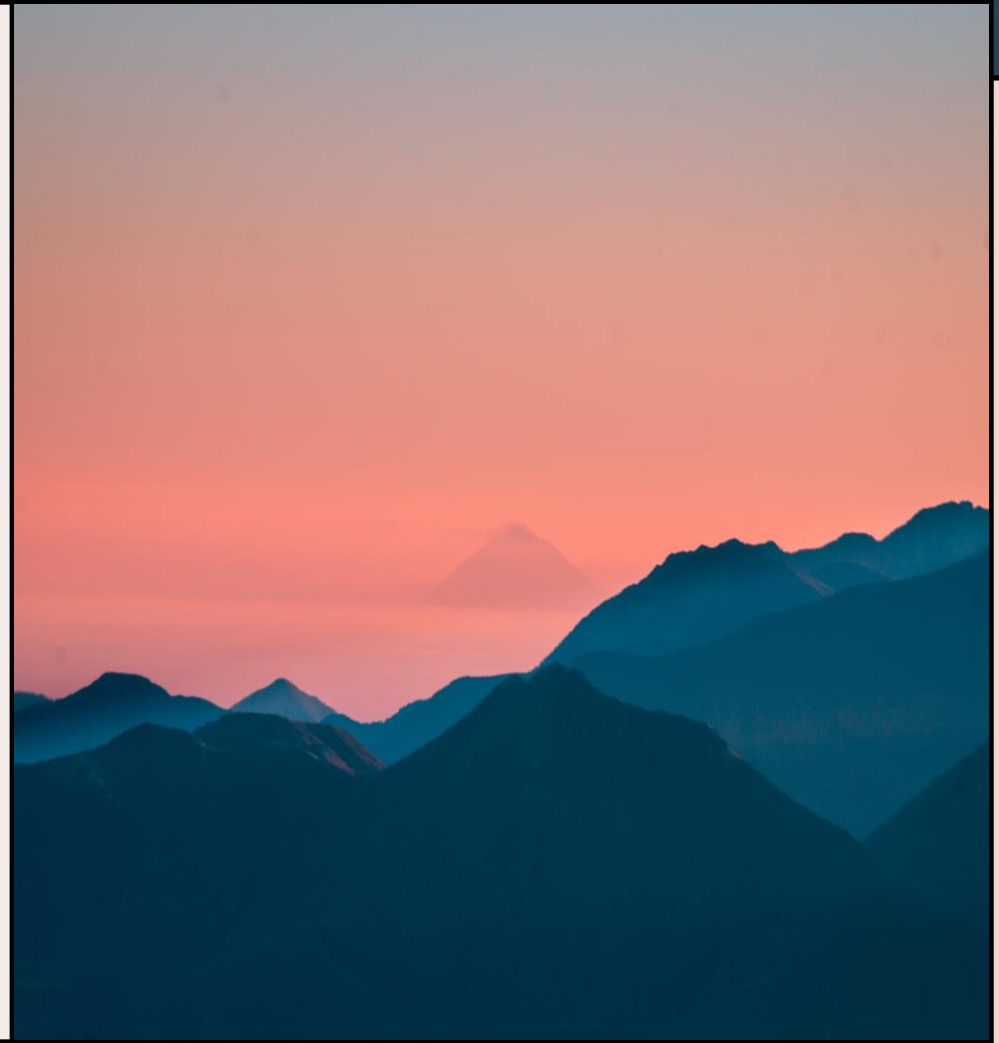
# Thank you!

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# Resources

1. Crabill, A. J. (2023). *Great on Their Behalf: Why School Boards Fail, How Yours Can Become Effective*. John Catt from Hodder Education.
  2. Dervarics, C (2011). *Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards*. Center for Public Education.
  3. Hooge, E (2014). *Are School Boards Aware of the Educational Quality of Their Schools?* Educational Management Administration & Leadership.
  4. Shoher, A. F. (2014). *Does School Board Leadership Matter?* Thomas B. Fordham Institute.
  5. Land, D (2002). *Local School Boards under Review: Their Role and Effectiveness in Relation to Students' Academic Achievement*. American Educational Research Association.
  6. Vishanoff, B. D. (2018). *The association between local public school board member beliefs and behaviors and student academic achievement*. Graduate Research Theses & Dissertations (Northern Illinois University). 5325.
  7. Ford, M. (2013). *The Impact of School Board Governance on Academic Achievement in Diverse States*. Theses & Dissertations (University of Wisconsin Milwaukee). 329.
  8. Crane, E. (2005). *The Effective School Board: Do whatever it takes to get your board to understand its role and to communicate civilly with each other*. District Administration.
  9. Johnson, P. (2013). *Effective Board Leadership: Factors Associated with Student Achievement*. Journal of School Leadership. Vol. 23.
  10. Gersich, B. (2023). *Strategies to Enhance Effectiveness of School Boards in Governance* (Dissertation, Concordia University, St. Paul). Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.csp.edu/edd/48>.
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